

**Appendix1:**

**Interviews with**

**Local Members of Parliament**

## 1. TRENDS

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### **a). Government services**

Since 1999 there has been a shift in Government Departments policies and practices that is resulting in fewer complaints through the MP's electoral office and a greater fairness from Work & Income, ACC etc.

Over time people have been concerned about Police inability to attend to crime, for example, car crimes and boy racers. Police do not have time to respond to general complaints, for example assault.

There is a perception of crime which generates widespread concerns among a large part of the population. This perception is promoted by the media, and generates fear that limits the daily activities of many residents in Christchurch. Although crime rates are increasing, the levels of fear are increasing exponentially.

### **b). Housing**

In Christchurch higher rents are affecting those in the rental property market. For people at the bottom end of the market, properties are in poor conditions, but people have no other choices (2).

There is a high demand for State rental properties and long waiting lists.

There is a need for emergency accommodation for individuals and families in Christchurch. (2)

Home ownership is becoming more remote for low income people who are caught paying high rent and unable to increase their equity.

Housing for older divorced women is an increasing trend. With the split of the family home, these women do not have sufficient equity to get decent housing.

Older people in the deaf community have particular problems when they need to move into rest homes. Because their means of communicating is signing, they become isolated and unable to communicate in the rest home.

### **c). Work**

Unemployment rates are dropping in Christchurch, but for young people, Maori and Pacific peoples, unemployment is higher than the average. (3)

Over 50's unemployment is an identified trend. Many of these people have been made redundant, and find that their expectations of continuous work for one employer, and values of loyalty to that firm are no longer appropriate in a rapidly changing job market. Although many of the over 50's have general management experience, they do not have the specialist computing or technological skills to find positions with similar remuneration to their former ones.

The Christchurch economy is becoming increasingly service orientated. Christchurch citizens are following worldwide trends of spending a greater proportion of income on services, for example eating out. City planners need to be aware of this trend, and the implications on local businesses.

### **d). Poverty**

Too many people are struggling without access to adequate income, health care, parenting skills, role models, or healthy lifestyles. (2)

For people living on benefits, the move to employment may result in them receiving less money at the end of each week. There is a need for the market to pay a "living wage". Subsidised transport may make some paid work more attractive.

**e). Health**

Long waiting lists for access to operations are resulting in people putting their lives on hold as they wait to find out when (or if) they will get their operations. While waiting, quality of life is low, and people who would be able to work if they had their knee or hip or hernia operations are out of the workforce. (3)

There is concern that people with injuries get support from ACC, whereas people who are similarly debilitated through long-term debilitating illness get no support. These people feel disempowered, and have no one lobbying for them.

Access to Mental health services for children was an issue identified by two MPs. One talked in detail about how some children are falling through the gaps. He has been working with a family who have tried to access the mental health system for their child, only to be told by clinicians that he is not mentally ill, but has a behaviour problem, and as such is outside their area of care. The parents have been left with no support and no knowledge of where to go for appropriate care/treatment for their child. The shortage of respite care for children with mental health problems is also a concern.

**f). Cultural/Ethnic/Immigration**

Christchurch is becoming more multi-racial, and more international in nature with different ethnic groups settling, or attending educational facilities in Christchurch. There is a lack of awareness, and prejudice within the general community about race issues. Although there is “less obvious in-fighting between groups than in Auckland” ethnic communities, Christchurch does not make new comers feel at home here. (5)

Christchurch has a legacy of 150 years of an English class system introduced by the first planned European settlers. This structure exists today, and works to exclude Maori, people of other ethnicities, and working class people.

The Ngai Tahu settlement has had a huge impact on the economy of Christchurch, and it is taking “the traditional movers and shakers of the economy” time to recognise this. (2) There has not been enough information about the treaty claim process, the facts of the grievances, and the reasons for settlements.

In Christchurch the various groups of immigrants have settled in particular suburbs, for example Asian migrants in Avonhead with the various subgroups of Taiwanese, Korean, Chinese. In Avonhead this has resulted in “patterns of cluster buying” in particular suburbs.

#### **g). Education**

The education system in Christchurch is in the process is becoming more diverse with a range of new ‘special character schools’ opening.

#### **h). Community**

Christchurch residents are becoming increasingly aware of issues (other than race), for example gay issues.

Christchurch has a strong sense of community in various neighbourhoods that have strong residents and ratepayers Associations. These groups have become stronger in terms of being involved in planning processes. Some communities have organised services for their older members. (3)

Community organisations are establishing on the basis of perceived need, and often duplicate existing services. They get funded by lottery for the establishment stage and then expect government to “bail them out” when they are no longer funded from that source.

There is the beginning of a trend of central and local government working together with communities, as in the Aranui Renewal Project. The project began with a stock take of everything being delivered in the area, and

prioritised goals for the area in housing, health, education and employment. This is seen as a particularly positive way to work in communities.

### **i). Environment**

Christchurch residents are becoming increasingly aware of environmental issues.(2) They re supporting more effective recycling of bottles, paper, tin etc. They are also lobbying against structures such as cell phone towers that they see as dangerous to their health.

## **2. OUTCOMES**

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Members of Parliament talked about desired outcomes for Christchurch in general ways, for example they wanted:

- A city where everyone has access to meaningful employment for a living wage, access to health services, housing and public services.
- A healthy safe environment where every resident is able to live and achieve full potential in an environment that fosters good relationships between people.
- An Inclusive, safe city that is welcoming to new people. Members of the community feel supported and able to be actively involved.
- Sustainability, where we are working to quadruple bottom lines including social, environmental, cultural and economic.

