

CENTRAL OTAGO DISTRICT COUNCIL

DATE: 1 December, 2008

SUBJECT: Blossom Festival Research Survey Report 2008
(EDT 01-02-11)

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to summarise the outcomes of a visitor survey at the parade and park event of the 52nd Alexandra Blossom Festival, held in September 2008. The primary purpose of the survey was to evaluate the economic impact of the festival to the Alexandra community.

Background

The 52nd Alexandra Blossom Festival parade and park event were held on September 27 2008. A random sample survey of attendees was conducted. This had several purposes:

1. The primary intention was to undertake a survey to obtain credible data on the economic impact to Central Otago of the Alexandra Blossom Festival.
2. The survey also provides excellent user feedback to the organisers for future festivals.
3. Festival organisers are also obligated to provide a detailed report to major sponsors.

Detail

The survey was conducted on Saturday September 27 2008. Eight survey takers were engaged on a casual basis. Survey takers were provided with an "official" name badge and "A World of Difference" t-shirt. Training was provided immediately prior to the surveys being conducted.

The weather started out poorly, with southerly rain leading to a one hour postponement of the parade. The weather improved markedly as the afternoon progressed. However, the park showed the impact of the earlier rain by becoming very muddy in some areas. It was noticeable that people lingered much longer than in 2007 (when the weather pattern was the opposite - progressively worse as the day progressed, with steady rain from mid afternoon), meaning that the park was still full of activity well after 4.00 PM.

Completed survey forms were tested for consistency within and between surveyors. There were no significant trends to suggest that the completed forms were not the recorded information and opinions of festival attendees.

The total direct cost of the survey was \$1100. This was funded from the Business Development projects budget. This does not include staff time to plan, supervise

and analyse the survey. This represents very good value as interview based surveys can cost up to \$50 per survey form.

As this was the second year that a survey has been conducted it is possible to make some comparison between the two years. While visitor surveys will potentially be conducted for the Blossom Festival every two to three years it is not planned to conduct the survey in 2009. A baseline has been established and Business Development has additional priorities with its limited applied research budget.

A copy of the survey form is appended to this report.

Results

A total of 244 questionnaires were filled out, representing the views and expenditure of 716 people. The event organiser has estimated that 8,500 people attended the parade and park event. This sample size and population results in a $\pm 3.5\%$ confidence interval at the 95% level. In other words, if the survey was repeated with the same population twenty times, then we would expect the aggregate results to be within $\pm 3.5\%$ of the results reported here nineteen times. This is acceptable given the trade off between cost and precision.

Major findings were:

Economic Impact

The economic impact to the Alexandra and the Central Otago District of the 2008 Blossom Festival headline events is shown in the following table:

Table1:

Impact Summary	Direct	Total
Output	\$426,626	\$647,042
GDP	\$198,845	\$307,230
Employment (FTE's)	5.8	7.3

This is based on 8,500 people attending the parade and park event and spending an average of just over \$50 per person on all expenses including accommodation, food and beverages (both in and out of Pioneer Park), retail (both in and out of Pioneer Park) and entertainment. The estimate of 8,500 was provided by the event organisers.

To recap:

1. Total expenditure for the Blossom Festival parade and park event was almost two-thirds of a million dollars.
2. The total GDP impact of this was over three hundred thousand dollars.
3. Directly and indirectly, the event has created the equivalent of more than 7 jobs.

The "direct" totals are those that derive from direct expenditure while "total" includes the multiplier effect of the direct expenditure as upstream and downstream impacts are considered.

The input /output table used to calculate these totals is supplied by Butcher & Associates and is the current standard for Central Otago.

The similar output table for the 2007 survey result is shown here:

Table2:

Impact Summary	Direct	Total
Output	\$936,656	\$1,408,610
GDP	\$472,243	\$705,952
Employment (FTE's)	13.4	16.1

As can be seen, the direct and total outputs are considerably less for 2008 than 2009.

The difference between total output for 2007 and 2008 is explained as follows:

- The organiser estimated crowd attendance was 23% less (8,500 vs. 11,000)
- Per person expenditure was down by 42% (\$50 vs. \$86)
- The spending mix had a small (+ 2%) positive impact. This means that the mix of spending resulted in a slightly increased flow-on effect into the wider community.

The overall impact of this is that the total output for 2008 is only 46% of 2007.

Visitor Details

The following table summarises where people came to the festival from and where they stayed.

Table3:

Accommodation	Where From						Total
	Central Otago	Otago	Southland	Canterbury	NI	Overseas	
Didn't stay	122	19	11				152
B&B							
Commercial Camp Ground		4	6	5			15
Camp / campervan		1	3				4
Motel		4	1	3	1	1	10
Backpackers					1		1
Private Home		24	18	13	4	1	60
Hotel							
Other		1			1		2
Total	122	53	39	21	7	2	244

Key:

B&B	Bed & Breakfast
Otago	Other areas of Otago not within Central Otago. For instance; Queenstown, Dunedin or Balclutha
NI	North Island

It is worth noting that the mix of where people came from was very similar to last year.

For those staying the average length of stay was 3.2 days. This figure, however, is highly skewed by some people staying two or more weeks. More representative was the median stay of 2 days, which was the same as 2007's result.

