

8. MERIDIAN ENERGY FIREWORKS EXTRAVAGANZA 2000

Officer responsible Leisure Unit Manager	Author Andrei Martin, Events Team, DDI 371-1470
Corporate Plan Output: Events Management	

The purpose of this report is to provide a post-event report for the 2000 Meridian Energy Fireworks Extravaganza that was managed by the Leisure Unit's Events Team.

EVENT BRIEF

On Sunday 5 November 2000, Christchurch's only large-scale free public fireworks display, 'The Meridian Energy Fireworks Extravaganza', was held for the fifth consecutive year at the New Brighton Pier.

Leisure secured a naming rights sponsor for the first time in the event's history, namely Meridian Energy. This is a three year sponsorship contract.

The pyrotechnics display was fired from the seaward end of the New Brighton Pier with spectators enjoying the view from various vantage points in New Brighton, along the beaches both to the north and south of the pier and from the surrounding roads and hills.

The extravaganza began on time, at 9.30pm, and ran for approximately 16 minutes. The display itself consisted largely of huge sky-based star shells to enhance the enjoyment for the public, regardless of their vantage point and included special pyrotechnical effects shown at the Sydney Olympics, never seen before in New Zealand. This event was fired for the first time to music simulcast live on 92 More FM, which was broadcast from large speakers positioned on the pier and the access ramps to the pier.

The number of spectators at this year's event was estimated at a similar level to that in 1999, with more than 25,000 people watching the display from the New Brighton area and thousands more watching from the surrounding areas.

ADDITIONAL ENTERTAINMENT (NEW BRIGHTON CARNIVAL)

Following the success of the first New Brighton Carnival, Leisure assisted the New Brighton Association in staging this event again to help further enhance the festive atmosphere in New Brighton on the evening of the fireworks. Spectacular amusement rides and side-shows were introduced to the area both north and south of the New Brighton Pier, as well as entertainment positioned throughout the New Brighton Mall in an effort to encourage families to come down to New Brighton earlier and help alleviate traffic congestion.

The carnival opened on Friday 3 November and finished with the final day being staged with the Meridian Energy Fireworks Extravaganza on Sunday 5 November. All proceeds from the New Brighton Carnival went back to the New Brighton Association and local community.

TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT

Traffic congestion poses a challenge with this venue as traffic can only enter and leave the area from the west side of New Brighton. Leisure implemented the successful formulas from the previous year that were developed and co-ordinated in conjunction with the New Brighton Police and the Council's Parking Unit. Central New Brighton was again closed to vehicle traffic to assist with traffic control on the evening and the safety of the public at the event.

The running of the traffic operations on the evening was slower than previous year's due to a weakness in a specific closure area and an increased number of motor vehicles due to the colder weather. Leisure has met with the relevant Council Units and Police to work on these issues for the 2001 event.

FREE BUSES

Buses were chartered for this event to provide free transportation of people both to and from the outskirts of the city to the event. The number of buses was greatly increased from the previous year, with all being used to full capacity by the public and with additional buses needing to be ordered due to high demand to bring the public into the event. Following the conclusion of the event some additional buses were also commandeered to take members of the public back to suburban malls and the city; the number of users had once again increased from the year before.

GENERAL CROWD SERVICES

General crowd safety was provided by a number of services. First aid was provided by both the New Zealand Red Cross and The Order of St John, who this year was contracted to supply a fully equipped paramedic crew.

After the successful inclusion of youth workers last year, the initiative was once again implemented this year with excellent results. Security was provided by a contracted security company in partnership with the Police, and a communications system was designed specifically for the event. Other service organisations assisted with parking, beach marshalling and rescue services. Overall, the Police were extremely satisfied with the crowd behaviour.

High Police presence and effective liaison with security along with the positive attitude of the public on the evening all attributed to the good behaviour displayed by spectators.

PUBLIC REACTION

Overall, public response was extremely favourable with both businesses and residents in the area fully supporting the event.

Pre-event and post-event media interest was very high with the Fireworks Extravaganza receiving national exposure via radio and television networks. The front page of the Christchurch Press (post-event) summed up well with, "Set to dramatic classical music for the first time, the Meridian Energy Fireworks Extravaganza fulfilled its promise as a spectacular Guy Fawkes Celebration last night".

The event achieved its key performance indicators and was considered a success for the Christchurch City Council.

Chairman's

Recommendation: That the information be received.