

## 10. THIRD AGE LEISURE ACTION PLAN

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Corporate Plan Output: Plans and Policies, Community Recreation Programmes and Promotions	

The purpose of this report is to provide information on an action plan being put in place to respond to the leisure needs of those in the third age.

### INTRODUCTION

The third age is a relatively new phenomenon and one that is difficult to define precisely. The third age is defined as a time in people's lives when they have completed the conventional work and child-rearing stage of life and have two or three decades of active living ahead. It comes at a different chronological time for each person and is quite distinct from the stage on either side; full-time employment and parenthood on one side and (usually) dependency on the other.

The third age as a segment of society is growing. The percentage of the population aged sixty-five and over in New Zealand is projected to rise to 25 percent by the year 2051. It is expected that from 2024 older people will outnumber children for the first time.

Trends nationally also apply to the local population of Christchurch. The number of residents aged sixty-five and over in Canterbury grew by 9.5 percent between 1991 and 1996. Over the next twenty-five years the city's older population is expected to increase markedly. By 2011 the first baby boomers will begin retiring from the workforce and by 2021, it is predicted nearly 18 percent of the city's population will be aged sixty-five and over (Christchurch City Council, 1998).

There are several reasons for this dramatic population change. Firstly, since the post-war baby boom, birth rates have declined steadily, meaning that young people make up a smaller group within the population than in the past. Secondly, as a result of changes in health and especially living conditions, life expectancy is changing, and generally speaking, New Zealanders today can expect to live longer than ever before.

As work becomes a lower priority for people reaching the third age, rewarding and enjoyable leisure becomes a much higher priority. It is important that the Council as a major provider (directly and indirectly) of leisure opportunities works to ensure the leisure needs of people in the third age are met.

### MEETING OF GENERATIONS FORUM

The Meeting of Generations Forum, organised by the Third Age Programme at Canterbury Development Corporation, took place in Christchurch in September 2000. The forum provided a platform to engage people in debate concerning the challenges ahead related to the growth of the third age.

In the lead up to the Meeting of Generations Forum a Third Age Leisure Focus Group was organised by CCC Leisure, Parks Unit, Libraries Unit, Robert McDougall Art Gallery and Canterbury Development Corporation. This focus group brought together a cross-section of leisure providers to raise awareness of the issues and begin to consider what action needs to be taken. The results of this focus group fed in to the Meeting of Generations Forum.

The intention with the forum was that some clear action plans would result for various areas of activity. Unfortunately, owing to time pressures and the logistics at the forum an action plan for leisure did not eventuate. Since the forum, officers have been working with the Third Age Project at the Canterbury Development Corporation to develop an action plan.

In preparing the action plan it is acknowledged that efforts need to continue to understand the leisure needs of those in the third age now and in the future. It is likely that those in the third age in the future will present different characteristics and have different needs than those currently in the third age. It is also acknowledged that the proportion of the population in the third age will grow progressively rather than increase overnight. The action plan has therefore been prepared for a two-year period providing the Council with an opportunity to review progress and the state of knowledge on the needs of those in the third age at the end of two years before preparing a new action plan.

The Third Age Leisure Action Plan to end December 2002 is attached.

**RESOURCING IMPLICATIONS**

From February to July 2001 the Christchurch City Council Leisure, Recreation and Arts Team will be bringing together the third age leisure providers to establish an on-going Third Age Leisure Network. This network will look at the implications of research around the third age and decide collectively how to implement the Third Age Leisure Action Plan.

Currently the Recreation and Arts Team's total budget for Third Age Leisure provision is \$38,000. This funds five programmes around the city predominantly focusing on people aged 70-plus.

As part of the 2001/02 budget process a further \$30,000 has been requested to implement other parts of the Third Age Leisure Action Plan.

**CONCLUSION**

The leisure needs of those in the third age will be an increasingly important consideration over the next 20 to 30 years as this segment of the population grows proportionately and in real terms.

The Council has a commitment to older persons through its Older Persons Policy and addressing the leisure needs of those in the third age is one element of realising that commitment.

There remains considerable work to be done in understanding the leisure needs of those in the third age now and in the future. It is important that the Council begins to respond to the needs of this group now. To this end a two-year action plan has been developed.

**Chairman's**

**Recommendation:** That the information be received.