

6. PARTNERSHIP WITH COAST TO HIGH COUNTRY ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION PROGRAMME

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The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the Council's involvement in the formalisation of the Coast to the High Country Programme partnership agreement.

CONTEXT

In 1997 an approach was made to the Environmental Policy and Planning Unit Manager, to join the New Zealand Association for Environmental Education (and others) in the investigation of the possibility of an environmental education agency for Canterbury. Once a key group of organisations were on board an application was made to the Community Trust to secure funds to assist in the feasibility study. The findings of the feasibility study are documented in the report by John Brundall "The Feasibility of an Environmental Education Agency for Canterbury" November 1998.

The release of this report coincided with movement by the Christchurch City Council on the "Our City" facility concept. This action resulted in work towards the establishment of an EE Agency losing its momentum and effort shifting to support for the "Our City" concept. However, getting all the organisations together led to openings for other opportunities to work co-operatively on the development of environmental education programmes. Hence the introduction of the Coast to the High Country Programme.

In May 2000, the Christchurch City Council approved funding for the Coast to the High Country Programme through the Annual Plan process. This support has continued and no further funding, except that provided for in the current and forward budgets, is being sought at this time.

RELEVANT CURRENT POLICY

The concept fits into the strategic goals in the triple bottom line adopted in the 2002 strategic statement, in particular that of environmental sustainability. It also fits into the vision for Christchurch relating to *A green city that protects its important natural habitats, landscapes and ecological values and develops community environmental awareness and responsibility*¹.

It fits within the concept of community plans taking as it does a number of organisations working together in a cooperative manner to provide outcomes that are jointly held.

It is within the Terms of Reference of the Community Plans Special Committee:

To build relationships with other bodies, particularly public agencies, which lead to better integration of priorities, planning and programme delivery within Christchurch primarily.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSAL

The Coast to the High Country Programme was introduced in early 1999. It is a programme of educational activities for students from Year 7 to Year 13, focusing on primary level initially then secondary as resources, both financial and staffing, become available. The jewel in the crown of the programme is the unique three day residential, *Mountains to the Sea* field trip/camp, which takes children in a bus from their school to the beach, thence via a number of significant environmental sites to the high country, where they stay two nights at the Environmental Education Centre of New Zealand in the Craigieburn Forest Park. To ensure that the programme offers something to attract every school, it comprises a number of different courses and activities for a variety of target student groups.

The 'Coast to the High Country' environmental education programme provides a programme of activities and lessons to address the key aims of environmental education. These aims are for students to develop:

Awareness and sensitivity to the environment and related issues;

Knowledge and understanding of the environment and the impact of people on it;

Attitudes and values that reflect feelings of concern for the environment;

Skills involved in identifying, investigating, and problem solving associated with environmental issues;

A sense of responsibility through **participation and action** as individuals, or members of a group, whanau, or iwi, in addressing environmental issues.

¹ *A Vision for Christchurch in Environmental Policies and Programmes*, Environmental Policy and Planning Unit, Christchurch City Council, August 1998

The programme currently employs one full time, specialised environmental education teacher. Responsibility for supervision of the paid co-ordinator and the health and safety plan sits with the World Wide fund for Nature (the employer). Shell New Zealand is also involved in sponsorship of the programme.

More detail on what is offered by the Coast to the High Country Programme can be viewed in the programme a copy of which will be tabled at the meeting.

The role of the partnership is to co-ordinate the activities of the Coast to the High Country environmental education programme in Canterbury.

Partners in the Coast to the High Country Programme are:

Environment Canterbury
Canterbury Environmental Trust
Christchurch City Council
Christchurch College of Education
Department of Conservation, Canterbury Conservancy
World Wide Fund for Nature

In order to clarify roles and expectations and to formalise the Partnership, a partnership agreement was drawn up in 2001. The agreement provides the framework within which the partners that have established the "Coast to the High Country" programme agree to operate. The agreement also provides a reference point for the rights and responsibilities of each partner in terms of ensuring that the programme delivers on the partners' expectations. The Partnership Agreement is attached. All partners are represented by nominated staff members (working in the field of environmental education) on the management group. At present the CCC representative is the Education and Promotions Co-ordinator on behalf of the Policy Team. Each partner has made significant contributions as direct or in-kind resources.

The focus for the management team for the first two years of the programme has been on developing a programme and trialing the programme. Late in 2001 the focus of the management team shifted to that of marketing the programme. In the developmental years the uptake from schools has been slow. The difficulty has been that historically schools have spent their field trips doing outdoor recreation rather than environmental education. However, successful trips with a couple of classes from Catholic Schools during the trial period has resulted in further interest from other Catholic Schools. This prompted the management team to look at other ways to promote the programme through word of mouth. This is being done this year by offering a limited number of heavily subsidised *Mountains to the Sea* camp experiences to Christchurch schools. With the proviso that each class applying for the offer would be asked to express how they would follow up the trip. This would need to include reporting back the benefits and value of the trip to the teaching staff at their school and what they are prepared to do as a follow up action plan to address an environmental issue in their community.

ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

The process of development of the current programme and courses visualised now and in the future, is co-operative rather than competitive, co-ordinating with other organisations offering environmental education so as to complement rather than copy or double up. This co-operative model will ultimately lead to better use of limited resources, better co-ordination and a greater appreciation for the role of environmental education. Courses offered reflect the vision of Sustainable Christchurch and a sustainable community.

The Coast to the High Country Programme is seen as a complementary extension of the environmental education programme offered by the CCC through LEOTC (Learning Experiences Outside of the Classroom) funds. Co-ordinators for both programmes work closely together, providing support and promotion for each other's programmes. The Coast to the High Country Programme requires more of a commitment from teachers and is seen as the next step for those teachers that see value in the programmes offered by the CCC Programme.

NATURAL + PEOPLE + ECONOMIC STEP ASSESSMENT

#	CONDITION:	Meets condition ✓✓0*	HOW IT HELPS MEET CONDITION:
The Natural Step			
N1	Reduce non-renewable resource use	✓	Through education in sustainable resource use including waste and land.
N2	Eliminate emission of harmful substances	0	
N3	Protect and restore biodiversity and ecosystems	✓✓	Education on both natural and built environment for understanding of need to protect these
N4	People needs met fairly and efficiently	NA	NA - See People Step + Economic Step
The People Step			
P1	Basic needs met	0	
P2	Full potential developed	✓✓	Helping young people to develop skills and have experience in engaging in a life long learning process
P3	Social capital enhanced	✓	Building of relationships and trust among people and organisations
P4	Culture and identity protected	✓	Promotion of a sense of identity and belonging
P5	Governance and participatory democracy strengthened	✓✓	Develops participation and action as individuals, or members of a group, whanau, or iwi, in addressing environmental issues. Community groups working together to provide the resource
The Economic Step			
E1	Effective and efficient use of all resources	0	
E2	Job rich local economy	0	
E3	Financial sustainability	0	

Staff

Recommendation: That the Council adopt the Coast to High Country partnership agreement for environmental education.

Chairperson's

Recommendation: Not seen by Chairperson.