

# **IDENTIFYING INVERCARGILL'S POINT OF DIFFERENCE**

Prepared for Invercargill City Council

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1 June 2010

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## **Introduction**

Congratulations - Your city looks to have an exciting future in front of it judging by the passion and insights of the people we met on our visits. We were truly impressed by how many people wanted to get involved and give us their thoughts – both positive and negative. Some great themes were identified and your city does have some wonderful opportunities facing it. There was some wonderful realism and pragmatism in our discussions because it was clear that people understood that Invercargill can't be what it's not.

However Invercargill does have a major issue. People are saying that that your population is going to decline and age significantly over the next twenty years. In fact Statistics New Zealand forecasts 3,100 less people will live in Invercargill by 2031. We know this isn't a given and you proved in the late 1990's that you can actually change these trends. But a reduction in population is still a very real possibility and can probably only be minimised or reversed by getting more New Zealanders to connect with the messages that Invercargill is promoting.

You need to understand the impact of this change. In New Zealand any population increase or decline directly affects the quality of education, health and policing service provided as most central government funding is population based. When people and businesses move out of a city, they leave it with fewer economic and social resources, a situation that can lead to a cycle of disinvestment and decline. The loss of people and businesses and the associated decline in property values diminishes a city's rating base. This limits the ability of local government to maintain existing programmes, infrastructure and services. It can also diminish the pride that remaining residents feel for the community.

That's why, even though some people will argue that they like everything the way it is, doing nothing means that the city is likely to change anyway – but in our view for the worse. In order to keep facilities and services at the same level as they are today means that Invercargill must have at least the same number of people as currently.

Positive change was the simple purpose of our visits and work. We were tasked with identifying ways to make your Invercargill a more competitive city in New Zealand. This task is not easy as competition between cities for residents, businesses, visitors and investment is ever-increasing. Cities worldwide now recognise that people moving into a city directly affects the level and quality of services that a city can provide.

People and businesses move for a variety of reasons. Mobility can be driven by a continuing search for better schools, better job opportunities, greater affordability, a quality workforce and/or a better quality of life. From an outsider's point of view, Invercargill is actually blessed with a lot of these key drivers that influence where people want to live. However perceptions are often more important than reality in a city's success, and Invercargill does appear to suffer from negative perceptions in other parts of New Zealand which are not based on reality.

You need to identify and develop a point of difference for Invercargill that increasingly generates positive national media attention and differentiates yourself from the offerings of other New Zealand cities and towns. This attention will position Invercargill in front of more who will then start thinking about Invercargill as a potential option. However to do this will require innovative thinking, bold action and buy-in by everyone to an agreed vision.

Buy-in will be key to the success of the project as securing a mandate and a common vision from all parts of the community – city council, community groups, business sector and ratepayers – is vital as no matter how exciting the vision it will never be delivered on without ownership by all of these groups.

## **Process**

The process followed for determining Invercargill's point of difference was based on Mark Blumsky's philosophy and experiences in leading Wellington and helping other New Zealand towns.

The process involved:

- An initial visit to meet key stakeholders and identify their vision for Invercargill.
- Desk research on potential key competitive advantages and opportunities for Invercargill.
- Undertaking workshops and consultation with a wide range of Invercargill stakeholders. This included the general public, tourism operators, youth council and media as well as groups such as Invercargill City Council, Vibrant Invercargill, Bluff Community Board, Venture Southland, Invercargill Licensing Trust, Community Trust of Southland, Southland Inter-Agency Forum and Te Ao Marama.
- Analysis of feedback and determination of potential points of difference.
- Recommendation on a point of difference and brainstorming and research on potential actions and initiatives.

This has now culminated in this report and a feedback process back to key stakeholders.

## **Importance of Point of Difference**

On the visits to Invercargill Mark Blumsky told the story of how meeting a plumber led him to recognise the importance and power of demonstrating a point of difference. In what were tough economic times in the late 1980s Mark met a plumber whose business was booming. Mark saw that he had attitude, a clear vision for the business and most importantly was doing something that no other plumber was doing. He did this by having his staff turn up at the door of every job with a bag of tools but then surprisingly a vacuum cleaner and a pair of slippers to put on. This instantly sent his customers a simple, strong and welcome message that he cared about how he was going to leave their house. This clear point of difference was why people remembered the plumber and his company. The full story about what the plumber taught the Mayor is available in Mark's book "Slippers" which is available at all good bookstores.

Mark took this philosophy of a vision, point of difference and an attitude and applied it firstly to his new business and then later to his mayoralty of Wellington. His vision was to change Wellington from a grey dull city to a vibrant arts and sports capital. People's perception of Wellington today is nothing like it was fifteen year ago and that has been beneficial in terms of people and businesses wanting to move there and tourists wanting to visit. Producing a positive image is essential for cities desiring to promote themselves as a destination for people to live, work, play and visit.

However this point of difference needs to be based on fact and creating an expectation that you can meet. You can't be what you are not. Experience has shown with city and country branding that if you attempt to manufacture the brand, instead of creating an environment and infrastructure that will promote the vision, you are almost certain to fail. You need to back up any brand with tangible physical proof and support.

In order to create this point of difference you need to understand what people like and dislike about your city. That enables you to do as the Saatchi & Saatchi ad suggested and "accentuate the positive, eliminate the negative". While you may not be able to address all the negatives you need to understand what they are. Cities that are successful ensure the positives are more prominently perceived will benefit by the target audience "latching on to the affirmative".

## **What Residents Think About Invercargill**

In order to successfully create a point of difference for Invercargill it is important to understand perceptions of what is good and bad about the city. Many researchers would say that you need to understand what people outside of Invercargill think and their perceptions. However our view is that far more important are the ambassadors for Invercargill. These are your residents and their views, and the way that they sell the city, needs to align with any potential point of difference.

For this reason attendees at workshops were asked what they liked about Invercargill. The entire list is included in the appendices with the most common ones listed below.

### What People Like Most About Invercargill

1. Affordable Housing
2. Great sports facilities
3. Easy commuting
4. Strong sense of community
5. Proximity to the Great Outdoors
6. Invercargill Licensing Trust and Community Trust of Southland
7. Family friendly
8. Pace of life
9. Ranfurly Shield
10. Safe city
11. Climate
12. Wide range of recreational activities

These are ordered, based on the frequency of responses, with affordable housing being the most common perceived asset for Invercargill. While some of these answers are very unique to Invercargill (i.e. Ranfurly Shield and the Community Funders) they align well with work that has been completed internationally on what a city fundamentally needs if it is to successfully brand itself or create a point of difference.

Our research generally identifies ingredients that make up a successful city include:

- Offering attractive employment.
- Being affordable in relation to wages.
- Providing good and affordable housing.
- Having reasonable public transportation.
- Having good schools.
- Providing good recreational/cultural attractions.
- Having a reasonable climate.

