

Officer responsible Financial Services Manager	Author Wayne Hann
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The purpose of this report is to consider an application from Orana Park Trust Board for a full remission on rates payable for 1990/00. Authority for such a remission is covered under Section 179(1) of the Rating Powers Act.

BACKGROUND

The Orana Park Wildlife Trust occupies land at McLeans Island under a long term lease from the Canterbury Regional Council. The land is held for river protection purposes and would otherwise be non-rateable.

In May 1997 following receipt of an earlier application for remission the Council approved a full remission of rates covering the 1996/97 and 1997/98 rating years. This remission recognised that Orana Park was experiencing a difficult trading environment and this was causing significant cash flow problems. In granting a full remission for both the 1996/97 and 1997/98 years the Council resolved that any subsequent remission be subject to a further application.

Rates, in excess of the 50% mandatory remission to which the park is eligible, were levied by the Council for the 1998/99 rating year and the Trust Board has paid all but one instalment.

Remission of rates has been of great assistance to the park as it strives towards its recovery and continued viability.

CURRENT POSITION

In support of the application the Council is being asked to take into account that the Orana Park Wildlife Trust Board and staff are committed to working very hard to ensure that Orana Park remains an important asset to Christchurch and Canterbury. During the last year they have been able to commit funds to overdue maintenance which has had a dramatic effect on the overall presentation of the park. The assistance given to the Park by the Council by way of a rates remission has helped make this possible.

LEGAL POSITION

While the Orana Park Trust Board qualifies for a mandatory 50% remission of rates under the provisions of Section 179(2) this does not limit the powers of the Council to grant a greater remission under Section 179(1) if it thinks fit. Provision for this further remission is contained in Clause (e) Part I of the Second Schedule to the Act, the wording of which is similar to that contained in Part II.

Orana Park has a 1998 Capital Valuation of \$2.3M which currently is rated at 50%. The 1999/00 rates are estimated at \$3,129.

Recommendation: That the Council grant a full remission on the rates for Orana Park under the provisions of Section 179(1) of the Rating Powers Act for a three year period commencing from 1 July 1999.