

## 1. EVALUATION OF OUT OF SCHOOL PROGRAMMES

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The purpose of this report is to briefly present the findings and recommendations of the report "Investing in the Next Generation An Evaluation of Out of School Programmes" by Dr Lesley MacGibbon. Key outcomes were presented to the Community and Leisure Committee at a seminar on Tuesday 22 June 2004. The full report is tabled.

### BACKGROUND

As part of its commitment to the support of children and young people, the Christchurch City Council has for many years supported out of school programmes (school holiday programmes and after school programmes) through service delivery, funding support, advice and resourcing.

The majority of the financial support has been from Community Board project funding, with some operational funding provided through the Community and Recreation Unit. Service delivery, advice and other resourcing is provided by staff of the Community and Recreation Unit (Community Recreation Advisers and Community Development Advisers).

### CONTRIBUTION TO THE COUNCIL'S COMMUNITY OUTCOMES

The Council's involvement in the provision of funding support, service delivery, advice and resourcing for children/youth out of school programmes contributes to the following Council outcomes:

- A learning city
- A sustainable natural environment
- A prosperous city
- A city of inclusive and diverse communities
- A city of healthy and active people
- A safe city
- A cultural and fun city

### EVALUATION OF OUT OF SCHOOL PROGRAMMES

Over the past few years social and economic trends have seen a growing demand for these services.

Within the context of increasing demand for Council support, the Community and Leisure Committee requested in November 2002 that staff "prepare an evaluation report on Out of School Programmes on a metropolitan basis".

The objectives of the review were determined to be:

*"To conduct a comprehensive review and evaluation of current Council involvement in Out of School Programmes including:*

- *Details of current provision (number of programmes; attendances; funding sources, etc).*
- *Analysis of gaps in provision.*
- *The efficiency of how Council funding is being utilised (ie money per attendance).*
- *The effectiveness of the support in achieving Council policy goals, including an examination of whether resourcing Out of School Programmes is the best "investment" the Council can make for children's welfare and development.*
- *Evidence of benefits and outcomes to children and their families through participation in Out of School Programmes (literature search; case studies).*
- *Potential impacts of external funding sources on Council's current level of provision."*

Subsequently Dr Lesley MacGibbon was contracted to undertake the evaluation. Dr MacGibbon is a community educator, trainer and researcher with long term experience of the non-governmental organisation sector in New Zealand. She has also worked on a number of social evaluations for the Christchurch City Council.

## RESEARCH METHOD

A variety of methods was used to gather data for this evaluation, including both qualitative and quantitative methods. Research included a review of Council documents; a review of empirically based research articles/documents that addressed the benefits/outcomes of attendance at Out of School Programmes; an analysis of overseas trends in the provision of Out of School Programmes; and an analysis of demographic data from the New Zealand Census 2001 and the New Zealand Deprivation Index. Telephone interviews were carried out along with an intense study of ten Out of School Programmes. Programmes selected were spread over the Community Board areas to give a geographical spread and included a variety of management structures and varying amounts of Christchurch City Council support. Observations of the programmes were undertaken and paid staff members, Board/Committee members and some programmes groups of children were interviewed.

## KEY FINDINGS

Key findings from Dr MacGibbon's evaluation showed that during recent decades there have been dramatic changes to social and economic structures within a variety of countries, including New Zealand. These changes include the increased participation of women in the workforce, the growth of dual-earning families and an increase in the number of solo parents. Therefore, Out of School Programmes are a significant resource for these groups of people.

Without access to quality Out of School Programmes, it was found that children of working parents are at risk physically, emotionally and socially.

The Council has played a crucial role in enabling this development to take place. This support has been particularly important in enabling Out of School Programmes to operate in lower socio economic communities. In more affluent communities, programmes can recover a greater proportion of their costs from parent contributions. In Christchurch, only 9% of Out of School Programmes are run as private businesses with most of these operating within affluent communities.

Although Council financial support is only one source of funding for these groups, in the face of the current situation of lack of central government recognition of this area, Council funding is often the difference between programmes continuing to operate or being forced to compromise on standards of quality or to close down altogether.

