

STAFF REPORT

TO: Corporate Services Committee

FROM: Cameron Fraei, Rates Officer

DATE: 28 May 2009

SUBJECT: **Consideration of 2009/2010 Rate Remissions**

1. INTRODUCTION

Under the Local Government (Rating) Act 2002 Councils are able to consider rate remissions for sporting and community groups under their remission policy contained in the Annual Plan (Policies attached)

These policies require Rates staff to communicate with these organisations who have previously received a rate remission or for whom a rate remission may be perceived to be available.

A letter and application form was forwarded to these groups asking for information on:

- Organisation objectives
- Details of membership
- Current financial information
- Any other relevant information

Today's meeting will consider those responses that have been received with remissions being considered under the provisions of Section 85 of the Local Government (Rating) Act 2002 and Council's policy on remissions for sporting, recreation and community groups.

2. CURRENT COUNCIL PRACTICE – DISCRETIONARY REMISSIONS

a) Halls and Libraries

Halls are deemed to be providing a service at no cost to Council. None of the halls listed on the attached schedule are owned by Tasman District Council.

b) Promotion of Arts, Recreation, Health and Education

Again Council's policy has been to provide relief on privately owned facilities which are offered for general use to the public at no cost to Council. Further consideration is given where it is perceived that there may be some financial pressure placed on the owners of such facilities if rates were collected in accordance with the amount directly levied.

c) Games and Sports

Clubs operating from Council reserves generally pay a lease to council but receive no separate rating charge. In an attempt to equalise the position of sports clubs within the district it has been past practice to provide clubs who either own their property or who under the terms of their independent leases are responsible for rates, a 25% remission.

d) Agricultural and Pastoral Societies

Council policy has been to acknowledge the work of A & P associations in a district with a significant rural economy.

e) Free maintenance and relief of persons in need

Council recognises organisations which provide a free service to those in need in the community. While there are many organisations providing services in the district they mainly operate from non-rateable premises. Organisations which rely on volunteers and donations may be given some rate relief at Council's discretion.

3. RESPONSES RECEIVED AND LEVELS OF REMISSIONS

We have included response details from those organisations seeking a rate remission for the 2009/2010 financial year. These are numbered in accordance with the application number indicated on the rate remission schedule. Financial details have been withheld from the public portion of this agenda but specific information can be tabled at the meeting, in committee, if requested.

Please note that the proposed rates may also include wastewater, water services and refuse collections which are not eligible for any remission.

Should the Committee agree with staff recommendations, the amount of remissions to be granted will be \$44,904.50 (not including the three new applications).

4. NEW APPLICANTS

There are three new applicants this year.

- Takaka Christian Assembly
- Mountain Valley School Founders Trust
- Huia Rugby Football Club Inc

5. OPEN SPACE QEII COVENANTS

Concurrent to the annual rate remission exercise, Council is also required to pass a resolution to acknowledge the granting of rate remissions specific to registered QEII Covenants. A schedule of those applicants, totalling \$50,511.50, is attached to this report.

6. RECOMMENDATION

That:

- a) **Remissions in accordance with Council's Policy on Remissions for Sporting, Recreation or Community Organisations for the 2009/2010 financial year, as per the schedule contained in the agenda, be approved.**
- b) **Remissions for Open Space QEII Covenants for the 2009/2010 financial year as per the schedule contained in the agenda be approved.**

Cameron Fraei
Rates Officer