This would indicate that most of the fundamentals are in place to successfully create a point of difference for Invercargill. At the same time it is important to understand what residents perceive as the negative aspects of Invercargill so these can be understood, addressed and minimised. Once again the entire list is included in the appendices.

#### What People Dislike Most About Invercargill

1. Drivers – boy racers, bad drivers
2. Expensive airfares – tyranny of distance
3. Perceptions by people outside of Invercargill
4. Drinking culture
5. No plan or vision
6. CBD – disjointed, rundown, no shelter and lacks parking
7. Weather
8. Invercargill Licensing Trust
9. Conservative in self-promotion
10. Limited activities for youth/teenagers
11. Lack of vibrancy
12. No shopping mall

What should be viewed positively is that some of the things people disliked the most fall within urban design planning processes for Invercargill City Council which gives the city the ability to address those issues through its existing mandate and responsibilities. Urban design is a key part of council responsibility that is concerned with the design of places, spaces, networks and buildings, and with the way people use them. Addressing issues such as the way that the character and heritage of the CBD is enhanced or the way that drivers use the roading network within the city are issues that council continually considers.

Probably our biggest concern would be the perception by many residents that there is no plan or vision for the City. This has to be addressed as if we are to move forward with any point of difference residents will need to understand what the city is trying to achieve and feel proud to be brand ambassadors. When these residents are proud and speak vocally then potential residents, visitors and businesses are encouraged to find out why. This was one of the key reasons for the successful transition of Wellington.

#### **Potential Points of Difference**

Identifying a strong point of difference from other New Zealand cities will help create a positive image for Invercargill. Without this you will be less in control of the perceptions that people form. It is important to repeat again that Invercargill appears to suffer from negative perceptions that are not based on reality and people with no knowledge of your city then seem to reinforce or restate this. If left unbranded, people will develop their own image for your city whether good or bad.

We have found that by thinking through and identifying strengths and weaknesses of a city or a region then people get into a frame of mind where they can start identifying potential points of differences. A huge number of points of difference were suggested through the consultation including:

- Heritage City – beautiful buildings and Edwardian streetscapes.
- Three degrees of separation.
- Gourmet District.
- One of top 5 cultural cities in New Zealand.

- Place to start life again.
- Visiting Family and Friends.
- Oyster Capital.
- Accelerated learning centre – education that is affordable, accessible and high achieving.
- True free schooling – no school fees and no school uniforms.
- Hi-tech Invercargill – fibre optic link from Australasia, extend ILT/CTOS school funding to every student, free wireless, free SIT IT courses for all.
- Healthy lifestyle – warm homes, recreational parks, cycle only streets, extend cycle lanes.
- Science capital of New Zealand.
- Cycle City – wide streets, good facilities, safety, velodrome.
- Farming City – known for rural life, land is always hydrated, grass is always green, plenty of livestock and jobs are always available.
- Good parts of old fashioned values.
- Most liveable city – free parking, better public transport, increased opportunities, cycle stands, more bins, better entrance to city.
- Retail centre.
- Heartland New Zealand – where dreams come true.
- Best place for international students.
- Events city – particularly building off unique local Southland things such as Oysters and Burt Munro.
- Come and taste our lifestyle and use your time to do the things you love

However there were four points of difference that clearly stood out and were raised in most of our workshops.

### 1. Sporting City

There is no doubt that you are extremely proud of your city and region's accomplishments in terms of sporting prowess and the quality of your facilities. Community funders such as Invercargill Licensing Trust, Community Trust of Southland and the Invercargill City Council received significant praise for their support in this area.

Attendees commonly reinforced that not only are the facilities, such as the Velodrome, world-class but that Invercargill people have shown that they have the ability to organise and run events at an international level. Many people believed that the events did not need to be the 'A' events, which often require significant money to attract, but could be the second tier events such as the recent University Games or events (such as netball, tennis, hockey and adventure sports) that align well with Southland and facilities. Where distance was an issue, in relation to increased airfare costs, it was even proposed that Invercargill could buy or charter a plane for these sporting events to increase the financial attractiveness of the city as host.

Ideas went past just attracting sport events and included Invercargill being a base for sporting excellence through sporting academies and developing further sporting facilities, particularly ones that are affected by the weather. Developing a covered athletics track was mentioned, as were further developing Sandy Point as a training centre, Teretonga Park for motor sport and creating iconic events such as 'Swim to Stewart Island'.

People believed that Invercargill could create a city of unrivalled facilities and infrastructure and that this could create economic activity through events, visiting sports teams and attracting athletes in particular sports to base themselves there.

### 2. Zero Fees

The zero fees policy from Southland Institute of Technology was able to generate significant national attention for Invercargill and still seems to have some brand leverage today. The problem for Invercargill is that other tertiary institutions have now copied this initiative and are marketing themselves in the same way. This is diluting this market position for the city and region.

There is no doubt that the zero fees policy has been extremely successful for Southland Institute of Technology and the wider region with reports estimating that it resulted in an economic impact of about \$25 million per annum in the early days.

The success of this scheme meant that people wanted to take it a step further and suggested that the zero fees branding could be widened so that rather than be SIT's positioning it could also be Invercargill – the city of zero fees. This would include such things as zero fees for facilities such as the library, pools, parking, consents and museum. There were even suggestions that free rates could be part of the zero fees.

This is a point of difference that would be hard for other cities to replicate due to the cost involved and the fact that few regions in New Zealand have access to the high level of community funding that Invercargill does. This point of difference would require significant funding as at present just over \$15 million of Invercargill City Council's revenue comes from sales and services. From our initial estimations it is unclear what level would need to be found but no fees charged in libraries would reduce revenue by \$309k, for pools by \$1,186k, for parking by \$713k and in regards to building consents by \$1,846k. The level of actual investment required would need to be calculated further before any full evaluation of this idea was progressed.

From a marketing perspective the idea would likely need to be expanded past just fees charged by the council and it was suggested that free childcare fees, free school fees and free school uniforms

### 3. Nature/Eco City

A range of points of difference were suggested across the broad theme of nature and wilderness. These included being an eco-destination, wild at heart, a spa town, a green city, big skies, gateways to the outdoors and closest city to the Southern Magnetic Pole.

In most of these aspects the point of difference was around the major audience being visitors. Discussion generally revolved around the wide range of natural beauty and wilderness within a short distance from Invercargill. This included the national parks, Stewart Island, Fiordland and right through to Queenstown. The problem with the proposed positioning was that it was often referred to Invercargill being the gateway to this beauty which implies that people simply pass through. This means that Invercargill is less likely to get significant economic activity from these tourists.

There were elements of the positioning that were viewed as having economic development potential, with a suggestion of being the space capital of New Zealand and of expanding initiatives around environmentally friendly industries. This positioning has attracted increased attention by a range of cities in recent years and would appear difficult to achieve and then maintain.

