
St James Trust – funding request

The Proposal

The St James Trust is requesting an increase of \$200,000 in the Events Development Fund in each of the following two years (2009/10 and 2010/11) to be specifically allocated to the St James Trust.

The St James Trust has made the funding request in recognition that the current economic situation is having a negative impact on sponsorship, naming rights and the ability to obtain grants from trusts to secure shows. Promoters are also less willing to carry the risk in the current economic environment.

The proposal – as outlined by the St James Trust - would see the Events Development Fund increased by \$200,000 and allocated in each of the following two years for the Trust to enter into joint ventures with promoters to deliver a programme of shows at the St James and the Opera House.

Presently the Trust cannot apply for events funds until a show is contracted.

The Trust does not recommend the alternative option of using the St James and Opera House as 'venues for hire' as this would require a change to the way the theatres are managed/administered and would result in the venues being 'dark' for periods of time.

Proposal Costs

Project Component	Operating expenses									
	\$000									
	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19
<i>Increase in EDF for St James Trust only</i>	200	200	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Total</i>	200	200	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

This proposal would be funded by an increase to the targeted commercial rate in accordance with the Revenue and Financing Policy.

Discussion

The St James Trust contributes to our priority of 'maintaining Wellington's reputation as a vibrant and eventful place' and the venues maintained by the St James Theatre Trust are an important part of the city's event and arts infrastructure. It is therefore important that the Trust continues to operate sustainably into the future.

Officers however do not believe that increasing and transferring a portion of the Events Development Fund is an appropriate way to achieve the above. The St James Trust can, and does, access funding from the Fund on a case by case basis. This is appropriate because the Trust's proposals should be weighed up against other event proposals so that the best investment is made from the city's point of view. Giving the Trust control and exclusive access to a proportion of the city's events funding may result in events of potential greater benefit not being supported.

In addition, there is the potential for too many out of town events to undermine the sustainability of Wellington based performing arts organisations. There have been examples in the past of international touring shows competing directly for audiences with locally produced works. This is contrary to our

cultural well-being priority of 'facilitating a supportive environment for arts and cultural activity'. The Council's Events team is aware of this potential and currently allocates funding to reduce the occurrence of such clashes. Maintaining the current situation, where there is one source of funds for the attraction and support of events, will ensure that a strategic approach to events development and an appropriately balanced programme of events is maintained.

Officer recommendation

It is recommended that the request is declined. The St James Trust should continue to apply to the Events Development Fund on a case by case basis as the most appropriate way to access funding support.

Contact officer:

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