

9. UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE MEETING

General Manager responsible:	General Manager Public Affairs, DDI 941- 8637
Officer responsible:	Marketing Manager
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PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. The purpose of this report is to advise of a request received from the organising committee for the UNESCO World Heritage Meeting for the provision of a Mayoral welcome reception for delegates attending the meeting in Christchurch in June 2007. The request has been made to the Council by the Department of Conservation.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2. The 31st World Heritage Committee meeting will be held in Christchurch from 23 June to 1 July 2007. The meeting is expected to be attended by between 600 and 800 participants and observers from the 21 countries on the Committee and the other 178 state parties to the World Heritage Convention. It is estimated that the event will provide a direct local economic impact of at least \$3 million to the local economy, as well as providing significant international media and stakeholder exposure for the city.
3. The UNESCO World Heritage Convention provides for the protection of landscapes and cultural places of outstanding universal importance, representing the best in the world for the type of heritage. The Convention was adopted by UNESCO in 1972, and to date 178 countries have ratified the treaty. New Zealand joined the Convention in 1984.
4. The Department of Conservation has been charged with the responsibility for conference organisation in New Zealand. The Department has contracted Conference Innovators, a Christchurch company to manage the day to day organisation.
5. A local steering committee, coordinated by the Christchurch City Council, is also meeting. This group is developing a programme of events and exhibitions to run alongside the World Heritage meeting, and to provide opportunities for delegates to experience Christchurch's heritage.
6. In the past the Council has agreed to support conferences of this magnitude with the provision of a civic welcome, usually in the form of a cocktail reception. Examples of previous events include TRENZ, APEC Trade Ministers and APEC SME meetings, and the Physiological Conference in 2001. The rationale for supporting such events is to maintain connections with Government agencies. Discussions have been held with Department of Conservation to determine if it will be possible to seek financial support from them in the provision of the event. They have agreed to meet some of the costs associated with the staging of the event and those costs have been removed from the budget.

UNESCO Steering Committee

7. A steering committee, chaired by Councillor Anna Crighton has been formed to help leverage this opportunity by welcoming delegates, act as a connection to DOC and ensure that delegates and international media experience a vibrant and hospitable stay in Christchurch. Discussion has been held between the steering committee and the Department of Conservation around the provision of a civic welcome to delegates.
8. To date, the Council has contributed no extra funding to this steering committee or event. In order to maximise the exposure of Christchurch's heritage values, Heritage Week (funded through strategy and planning operational budgets) has been moved to this time.

FINANCIAL AND LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

9. The cost of a reception for 650 people at the Art Gallery is estimated at \$51,327 nett. There is no budget provision for this event. However, \$30,000 has been identified through savings across the year within the Civic Receptions budget which could be set aside for the event.

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Council select Option 1 and allocate \$30,000 to the UNESCO Conference Civic Welcome.

OPTIONS

10. Option 1: Allocate \$30,000 of savings to the UNESCO Conference Civic Welcome event. This option will require that the Conference Organisers reduce the number of invited delegates to this particular event. This does pose some problems as it has been identified in the programme that there will be a Welcome Reception for all delegates, so an expectation has been set.
11. Option 2: Allocate \$30,000 of savings to the UNESCO Conference Civic Welcome event and acknowledge there will be an unbudgeted over-expenditure of \$21,327 in the Civic Receptions line item. The final number of delegate registrations will determine the final cost of the event. While the registrations are expected to be 650 it is quite feasible this target will not be achieved and hence the variable costs of food and beverage will be reduced.
12. Option 3: Not support the provision of a Civic Welcome event for the UNESCO Conference as there is no specific budget for the event. This does pose a problem in that the programme sent to registered delegates includes a Civic Welcome hosted by the Christchurch City Council.