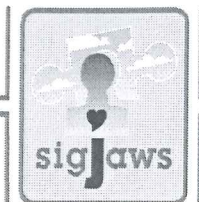


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Subject: Submission for the LTCCP Draft Plan 2009-19

Date: 14 April 2009

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Special Notes: this submission was originally submitted on CD and has been transcribed

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Introduction.

Kia Ora Katoe.

My name is Gary Watts and I am Project Manager for “Sigjaws” (a specialist Health and Disability Consultancy/Advocacy Organisation) in Christchurch. Also am currently a Regional Executive (Committee, i.e. elected 2007-09) Member for the NZ Disabled Persons Assembly, Christchurch and Districts.

The date in the lodging of this submission is the 14th April 2009 and is for assisting the development of the LTCCP for the Christchurch City Council.

Am sincerely grateful to the Council for allowing me to make this submission onto a recorded disc as I believe Mr. James Ryan instructed his staff to transcribe this information into a written version.

Have listed this submission into several individual and separate sections.

Please be patient while I outline relevant and related information, as will proceed as quickly (and also be as brief) as possible.

First of all I would like to formally introduce myself, although I guess most of you within the Council will already know me quite well. This is mainly because have been involved in presenting several submissions to your organisation since 2001. (Hence in also personally assisting the initial or original development of the “Equity and Access Policy for People with Disabilities”)

As in fact I presented in 2001 a rather comprehensive submission (also verbal) to the Council (e.g. Finance Committee) As this was uniquely following a distinctly large and quite intensive consultative process with a significant amount in numbers of People with Disabilities throughout Christchurch, Canterbury.

This previous and important submission (which included a prepared financial statement /prediction) was in fact fully supported by quite a number of former and also highly recognised Councillors. This report detailed an identified costing of essentially required resources for enabling a competent and also highly professional Disability Advisory section within the Council.

This financial report was even evaluated by a qualified and fully experienced Accountant, as this was to fully verify authenticity and accuracy. I believe this document will most likely be still readily available to access within the records of your busy administration department. (It would be ideal to carefully review the outlined information within that publication)

Personal Effects of a Disability

You may perhaps visually view me as a person without any form or type of a Disability. I have had an ongoing and very serious Disability for many years which includes several separate unusual human characteristics which often makes life extremely difficult and also to continually cope with.

This particular Disability is indeed a very complex one and is completely non-visible. It also can possess certain quite unusual (and separate) components that are often easily misunderstood by society.

A debilitating lifestyle factor is sometimes involuntarily created and this unfortunately has influenced immense amounts of personal and social disadvantage. In fact this adverse factor has influenced immense amounts of sheer personal disappointment and utmost dissatisfaction throughout many stages of my life.

This could be best described as an ongoing and complete violation (mainly caused through societal attitudes) in my personal rights as a citizen of this country. I now clearly and distinctly recognize this is a deplorable and disgraceful thing for anybody to experience.

I believe the above mentioned information could possibly have a seriously adverse impact on what any person experiences during their life. For a person whom has a human impairment one also experiences increased amounts in numbers of added and unwanted burdens in life,

Unfortunately, have also been confronted with a considerable amount in numbers of very serious family tragedies. This has enabled in learning additional, further and important knowledge in differing aspects of human life, family, including any decent mature parent's important and associated responsibilities.

Although have continually and also personally experienced the above it appears that because I fortunately possess significant amounts in self determination, including an ongoing desire to fully succeed in life have actually achieved a great deal. In fact a lot more than most people would realise or in fact even recognise.

I am fully qualified in 3 well known professions as also have assisted in the successful commissioning process (also operated) within in some of this country's fully mechanised (ultra modern) systems within 2 of the largest built industrial manufacturing plants. Ironically these 2 organisations are currently the largest exporters of products made or produced in New Zealand.

- Was previously and closely involved with a special and highly complex operative process within the initial production of the NZ Oil and Natural Gas Industry. As was one of the initial operators that assisted the initial development of the extremely difficult Kapuni Oil field...

