

# CHRISTCHURCH CITY COUNCIL

## Draft LTCCP 2009-19

### - Received via Web

Submissions close on 16 April 2009

**I do NOT wish to present my submission at the hearing, and ask that this written submission be considered**

**Are you completing this submission:**

On behalf of a group or organisation

**If you are representing, how many people do you represent?**

**Name:**

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The Conference Company Ltd

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**Date:**

16 April 2009

**Your Submission:**

We are writing in support of the proposed expansion of the Convention Centre and the modernisation of the Town Hall.

As professional conference organisers one of our roles is to recommend suitable venues to meet each client's requirements, book their selected venue and liaise with the venue personnel during both the lead-up to each conference and on the day.

It is our experience, and also that of our colleagues in the International Association of Professional Congress Organisers, that one of the top two criteria on which clients select venues is the suitability of a city's infrastructure for their purposes. Infrastructure includes the convention facilities themselves, the proximity of a range of accommodation, venues for social functions of the right size and ambience and a plethora of convention-related services such as audio-visual, transport, entertainment, activities. While all these components are required, crucial to the definition of suitable infrastructure is the convention facilities. Without the right mix of meeting, socialising and exhibition spaces, within the same complex, our clients will choose alternative destinations.

On a number of occasions we have identified conventions which could have been held in Christchurch or been in discussion with an international association about the feasibility of doing so, only to have to remove Christchurch from the list of options on the basis that the Convention Centre and Town Hall cannot accommodate their requirements. Where clients have gone ahead with a large convention in the city knowing Christchurch's limitations, we have had to hold some sessions in surrounding hotels, limit the amount of revenue which can be generated by the exhibition due to a

lack of space and cap the number of tickets available for social functions. Although they always are aware of the limitations when they committed to Christchurch, none of these scenarios are appealing to clients.

We believe that the proposed expansion and modernisation will increase the number and type of conventions which can be held in the city for many reasons, but ones of particular note are:

(a) the ability to host larger exhibitions will attract clients who did not consider the venue in the past due to insufficient space (primarily healthcare and scientific conferences)

(b) the need to hold offsite dinners due to the fact that the Convention Centre Halls are usually used for exhibitions is overcome

(c) break out sessions are becoming more and more popular so the increase in the number of rooms for this purpose increases the attractiveness of the venue

(d) the ability to host more than one convention at a time will make it easier to accommodate our clients' preferred dates (from time to time we have found that international clients only have a small date range available for a convention due to the timing of other conventions/events worldwide in their specialist discipline).

The economic benefits of conventions are well-documented so we will not dwell on this other than to reiterate the important contribution international delegates make as a result of the length of their stay, the amount they spend in various quarters (not just with one supplier) and, if they enjoy their conference experience, the potential for a return visit to New Zealand and a recommendation of New Zealand as a holiday destination. Similarly exhibitors who are satisfied with their experience will then consider holding their own company meetings and events in the city.

The planned changes will complement, rather than compete with, a national convention centre in Auckland. New Zealand's profile as a viable and attractive convention destination is enhanced by quality facilities and the quality service which will be associated with them.

We firmly believe that, as a result of the expansion and modernisation, Christchurch will be in a considerably stronger position to confidently bid for and host conventions for which the city would not otherwise be considered.

We would be pleased to provide specific details in support of the proposal as required.