

3. WORLD PEACE BELL

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The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the placement and housing of the World Peace Bell in the Botanic Gardens.

BACKGROUND

At its meeting in December 2002 the Council supported a recommendation that Christchurch endeavour to secure a World Peace Bell for the city. The Council resolved:

1. That the Council support, in principle, the continued negotiations with the World Peace Bell Association to endeavour to secure a Peace Bell for Christchurch.
2. That sponsorship be sought for transportation of the bell.
3. That the Mayor write a letter in support of the continued negotiation with the World Peace Bell Association.
4. That further information be brought back to the Arts, Culture and Heritage Committee on the installation costs, placement and funding provision.

Since 2002 a Christchurch Chapter of the World Peace Bell Association has been legally set up by interested local people and the Chapter is currently in negotiations with the head of the World Peace Bell Association (WPBA) in Japan to secure the bell for the city. An invitation to visit Christchurch to evaluate the city's appropriateness to be the site for New Zealand's Peace Bell will be extended to the principals of the WPBA in the very near future. It will be most important to show them the proposed location of the Bell.

The aims of the Chapter and WPBA are:

- To eliminate the scourge of war which brings untold sorrow and misery to mankind throughout the world, without distinction as to politics, religion, creed, ideology or race.
- To provide great support and assistance for those countries where people are suffering from hunger and have fallen into extreme poverty, and for those countries where there are sufferers affected by a natural calamity.
- To develop world peace by exchanging views with people of all countries and through sharing culture and education.

ABOUT THE BELL

The first World Peace Bell, which was made from coins and medals from United Nations member nations (including New Zealand), was presented to the United Nations headquarters in 1954 and by January 2001 World Peace Bells had been installed in 19 countries and 21 capital cities had selected a site for a bell to be installed.

The proposed Christchurch bell is 1.05 metres in height, 600 millimetres in diameter and weighs 365 kilograms. The housing for the bell will need to be approximately 4–5 metres in height and the foundation approximately 5 metres square.

The bell would be donated to the city by the World Peace Bell Association.

THE SITE

For some time the Council's most preferred location was the proposed Turners and Growers site where a park is to be established. There are a number of reasons this site is no longer the preferred option and these are:

- The residential nature of the surrounding buildings. If the hammer was not removed from the bell it could be rung at any time and may be a nuisance.
- The bell could be a target for vandalism if left unsecured overnight.

- The site may not be significant enough to draw residents and visitors to view the bell.
- The site will not be developed in time for the visit of the WPBA officials to view. The WPBA are anxious to select a site for the NZ bell and a time delay may have a negative influence on the decision.

Anne Greenup, Greenspace Manager, has suggested the possibility of locating the bell in the Botanic Gardens. The bell could provide a focal point for a Japanese garden which is being proposed for an area on the southern side of the gardens. The establishment of a Peace Park was also discussed. It was suggested that a Peace Park be incorporated adjacent to and to the east of the Japanese garden. Dr David Given, Curator Botanic Gardens, has enthusiastically supported the idea. This site would solve all the issues of security and prominence mentioned above in respect to the Turners and Growers site.

The Botanic Gardens site could also be the start or finish point of a Peace Walk which could take people to the many peace icons in the city which are situated in close proximity to the Avon River eg Friendship Corner, Bridge of Remembrance, the proposed Memorial Park, Kate Sheppard Memorial, site of the Hiroshima Day lantern floating ceremony, Fire Fighters Memorial, Elsie Locke Park etc.

THE COSTS

At this stage it is not envisioned that any funding will be required from Council for this project. The bell will be donated by the World Peace Bell Association. The local chapter of the Association will seek sponsorship for the transportation of the bell to Christchurch.

The Linwood–Woolston and two or three other branches of Rotary, have expressed interest in providing the support structure for the bell. They are wishing to be involved in a significant project to celebrate the 100th anniversary of Rotary and they believe this project would be most appropriate.

The Christchurch Chapter of the WPBA will be caretakers of the Bell and its housing once completed, including ongoing costs.

CONCLUSION

The location of the Peace Bell in the Botanic Gardens would provide a focal point for the Japanese Garden, resolve all security and noise issues and be an important element in the proposed Peace Walk.

Committee

Recommendation: That the Christchurch Botanic Gardens be approved as the location for the World Peace Bell and its supporting structure, and that Council staff work with the Christchurch Center of the World Peace Bell Association and the Rotary branches on this project.