

GREATER HASTINGS



Phone 4132

P.O. Box 478

Russell Street,

Hastings

Public Relations Office

RE GREATER HASTINGS INCORPORATED.

GREATER HASTINGS was established on 16th May, 1950, and is Incorporated under the Incorporated Societies Act 1908 as an organisation not working for profit.

The Society came into existence as a result of the preliminary efforts of approximately a dozen civic-minded citizens who had felt the need of such an organisation for some considerable time.

To maintain complete independence of sectional interests, and to be free to serve the whole of the community, the Society was set up on a basis making it almost entirely independent of other civic and local bodies, the partial exception to this rule is that the local Borough Council pay an annual subsidy towards the administration costs of the maintenance of a Public Relations Office and in return the full time Executive Officer of Greater Hastings acts as Public Relations Officer in the interests of the Borough Council on numerous occasions, and although it is necessary, if progress is to be made, to have the closest possible co-operation at all times between the Society and the Civic authorities, the Executive Officer of Greater Hastings are not subject to Council control or policy at any time.

Two of the principle objects for which the Society was established are, briefly;

- (a) To provide a Society for the advancement of Hastings, the welfare of its citizens, and the development in them of the fullest civic consciousness and pride in their town.
- (b) To enable members to develop qualities of citizenship and to encourage the ideal of service to the community.

FINANCE AND MEMBERSHIP.

Funds to maintain the Society are in the main derived from approximately 1000 civic-minded and public spirited citizens who pay an annual membership subscription, and who in return obtain certain privileges for annual activities sponsored by Greater Hastings. A number of business firms and commercial houses contribute certain amounts in the form of an Annual Publicity Allocation and include this amount in their annual advertising expenditure each year. The foregoing in addition to the previously mentioned subsidy received from the Borough Council are the Society's main source of Annual Revenue, although the organisation derives considerable annual revenue from two principle revenue producing activities, the Hastings Highland Games, and the Annual Blossom Festival.

Membership of Greater Hastings is open to any person of good character who subscribes to the ideals and objectives of the Society.

ADMINISTRATION.

For the purpose of the administration of the affairs of the Society, there is a Central Executive of eight, which is elected annually, there is also a Treasurer, and a full time Executive Officer, this Executive meets at a weekly luncheon. In addition there is what is classified as an Active General Committee of approximately 40 civic minded citizens, representing a cross section of the community, who meet at a monthly tea meeting, and who are mainly responsible for many of the duties associated with town decorations, etc.

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One of the original objectives of Greater Hastings became a reality last year when what is believed to be the first community sponsored Public Relations Office, in New Zealand was established and opened.

This modern and up-to-date office has provided the community with a worthwhile and valuable public amenity.

The work of a Public Relations Office is carried out under the direction of Public Relations Officer is varied in scope, but may be classified broadly under the following headings:-

1. Providing a service to visitors that will ensure that they have a pleasant visit to Hastings and that they leave with a favourable impression of our town.
2. Providing information on a wide variety of topics.
3. Publicising our town on every occasion that the opportunity presents itself.
4. Assisting worthy civic objectives.
5. Printing guide maps and similar literature.
6. Undertaking projects which other organisations are not equipped to handle.

Many local citizens as well as visitors to our town make use of the service provided, in some cases it is merely information they seek. In other cases callers are desperately in need of help, sometimes such assistance involves many hours of work and many interviews, but in almost every case the Public Relations Office is able to be of material assistance.

The information and assistance provided by the Office is by no means confined to visitors to Hastings and District. Local businessmen, organisations and numerous individuals often seek advice, and help. A number of organisations who have assumed the responsibility of conducting and controlling National, Inter Island, and Provincial Championships in different fields have been assisted with their publicity and accommodation problems.

The accommodation, entertainment and Public Relations files compiled by the Office have proved most valuable, and every opportunity is welcomed to sponsor and promote worthwhile civic schemes and projects for the benefit of the citizens of Hastings and District.

As mentioned previously, the enquiries received by the Public Relations Office are many and varied, and while we do not claim to know all the answers, it is almost always possible to find the answer.

The establishment of Public Relations Office has already done much to publicise our progressive town, throughout the Dominion, and enquires concerning the constitutional basis of Greater Hastings, and for information about the activities sponsored, have received from Wanganui, New Plymouth, Masterton, Wellington, Hamilton, Rotorua, and Palmerston North, and the following extract from the Wanganui Herald of Saturday, 11th September, 1954 is typical of similar articles that have appeared in a number of metropolitan and provincial newspapers during recent months it reads :-

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"Wanganui Public Relations problems could well be solved by the formation of an organisation patterned on the highly successful Greater Hastings which is leading the way in Provincial Public Relations work in New Zealand".

Also from an Editorial in the Taranaki Herald on Wednesday, 15th September headed Easter Coast Initiative.

"Last week Hastings revelled in its Annual Blossom Week with a record entry of floats, watched by the largest crowds ever seen on the Hastings streets, this progressive town thus setting a challenge to other places, including New Plymouth. Blossom Week at Hastings is an established National attraction with ever increasing attendances, as people elsewhere in New Zealand fit the fixture into travel plans." This publicity is most gratifying, but it is also remarkable as no expense has been incurred to date in publicising Blossom Festival outside our own Province.

Much time and space would be necessary to give a comprehensive review of the activities sponsored by Greater Hastings, in the course of a year, but the outstanding annual attractions are undoubtedly, the Hastings Highland Games, Hastings Blossom Festival, Community Christmas Carols, Arrival of Father Christmas, Christmas Festivities, Windsor Park Motor Camp Entertainments and Service, Memorial Hospital Fund Fun Session, Hastings Home Garden Competition, Hastings Parks Rose Sunday, and Town Decorations, these activities form a major part of our efforts during the year, and there is no doubt that they are now accepted by the community as permanent and worthwhile functions, which attract many visitors to Hastings, and provide very definite reasons - if any are necessary - for the continued existence of a community organisation such as Greater Hastings, which is able to work in the interests and welfare of the whole of the community.

With all due modesty we feel justified in claiming that much has been achieved by our Society in its short existence, and we of Greater Hastings readily acknowledge the greater inspirations that we have received since the inception of our Society from our popular President, Mr. H. B. Poppelwell. He together with the other Executive members have continued to work unceasingly in the interest of our town and its citizens, but we hasten to stress the fact that the progress that has been made, and what has been achieved has only been possible by the collective endeavours and co-operation of many organisations and individuals.

We are deeply indebted to our civic authorities, its executive and staff, and to many other citizens, business firms and organisations too numerous to mention, but the progress made does give both our Executive and our Active General Committee Members, a great degree of personal satisfaction, and they are happy in the knowledge that collectively we have made some extra contribution to the life of the community generally, and we are confident that with a continuation of the co-operation and support that we have received since the inception of our Society, Greater Hastings will indeed achieve its ideal of making our future city a "Greater Hastings" for the citizens of the future.

K. J. Sparks,
Organising Secretary.