### 4. Family/Child Friendly

This and 'Sporting City' were easily the most commonly suggested points of difference. In regards to being family/child friendly, people talked about a wide range of advantages that they perceived Invercargill had. These included strong family values, a balanced lifestyle, no traffic congestion, quality education, excellent sport opportunities, safe community, affordable housing, larger size of sections and access to the outdoors.

It was commonly believed that Invercargill was a great place to raise a family. As one person said "it takes a village to raise a child", and as many other people stated families support each other in Invercargill.

The time factor was also commonly stated as an advantage when raising children in Invercargill. For many people no traffic congestion meant that they could pop home for lunch or be home in ten minutes after work. This meant that they had more time to spend with their children, particularly with the long daylight hours in summer. This time factor could be taken further than just families, as it also enabled people to participate in other recreational opportunities and community projects. Ideas around this positioning were plentiful and are included in the following section.

This was the point of difference that we believed linked most with what people liked and disliked about Invercargill and was a space that we believed you could own. While 'Sporting City' was also regularly suggested we believe that this can still fit within the overall child and family friendly brand and that will generate greater economic activity.

### **Recommended Point of Difference – Child Friendly**

For the past decade or two, a large number of cities focused on the young professional and the creative class believing that these were the ideal demographic for achieving economic growth. However American cities, where this trend began, are now changing as research has recognised that the strongest job growth and economic activity is in those places with the largest net immigration of young, educated families ranging from their mid 20s to mid 40s.

Families are the most likely population group to reinvest in their community through time, money, and other forms of civic engagement. It is now being recognised that families provide the most reliable foundation for successful economies and are important to growth, sustainability, and diversity.

It is our belief, based on statistics viewed, that attracting families is even more important for Invercargill. It became apparent to this in completing this work that attracting more visitors to Invercargill was not the positioning that needed to be taken and attracting residents had to be the priority focus.

When looking at the population estimates forecast by Statistics New Zealand, Invercargill is projected to have an aging population. The key worry about this data is that the population groups that provide the labour market (15-64) are projected to decline significantly from 33,700 people at the last census to 27,700 by 2031. This is also reflected in a drop of children aged 14 and under from 10,500 to 8,200. While New Zealand will experience an aging population over the same period Invercargill's median age is forecasted to go from 1.7 years higher than the national median in 2006 to 3.4 years higher by 2031. This means that Invercargill's population is aging quicker than the New Zealand median.

Territorial authority area	Year	Population <sup>(2)</sup> by age group (years), at 30 June					Median age (years) at 30 June
		0-14	15-39	40-64	65+	Total	
Invercargill city	2006	10,500	17,100	16,600	7,500	51,600	37.5
	2011	10,200	16,900	17,100	8,200	52,400	38.5
	2016	10,100	16,500	16,600	9,300	52,400	39.4
	2021	9,900	15,600	15,600	10,400	51,500	40.4
	2026	9,100	14,800	14,700	11,600	50,200	41.9
	2031	8,200	13,700	14,000	12,600	48,500	43.6

Statistics New Zealand Subnational Population Estimates: At 30 June 2009

This reduction in labour force availability and increase in retired workers will have a significantly negative economic effect on Invercargill creating an increased demand for health services and also result in a declining rating base for the City. Change will need to occur with initiatives being put in place to drive this change. These initiatives will have financial implications which some in the community can be expected to vocally oppose. Doing nothing is however not a realistic option for Invercargill.

It can be expected that the change in America to focussing on families and children will be a trend that other countries and cities experience, but is one that to date no New Zealand city owns to any degree. Family and child friendly cities are communities where families enjoy housing that is affordable, good job opportunities, adequate child care, parks to play in, quality schools, and safe neighbourhoods.

Wanganui is the only place in New Zealand that has tried to take the mantle of being family friendly. While they appear to have created little national noise or profile based on this positioning they have ensured that this strategic position was prominently referred to in the development of their recent 10 year plan. They have also committed to ensuring that all policies and plans will be measured against how they contribute to the council's mission statement – *“To make Wanganui an attractive place for families and to ensure a quality of life for all”*.

Initially our focus was on Invercargill owning the ‘family friendly’ space however in conducting desk research and analysing overseas cities positioning it is our recommendation that Invercargill would generate better profile and understanding from being ‘child friendly’ or simply ‘the best place to raise your child’. Our belief, based on our research, is that increasingly other cities will try to promote their family friendliness and that being ‘child friendly’ will allow additional time for Invercargill to reinforce this brand and make it extremely difficult for other cities to steal that position.

Choosing to develop a point of difference as being ‘child friendly’ does not mean that other groups in your community are not supported. A presentation made, by researchers at Cornell University, to the American Planning Association highlighted that the needs of families are similar to the needs of the elderly with regards to the physical environment. This means that infrastructure development that makes Invercargill more children friendly can also make the city more elderly friendly too.

An example of this is the extremely popular Splash Palace complex. Elderly and all members of a family are able to use this facility due to features such as the sloping beach in the wave pool. A traditional swimming complex that only features lanes would have provided added difficulties or challenges for the elderly.



## **What being Child Friendly Means**

We started by broadly basing what would make Invercargill child friendly on the Unicef Child Friendly Cities project which defines that it is a city committed to fulfilling children's rights, including their rights to:

- Influence decisions about their city.
- Express their opinion on the city they want.
- Participate in family, community and social life.
- Receive basic services such as health care and education.
- Drink safe water and have access to proper sanitation.
- Be protected from exploitation, violence and abuse.
- Walk safely in the streets on their own.
- Meet friends and play.
- Have green spaces for plants and animals.
- Live in an unpolluted environment.
- Participate in cultural and social events.
- Be an equal citizen of their city with access to every service, regardless of ethnic origin, religion, income, gender or disability.

While initiatives put in place need to ensure that these rights are achieved, it must be remembered that our rationale for being child friendly is to enable Invercargill to retain and attract families because it will be the best place to raise children.

Invercargill will need to provide the basic requirements that a family will have in choosing where to live which include:

- Economic and employment opportunities.
- Affordability in relation to wages.
- Good and affordable housing.
- A safe community.
- Community networks.
- Good health care services.
- Quality educational opportunities.
- Access to recreational and cultural opportunities.

Where Invercargill can't tick these boxes then strategies and initiatives need to be put in place to improve or address the impacts. These should be included under the child friendly initiatives.

## **Child Friendly Initiatives**

Many cities think they have devised a point of difference by creating a brand and maybe a logo. However branding a city is about far more than a logo – it is about tangible and intangible details. For Wellington having a council funded and managed private security force walking the streets at night made a significant difference to people's perception of how safe the city felt. When Wellingtonians became proud of the city then friends and family in other parts of the country were encouraged to find out what the fuss was all about.

A brand or logo is great but you need to actively demonstrate it. Just saying that you are child friendly or the best place to raise a child will not be enough. There is a need to be bold and generate national media attention either through clever initiatives or undertake initiatives on a scale that attracts significant national interest.

