

### 3. AURORA CENTRE FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS - APPLICATION FOR FUNDING

<b>General Manager responsible:</b>	Stephen McArthur, General Manager, Community Services
<b>Officer responsible:</b>	Catherine McDonald, Unit Manager, Community Support Unit
<b>Author:</b>	Maryanne Lomax, DDI 941-6730

#### PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. The purpose of this report is to provide information in relation to an application for funding from the Aurora Centre for the Performing Arts for \$27,000 from the Board's 2006/07 Discretionary fund.

#### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2. The Aurora Centre are seeking financial support from the Fendalton/Waimairi Community Board to meet the shortfall in regards to operating the Aurora Centre for the Performing Arts as a community facility.
3. The Trust are seeking a one off contribution of \$27,000 to contribute towards the cost of ongoing maintenance, renewals and replacements.
4. Despite the best efforts of the Board and management, the Aurora Centre is struggling to be financially viable. Increased overhead costs and the loss of a key weekly tenant has meant that the cashflow situation of the Trust has become increasingly critical.
5. The Aurora Centre is an excellent performance venue which risks being lost if external financial support is not forthcoming. Although the Centre is recognised as a metropolitan facility, due to its users coming from all over the city, it is also a key community asset which brings large numbers of people into the Fendalton/Waimairi ward. The Centre also plays a key role in supporting the artistic development of many young people living in this ward through its close relationship with Burnside High School.
6. The Council's Arts Adviser, Marlene Le Cren, has been made aware of the Centre's current situation and will be providing support to the organisation to address some of the long-term sustainability issues they face. This support may include seeking financial support from the Council's Metropolitan funding schemes.

#### FINANCIAL AND LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

7. Council funding of \$735,580 was provided to the Trust at the time of construction. This funding was granted on the understanding that there would be no recourse to the Council in the event of the Trust facing difficulties in meeting operational expenses, or repaying other loans.
8. A Memorandum of Understanding exists between the Trust and Burnside High School. The school has invested significant time and resources into the Centre and are also one of the key users of this facility.
9. In the past 5 years, the Centre has applied for and received a total of \$120,000 in funding from community charities and the ASB Bank.
10. In relation to this application, the Trust are seeking financial support for the following:
  - Preparation and repainting of dressing rooms, store, corridors, external doors, floor, external wall
  - Stage floor resurface
  - Safety compliance check of technical equipment
  - Servicing of door hardware and maintenance
  - Regular maintenance to air conditioning unit
  - Repairs required to prevent water leaks
  - Regular carpet cleaning
11. There are no legal considerations in relation to this application.

## **OPTIONS**

12. There are three possible options in relation to this application.
  - a) Approve the application for funding from the Aurora Centre for Performing Arts and grant \$27,000 from the Board's 2006/07 Discretionary funding;
  - b) Decline the application for funding from the Aurora Centre for Performing Arts based on two considerations
    - The original Council funding was granted on the understanding that there would be no recourse to the Council in the event of the Trust facing difficulties in meeting operational expenses, or repaying other loans.
    - The group is considered to be metropolitan which in line with the Council practice would normally require a referral to metropolitan funding sources.
  - c) Approve a portion of the amount requested from the Board's 2006/07 Discretionary funding.

## **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the Committee agree to decline this request as outlined in Option b).

## **BACKGROUND ON THE AURORA CENTRE**

13. Planning for the construction of the Aurora Centre for the Performing Arts commenced a decade prior to the opening of the building on 26 October 2001. The building cost \$4.7M to complete. The current estimated replacement cost is \$6M. The Centre is located at Burnside High School .
14. The Trust was set up and the Trust Deed signed on the 14 October 1998. The key objectives included:
  - To provide a community facility in Christchurch accessible to the individuals and organisations representing all ages and social, economic and ethnic backgrounds.
  - To foster, promote, facilitate and encourage interest in music, drama, art, culture, sport, education and other related community interests through the operation of the Aurora Centre for the Performing Arts.
15. Since 2001, 95%-98% of venue bookings have been 'community', i.e. churches, schools, cultural groups, and special interest groups.
16. During 2005, venue visitors were calculated at approximately 105,000.