



## **Our Community Plan Christchurch O-Tautahi 2006**

### **Submission from Science Alive!**

#### ***Science, Technology and the Future of Christchurch***

Thank you for providing us with an opportunity to offer input into the Community Planning process.

#### ***Imagine a Future Without Science and Technology?***

The future of Christchurch and New Zealand is linked to major advances in science and technology. The new draft Community Plan however does not address the important linkages between science and technology developments and the successful long-term growth of the City. We live in a global world that requires global solutions. The Community Plan is a document about the type of City we want for future generations and what message we want to send the rest of the country and the world.

We must consider the best means for advancing the principles of science and technology in all planning and strategic directions. Christchurch should be recognised globally as a *City of Innovation* and incorporate a strong commitment to the quality of life of its citizens through science and technology promotion. This planning document should lead by example.

#### ***Lead by Example***

*Commitments to science and technological innovation should be embedded throughout the Community Plan and be part of the overall philosophical approach of the long-term planning process.*

#### ***Building Design and Innovation***

The City should be a leader in recognising the importance of science innovation and its relationship to a better quality of life. Land could be set aside by the City for the eventual development of a new "smart technology park" which celebrates and utilises advancements in energy conservation, engineering and environmental design. The integration of smart, clean, energy efficient technologies should be incorporated into all areas of future City planning and design. The community and stakeholders should be provided with the necessary incentives to move the City down this path over the next decade.

### *Transportation Planning*

Transportation strategies that attempt to reduce CO2 emissions should be developed as a meaningful contribution to reducing the devastating long-term consequences of global warming. Planned transportation strategies should be focused on moving people quickly and efficiently utilising the safest, sustainable, energy-efficient and environmentally friendly means possible.

The location of the old Christchurch Railway Station, the current home of Science Alive!, would be ideal for providing a new centralised bus service for the citizens of Christchurch. Long-term planning could also allow for the eventual incorporation of a light rail transit network to this centrally-located site to better serve the entire Christchurch community.

### *Communication Technology*

The City should encourage investment in high speed broadband as a part of any new land development. Future industrial and office parks should be designed with the most advanced means of global communication possible, with communications technology part of the community infrastructure. We should be the first city in New Zealand to demonstrate our commitment to long-term economic development by offering easy access for industry and business to wireless high speed broadband.

Any new high speed communications network should be designed to provide emergency services with a faster response capability in dealing with any public crisis.

<p><i>Council should express a planning commitment to achieving the highest standards in science, technology and engineering innovation in the development of any city-owned buildings, transportation and communications infrastructure.</i></p>
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### *Helping our Young People*

Our national security, economic development, health care, the environment, education, energy, and natural resource industries are all dependent on the strength and vitality of science and technology in New Zealand.

More than ever it has become critical for this country to excite students to pursue careers in science, technology and engineering. This will have a direct impact here in Christchurch where there are established knowledge-based industries such as engineering, design, biotechnology and software development that are dependent on a source of highly skilled individuals to produce new innovative products.

Where will our next generation of medical doctors, engineers, computer analysts, architects, biologists, chemists, physicists and mathematicians come from? These career choices are an important part of our long-term social fabric and community

planning process. There has never been a more urgent time for attracting more Christchurch students to careers in these sectors. Many students decide early on in their formal education and consider these careers too difficult.

Science Alive! is currently the only facility in New Zealand that is solely committed to providing hands-on, minds-on science and technology experiences to young people. For well over a decade the Centre has been providing people of all ages with a greater appreciation of the importance of science and technology through informal science experiences. Unfortunately there is no recognition of the importance of this type of informal educational experience in exciting Christchurch students in pursuing careers in science, technology and engineering expressed in the Community Plan.

The City of Christchurch needs to develop a long-term commitment to science and technology innovation, similar to the ongoing commitment of maintaining other cultural and recreational infrastructure (museums, art galleries, parks, rugby and soccer fields, swimming pools and community centres). It should ensure that the citizens of Christchurch have the opportunity to experience some of the best travelling science and technology exhibitions available to residents of other communities in New Zealand and overseas.

Science Alive! relies largely on gate admissions to maintain programme delivery. Cost is a major obstacle for many disadvantaged youth and families with less disposable income to participate in the learning experiences Science Alive! offers the community. Long-term community planning should ensure participation in such lifelong learning experiences is encouraged and equally accessible to all members of the community.

*Every Christchurch resident should have equal opportunity to access the lifelong learning experiences Science Alive! offers. Price should not be a barrier to participating in learning experiences about the importance of science and technology in the community.*

Murray Giera  
Chairperson  
The New Zealand Science and Technology Charitable Trust

Science Alive! The New Zealand Science Centre  
PO Box 40 020  
Christchurch

Contact: Neville Petrie, Deputy Director, Science Alive!, Ph 961 6615