We have put together a list of possible ideas. Some are big and bold ideas, some are on the edge and outrageous, some are fun and cute, and some add real value in putting substance behind the point of difference. We have come up with list through brainstorming sessions, from ideas suggested when we visited Invercargill and from desk research of initiatives undertaken in other child and family cities around the world.

This is a menu that will have ideas on this that you like and others that you don't. It is intended to get you thinking about the possibilities and potential of the child friendly point of difference. Just like a menu you can chose from it as you wish and it would be suggested that the list is challenged by the public and added to through some form of consultation.

The following list of ideas, which are in no particular order, provides a starting point.

### 1. Make 2011 the Year of the Child in Invercargill

A first step would be to demonstrate the importance that Invercargill places on being child friendly. Provide special events and discounts over the year that are targeted at the children. Ideas might include discounts at council-owned facilities or value add opportunities such as securing a deal with Air NZ for half price deals under 12 years old.

### 2. Establish a Council Committee for Children and Family

For council and Invercargill to be serious about this point of difference then there is a need to ensure that all future policies and plans are measured against whether they make the city a better place for children and families. All council reports should mention linkages or relevance to the Child Friendly strategy. Establishing a small advisory committee is a mechanism for council to ensure that it receives feedback and guidance on policies, infrastructure developments and initiatives that impact on families and children.

### 3. Free School Uniforms

School uniforms are a major expense for all parents and an initiative that would be likely to get media attention based on Campbell Live's and other mainstream media discussion of the issue earlier this year. Could be a worthwhile initiative for Invercargill Licensing Trust to lead as it would be expected to create significant community goodwill. The cost of the initiative could be mitigated, without limiting the marketing effect, by only providing free school uniforms for the first year of high school.

### 4. Change the Name of the City to Invergiggle

For one week each year change the name of Invercargill to Invergiggle – the City where kids are always laughing. During this week run a Children's Comedy Festival consisting of comedians that visit the schools, public shows and screening funny kids movies. This could be aligned to the Kidzone festival. The simple act of changing the name of the city is one that we instigated in Wellington around the Lord of the Rings activities and, while costing nothing, actually achieved the greatest level of national and international media profile for the city.

### 5. Special Welcome Gate at Airport for Children

Make flying into Invercargill a unique experience for children and design a special welcome gate for children to walk through when they arrive. This could even be a tunnel to walk through, or something that relates to Invercargill, but the key is to make it interesting and small so that only children can use it and not adults. That way it makes it special for the children.

### 6. The Great Lemonade and Toffee Apple Challenge Week

Teach kids entrepreneurship through the power and simplicity of running a lemonade or toffee apple stall in either their neighbourhood or a dedicated location. Prizes could be given out for the best tasting lemonade and toffee apples (judged by a famous local chef or celebrity), the best designed stall and the best sales pitch.

### 7. International Festival for Children

Build on the success of Kidzone, which is a fantastic initiative, and position it as a cornerstone event that makes Invercargill 'the best place to raise your child'. Kidzone should reposition itself as the 'International Festival for Children' thereby elevating its prestige and making it harder to supplant for other regions and cities. In doing this a focus would need to be placed on increased funding so that the quality of the programme can be enhanced and the programme expanded over a longer period.

### 8. Instigate a Take Your Child to Work Day

The idea behind this concept is to expose children to what their parents do at work each day and starts them thinking about career possibilities for themselves. This day can help a child discover a link between what they do now in school and the importance of their education. In many workplaces it might involve a guided tour or set activities. For many children the bond with the parent will be strengthened by sharing in the daily commute and lunch break. While younger children may appear to be interested in nothing more than photocopying their hand, they too can benefit from the experience by being able to visualise where mum or dad are when they are not with them and to understand what "going to work" actually means.

### 9. Mayor for the Day

One day every year a child is voted to be the Mayor for the day. This might be through a public election process through the media, through submitting 100 words about why they love Invercargill or might simply be drawn out of a hat. There would need to be some real events for the child to participate in. The day could include the Mayor picking up the child at school in the Mayoral car and chauffeuring them back to the mayoral chambers. The child could wear the Mayoral chains and some child-size Mayoral robes could be provided.

#### 10. Develop New Zealand's most Child Friendly CBD

Identify infrastructure, services and facilities to make Invercargill's CBD the most child friendly in New Zealand. Ideas may include a parents room in the CBD, dedicated parking (similar to disabled parking) for parents with strollers, buggy parks on the sidewalk or free to hire kiddy cruisers like what are commonly available in shopping malls. The reason for instigating a child friendly CBD is that the more activities and attraction that are CBD based the more economic activity for the retailers and vibrancy within the inner city.

#### 11. Birthday of the Month

Every month one child with a birthday is randomly selected and provided something special for their birthday. This could include a birthday card from the Mayor, a giant birthday cake, a clown for their party or a blow-up castle for the day. An option would even be to give the child a wish list from which they can pick what they would most like. Promotion and management of this concept could be a great initiative for the media.

#### 12. Play Equipment Rather Than Sculptures

Cities worldwide are increasingly placing art in the streets through sculptures, statues and permanent displays. A point of difference for Invercargill could be either making these art forms in the CBD based around children, like Wellington has based theirs around wind, or even better create climbable, swingable, moveable pieces of art that double and encourage children to interact and play on them.

#### 13. Build New Zealand's Biggest Indoor/Outdoor Playground

Every city has a number of playgrounds usually consisting of a few swings, slides and jungle bars. We think that Invercargill could do much better than this and build, as close as practical to the CBD, the biggest playground in New Zealand. This is not a theme park but is an opportunity to push people's perception of what a playground can be. This would create a focal point for families within the community to gather and interact. We would envisaged it being bigger than a football field with some parts enclosed or sheltered from the weather to allow for use all year round.

#### 14. Become Friendly to Children with Special Requirements

For many families support groups are an important reason that they choose to live in a city. When families have a child with special requirements (e.g. Aspergers, Autism, OCD) the need for strong community support will often be even greater. Invercargill could identify areas where it believes that it could develop an extraordinary support network and/or facilities to assist those families and children, and use this as a means of attracting new families.

#### 15. Children's Working Farm

Invercargill and Southland are known for being part a key agricultural producer for the country and putting a Children's working farm into a large inner city park or Sandy Point may be a way to reinforce this. This could even be located next to the large playground that is recommended and include other facilities such as a miniature rail track running around it. This would provide another outdoor, healthy entertainment option for city-based children and may interest them in future employment opportunities within that sector.

#### 16. Hold the World's Largest Lolly Scramble

Everyone remembers the joy of a lolly scramble when you were a kid. Go for some media attention by running the world's largest lolly scramble and maybe align it within a festival or event.