Dr MacGibbon's evaluation document pointed out that the Council's support of Out of School Programmes is fragmented and inconsistent across the different Community Board areas and Council Units. Community Recreation Advisers were well informed about holiday programmes in their ward areas. In some wards, Community Development Advisers were well informed and had up to date knowledge of the after-school programmes operating in their areas. In other ward areas, the Community Development Advisers were less involved with programmes in their areas.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Dr MacGibbon identified the following recommendations in her report:

### OVERALL RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Christchurch City Council continues to support Out of School Programmes as an effective way of meeting the policy goals and supporting children and their families.

**Recommendation:** That the Council financially supports Out of School Programmes until such a time as programmes can source adequate ongoing funding from central government.

**Recommendation:** That the Council at a local and metropolitan level advocate with central government for secure central government funding for Out of School Programme provision.

### RECOMMENDATIONS TO IMPROVE CHRISTCHURCH CITY COUNCIL CURRENT PRACTICES

With 'fine tuning', some of the fragmentation currently evident in the Council involvement in this field, can be eliminated. The following recommendations focus on ways that the Council can be more effective in achieving its policy goals of supporting children and families, and contributing to social wellbeing in Christchurch communities.

## STRATEGIC ALLIANCES

- Recommendation:** That the Council develop strategic alliances with the Ministries of Education and Social Development at a local and national level.
- Recommendation:** That the Council advocate with the MSD for adequate ongoing Out of School Programme operational funding.
- Recommendation:** That the Council negotiate with the Ministry of Education for Out of School Programme access to school buildings and facilities.

## PLANNING

- Recommendation:** That the Council develops an integrated city wide approach to strategic planning for Out of School Programme support.
- Recommendation:** That the same criteria for prioritising funding Out of School Programmes be implemented by all Community Boards.
- Recommendation:** That the Council is proactive in its support of programmes in disadvantaged communities. 'Disadvantaged communities' can be identified by the use of school decile ratings and deprivation index ratings.
- Recommendation:** That Council responsibility for the service delivery of after school and holiday programmes is integrated into one Council unit.

## FUNDING PRIORITIES

- Recommendation:** That Council funding for Out of School Programmes be prioritised:
- (a) To supporting new initiatives with 'start-up funding', and ongoing support to programmes operating in disadvantaged communities.
  - (b) That if partial funding is available from central government (eg MSD), ongoing funding from the Council is contingent on the central government funding being assessed.
  - (c) That these criteria be constantly reviewed in relation to other funding provided by central government.

## MONITORING PROGRAMMES FUNDED BY THE COUNCIL

- Recommendation:** That a common approach to monitoring and evaluating programmes financially supported by the Council is implemented across Community Board areas.
- Recommendation:** That the Council in consultation with other key stakeholders (for example the OSCAR Network) develop appropriate measures of success that are linked to the social outcomes of the LTCCP.
- Recommendation:** That the monitoring process does not incur additional expenses on the programmes funded.
- Recommendation:** That the monitoring system is similar to that used by other funders of the programmes.
- Recommendation:** That the Council staff receive appropriate training.

## INFORMATION SYSTEMS

- Recommendation:** That a central database be established to :
- (a) Record information on a city-wide basis for Out of School Programmes operating in Christchurch
  - (b) Record all Council funding assistance received by individual programmes.
  - (c) If possible record what other funding programmes have accessed in the past two years.
- Recommendation:** That the Council staff utilise this information to provide decision making committees with information needed to make informed funding decisions.

## COMMUNITY BOARD FEEDBACK

Before being presented to the Community and Leisure Committee Seminar on 22 June 2004, the key findings of the evaluation were presented to the Community Boards in May 2004.

## SUMMARY

In terms of the question 'Is this the best way Christchurch City Council can support children and families?' the evaluation concludes:

*"It is difficult to say if the funding and support that goes into Out of School Programmes is the best way of achieving the Council's policy goals and the best investment that the Christchurch City Council can make for children's welfare and development. However it is difficult to envisage another way that could be as effective as Out of School Programmes are in achieving these goals.*

*Currently no other Christchurch City Council activities contribute as directly to 'promoting the healthy happy development of children to their full potential, both as children now and for the future well-being of children/tamariki and their families/whanau'.*

*By supporting out of school programmes the Christchurch City Council makes a real difference in many families. Compared to the amount of resources the Christchurch City Council puts into the programmes, the benefit to the community is huge. In 2002/03 44 after school programmes catered for 188,840 attendances and 67 organisations ran holiday programmes that catered for 44,975 attendances."*

### **Committee**

**Recommendation:** That the recommendations of the evaluation report be adopted.