Key ideas mentioned in outcomes were

- Employment (7)
- Personal safety, including access to healthcare housing and education (6)
- Community safety – a say in what happens in own community (3)
- Inclusion (4)

Most MPs thought that it was the role of Central and Local government to create the climate, and provide the resources to enable people to be fully

engaged in their communities. One MP described Central Government's role in terms of being a safety net:

Central government needs to provide a safety net that allows people to pick themselves up and get off state assistance. We do not want a hammock that allows people to get on, go to sleep, and never get off it.

### **3. PRIORITIES OF OUTCOMES**

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Although two MPs identified paid work as a first priority because it enabled people to access housing, health care etc. Other's stated that we needed to work incrementally across all areas simultaneously to achieve outcomes.

One MP seemed to sum up the comments of many others when he stated:

It is really hard to set priorities for outcomes. I see education, health, housing, and employment as a package that is in many ways interdependent.

### **4. CRITICAL FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO ACHIEVING SUCCESSFUL OUTCOMES**

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There is a need for government agencies to work together to a greater extent (5). The inter-agency report in to the murder of Michael Choy identified four key factors that influenced the lives of the young people concerned: home, peer group, drug and alcohol abuse, and level of engagement with school.

There needs to be good communication across Government Departments, the local authority, and the voluntary sector, and funding decisions at all three levels need to be evidence-based (5). Community organisations need to be supported, but also evaluated as to how they are meeting outcomes, and accountability requirements.

New Zealand has a lack of self-reliance, with heavy reliance on imported goods. If New Zealanders bought NZ made goods, local employment and

economic development would create full employment. A campaign to “Buy Canterbury” would rejuvenate the local economy.

Education was identified as critical to achieving positive outcomes for Christchurch. At present too many young people are “slipping through the net’ and leaving school with no qualifications.

A common goal for the people of Christchurch, and the promotion of an image that is positive, for example “Christchurch, the city that shines”.

## **5. FACTORS MAKING PROJECTS SUCCESSFUL**

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### **a). Processes**

- Identification of real issues as the essential first step
- Consultation
- Deal with causes not just symptoms
- Provide appropriate services or interventions
- Transparency of decision making and accountability processes
- Regular monitoring and evaluation
- Ability to prioritise

### **b). Structures**

- Organisations need to be aware of what others are providing, and not duplicate existing services.
- Organisations need a clear vision
- Good communication across Government, Local Government and community sectors

### **c). People**

- People must be committed to what they are doing “Put the passion back into compassion”.
- Need for good leadership

- Must have the appropriate skills. For example, some schools struggle because the BOTs do not have people with the skills needed.

## **6. BARRIERS OR LIMITATION TO ACHIEVING THE DESIRED OUTCOMES**

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The responses to this question were that an absence of the critical factors in questions 4 & 5 above, were barriers to achieving the desired outcomes. MPs also identified the following barriers:

- Resources are not adequately prioritised
- Duplication of existing services
- The level of violence in the community
- Apathy and lack of awareness in the general community
- Unemployment, as full employment was seen as a key to participation in the community.
- There is a lack of recognition that young people can achieve and make positive contributions to their communities . It is negative incidents that receive media coverage.
- Planning and resource consent processes are stifling enterprise
- The conflict between CCC and ECan
- Lack of vision of Central and Local Government. “It is more important for representatives to stay in power, therefore a unified approach stemming from a vision just doesn’t happen. It is very ad hoc”.

## **7. NEED FOR ADDITIONAL FUNDING/SERVICES**

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Most MPs thought that the pool of money going into service provision was adequate, but that it needed to be better utilised. Suggestions as to how that could be done included:

- Find out where existing resources are going
- Research the needs

- Base projects and programmes on evidence of need
- Cut out duplication
- Develop better partnerships between Central Government, Local Government, private enterprise and the community sector
- Have effective evaluation processes
- Have greater transparency of funding decisions.

## **8. PRIORITIES FOR ADDITIONAL FUNDING**

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Within the context of the comments made in question seven above, MPs identified the following priorities for funding (new or re-prioritised and re-allocated)

- Proactive projects to lower youth unemployment. This could include more resources for careers departments in secondary schools.
- Respite care for carers of people with mental illnesses.
- Mental health services for children and youth.
- Immigration service, to avoid queues of Asian students trying to renew visas.
- Greater support from volunteers and people on management boards
- Creating a “democracy centre” where people could learn about how our system works, how to make submissions and how to become more active participants in a democracy.
- A light rail transport system for Christchurch and Canterbury.
- A swimming pool and fitness centre in the south east part of Christchurch.

## **9. ORGANISATIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE COMMUNITY**

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All MPs interviewed, list and electorate, had offices where they interacted with members of the public, They believed that in addition to representing the electors they made the following contributions to the community:

- An advocacy service with Government Departments.
- A referral service to Departments and community agencies/activities.
- A channel for feedback to Government on effects of legislation and policies.
- Providing a “listening ear”.
- Offering moral and political support to the more vulnerable members of society by attending community events and gaining great media coverage for the organisation or event.
- Promote issues and resolve problems for individuals and groups.

## 10. COLLABORATION

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### **a). Opportunities for increased internal collaboration**

All MPs worked in small offices so it was easy to maintain communication within their offices. Labour MPs work together as a team to ensure that invitation to local events are attended by one of them. All Christchurch MPs meet together periodically, but there was an acknowledgment that they could collaborate to a greater extent and advocate for Christchurch.

### **b). Opportunities for increased collaboration with external agencies**

All MPs stated that through their offices they had good networks with all Government Departments, and the CCC. Many had extensive links with community organisations. MPs found that being part of working parties in Christchurch, for example a monthly race relations breakfast, were useful collaborative projects

### ***MPs interviewed***

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Rod Donald

Gerry Brownlee

Tim Barnett

Marc Alexander

Liane Dalziel

Ron Mark

Ruth Dyson

Alan Hayward – Jim Anderton's electoral agent

