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CHRISTCHURCH CITY COUNCIL

Draft LTCCP 2009-19

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Submissions close on 16 April 2009

I wish to talk to the main points in my written submission at the hearings to be held between Monday 11 May 2009 and Monday 18 May 2009.

Are you completing this submission:	On behalf of a group or organisation
If you are representing, how many people do you represent?	
Name:	Nadine Bashford
Organisation Name:	Redwood Early Childhood Centre
Organisation Role:	Care and Education Centre
Contact Address:	339 Main Road Redwood
Postcode:	8051
Daytime Phone:	03 3525 722
Evening Phone:	03 388 2327
Email:	recc@xtra.co.nz
Email Address for copy of submission:	recc@xtra.co.nz
Date:	16 April 2009
Your Submission:	<p>Draft Long Term Council Community Plan (LTCCP) 2009-19</p> <p>12th April 2009</p> <p>Submission: Redwood Early Childhood Centre Inc.</p> <p>The Christchurch City Council is planning to review the current lease agreement on its expiry date (June 2010). It has been indicated that there will be assessments undertaken on market rental and rent to be charged accordingly. Unlike the current agreement where the centre receives an operational grant (in recognition of the community service being provided by the tenant. Dead of Lease 2002) to support the rental charged, it is unknown presently what future council grants the centre may be able to access to support the possible proposed market rent.</p> <p>Taking in to account the above situation, we feel gravely concerned about the future operational potential of our community organisation. Given that our current financial operational costs match that of our income which includes the council rent subsidy covering the yearly rent cost.</p> <p>I am writing in support of maintaining the status quo, for the following reasons:</p> <p>1. Voluntary and community organization are also crucial to the success of the Council's goals, carrying out important work within our neighbourhood.</p> <p>Our centre has been established since the early 70's in the Redwood community and offers low cost, quality care and education for this</p>

community. If a rent charge was to occur without a matching grant, this will mean increasing fees and therefore threatening participation of members within our local community. Historically, the centre is a celebrated part of our community, a place where individuals have an identity and this would be a great loss if we were unable to continue to offer this to all our members.

2. Our diversity is seen, heard, valued and celebrated. All people feel a sense of belonging and participate in the community. Everybody is able to participate, particularly those who are most vulnerable.

We would like to explain what a community childcare centre means to our community.

Developing a sense of community is a core part of our philosophy; all individuals from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds are acknowledged, accepted and celebrated, we want them to feel this is their place. Community centres are at the heart of a local neighbourhood, where relationships are nurtured and grow. We make time and have the resources to work with families from disadvantaged situations, and differing backgrounds and needs is important to us. As part of our reciprocal and responsive relationships with the children and their families, we celebrate parents/whanau strengths and invite and encourage these to be part of the programme and our centre, providing opportunities for new learning to be fostered.

Collaboration and consultation is an important feature of a successful community service, our service is represented by a committee of parents who help to provide governance for the centre, through this they are making a valued contribution to society.

In particular at Redwood Early childhood Centre we take a sense of pride in supporting and meeting the needs of wide range of families with varying needs, including those with children with special needs. As a non-profit organization it enables us to offer more flexible sessions, to those families who want give their child the opportunity to participate alongside other children on a regular basis. We offer higher teacher:child ratios, qualified teachers and keep the maximum group sizes at a lower level to support quality and best meet individual needs. We also have good relationships within the wider early childhood community with associations such as Early Start, Group Special Education, Champion Centre.

3. If the council was to assess the properties value on market rental, we would urge the council to take into consideration the renovations, maintenance and improvements which the centre has undertaken since the beginning of the lease agreement. These need to be seen as the centre's assets, as we have funded, fundraised, accessed other grants and worked tirelessly for these improvements to occur.

4. In previous communication, the council has acknowledged their support of early childhood education whilst also recognising the 20 hour free ECE funding scheme from the government. Whilst we acknowledge this scheme and appreciate the benefits it is providing the 3 and 4 year old children in our centre, it is also a high priority of the centre to make our service accessible to all children including those under 3 years of age.

We feel this supports the following statement from Pathways to the future - A 10 year strategic plan for Early Childhood Education. The governments vision is for all New Zealand children to have the opportunity to participate in quality early childhood education, no matter their circumstances. Research shows that having access to quality education in early childhood offers the greatest benefits for the very children who are least likely to be attending (children from low socio-economic backgrounds). Offering our non-profit service with affordable fees enables us to not only put this vision into action for all individuals but it also has a flow on effect in supporting the whanau of the children in many ways; providing accessible childcare means whanau members are able to continue building their

foundation of life long learning through training, work or education.

In support of the values we hold as a community non-profit early childhood centre changing our budget to incorporate a rent charge would have a significant impact on these values which have been discussed throughout this submission.

The council acknowledges that they are the only council in New Zealand who financially support childcare centres. This is something which should be celebrated, not stopped.

Our centre and community value with great appreciation the support that the council has provided us through offering the full grant to cover our rent so far and we ask the council to give great consideration to this submission of keeping status quo.

Yours sincerely

Nadine Bashford, Centre Manager,
Committee, Staff, families of RECC

