

8. GOVERNMENT FUNDING – OUT OF SCHOOL CARE AND RECREATION PROGRAMMES

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| Officers responsible Leisure Manager & Community Relations Unit Manager | Authors Lyn Campbell (Children's Advocate), DDI 941-8860 and Lesley Symington, Recreation and Arts Team Leader, DDI 941 8879 |
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This report outlines the latest information on new government funding available for Out of School Programmes and is also referred to the Board for any comment. Out of School Programmes include before and after school and school holiday programmes for 5–13 year olds.

BACKGROUND

Out of School Programmes provide a range of recreational, educational and social opportunities and benefits for children and their families. In addition the availability of quality, affordable out of school care has been identified as an important factor in assisting parents to move into and remain in the workforce, and to date this factor has been the impetus for making available central government funding.

Christchurch City Council has long recognised the value which Out of School Programmes bring to children and their families in Christchurch and is recognised nationally as a leader in its support of this area. It is also one of the few local authorities which has developed and adopted an Out of School Programmes Policy (1999) to describe its vision and outcomes for Out of School Programmes. Funding for these programmes has been made available through Community Board Project Funding; the Social Initiatives Fund and the operational budgets of the Leisure and Community Relations Units.

GOVERNMENT BUDGET 2002 – ADDITIONAL FUNDING FOR OUT OF SCHOOL PROGRAMMES

In the Government's 2002 Budget, the Minister of Social Development received \$36,592m additional funding over four years for Out of School Care and Recreation (OSCAR) programmes. The package of increased assistance is aimed at improving the viability, supply and quality of OSCAR programmes by covering any **operating deficit** between operating costs, fees and other revenue.

The National Association for OSCAR (NAOSCAR) has been contracted by MSD for two years (to July 2004) to provide support and advice to providers of out of school care and recreation. This is part of the Government's Making Work Pay project. NAOSCAR will receive, process and make recommendations on applications by MSD will make the final decisions on funding.

Applications will be looked at on their merits, but top priority will be given to those programmes which, even with the best and smartest management, will have deficits because of the socio-economic area in which they are operating. There are not target areas nationally and decisions will be made on a need basis.

How will the money be spent?

The funds will cover an increased uptake of the OSCAR subsidy (a programme fee subsidy paid to parents who as beneficiaries are required by the Government to work or train in order to receive their benefit) as well as:

- *Assistance Grants*

Up to \$9,000 annual grant payable direct to OSCAR programmes based on individual programme need and to be used as a contribution to funding programme operating deficits (see Section on Eligibility).

- *Establishment Funding*

A total of \$169,000 annually for those programmes needing funding to purchase new equipment or to alter buildings, particularly in order to be eligible to meet Child, Youth and Family approval. This can be applied for in the same financial year as an Assistance Grant, with recommendations made monthly.

- *Field Workers*

Some funding will be available for a nation wide field workers service. This will fund a number of field workers who will advise and support OSCAR programmes as well as undertaking a liaison role within the community. Note that the OSCAR Network in Christchurch has received only 20 hours per week of this funding and this is to cover the whole of Canterbury.

- *Child Youth and Family resources for Provider Approval Process*

\$1.28m over four years to resource Child, Youth and Family for the provider approval process.

Eligibility to Receive Assistance Grant for Funding

To be eligible to apply for an Assistance Grant programmes must be:

1. Approved by Child, Youth and Family.
2. Operating for a minimum of 5 days per week.
3. Open for at least 10 hours per week during the school term and 30 hours per week during the school holidays.
4. Collecting fees from parents using the programme.
5. The programme must require an Assistance Grant to remain viable and sustainable.

There will be two funding rounds per financial year – in November and in March. OSCAR programmes may receive Assistance Grant funding only once per year.

Christchurch Providers Currently Eligible to Apply

Currently there are 46 Out of School programmes operating in the city with membership of the OSCAR Network, managed by a variety of agencies including the Council. Of these, 9 are currently not eligible to apply for this funding.

DISCUSSION

The Government's new OSCAR funding presents a welcome resource to assist existing and new programmes and the potential for a key partnership between the Council and the Ministry of Social Development.

Programmes currently receiving Christchurch City Council funding will not be penalised and NAOSCAR is keen to work with those local authorities which have a history of supporting out of school care and recreation.

Christchurch City Council Leisure holiday programmes which are provided in-house (currently 5 out of a total of 22) have Child, Youth and Family approval and will be applying for Assistance Grant funding in the November funding round.

Community Recreation Advisers and Community Development Advisers will be working with community providers of programmes to make sure they are aware of this funding and, if eligible, provide advisory assistance if required with applications or refer them to the OSCAR Network. If providers are currently not eligible staff will be referring them to the OSCAR Network in Christchurch and National OSCAR to encourage them to become eligible to apply.

In the longer term new Government funding will enable some programmes to have less reliance upon the Council for their sustainable operational costs.

However it must also be noted that this funding has tight eligibility criteria (e.g. a programme which operates for 4 days per week will not be eligible and may not be able to sustain operating for 5 days per week). There is a maximum of only \$9,000 per annum available per annum per programme (as a comparison it costs around \$36,000 per annum to run an after school programme 5 afternoons per week for one year). It must also be noted that the Government's commitment to this is currently only for a 4-year period. Programmes must apply each year for the Assistance Grant funding and are not assured of receiving the same or less funding during the 4 year period.

It is therefore recommended that Boards consider continuing to support Out of School programmes in their areas at current levels for the 2003/04 financial year, until any successful Assistance Grants for Christchurch Out of School Programmes pending the Ministry's November 2002 and March 2003 funding rounds can be reported to Boards. At this time any consequent opportunities for Boards to consider reducing their contributions to this area could also be discussed. It is expected that this will be able to be presented by June 2003.

Staff

- Recommendations:**
1. That Community Recreation Advisers and Community Development Advisers work closely with community providers, the OSCAR Network in Christchurch and National OSCAR to ensure that Christchurch providers are aware of this funding.
 2. That Boards consider continuing to support Out of School Programmes in their areas at current levels of funding for the 2003/04 financial year until an analysis of the impact of Government funding in this area in Christchurch has been made and reported back to Boards by June 2003.

The Chairman comments:

Earlier in the year the Board's Working Party completed a useful exercise enabling a sound basis to be used for the allocation of funding in support of Out of School programmes. The proposed analysis of the new funding processes will be important in assisting the Board to review the extent to which its support may still be required. The degree of support from the Board's Project Fund will still need to be determined by March 2003, but will likely require variation once the impact of the new funding is known.

Chairman's

- Recommendations:**
1. That the above recommendations be adopted.
 2. That officers consider the option for an update report in March/April on the new funding allocated within this community.