#### 17. Build an Ice Skating Rink in the Inner City

An ice skating rink was commonly mentioned on our visit as a piece of recreational infrastructure that was needed. This would seem to fit with the reputation for sporting facilities that the city is developing and be a facility that would be able to be used all year round and could be used to attract national sporting events. This would also provide a meeting (hang-out) place for Invercargill youth which is the key reason why many of them passionately wanted a shopping mall developed in Invercargill. This could be developed in partnership between the Council and a private operator.

#### 18. Create the New Zealand Kite Festival

While kite festivals have taken place in other parts of New Zealand an event like this done well has the potential to generate media attention and be a significant community event. Organise plenty of different contests and categories for kids as well as a major prize to attract national/international entries. Once again use one of Invercargill's natural gifts (a bit of wind) and turn it into a positive.

#### 19. Create the Great Grand Child Photo Competition

Let the grandparents of Invercargill skite about how cute their grandchildren are, no matter where in New Zealand, through photos displayed in the paper over the course of a month. There should be both a local winner and an out-of-town winner. The prize for the out-of-town winner should be flights for two to come and visit the grandparents. This can be used to generate some media attention in another city or town.

#### 20. Children Eat Free Month

Children under 7, when accompanied by a parent, eat free from a specially designed kids menu. This could be across all Invercargill restaurants (or just ILT ones), be heavily promoted and the month should change every year depending on that year's event calendar.

#### 21. Organise the National Toy Extravaganza

This is not a trade show but an opportunity for children to see and play with the biggest, brightest, coolest toys, games and hobbies of the future and the past. It will be the only dedicated exhibition in New Zealand that allows children to touch, feel and experiment with the products of the future. An add-on to this event may be to attract or run a national toy collectibles exhibition which allows the parents and even grandparents to take a stroll down memory lane.

#### 22. National Secondary and Primary Schools Art Competition

Develop two national arts competition, one for secondary students and one for primary pupils. Should open entries to students across the country and select regional winners who compete, and display at, the national competition and exhibition which is held in Invercargill each year. An aspect of this will be a 24 hour challenge where children have a blank canvas and a day to complete their artwork in front of the public.

#### 23. Create a Multi-Purpose Youth Facility

Develop a youth facility in the heart of the CBD that provides services and activities for young people in a safe, drug and alcohol free environment. This recreational and leisure facility should be developed in consultation with youth and what services and programmes they would use. In Wellington the youth venue is based around creativity, whether it's jamming some music with mates, performing solo tunes, showing their first art exhibition, designing or painting a masterpiece, or just being entertained by a great night of music. In other cities around the world they might focus on skating, art, internet / information technology or wider social programmes such as encouraging a volunteer ethos. This facility might be developed in partnership with an organisation like YMCA.

#### 24. More Swings Per Head of Population Than Any Other City

Wellington is noted as having more cafes per head of population than New York City. If Invercargill is the best place to raise children then maybe it needs to have more swings per head of population than any other city in the world. Do this and then let any other city try to argue it.

#### 25. Work with the DHB to ensure that there is a higher than average number of Paediatricians and GPs

The quality of health care and getting access to a GP is an important consideration for parents looking to live in a city. There is a need to ensure that Invercargill can say that people based in the city have greater access to quality healthcare services than in other parts of the country. If there is a shortage incentivise to fix the issue and don't forget to also concentrate on retaining the medical staff already there.

#### 26. Create a Child Friendly Charter

Invercargill City Council should develop and agree a charter that establishes and commits them, the community and businesses to create and sustain an Invercargill that cares for, trusts and respects all children, youth and families; meeting all health, welfare and education needs; offering entertainment options that are family friendly; and ensures a supportive environment in which friends and extended family can be closely involved in the lives of the children and youth. This should spell out aims, a framework and outcomes for achieving this. Key stakeholders and organisations should then be requested to sign up to this charter.

#### 27. Develop an Invercargill Five Year Children's Plan

Develop a five year plan using three consultation mechanisms – children workshops, community surveys and focus groups. This would develop a plan of action that would have focuses such as:

- Safe and Accessible Environment
- Caring and Inclusive Community
- Child Friendly Services and Facilities
- Informed and Active Children
- Nature, Parks and Play Spaces

#### 28. New Zealand's Best/Biggest Mini-Putt

Build the biggest or most unique mini-golf facility in New Zealand. It may be that it has greater shelter requirements or is even indoor. This could be developed in partnership between the Council and a private operator.

### 29. Develop a Gifted Children Centre for After School/Holiday Programmes

Gifted and talented children confront parents with distinct questions and challenges. This centre would help keep gifted youth motivated and develop rigorous programmes to support gifted students interests. This could be a key marketing proposition to parents by highlighting that Invercargill actively supports helping gifted children achieve their potential. The educational facility at the old Sugar Shack site could be expanded to achieve this goal or a facility like an abandoned school could be utilised for this purpose.

### 30. The Imagination Centre

Albert Einstein once said "Imagination is more important than knowledge". We would add that being able to recognise, release and reward imagination is more important than measuring and examining. This facility would provide children with opportunities to learn, play, and participate in fun and challenging projects utilising mind-stimulating computer graphic design, animation, multimedia, arts, crafts and puzzles that spark creative thought. Once again this could be a function of the expanded educational facility at the old Sugar Shack site.

### 31. Create a Child and Family Innovation Fund

Small grants of up to \$1,000, managed by council, could be provided to community and parent groups to assist and promote the development of innovative programmes that improve outcomes for children and families in line with building a child friendly community. This could be in areas such as early education, parenting support networks, parent education or breastfeeding initiatives.

### 32. Contribute to Creating Healthy Warm Homes

Insulating and warming up New Zealand homes has many benefits, including improved health, as a warmer home and improved air quality reduces the risk of many respiratory and cardiovascular diseases of children and adults, and saves a family money by improving energy efficiency. Government currently contribute up to a third of the cost and Invercargill could generate significant national media by providing a further subsidy.

### 33. Provide Free Capsules and Booster Seats to Parents

Restraint use in Invercargill is slightly lower than the New Zealand average with the latest annual survey showing that only 89% of children under 5 were in appropriate restraints. Plunket currently run Car Seat Rental Schemes throughout New Zealand hiring capsules and booster seats to clients. A partnership with Plunket which saw free capsules or booster seats provided would ensure that cost was not a barrier to parents in keeping their children safe.

### 34. 'Day Out With The Kids' Website

Days out with the kids and great places to go with small children in Invercargill are much quicker and simpler to find on a user friendly website. It should list ideas and events to keep children and toddlers entertained. It should have loads of listings which are great places to take youngsters for their birthday parties and cheap and free things to do. It would also give teachers loads of great ideas to take their students for school journeys or where to go for visitors sightseeing.