The people surveyed often answered on behalf of a group (which may have been a family). This result is shown in table 5. It is interesting that there were fewer individuals and more groups of four surveyed than in 2007. This is reflected in a larger average group size, increasing to 2.93 from 2.66. It is not possible to state whether this is reflective of a different composition of people attending the festival.

Table4:

People	2007 Responses	2008 Responses	2007 People represented	2008 People represented
1 Person	109	58	109	58
2 People	66	63	132	126
3 People	30	31	90	93
4 People	39	52	156	208
5 People	24	23	120	115
6 or more people	25	17	170	116
Total	292	244	777	716
Average	2.66	2.93		

Festival Impact and Feedback

Table 5 shows the expenditure by where from and category.

Table5:

Per Person

Region	Central Otago	Otago	Southland	Canterbury	NI	Overseas	Item Total
Entertainment	\$11.73	\$11.11	\$15.64	\$41.69	\$15.26	\$20.00	\$15.19
Food Outside Park	\$2.17	\$5.79	\$15.36	\$13.91	\$24.47	\$8.00	\$7.07
Food Inside Park	\$6.62	\$6.75	\$6.59	\$4.72	\$9.74	\$9.00	\$6.57
Retail Outside Park	\$1.92	\$9.27	\$6.40	\$13.26	\$11.58	\$20.00	\$5.73
Retail Inside Park	\$6.68	\$3.86	\$3.30	\$2.12	\$25.00	\$24.00	\$5.65
Accommodation	\$0.00	\$8.73	\$9.06	\$32.62	\$12.63	\$100.00	\$7.53
Other expenditure	\$0.77	\$4.31	\$5.53	\$1.54	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$2.45
2008 per person total	\$29.89	\$49.82	\$61.89	\$109.86	\$98.68	\$181.00	\$50.19
2007 per person total	\$61.47	\$73.42	\$60.10	\$206.58	\$427.86	\$198.50	\$86.17

This is probably the most significant result from the survey. Per person expenditure was down 42% on 2007. What has led to this dramatic decrease is a matter of speculation.

It is interesting that people spent as much on refreshments and retail outside the park as in it, meaning that there is a spin off for permanent businesses in the town.

43% of respondents indicated that they would be attending another event. This is slightly down on last year when 50% of people indicated that they would do so. The most popular other events were the Musical, the Drag Races and the Art Exhibit. Last years most popular other event, the Concert received only 25% as much indicated support this year.

Respondents were asked to rate the festival (parade and park event) from 1 – 10 (1 being poor, 10 being excellent). The result (7.2) was exactly the same as for the 2007 survey. Even more interestingly, the rating by people from different areas was very similar as for last year, with people from the wider Otago Region and Canterbury being most impressed while visitors from Southland were the least impressed.

Respondents were then asked to state one thing that would make it a “10” for them. These responses were categorised and are shown in Table 6.

Table6:

Category	Item	Count
Parade	The flow, spacing and speed of the parade	53
	Quality and or quantity of floats or vehicles	22
	Ditch the flags	1
	Happy as is	1
	Crowd Management	1
Parade Total		78
Event	Rides and entertainment - quality, quantity and cost	19
	Cost of entry	10
	Variety of Stalls	7
	Variety, cost and quality of food	4
	Improve the weather	4
	Happy as is	2
	General - content and cost	2
	Have a prize for tickets	1
	Crowd management	1
Event Total		50
Concert	Content and cost	4
Concert Total		4
General	Improve the weather	27
	Better event promotion	3
	New Event	3
	Remove the liquor ban	3
	Parking	2
	Overall content	2
	Early bird discount close off	2
	Happy as is	2
	Bring back a mardi gras	1
	Crowd management	1
	More colour	1
	More fun	1
	General Total	

It is worth noting that the things that people wanted improved show a similar pattern to last year, with comment on the parade being the main area of discontent. The main difference is that last year the importance of parade content and flow were very similar, whereas this year a much greater number of people were unhappy with the flow, spacing and speed of the parade. There were also more comments about the weather this year.

Sponsor Recognition

Sponsor recognition is important to events like the Blossom Festival. The cost to stage these events and their likelihood of covering costs means that some external funding or support is essential.

Sponsor recognition was better than for 2007. 61% of respondents were able to name at least one sponsor. Almost 50% of people named Contact Energy as a sponsor. The next most named sponsors had less than 10% recognition. These were The Southland Times, Westpac and Fulton Hogan. No attempt was made to see if these (or any of the sponsors named) were actually sponsors. For example, fourteen respondents named power companies that compete directly with Contact Energy.

Summary

The purpose of this report is to provide information and answer some specific questions about the Alexandra Blossom Festival. The methodology and the outcomes provide comfort that these results can be used as a good representation of the demographics, expenditure and views of festival attendees. Further comfort is provided by the similarity of many indicators (including sample make up, length of stay and festival rating) to last year. This makes the change in per person expenditure all the more stark. Regardless of this, the Alexandra Blossom Festival puts almost two-thirds of a million dollars into the local community and remains a major event for the district.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jonathan Gadd', written in a cursive style.

Jonathan Gadd
Business Development Manager