

## 7. REMISSION OF RATES – OPEN HOME FOUNDATION, 36 LISMORE STREET

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The purpose of this report is to seek, on behalf of the Open Home Foundation, approval for a remission of rates under the provisions of Sections 179 of the Rating Powers Act in respect of the property occupied by the trust at 36A Lismore Street.

### BACKGROUND

The Open Home Foundation is an approved Christian child and family support service working in the 'not for profit sector' under the Children, Young People and their Families Act 1989. It is an inter-denominational organisation having as its Mission Statement "*Providing Quality Child-Centred Family-Focused Support Services and Foster Care*". It is an inter-denominational organisation and is not tied to any particular church or other social service agency and works independently of the Department of Social Welfare. Where children need extended periods of time in foster care, as required by the CYP&F Act, the Open Home Foundation works in close liaison with the Children and Young Persons Service and the Family Court system.

The foundation plays a vital role in the welfare services in the city by providing a range of programmes and preventative interventions to support families experiencing difficulties under stress or in other ways in need in the community. These include:

- Crisis interventions where family breakdown, violence, neglect or abuse is identified;
- Abuse referrals to New Zealand CYPF or Police;
- Social work support and preventative programmes aimed at keeping families together;
- Short term care (emergency, regular, respite or up to 28 days or extension to a total of 56 days);
- Medium term care;
- Long term care;
- Parent education programmes; and
- Counselling.

### POWER TO REMIT RATES

Power to remit rates is contained in Section 179 of the Rating Powers Act 1988. A range of criteria are outlined at Part I of the Second Schedule of the Act being grounds upon which a local authority may grant a remission of rates. This remission is at the discretion of the local authority.

The property at 36 Lismore Street qualifies for a remission of rates under clause (n) of Part I of the Second Schedule to the Act, being land "*owned or occupied by or in trust for any society or association of persons, whether incorporated or not, whose object or principal object or one of whose principal objects is to promote generally the arts or any purpose of recreation, health, education, or instruction for the benefit of residents or any group ... of residents of the district*".

The property has a 1 September 2001 Capital Valuation of \$168,000 and the 2001/02 rates were assessed at \$984.65 on the basis of a residential differential under the Council's operative differential rating scheme.

### PRESENT REMISSION POLICY

The Council has no formal policy in relation to applications for remission of rates on such properties, rather tending to treat each application on its individual merits. However, there are one or two organisations which appear to have similar objectives or roles to that of the Open Home Foundation, where a remission of rates has been granted by the Council. Some examples of these are the Woolston Development Project where a 50% remission was granted and the Salvation Army (Sally's Place) and the Families of Linwood Trust where a 50% remission was also granted.

**Recommendation:** That the Council approve a 50% remission of rates in respect of the above property under the provisions of Section 179 of the Rating Powers Act 1988 with effect from 1 July 2002.