This field is still reputed as being one of most complex fields in the world, especially when utilised for any form of worthwhile or viable production. Without the ongoing dedication of many determined and highly skilled Kiwi oil workers (like I) this field would never have been considered for any form of commercial production.

- Was also previously comprehensively involved in the initial commissioning process of one of the biggest and very complex Milk Powder plants ever built in the Southern hemisphere. This includes a similar close involvement with a brand new Casein manufacturing plant which is still the largest dairy factory in the world. In the 1970s this particular factory was recognised as being the most modern and also the first fully computerised Dairy Plant to be successfully operating. As this was including with a record throughput of milk into top quality Casein production.
- More recently have fully participated on many boards and committees throughout Christchurch as have initiated and also promoted a lot of different and completely new projects. Have also had a distinctly close and quite unique involvement in assisting many complex sections within several very difficult Deinstitutionalisation processes.
- In 2006 proudly represented New Zealand (also participated in presenting a special paper) at the largest ever International Health Congress on the subject of psychosocial rehabilitation. (Athens, Greece) This huge Congress was formally opened by the President of Greece including a current Minister of Health and Social Welfare.
- Was accordingly selected by the World Health Organisation to become a committee member on the Global Forum for Community Mental Health.

Unfortunately received very little assistance from any Central or Local Government with this very special and uniquely important International Health related initiative/project. Personally this was quite an expensive exercise in promoting several highly successful (including very unique) advances we have made on the subject of Deinstitutionalisation in New Zealand and also right throughout the Canterbury region. (Many are Consumer initiated by myself)

To date have not received any congratulatory notes or even support for being appointed on this very special World Health Organisation, Committee. Several requests for assistance to attend various especially invited overseas meetings have also all been promptly denied even as being the sole Austrasia representative.

Explanation of a Disability

The commonly utilised term disability (for people) is highly misleading and is often used inappropriately. This word merely relates to societal produced effects to people whom solely have a human and personal impairment.

Therefore one needs to accurately recognise that all People with Disabilities only possess a human impairment. As this impairment could be permanent (or sometimes semi permanent) but with an existing medical or health condition.

This term Disability commonly relates to regularly encountered problems (normally produced within society) which can have an adverse effect on a related person's ongoing lifestyle.

I believe the late (Councillor) Graham Condon was a great role model for introducing this before unknown knowledge into the City Council Chambers. As he was certainly well known in the community, especially for clearly portraying several interesting and very unique aspects of this public concern. It is with a great deal of sadness this previous an excellent Councillor is not currently alive (also present within the Council) to read this information... As am fully convinced he would have clearly understood my enclosed comments regarding experienced personal and social disadvantage by many People with Disabilities.

People elected in your position have the power and responsibility to influence improvements as information within the NZ Disability Strategy (2001) fully confirms this knowledge.

(Please carefully examine certain detailed knowledge within the first 2 pages of this Central Government publication. This will assist your general understanding of the above. As this is mainly concerning the introducing of viable systems or effective processes within society that promote independence and equality for all people in the community, including People with Disabilities..)

History of the Disability Revolution.

I believe it is relevant to explain this subject as it directly relates to the development and necessity of competent and differing Advocacy styles within the Disability arena

Mr Peter Beatson (now a retired professor i.e. Massey University) directly refers to this subject by portraying certain very unique and interesting NZ history. As this is within the updated (2004) edition of his excellent publication. NZ Disability Revolution (A Social Model)

Carl Maynard's book also dramatically outlines distinct and complex issues that reveal many compounding problems (many societal produced) throughout his entire life. Carl was born with a very serious congenital deficiency as he has no arms or legs. However in his younger days he was previously a first class champion wrestler within many parts of the USA. As in fact really tough physical sports was a constant and special section of his life. This amazing young man has continually fought all obstacles to achieve in life against all odds.

This excellent book is currently available in the Library and I urge you all too very carefully review the enclosed information.

Issues Concerning People with Disabilities in Christchurch.

I will now outline some of the problems (concerning People with Disabilities) that we have in Christchurch. However it is of genuine concern that a considerable amount in numbers of these issues has been continually raised (within your organisation) which have been virtually ignored. As in fact there is quite a high level of dissatisfaction amongst many people with human and personal impairments throughout this region mainly because of this apparent lack of respect and genuine understanding from the City Council.