### 35. Create a Network of Mountain Bike Trails

More and more families are mountain biking together though there are generally limited tracks available designed for younger members of the family. Develop at Sandy Point a network of short, relatively flat, interesting, safe but challenging trails that cater for a range of capabilities and ages. This could be a leading development in New Zealand and reinforce Sandy Point's position as a premier outdoor recreational precinct.

### 36. Child Friendly City Sticker Programme

The city can recognise the achievements of the people, businesses and organisations that support children and their families in the community by rewarding them with a sticker identifying them as child friendly. This becomes a marketing tool for the businesses.

Behind the sticker lies a willingness of service providers to listen to children and to undertake activities to meet their needs. Valuing and welcoming children can be demonstrated in many different ways. A restaurant may have a suitable children's menu, a play area or children's activity and enough space for prams to pass or have highchairs at a table. Child Friendly organisations will welcome breastfeeding mothers, be smoke free and be willing to be flexible enough to accommodate the sometimes unpredictable needs of children. Other ways services and organisations can demonstrate the importance of children in our community is to promote and support children's events and activities or address environmental issues that will effect the safety and wellbeing of children now and in the future.

### 37. New Family to Town Kit

Provide a package of information and discount vouchers to assist a new family either thinking of coming to Invercargill or recently arrived. This information should help them integrate quicker and better within the community. Information will include real estate, education, child care, family support, medical facilities and more.

### 38. Youth Leadership/Excellence Awards

In most parts of New Zealand Rotary actively promote and reward youth leadership, and Invercargill should look to build on this programme. We would recommend focussing on secondary school students and rewarding those students showing leadership and excellence in sports, academia, arts, culture and in serving the community. These awards (which should have a monetary value of up to \$2,000) could be awarded at a certain time each year and would be where the money was contributed towards them achieving a goal, further learning or progress. Examples may be contributing toward an outstanding local dancer attending the week long NZ Academy of Dance's Winter School, a budding film-maker spending a week of work experience with Weta Workshop or a top debater assisted to attend an international event. This needs to be done on a level that highlights to other parts of New Zealand that children in Invercargill achieve excellence at a level unmatched in New Zealand.

### 39. Children's Museum

With plans for a new museum in Invercargill being proposed it would be suggested that any new museum have an area specially designed and dedicated to children. A Children's Museum should have exhibits and programmes that stimulate learning experiences for children. In contrast with traditional museums that typically have a hands-off policy regarding exhibits, children's museums feature interactive exhibits that are designed to be manipulated by children. Other parts of the museum could also be designed to be of increased interest to children – you could hold New Zealand's largest toy collection or you could focus on one of Invercargill and Southland's strengths in its wilderness and landscapes. If you did this children might enter a large butterfly room, play in the wetlands or be designed to teach children about the environment within which they live.

### 40. Free Parenting Courses

In most cities and regions groups such as Plunket and Parents Centre provide a range of ante-natal and parenting courses. Some of these will be free to everyone, some free to members and some may have a small charge. Assisting, or encouraging, these organisations to provide free courses to all, even if through subsidising membership of the organisation, would be beneficial.

### 41. Free Child CPR/First Aid

Ensure that everyone in the community has free access to professional instruction in CPR for babies and children, choking procedures, drowning procedures, serious falls and burns. It is likely that the course would only be two to three hours long and for those who wanted more detailed instruction they would have the opportunity to continue on to a provider like St Johns to get first aid certification. The course should include at least a basic paediatric first aid handbook as a refresher for the attendees. Parents Centre in Invercargill already run this for their members, and assistance and promotion, may enable them to expand this programme to train any interested Invercargill resident.

### 42. National Youth Symposium

Coordinate a national youth symposium focussed on bringing together all providers of services to youth. This would include city councils, government ministries, non-profit organisations, representatives of youth councils and education providers. The purpose of the network would be to share best practice of how services to youth can be improved and position Invercargill as being a leader in this work nationally. This proactive leadership could open up relationships and opportunities with government departments in regards to funding for pilot programmes.

### 43. Open Up The Richardson Truck Museum

From conversations we had with residents one of Invercargill's greatest assets would appear to be the Richardson Truck Museum. We understand that there are issues around opening this up to the public but this would be something that would be a tourist attraction, would be of real interest to families and children, and could be used as a centrepiece for a national event.

### 44. Children's Theatre

Based on the Capital E concept in Wellington, give young Invercargill children an opportunity to experience performance art and theatre. There would be two markets that could be focussed on:

- Schools – performing for children in pre-school, primary school, and lower secondary schools. This generally covers the ages of 2 - 12 years. Shows would be presented in theatre venues during school terms to give students a total experience of 'going to the theatre'.
- Public - shows would be produced for children aged 2 - 7 and 8 - 12 years. All shows would be designed to also appeal to the adult audience attending with the children, and therefore many can be classified as family shows.

This concept opens up the fantastically restored Civic Theatre to a wider audience and a group such as the Invercargill Musical Theatre Company may even be interested in leading this initiative. There would need to be a programme of regular performances, with selected shows even being performed as part of festivals such as Kidzone. The Capital E National Theatre for Children has a large repertoire of productions available for purchase

and undertakes a national tour each year. Invercargill could create a partnership with them to reduce the time and resource required.

#### 45. Trial Ground for Health Research

Just as Invercargill successfully secured the Diabetes Research on Pigs there may be opportunities to explore around health research projects focused on children. This should be looked at as an economic opportunity and may be delegated to Venture Southland to look to evaluate. As part of the child friendly strategy there will be a need to identify economic development initiatives that can assist with the desired strategy outcomes.

#### 46. Expansion of KiwiSport

To be truly child friendly there is a need to ensure that all children have access to, and participate, in active lifestyles, recreational opportunities and/or sports. Often barriers to this participation are activities being inaccessible or unaffordable to lack of parental support, lack of confidence and self-esteem. KiwiSport is a fantastic initiative that is backed by government funds and looks to address barriers such as cost, transport issues, lack of skills and coordination. It was noted that a draft investment plan was recently presented to stakeholders with proposed Southland KiwiSport projects that could be completed within current budgets. With additional resource Sport Southland may be able to provide additional support to Invercargill children or develop new programmes that further increase participation and achieve improved health outcomes. This plan should therefore be viewed within the context of the Child Friendly strategy and any additional proposed initiatives or expanded activities identified.

#### 47. Develop Outdoor Activity and Camping Programme

Other Invercargill providers should also be encouraged to develop formalised outdoor activities such as camping. It is noted that YMCA do traditionally provide programmes like this and discussions should be held with these providers to develop added value activities.

#### 48. Develop an Anchor Point in the CBD

Look to use the old Farmers building or any similar large site in the central CBD that brings children and families into town and gives visible profile to the positioning of being child-friendly. This site could be used for an Ice Skating rink, a large indoor playground or the Imagination Centre. Invercargill is blessed with an inner city that hasn't fallen victim to large scale retail developments being in areas outside of the CBD. However to create vibrancy in the inner city, and generate retail activity, developments should be looked at that bring families into town. When we looked at this idea we considered that shops, such as the Old Farmers site, might be suitable for this type of activity.

