

## 9. COMPUTERS IN THE COMMUNITY PROJECT

**Officer responsible**  
Children's Advocate

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The purpose of this report is to inform the Committee of the development of the Computers in the Community project. Numerous requests for support from community groups and individuals have been the catalyst for this project.

### BACKGROUND

The primary focus is to bridge the widening gap between those who can access information and communications technology (ICT) and those who find themselves excluded by educational social and economic circumstances. This will be done by the provision of donated, or heavily discounted, computers and software that will provide the necessary conduit between the technologically disadvantaged and the information super highway.

The changes created by the 'information age' that we live in continue to open up new opportunities in the way we can communicate with one another and the way in which we live our lives and go about our everyday business. We have an individual and collective responsibility to help bring down the barriers to human development and the progress of the poor or marginalized in our community.

#### 1. Aims and Objectives

The project aims to:

- increase the number and quality of computers donated to the project by businesses and organisations.
- convince potential donors of the benefits of broadening and strengthening the computer skills of the community.
- increase the number of refurbished computers distributed to the community.
- establish an adequate funding stream comprising both grants and sponsorship.

#### Mission Statement

"To create equitable access to the knowledge economy for the people of Christchurch".

#### 2. Target Groups

The Project team will:

- support community access to the information super highway (the Internet) by supplying community groups and individuals with appropriately resourced computers.
- support community access projects and pilot projects that provide access to the Internet.

**Community organisations:** The project aims to support non-profit community groups to have access to internet access and ICT providing them with a wealth of information for community projects and activities. Few sources of finance are available for them to purchase computer equipment (including hardware, software, installation and advice). The internet allows everyone not just to be a consumer of information, but also a producer. Information and communications technology can be incorporated into projects, used by community groups or form the basis of new projects to support social change. This will provide them with a means of having a voice, and can allow for diverse cultures and values to be reflected. Advocacy, organising and lobbying and can be also enhanced.

**Support community access projects:** Access to training and equipment are significant barriers to communities experiencing high levels of socio-economic disadvantage. One of the exciting things about addressing the technology gap is that it can involve the whole community in a very hands on way. Community development approaches to 'bridging the gap' can enhance access opportunities, but also create an environment in which empowerment of local communities occurs. A community approach which transfers skills and strengthens local capacity has real benefits.

### 3. **Project Team**

Molten Media Community Trust (Christchurch) has, over the years, made donations of recycled computers and/or subsidised computer technology into community groups. The Trust has focused its efforts in three areas: computer recycling, employment training and donating computers into the reach of community groups. In June this year, the Christchurch City Council agreed to investigate working in partnership with Molten Media Community Trust and Canterbury Development Corporation and with the aim of continuing to recycle computers on a grander scale. A project team has been set up with representatives from each organisation.

The team aims to achieve objectives by:

- Raising the profile of the Computers in the Community project through media advertising.
- Increasing the number of computers donated to the project team by convincing potential donors of the benefits of broadening and strengthening the computer skills of the community.
- Creating relationships with local businesses in Christchurch who share our vision and encourage them to donate computer hardware, software, technical expertise etc.
- assisting with seeking funding via:
  - business grants
  - local government funding
  - applications to funding bodies. Funding applications are currently underway to the Community Trust and CCC Social Initiatives Fund.
- Increasing the number of recycled computers distributed to the community/individuals.

### 4. **Role of Molten Media**

The trust will continue with its current three pronged focus of computer recycling, employment training and donating computers into the reach of community groups.

Molten will see computers through the process from the point of receiving a donation to the point of redistribution, including:

- Ensuring previous information is wiped from donated computers.
- Loading licensed operating system software and other software.
- Bringing donated computers up to specification.
- Running diagnostic check.
- Replacing faulty parts.
- Ensuring all software and hardware is compatible.
- Organising deliver of computer/s to or pick up by community group.
- Facilitating access by communities to resources they need to get on line. (offer online resources to help them get connected).
- Honouring three month onsite guarantee of donated computer.
- Acknowledging donors with letter of appreciation.

Molten Media Community Trust will also assist with:

- Encouraging local businesses to donate their no longer required computers to the project.
- Providing editorial for Press Releases.

### 5. **Role of Canterbury Development Corporation (CDC)**

The CDC will act as a funder. Current funding for the 2001/02 financial year is \$25,000. The CDC will also maintain a governance role through a staff appointment to the Board of Molten Media Community Trust.

### 6. **Role of Christchurch City Council**

The Christchurch City Council will, through its knowledge and network of key organisations and businesses:

- Endeavour to raise the profile of the Computers in the Community project.
- Organise media advertising/organising editorial and photo opportunities.
- Distribute project news through mail outs.
- Assist with funding applications.
- Seek donors of computer software, hardware, technical expertise.

## 7. **Process from Donation to Delivery**

The basic process for service delivery is generally along the lines as follows:

- Encourage local businesses to donate their redundant computers to the project.
- Ensure previous information is wiped from donated computers.
- Load licensed operating system software and other software.
- Bring donated computers up to specification.
- Invite applications from community groups ~ to be reviewed by Selection Committee on a quarterly basis.
- Selection Committee identifies successful recipients.
- Organise delivery of computer to community group.
- Provide three month onsite warranty.
- Facilitate access by communities to resources they need to get on line.

This process will be continually 'fine tuned' in further consultation with project team members to ensure best practice.

## 8. **Further Partnerships**

One of the keys to successful implementation is to use partnerships which can benefit and contribute to successful outcomes by ensuring access to resources, support and knowledge. The project team needs to work together with other appropriate agencies, including, community sector organisations and businesses, internet service providers, technology suppliers and academic institutions to find imaginative and effective ways to implement the objectives of the project. Businesses will be encouraged to consider contributing to the project in the following areas: PC's for recycling, corporate volunteering, in-kind equipment and software, discounts on products, grants etc.

Telecom New Zealand Limited has expressed an ongoing interest in being involved in the project and has generously donated computers to the project. Discussions are currently underway with Telecom regarding the provision of internet line connections and charges (Addington.Net)

## 9. **Project Monitoring/Evaluation**

A quarterly report will be provided, by the Manager of Molten Media Community Trust, to each of the partner organisations. This will include lists of donors, applicants, recipients, financial information, and commentary. On an annual basis recipients will be surveyed and the results appended to the April - June quarterly report.

## 10. **Ownership**

Computers for which a partial payment is made, will become the property of the recipient. Ownership is vested with payment of an appropriate percentage of costs. Recipients of donated computers will be required to sign a simple agreement stating that while their use is unrestricted Molten Media Community Trust retains legal ownership.

## **Chairman's**

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