

16. SUSTAINABLE HOUSEHOLDS PROGRAMME

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Corporate Plan Output: Solid Waste	

The purpose of this report is to seek funding from the Board to assist with developing the national Sustainable Households Programme.

Background

The New Zealand Sustainable Households Programme is being put together by a group of local authority staff across New Zealand (including Christchurch City Council staff), co-ordinated by the Education Officer of the Marlborough District Council. This group has contracted Christchurch-based environmental educator Rhys Taylor to co-ordinate the Programme's development.

The Programme aims to reduce the environmental impact of households through interactive education in an accessible local context. The Programme will focus on practical everyday changes in behaviour and actions that will conserve resources and save money. A key feature of the Programme, once developed, will be that participants record the impact of their individual changes so that by combining these records, the cumulative benefit of the project can be measured.

The Programme will focus on waste, energy, water, gardening/backyard bio-diversity, transport, and food/shopping choices. The format will be facilitated monthly house meetings of groups of up to ten participants, over a six month period, supported by topic-based activity/information packs. An evening class option is also to be developed.

Similar educational programmes overseas, such as Global Action Plan in the United Kingdom, the United States of America and the Netherlands, have achieved significant measured impacts including:

- Solid waste reductions per participating household of 30% to 40% by weight
- Domestic power use cut by up to 9%
- Metered water volume reduced by 13% to 23%
- Household petrol consumption cut by 10% to 15%
- Cost savings of \$150 to \$250 per year (exceeds cost of participation)

The timeframe for developing the programme in New Zealand is:

By March 2001	Develop programme outline, content, format and begin work on materials
By July 2001	Begin test pilot programme.
By end of 2002	The Programme will be operational in five regions including Canterbury, Wellington, Marlborough/Nelson/Tasman, Waikato
From January 2003	Make the revised Programme available nationally.

Support for the Sustainable Households Programme

The Programme is supported by the Christchurch City Council, Environment Canterbury and other authorities at pilot stage. Funding has been requested from the Ministry for the Environment Sustainable Management Fund and may be available from July 2001. Until July, the supporting local authorities are jointly funding national development of materials and the education process. The principal contact within the Christchurch City Council is the Environmental Promotions Officer. The Programme is also relevant to current work on 'Sustainable Christchurch', led by the Sustainable Christchurch co-ordinator.

Involving the Spreydon Heathcote Community

At the initiative of the Community Advocate, there is an opportunity for the Spreydon Heathcote Community to make a valuable and distinctive contribution to the success of the Programme. This would be done by recruiting and supporting a group of 8-12 local residents to assist with the development of the scope, content and format of both the learning workshops and activity/information packs. (Please note that the costs of researching educational materials nationally will be covered by the Sustainable Households Programme).

This will be a participatory process where those involved assist in working out the environmental issues that are most relevant to Christchurch City and how they can be addressed by individual households. The interests and information needs raised in this group process will significantly influence the content and approach taken nationally. The participants will provide a practical, down-to-earth basis for subsequent development, increasing the likelihood of it being adopted widely in the city.

The process will involve four evening workshops facilitated by Rhys Taylor. Tentative dates for these workshops are 19 and 26 February, and 5 and 12 March. The Community Advocate will attend the first, and if convenient, the final workshop. Local follow-up could include self-financing evening classes at either Hillmorton or Cashmere High Schools in 2002.

Support Sought from Spreydon Heathcote Community Board

The Board could assist by providing \$1800 from its Discretionary Fund to fund development of workshops and information/activity packs to be spent as follows:

- Venue, refreshments and equipment for four evening workshops \$800
- The workshop facilitator (Rhys Taylor) and expenses (eg copying) \$1,000

The Community Advocate has agreed to assist by:

- Recruiting 8-12 local residents to participate in this process
- Providing administrative support for the workshops including booking venues, ordering refreshments, reminding participants to turn up, etc.

In Summary

The New Zealand Sustainable Households Programme is being put together by a group of local authority staff across New Zealand (including Christchurch City Council staff). The Programme aims to reduce the environmental impact of households through interactive education that will focus on practical everyday changes in behaviour and actions that will conserve resources and save money. Participants will record the impact of their individual changes so that the benefit of the project can be measured. Similar educational programmes overseas, such as Global Action Plan in the United Kingdom, the United States of America and the Netherlands, have achieved significant measured impacts.

There is an opportunity for the Board to make a valuable contribution to the success of the Programme by supporting work with local residents to develop the scope, content and format of information/activity packs.

Recommendation: That the Board allocate \$1,800 from its 2000/2001 Discretionary Fund for the purpose of workshop and facilitator expenses as outlined in this report.