#### 49. Financially Incentivise New Families to Move to Invercargill

If getting families to move to Invercargill proves difficult then consider whether financial incentives might remove barriers. It is highly likely that the cost of relocation could be a major upfront cost that stops families moving further south. If that is the case then consider contributing money to assist these families. Financial incentives could also be used to target family members who have job skills that are in short supply.

#### 50. Ensure First-Class Child Care

Child care has become a significant issue for more families in New Zealand as parents increasingly look to return to, or stay in, the workforce. With funding reducing to child care centres nationwide Invercargill needs to find ways that it can show that it's child care is the best in the country. This might be through the development of a quality accreditation process for childcare facilities in Invercargill, based on international ones, and then promotion of the fact that Invercargill is the only place in New Zealand where this is in place and they meet the standards. Resource would need to be provided to assist childcare facilities to achieve these standards. As part of this investigation of further childcare subsidies or free childcare for a period of time needs to be considered.

#### 51. Provide Additional Assistance to New Businesses Focussed on Children

New businesses should be encouraged that focus on providing services and products to children. This could be through council assistance such as rates relief during the start-up phase, additional business advice assistance from what is normally provided or targeting programmes such as Work and Income's Enterprise Allowance Scheme for start-up grants on businesses that fit this criteria.

#### 52. Get All Schools to Sign Up to an 'Increasing Family Involvement' of "Education Excellence" Charter

Quality of education is a major driver for families considering where to live. Schools in Invercargill could differentiate themselves by signing up to a charter that improves family involvement in their children's education. It would do this by undertake a range of activities designed to improve communication between parents and teachers and to a range of initiatives that other schools do not undertake. Ideas might be signs that welcomed parents or a welcome letter from teachers each year with contact details. The key would be provide parents with better access to teachers, information about their children's progress and a perceived higher level of education than anywhere else in the country.

### 53. Safe Precincts and Child Friendly Transport

Child friendly transport planning guidelines need to be developed that enable children to more safely travel to school, playgrounds, neighbourhood houses and other facilities. This would involve considering the routes that children travel, whether sidewalks are always available, ways to slow traffic and how streets might become playable spaces. A lot of work has been undertaken on this internationally which should enable this to be implemented. One idea might be to utilise Invercargill's wide streets and paint blue lanes that are cycleways. These could provide additional safety for children biking to school and could also position Invercargill as New Zealand's most cycle-friendly city.

### 54. Appoint a Regional Children's Commissioner

Nationally a Children's Commissioner is appointed to advocate for the best interests of all children and young people in New Zealand. Invercargill could look at two options. The first one would be to appoint a Regional Children's Commissioner in Invercargill who becomes the key contact point to this National Commissioner on behalf of the children of Invercargill. This would need to be someone of high standing but preferably separate from involvement with the council. The alternative option would be to provide resource so that an Advisor for the Office of the Children's Commissioner can be based in Invercargill. Either way would improve Invercargill's access to information and provide a more direct ear to influencers within government. Invercargill would also take a leadership position due to being the first to undertake this type of initiative.

### 55. Integrate the Child Friendly Strategy within Urban Design planning

Urban design is a key part of council responsibility that is concerned with the design of places, spaces, networks and buildings, and with the way people use them. Improving the quality of the urban environment is essential to the successful implementation of this point of difference, and to its acceptance by the wider community.

Good urban design is about:

- the way a place functions within its wider context,
- the quality of the public realm - safety, amenity, vitality,
- the right mix and density of uses,
- connectivity,
- scale and bulk of buildings,
- character and heritage,
- natural environmental qualities,
- environmentally sustainable design and building.

Many communities restrict choice through plans and regulations that inhibit the flexibility necessary to create family friendly environments. Urban designers and planners are uniquely positioned to move a community-building agenda forward that is truly family supportive through both the physical and social infrastructure.

Future urban design needs to be undertaken while considering what makes a family friendly community, what's currently being done, and what opportunities are there to create more friendly communities. Council needs to ensure that children and families are involved, and listened to, within this planning process.



## Way Forward

Developing a point of difference for Invercargill is a great first step but you will need to actively demonstrate it. In our view Invercargill needs to declare its intention to become the "number one child-friendly city in New Zealand." Then use every opportunity you can to tell the rest of the country about this. And you can't forget that your biggest ambassadors have to be your current residents. That is why you have to ensure that they are satisfied with the vision and that their expectations are not only met but exceeded.

You have now got to this point and our suggestion for a process moving forward from here would be:

- Council needs to agree the concept and become a 'Champion' of it. This includes appointing a senior staff member to drive it forward and manage the process.
- Buy-in needs to occur of key stakeholders such as Invercargill Licensing Trust, Community Trust of Southland, Vibrant Invercargill, Chamber of Commerce, Venture Southland.
- Consultation needs to be undertaken with residents and children on their support for the recommended point of difference.
- Following agreement workshops, focus groups and surveys will be required to challenge the initiatives proposed and develop new ones.
- Consultation with delivery partners such as DHB and non-profit organisations.
- Compile a five year implementation plan that has prioritised the delivery of initiatives under the child friendly strategy. This means that initiatives will need to be researched, evaluated and fleshed out. A list of recommendations would then be developed.
- Determine annual plan implications and external funding sources.
- Identify low hanging fruit to score early points.
- Implement plan and welcome new residents at the airport.

## APPENDIX ONE - THINGS PEOPLE LIKE ABOUT INVERCARGILL

The following list is not ordered in any way, and it should be noted that some points below were mentioned once while others were commonly listed.

- Great facilities
- Great stadium
- Family friendly
- No traffic congestion
- Access to hinterland
- Zero Fees
- Innovative – real can do attitude
- World class sporting facilities
- Cost of Living
- Great base for day trips
- Underlying economic strength
- Affordable housing
- Queens Park
- Space
- Positive attitude of people
- Don't have to pay for water
- No water restrictions
- Business opportunities
- Beaches
- SIT has brought in people and diversity
- Cycle tracks
- Base for ecotourism
- Hospitable people
- Agriculture provides strong economic base
- Gateway to tourist destinations
- Representation in NZ sports teams
- Mineral wealth
- Strong sense of community
- Ten minutes to anywhere
- Scottish heritage
- Can go home for lunch
- History
- Burt Munro week
- Bluff oyster festival
- Playgrounds
- Can drive on beach
- Southern most pyramid in world
- Close access to Stewart Island and nature
- City green belt
- Smelter – major employer
- Good truancy officer
- Tour of Southland
- Relaxed atmosphere
- Best kept secret in New Zealand
- Good environment – green grass
- Increasingly multi-cultural
- The proximity of beach to the city
- Richardson Truck Museum
- Sporting teams achievements
- Ranfurly Shield
- Southland Institute of Technology
- Community funders
- The Mayor
- Wide Streets
- Access to Outdoors
- Everything close at hand
- Pace of life
- Quality of education
- Traditional values
- Extremes of weather
- Parks & Reserves
- Natural resources
- Size of houses and sections
- Cheap and free parking
- Great place to bring up a family
- Food particularly seafood
- People here care
- Safety – personal and property
- Flat
- Dramatic scenery
- Conference Centre
- Southland 'Rs'
- Burt Munro
- Healthy lifestyle
- Big open skies – no limits
- Kakapos breeding programme
- Nice night skies
- Community spirit
- Facilities for elderly
- Architecture – Edwardian buildings
- Bluff oysters
- Relaxed lifestyle
- Easy commuting
- Good land and sheep
- Southern Steel
- A&P show
- Excellent boutique shopping
- Long daylight hours
- Honest people
- Tuataras and Kiwis
- Diabetes research on pigs
- Proximity to resort locations
- Widest road in Southern Hemisphere
- Loads of sports and cultural clubs
- Traditional/Old Fashioned Values
- Verandas in CBD

