

27. 5. 2004

REPORT OF THE MAYOR

1. ANTI-RACISM MARCH

During the past month there has been considerable debate in our city as a result of the anti-racism march "Say no to racism, say yes to harmony".

Councillors will recall that I had initially agreed to march, but then became alarmed when the organisers were promoting an open microphone for "victims of racism" to be able to come forward to talk about their experiences in this city. I attempted to get the organisers to give equal time to new residents of this city who had good experiences here. They were not interested in this and we then had a very public debate as the issues went to and fro.

In the end the organisers changed the march and restricted the speakers and it was a very low-key occasion. The issue of racism was handled in a very up-front way and any potentially damaging extreme statements were unsaid.

The purpose of this report is to address the matters which were raised during this debate and to plan for "what next".

The issues I believe that we have to address are:

1. Developing a multi-cultural Action Plan for the city;
2. Support for the international education sector in the city.

MULTI-CULTURAL ACTION PLAN FOR CHRISTCHURCH

At present our Community Plan is pretty thin on our commitment to a multi-cultural society. Under "Outcomes" it is stated under A City of Inclusive and Diverse Communities that "we recognise our bicultural heritage in our multicultural society" in Volume 2. There is very little data or proposal on how exactly we will put this into action.

The city's cultural diversity provides major social and economic benefits for residents, workers, students and visitors. Cultural diversity is also a key feature in enhancing the city's prosperity and vibrant lifestyle.

It is time for this city to develop a multi-cultural Action Plan to:

- promote social harmony
- optimise the benefits of cultural diversity for the city
- ensure all our services are responsive to our culturally diverse population
- encourage participation in public and civic life by all our city's people

Addressing the matter of racism is a sub-set of this Action Plan, not an end in itself.

I would imagine the process for developing a Multi-Cultural Action Plan would involve:

- (a) Confirming the vehicle we would use to develop the Action Plan would be the Inter Cultural Assembly;
- (b) Agree on what would make up the elements of an Action Plan
- (a) **Inter-Cultural Assembly**

We have the ideal vehicle to work with the various cultural communities in our city in the Inter-Cultural Assembly. This was established by the former Race Relations Conciliator Dr Rajeen Prasad, the Kaihakaheari of Ngai Tahu, Mark Solomon, and myself. Over the past four years many of the communities which make up the diverse structure which our city has become (there are now over 150 different cultures in Christchurch), have slowly worked together to form the Inter Cultural Assembly. This Assembly meets quarterly and at the last meeting several weeks ago there were over 100 people, of many different races, at the meeting.

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I would recommend to this Council that we confirm our commitment to the Inter Cultural Assembly and that we take a more active role with the Assembly to demonstrate our commitment to the promotion of harmony and celebration of diversity in city life. I will offer my services as we develop the Multi-Cultural Action Plan and I think we should have the Chair of the Community and Leisure Committee, Graham Condon, also as an official Council representative at the meetings. I have recommended Graham as many of the issues which the Action Plan will be addressing will involve how we integrate various communities into our city. We will be using basic community development techniques, and this all falls under the Community and Leisure Committee. I will ask their steering group to accept active participation by this Council on the Assembly.

(b) Identifying elements of the Action Plan

I suggest that the strategic intent of the Multi-Cultural Action Plan would be to:

- promote social harmony
- optimise the benefits of cultural diversity for the city
- ensure all our services are responsive to our culturally diverse population
- encourage participation in public and civic life by all our city's people

Elements of the Action Plan could include:

How our community should welcome new residents;

Methods of celebrating our different cultures;

Issues relating to communication between cultures, eg "It's time to talk Programme";

How new cultures engage in our economy, both through investment and finding a job;

How we train up our new leaders in all of the ethnic communities;

How we as a city relate, and trade, with the world, ie our International Relations Action Plan;

How we address matters of race discrimination in Christchurch.

There will be many other issues. To go through this in a measured way will ensure that we come up with something which is "owned" by all sectors and has a chance of significantly changing the perception that this is a "racist" city, which I believe that we are neither better, nor worse, than most others. It is a label which I personally would like to assign to the rubbish bin of history.

Recommendation: That the Christchurch City Council, in association with the Inter Cultural Assembly, facilitate and lead the development of a Multi-Cultural Action Plan for Christchurch and that Mayor Garry Moore and Councillor Graham Condon be the Council representatives on this project and that there be periodic reports to the Community and Leisure Committee on progress.

2. GARDEN FESTIVAL

This city prides itself in being the Garden City. With this in mind we decided that we wanted an "icon" event to celebrate this. The news overnight that we have won a Gold Award at the Chelsea Flower show must give added impetus to us getting our act together to celebrate the four distinct seasons in this city.

Councillors will be aware that the proposed Garden Festival has been hotly debated for the past few months. I became involved with the issue when it hit the media as the various parties disagreed with each other in public. The NZ Garden Festival Trust took little part in this debate. They merely copped the results of this disagreement.

