

4. AOGA AMATA AOTEAROA EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTRE

Officer responsible Community Advocate	Author Bruce Meder, Community Development Adviser, DDI 941-5403
Corporate Plan Output: Discretionary Funds	

The purpose of this report is to seek assistance from the Board on a one-off basis for the Aoga Amata Aotearoa Early Childhood Centre.

CHRISTCHURCH CITY COUNCIL POLICIES

Three Council policies are pertinent to this report:

- (a) Early Childhood Education Policy. Outcomes of this policy that are especially relevant include:
 - (i) Improving the position of the least advantaged.
 - (ii) Services that provide for cultural diversity.
 - (iii) Improved services for children and their families/whanau through increased opportunities and choices for children and their families/whanau.
- (b) Social Well-being Policy – especially the outcomes of:
 - (i) Resources are fairly distributed among citizens, communities, regions and sectors.
 - (ii) Cultural diversity is respected.
- (c) Community Policy which states that “our first priority is empowering and enabling those who are deprived of power and resources”.

HISTORY

Aoga Amata is a Pacific Island based Early Childhood Education centre which has been operating since the late 1980's. Until a year ago the centre was based on the grounds of the Sydenham School. However, with the closure of that school the Centre was faced with the task of seeking alternative premises. In doing so, they were keen to move to an area of high demand for Pacific Island early childhood education. Space became available at Birchgrove School and the Centre has been operating from there for the past year.

CENTRES OPERATIONS

The Centre currently caters for approximately 30 children. Consistent with the desire to make early childhood education more accessible to low-income families (especially Pacific Island families) the Centre has no fees and provides transport for the children to get to and from the Centre. The Centre is based in Shirley to provide for the needs of that community, although access is not restricted. However, over half of the children reside in the Shirley area.

The Centre is community based with parents playing an active role in both the operating of the Centre on a day-to-day basis as well as the administration.

CURRENT SITUATION

A major effect of the shift from Sydenham to Shirley has been the requirement for this centre to obtain a new licence from the Ministry of Education. The Ministry highlighted the need for the employment of further staff with higher qualifications. This, along with one-off costs associated with the shift, has resulted in higher expenses than normal. The Ministry of Education provides an annual bulk grant (approximately \$100,000 for the 2001/02 year). This grant is approximately \$7,000 short of wage costs alone, notwithstanding other costs of approximately \$35,000. The group actively seeks funding from other sources including COGS, WINZ, Community Trust and, until recently has held a regular Housie evening. This group currently has applications into Community Employment Group (CEG), two Pub Charities and to both the Hillary Commission and Community Development Scheme, all for resources and staff costs.

PRESENT NEED

In order to be licensed the group need to comply with the Ministry of Education requirements by 8 June 2002. The Ministry presently is contracting a licensee to work with the Trust of Aoga Amata to assist them to meet these requirements. The Contractor is convinced that if this Centre were to close then at least 90% of the children would not be able to attend another early childhood centre. The major area of expense that the Trust has difficulty raising funds for is that of administration (including power and telephone costs). These costs amount to around \$4,000 annually. (A copy of the Trusts Annual Accounts has been sent under separate cover).

Although the accounts to 31 July 2001 suggest a substantial total asset base, it should be noted that this includes a Ministry of Education Building Grant.

CONCLUSION

This group has proven itself over the years to be highly effective in the delivery of early childhood education to Pacific Island communities. Extenuating circumstances have led it to seek assistance from the Community Board and it would be grateful for any help towards the administration costs of approximately \$4,000.

Recommendation: That \$4,000 be allocated to Aoga Amata Aotearoa Early Childhood Education Centre from SCAP funds for the purposes of administration expenses.

Chairperson's

Recommendation: That the officer's recommendation be adopted.