- World's fastest Indian
- Movie Theatre
- Tourism
- Small
- Out of school music
- Close to South Magnetic Pole
- City Council
- Safe City
- Close to recreational activities
- Structure of CBD in place
- Time for family
- Balanced lifestyle
- Youth Council
- Flat – elderly, disabled and cycle friendly
- Opportunities for development
- Can walk anywhere
- Career opportunities
- Green space
- Free bus systems
- Landscape
- Invercargill Licensing Trust
- The baby boom
- Recreational opportunities
- People
- More book shops per head than any other city
- Education increasing opportunities for young
- Art Gallery/Museum
- Four seasons
- Friendliness
- Events and Arts
- Infrastructure
- Youth Centre
- Time rich
- Oreti Beach
- Trees
- Engineering skills
- Sandy Point
- Bush walks
- Civic Theatre
- Roding network
- Location – Coastal/Roaring 40s
- Climate
- Water tower
- Proximity to nature's wonderland
- Identity
- Quality of retail
- Community Trust of Southland
- Rowers
- Culture
- Farming and industry
- Close to hunting, fishing, tramping and skiing
- Great opportunities for children to participate in sport, music etc.

## APPENDIX TWO - THINGS PEOPLE DO NOT LIKE ABOUT INVERCARGILL

The following list is not ordered in any way, and it should be noted that some points below were mentioned once while others were commonly listed.

- State of the playgrounds - neglected
- Conservative in self-promotion
- Weather
- ILT monopoly
- Perceptions of weather
- Lack of respect for facilities
- Local apathy
- Expensive airfares – tyranny of distance
- Lack of culture in bars
- Negative attitudes
- Limited job opportunities
- No underground parking
- Lack of accommodation
- Not as friendly as perception
- Inner city unsafe at night
- Depressed communities
- Not enough flights
- No cycle stands
- Anti Auckland/Wellington
- Need longer opening hours
- Old schools being wasted
- Drivers not courteous
- Miles from anywhere
- Not open to change
- Youth drunk at nights
- No university
- No CBD information centre
- Run down residential properties
- No Mall with Food Court
- Promotional campaigns under funded
- No roof over Esk St
- Limited places for elderly care
- Restricted youth activities
- Trapped in mindset
- Too quiet for younger people
- Too much farming focus
- Rates too high
- Lack cultural diversity
- People migrate
- Bogan mentality
- Potholes
- Night culture
- Not enough trees
- Tired
- Cold
- Aging baby boomer population
- Info Centre outside of CBD
- Locals attitudes
- Anti out-of-towners/foreigners
- Lack of tourist activities
- Vandalism
- Boy Racers
- Lack of shelter in CBD
- Too modest
- Main Street dilapidated
- No plan or vision
- Lack of vibrancy
- Food – dining out options
- North/South Invercargill divide
- Empty Shops
- Degraded waterways
- Entrance to City
- Drinking culture
- Bad drivers
- Conservatism
- Litter/Services over public holidays
- Personalised around the Mayor
- CBD – drab, unwelcoming
- Not proud of city
- Heavy trucks of roads
- Electricity costs
- Take a lot for granted
- No international chain hotels
- Dogs on the loose
- Lack of CBD parking
- Negative attitude of local paper
- Absentee landlords
- No decent skate park
- Migrants bringing social problems
- Lack of classical music teaching
- Lack of doctors/dentists
- No international flights
- Transport services
- Lack of events/entertainment
- Redneck attitudes
- Everyone knows everyone
- Not a destination
- School leavers go away to Uni
- Youth racism
- No CBD anchor
- Hard to find car parks
- ILT – lack of diversity
- I-site hard to find for visitors
- Lack of activity in CBD

- Great Invercargill shutdown
- Lack of quiet licensed facility
- End of the line for travel
- Lack of promotion
- Windswept
- Shortage of 'hunks'
- Too PC
- Property value of CBD buildings fragile
- Disproportionate number of petrol heads
- Excessively sports orientated – no balance
- Airport parking man – no free drop off
- Lack of motivation to keep tourists in town
- Few academic scholarships
- Lack of incentives to create new businesses
- Cycling not connected enough in central city
- ICC attitude to ratepayers – compliance issues and red tape
- Lack of access to farming communities for tourism
- Industrial buildings – scattered throughout city
- Young people – negative attitude about Invercargill
- Mediocrity – people don't strive for excellence
- Major projects are always fraught with controversy
- City leaders – no cohesiveness – all want control
- Poor perception by other people in New Zealand
- Not enough activities for the whole community
- No shopping mall – don't like shopping in the rain
- Need to leave to get higher levels of education
- Appearance of housing across Invercargill – lawns, rubbish, broken bottles, dog poo.
- Main St deteriorated
- Not promoted as a destination
- Attitude to alcohol
- Young people say its boring
- Isolation
- Violence in the weekends
- Split town – Tay St demarcation line
- Poor transport – not integrated into city
- No residential car permit for inner city living
- Need for more council responsibility
- Lack of cohesion between funders
- Can't plan outdoor events due to weather
- Inadequate parking for shoppers and staff
- Lack of 20-29 year olds
- Nightlife only aimed at drinking market
- Struggle to have café culture because of ILT
- Building maintenance – compliance to heritage buildings
- Southland Anniversary Day – not standardised
- Public transport – not enough and not convenient
- Barrenness caused by wide streets and few people
- Lack co-ordination with events which fragments attendance
- Mechanism/automation reduces job opportunities
- No cafes open at night after 9pm for movie goers and shows
- Lots of telling mechanisms but no listening mechanisms
- Parking charge for short-term airport drop-off and pick-up
- Abdicate too much to ILT and Community Trust – not doing enough collectively
- Current building regulation interpretation for CBD buildings ie. 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> floor requirements