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I called a meeting of the Garden Advisory Group, which advises the Parks, Gardens and Waterways Committee. This group is made up of many eminent people actively involved with gardening matters in the city. With their advice ringing in my ears I called a meeting with the NZ Garden Festival Trust and the Garden Advisory Group. After this meeting the NZ Garden Festival Trust decided to not run the proposed festival in 2004 but to undertake further consultation with the public of Christchurch and any interested parties on what form their event should take.

While all of these meetings were taking place the co-ordinator of Christchurch Garden City Trust, Fred Hollingworth, resigned and this Trust took a hard look at its future direction. A new Chair, Brian Keeley, was elected and a new board was put in place. When the Trust advertised for a new co-ordinator, Councillor Gail Sheriff was appointed. You will also note that in the Strategy and Finance Committee report this month a recommendation has been made to this Council that Councillor Carole Anderton become the Council representative on this Trust. I am very supportive of this happening.

I recently met with both Christchurch Garden City Trust and the Dunkleys, who have run their private sector event for 13 years, and there was a lot of agreement between the two groups on potential future co-operation. I am most hopeful about the opportunities this new arrangement may bring.

I have, since my meeting with the Dunkleys, received an e-mail from Rob Dunkley questioning the purpose of the proposed NZ Garden Festival Trust event. I have also received a letter from Iain Clark of the Horticultural Society, saying that they were not interested in co-operating with the NZ Garden Festival Trust or any of their projects. Their major concern is the timing of the event.

I must state that I met again with the Trustees of the NZ Garden Festival Trust and emphasised that it was fundamental that we did not undermine the Dunkley event as this Council must aim to co-operate with this private sector event.

The Trustees of the NZ Garden Festival Trust has re-looked at their business plan and have consulted widely throughout the community. They will be reporting their findings to a Council seminar next month.

My observations during my attempts to bring all of the various interests involved with the garden sector is that we may have given the Trustees of the NZ Garden Festival Trust an impossible task for them, a group of highly skilled people, to take the results of our research and implement it. No event in Christchurch can succeed without large numbers of volunteers who are enthusiasts. The recent hugely successful City of Christchurch Golf Tournament, which is in a sector which has vast amounts of sponsorship, had over 300 volunteers assisting with the event.

My other concern, for the Trustees of the NZ Garden Festival Trust, is that we set them the goal of developing an "icon" event in the shoulder season to fill our hotels. It seems to me that an event will not immediately attract visitors from outside of Christchurch and that maybe we gave them an impossible target. We cannot expect a quick result for this goal. It could take years to materialise.

Could I remind all Councillors, as you listen to the presentation from a very good group of Trustees who have diligently carried out the brief given to them by this Council through the Festival and Events Committee, that I want you to think about how we can attempt to bring together the various factions within this sector, or whether we have given them an impossible task to start with.

A lot of money has been devoted to this project through the Festivals and Events Committee. We need to ask ourselves whether or not the proposed event will satisfy the original dreams and aspirations set by this Council. We must listen openly to the presentation by the New Zealand Garden Festival Trust and give due attention to their ideas. The Trustees have received a huge amount of critical attention which has been not of their making as they have been diligently carrying out the express desires of the Festivals and Events Committee. I applaud them for their forbearance.

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3. LOTTERY FUNDING

At the end of last year we put a freeze on this Council being able to apply for any gambling funding until after we had completed the Gaming Policy. As this has been completed I would now recommend that we uplift this moratorium and agree that from now on this Council can apply for funding from Gaming Trusts.

4. TRIP TO CHINA

I will be travelling to China with a large contingent from Christchurch between 10 and 24 June. We will be visiting Beijing, Gansu Province (our Sister Province), Wuhan and Shanghai. There is a possibility that I will call in on Malaysia on my way home.

During the journey we will be meeting with various individuals and Government groupings. Matters to be addressed while we are in China include:

- relationships between Wuhan City and this city;
- business links between China and Christchurch;
- celebrations for the 20th anniversary of our sister city relationship;
- tourism between China and NZ;
- educational opportunities for Christchurch in China.

There are many agendas for our trip. I will be accompanied by Dr McTurk and Ian Hay from CCC, as well as representatives from CDC. The President and the Chief Executive from the Canterbury Employers Chamber of Commerce as well as representatives of the six largest IT companies in Christchurch. The Vice Chancellor of the University will head a delegation of 27 people from the education sector in Christchurch. In all there will be about 45 people in the delegation. We will be accompanied by representatives of Investment NZ and the Christchurch Press will be sending a reporter with us.

I believe that this could be the largest delegation Christchurch has ever sent overseas.

5. PROSPEROUS CHRISTCHURCH

The next major step for this project, which was shown to all Councillors last month, will be next Wednesday when we will be launching the concept to a selected group of Christchurch leaders. If any Councillors would be interested in attending this function then please contact me.

CONSIDERED THIS 27TH DAY OF MAY 2004

MAYOR