One must also accurately consider regarding that within the geographical area of Christchurch, Canterbury we have the highest recorded number of People with Disabilities in New Zealand? Recorded statistics (as a result of a recent census concerning related People with a form or type

Of Disability) within this region indicate a ratio of 1-4 currently exists. (As compared to a National average of 1-5)

Footpaths

- Poor quality in pedestrian surface of many footpaths. (many areas)
- Obstacles constantly blocking throughout of pedestrians...
- Lack of monitoring repeat offenders constantly displaying large signs, notices, tables etc
- Many water Toby boxes, have no covers. Location of the Toby boxes should also be directly close to the residential property boundaries including within the Central City businesses

Car parking facilities

- Not enough available at night times (this seems to be quite a concern with people with disabilities)

Passenger & including public Drop off Facilities

- Quite often when taxis are dropping off people they are told to move on, because they are longer and take up too more space.(often the time for allowing the disembarking of passengers is also longer than for able bodied passengers) (disabled or mobility taxis)
- This includes at all Central and Local Government Offices.

Disabled car parks

- A total lack of disabled car parks within the City. (the number of disabled car parks we have are the lowest in the Country in comparison to other large related cities)
- Urgent review required of all disabled car parks at all Central Government and Local Government Offices. Accessways must be as practical (e.g. close to entrances) and ideal as possible.
- The painted visible signage displayed on the ground surface at many disabled car parks needs urgently upgrading in many locations including at several City Council owned facilities.
- There is a poor monitoring of People continually and indiscriminately using and often abusing these special car parking faculties. (LTA regulations do not permit in completeing this task)
- A serious concern has been expressed (by Many People with Disabilities) regarding the constant and often indiscriminate (and often unlawful) use of wheel clamping being utilised throughout the City.

Transport Systems

- We need to review urgently the transport system, roading etc. There has been a very poor understanding or little consideration given for people with disabilities. (e.g. introduction of new and special Bus lanes) As this is going to severely restrict people with disabilities accessing private properties including being dropped off by public transport, taxis etc.

Urban Transport systems

Would like to see the City Council apply for worthwhile assistance from within Central Government for introducing a competent passenger rail network to and from the city. This is quite a concern for suburbs and associated public roads as I also firmly believe this is long overdue in time. In fact most Christchurch folk have lost all faith and confidence in Environment Canterbury on this topic. As it appears this particular and quite large local Organisation doesn't currently possess the essential skills or required ability to complete an appropriate application for a viable subsidy to even commence this project. This form of National assistance is readily available as this is within the formerly adopted NZ Transport Strategy within Central Government.

Auckland and Wellington Cities are currently receiving substantial assistance (from this fund) for improving their urban passenger rail systems. Canterbury will not be provided any assistance on this topic mainly because no comprehensive application was lodged.

Public Signage

- Current Signage leaves a lot to be desired especially for many people with disabilities. This relates to certain people with poor, limited or partially restricted vision.
- Indicating the exact location of all bus stops, air, rail, ship and taxi services (also urgently required near or adjacent to all rest homes and all hospitals)
- Indicating the close or nearby location of all Public and Local Government provided services.
- Public Car Parks (should indicate near or closely location, also current capacity i.e. if it is perhaps currently or nearly full)
- Location of closest Public Toilets.
- Location of Recreation areas.

Traffic signals

I am referring to the traffic signals particularly in the long or wider streets (e.g. Moorhouse Ave and Bealey Ave)

- We need to look at seriously at adjusting the timing rate on these. This is quite dangerous. (however this is a national certification)
- We need to emphasize that the City Council actually improves their communication with the LTA on this issue.

Street Lighting

Current street lining is totally inadequate as it is often very unsafe in certain residential and also many business locations. (This has been ongoing for several years).

Mobile library service

I would like to Council to seriously consider in upgrading the current mobile library service. As this relates to some important information personally sent quite a while ago. The current library bus service is getting pretty old and urgently needs upgrading. I have already sent in a suggestion as this was to include local businesses, including the local Designline bus manufacturer to enable this to occur.

