

9 March 2016

New Zealand Tax Payers' Union Inc

Via: requests@taxpayers.org.nz

To whom it may concern

Request for information relating to any payments made to the Wellington Marine Conservation Trust.

Thank you for your email to the Council received on 29 January 2015 in which you requested information relating to any payments made to the Wellington Marine Conservation Trust since 2009. Your request was forwarded to the Issues Resolution Office to provide a response.

Further to my letter dated 29 February 2016 I can now provide the information you have requested.

Wellington City Council supports the Wellington Marine Conservation Trust on two main fronts. The first is around the development and delivery of marine education and conservation programmes which are currently operated from the 'Bait House Aquarium'. The second is assistance in the development of the proposed Ocean Exploration Centre (OEC) which has the vision to educate and entertain visitors on the unique marine environment of the South Coast.

It is important to note that our support of this proposed facility is dependent on substantial non-council partner funding and economic analysis that shows the likely potential for an economic return of over 10:1 (more than \$10 economic return to the city for every \$1 invested by the Council).

Before Council makes a decision to fund the capital phase of the OEC, public consultation with appropriate information being made available will be undertaken.

As you have asked a number of questions I will now address these in the order of your email.

1) “How much money has Wellington City Council provided to the organisation since 2009? Please provide a breakdown of each”

Transactions 1 – 5:

These payments, set out in the table below, were made to the Trust as per the Council’s commitment made in the 2009-19 long term plan (see Appendix 1), to share 50% of the costs of a comprehensive feasibility study into the proposed Ocean Exploration Centre, capped at \$450,000. This funding followed positive findings of initial feasibility work relating to the Maranui Quarry site (see transaction 1).

The products delivered to the Trust as a result on this funding were as follows:

- Financial modelling and business case
- Market research and Visitor Demand modelling
- Various site analysis and geotechnical reports
- Economic impact assessment

Transaction	Year	Amount	Purpose
1	2009	\$25,000.00	Grant for feasibility study for proposed Marine Education Centre at Maranui Quarry site.
2	2010	\$35,017.71	Feasibility study 50% contribution payment
3	2011	\$149,762.01	Feasibility study 50% contribution payment
4	2012	\$162,805.67	Feasibility study 50% contribution payment
5	2013	\$102,324.63	Feasibility study 50% contribution payment

Transactions 6 – 15:

These transactions, set out in the table below, are grants paid to the Trust to assist them in delivering various educational programs and small capital projects (related to the bait house aquarium). These grants were awarded from contestable grant pools.

Transaction	Year	Amount	Purpose
6	2009	\$7,000.00	Expansion of open day programme
7	2010	\$5,000.00	Experiencing Marine Reserves Project
8	2011	\$7,200.00	Ocean Discovery Programme
9	2012	\$8,620.00	Family Open Sundays Programme
10	2012	\$6,500.00	Experiencing Marine Reserves Project
11	2013	\$8,000.00	Family Open Sundays Programme
12	2014	\$50,000.00	Year 1 of Three Year Funding Contract
13	2015	\$3,000.00	Healthy Harbours Wellington Project
14	2015	\$51,000.00	Year 2 of Three Year Funding Contract
15	2016	\$52,019.00	Year 3 of Three Year Funding Contract

2) “For what purpose has the Council provided funding to the organisation?”

Please refer to the tables in the above answers.

3) “What accountability mechanisms and oversight does the Council have to ensure that this funding is being spent as intended?”

- **Feasibility Study:**

Once the decision to fund was agreed by Council, and included in the 2009-19 Long Term Plan, a joint steering group was established between senior council officers and members of the Trust. Funds were released once invoices were received from suppliers, and those suppliers had delivered according to requirements. Once the joint group was satisfied with the products, Council funds were released to pay 50% of the invoiced amount. Evidence of these payments having being completed was also sighted by the joint committee.

- **Grant Funding:**

Each grant application is submitted to the respective Council committee for a decision. Prior to this current 2013-16 triennium, this was to the Grants Subcommittee. All current grant decisions sit with the respective specialist committee.

All grant applications must have specific targets/milestones/outcomes attached to them. Those who have received grants must participate in a ‘report back’ process to show what each grant was spent on and whether outcomes were achieved. This report back process must be completed before any further grants are applied for.

Since 2014 the Council has supported the Trust with contract funding which consolidated the various projects which we supported through different grant funds. The reason for this approach is that it allows the Council to form a closer working relationship with the Trust, and make them more accountable for grant pool funding than regular grant recipients by having them under binding contract.

In respect of the performance agreement and outcomes relating to the contract funding, this information is attached as Appendix 2.

Should you require any further information or clarification regarding the Wellington Marine Conservation Trust please contact Jim Robertson, Senior Strategy Advisor, on (04) 803 8375 or jim.robertson@wcc.govt.nz

Yours sincerely



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