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The purpose of this report is to recommend an option to the Committee for the on-going use of the special fund created pre-amalgamation as the Waimairi Community Award Fund. The recommendation provides for the implementation of a replacement set of annual awards to provide city wide coverage for the recognition of outstanding achievements by young people in the city.

1. INTRODUCTION

The former Waimairi District Council resolved in September 1989 “that, pursuant to Section 208 of the Local Government Act 1974, an amount of \$50,000 be set aside as a Special Fund for the purpose of providing an annual income for assisting in the study, research, or skills development of residents of the former Waimairi District (within criteria related to the Award)”. Each year since applications have been called for within the following categories:

- Academic (including Science, Health and Education)
- Arts (including Fine Arts, Music and Performing Arts)
- Sport and Recreation

This award is open to all citizens residing within the area of the former Waimairi District between the ages of 15 and 30 years old, inclusive. Applicants may be temporarily out of the district for study or competition at the time of lodging the application.

The present scheme is administered by officers from the Fendalton Service Centre, with a joint Committee comprised of Community Board members from the four communities now covering the former District Council’s area being responsible for adjudication on the annual applications received.

With the Committee continually looking for “excellence” in the applications the number of Awards granted each year is few and, of course, the interest earned from the Fund does not ‘provide’ much scope for extending these numbers. The money allocated each year varies between \$4,000 and \$7,000. The balance of the fund at 30 June 1998 was approximately \$62,500.

2. REVIEW OF PRESENT SCHEME

During the past term the Fendalton/Waimairi Community Board initiated a review of the Awards, based on the fact that the term “Waimairi” and, in particular, the boundaries related to the former district, had become rather blurred.

The concept of the Awards was however considered to be quite appropriate and, in later discussion with other Boards, the proposal to seek an extension to the Awards on a city wide basis evolved as a most worthwhile option.

Allied to this proposal was agreement that the moneys available should be increased and, most Boards resolved earlier to provide supplementary funding (\$1,000 each) for this purpose.

3. ADMINISTRATION OF “SPECIAL FUNDS”

“Special Funds” were created by a number of the (then) existing authorities prior to the 1989 local body amalgamation.

Paragraph 259 (2) of the Local Government (Canterbury Region) Reorganisation Order 1989 provided that special funds of the local authorities established pursuant to Section 208 of the Local Government Act 1974 shall:

“... be expended only for the purposes for which they were set aside...”

and,

... be expended for the benefit of the area in which they are originated...”

The Reorganisation Order also provided that “notwithstanding subclause (2) of this clause, the local authorities constituted by this order may at any time before the first day of November 1996, with the approval of the Local Government Commission, resolve to vary the use of any special funds.”

The Local Government Commission stated further that Council’s **shall** after 1 November 1996, review Special Funds ... and may resolve to apply the funds for other purposes.

4. THE NEW PROPOSAL

There are some difficulties in administering the present scheme, including the matter of identification with the former Waimairi District Council area. The proposal to extend the Awards to a city wide basis has particular merit, and will, obviously, enable a smoother administration of the scheme. Additionally the opportunity to recognise, and encourage, achievements by young people in the city is highly merited.

As the matter of the review of the “Special Funds” currently held for this purpose is one that needs addressing by the Council the extent to which this report (and its recommendations) should proceed is a little unclear. While there could be a further extensive review of existing eligibility criteria, and the level of recognition of achievement of applicants, it is suggested that the Committee (and Council) deal firstly with the principle of enhancing the awards scheme to that based on a city wide basis.

The latest set of Awards has been made recently (in December 1998), and any new advertising for the next round, under the present basis, would not be initiated until September 1999. There is therefore sufficient time for further work to be carried out in the criteria review, should Council adopt the recommendation for enhancement of the present scheme.

Matters such as the naming of the Awards, the money allocated for such Awards, and the eligibility and qualification criteria would be covered in any later report on the subject.

5. RELATED INITIATIVES

The Council's Youth Advocate has programmed for later this year evaluation of a new award scheme to recognise outstanding contributions to improving the lives of young people. Such a scheme and any restructuring of the Waimairi Study Awards should be developed in a co-ordinated manner.

- Recommendation:**
1. That the Council adopt in principle the restructuring of the present Waimairi Study Awards in order to provide for a suitable city wide based set of Awards covering achievement by young people in the city.
 2. That the present Waimairi Study Awards be discontinued forthwith (except for the formal presentation/recognition session proposed for February 1999, and the reporting back by the latest group of successful applicants).
 3. That new Study Awards be developed in conjunction with any proposals for service awards by the Council's Youth Advocate, to be implemented from late 1999.
 4. That the future of the Council's "Special Fund" be considered as part of a further report on funding and other criteria to be submitted to the April meeting of the Community Services Committee.

**Chairman's
Recommendation:** For discussion.