Communication systems (problems)

I would just like to mention some brief information on this topic...

- Some staff at libraries sometimes are often not fully confident when people with disabilities arrive.
- This is quite a concern in Service Centres and I guess you can go right through all the different services they provide.
- The Call Centre is another perfect example that often they don't understand when a person may talk slow, they may have an intellectual disability; they might have to repeat things. I have heard of reports that people have got quite angry, particularly since the rubbish bins have come out there has been quite a lot of people ringing me up saying "*I am not very happy with the Council because they are not listening*". I believe it is probably because there has been a poor understanding of how to communicate with some people with disabilities.

Poor or inadequate representation

There is a serious concern regarding very poor representation existing within the Council regarding many disability related issues. As in fact The Disability Advisory Group seems to be very poorly managed. Also the current Metropolitan Advisor for Disability Issues doesn't appear to clearly understand or recognise the complete context of many disability related concerns.

Lack of Accountability

Several public Disability related forums have been held with this Advisor present. At various times a person especially appointed by the Council (whom is indirectly employed) has obtained related important knowledge regarding many serious and important Disability related concerns.

Following an appropriate period of time there is often and quite surprisingly no feedback or review, including information offered or sent to any of the actual participants whom formerly voluntarily provided this valuable knowledge.

This has occurred on several consecutive occasions, including a series of previous and comprehensive “Accessible Christchurch” public forums.

Many Disability leaders within Christchurch could quite easily and also very successfully develop the Accessible Christchurch project. I believe this would be much more advantageous than considering involving a local Tertiary institution.

I have actually made a comprehensive outlining of what I think and how we could progress with this, but once again this is never passed on. I guess this is quite a concern because this means we can't actually progress these projects. These are quite innovative ideas and if you can't accept that we can have these and look at them, examine them. You need to understand people with disabilities like me are very understanding about how we can introduce cost effective regimes into pushing forward with these projects.

There are also concerns that a Christchurch City Council owned Company (Canterbury Development Corporation) hugely and previously assisted a disability related software company (“Humanware”) which has now accordingly been sold. The final sum in amounts of money outlaid to this organisation was quite substantial.

There is also an ongoing lack of accountability when funding is presented to various local organisations. I have received several very serious complaints regarding Disability related issues whilst attending the local and Royal & P Show. Apparently this has been ongoing for many years and the Council has ignored them all.

Many new building structures are still not complying with the current and appropriate building codes. As this is even after being fully certified as being ok by several Council employed Building Inspectors.

Increasing amounts of violence to People with Disabilities

There is a complete breakdown of understanding regarding an increase of assaults to people with disabilities right throughout the City. Various representatives appointed on crime respective committees have not even discussed any aspects of this problem.

Lack of recognition (in value) of Disability Advocates within the City

There is an ongoing lack of recognition of outstanding services that many disability advocates provide in Christchurch. It appears these special folk have never been considered important as it is clearly misunderstood the high degree of specialisation involved within this highly skilled profession.

My belief is that over the last 8 years in which I have been consulting with the Council we have seen a lot of excellent changes. Unfortunately have not viewed a great deal of understanding about the true success of these wonderful improvements. Believe this could be as a result of a very poor public relations exercise in outlining several new issues for People with Disabilities.

Council Housing Rentals

Please apply for worthwhile assistance from the New Zealand Housing Strategy (Central Government) when considering improvements or implementing further rises for rental tenants.

Your organisation does a remarkable job in providing worthwhile accommodation for people that are disadvantaged within this City. Christchurch is well known and very highly recognised for providing this form of very valuable assistance.

Conclusion

It has been a real pleasure in forwarding this submission through to the Council.

This is because I have a lot of respect for Councillors, Management team and also various Staff employed within the Council. (Including the many Community Boards)

I am always open to any questions on what I have already mentioned. I am usually readily available as it is also a pleasure to provide this knowledge.

Thanks very much and all the best with this excellent Community Project.

A previous consultative process LTCCP (draft) Plan proved to be very successful.

Would prefer to also lodge a verbal submission within the Council.

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