

From: peter goldsbury [pgoldsbury@stratex.co.nz]
Sent: Wednesday, 16 May 2007 5:27 p.m.
To: Lucy Green (MfE SMF); Cameron Sherley
Cc: Helen Beaumont (PCE); Bruce Griffin (NRC); Phil Grimshaw (FNDC);
Randal Stensness
Subject: Hokianga Harbourcare SMF Funding Application 07/066

Dear Cameron and the MfE SMF team (cc Lucy Green).

cc Bruce Griffin - Northland District Council
Phil Grimshaw - Far North District Council
Helen Beaumont - Assistant Commissioner for the Environment

I was privileged to have been asked by the Hokianga Harbourcare Collective (HHCC) to support them with the Project Management aspects of the proposal they submitted for Sustainable Management Funding support over the last two rounds.

1. 2006 Round:

Last year HHCC asked the Office of the Commissioner for the Environment to ascertain why their application was declined for such a positive project, providing evidence in the form of a DVD interview with the people concerned which portrayed the determination, vision and commitment of the team, the technical knowledge and support they had behind them and the essential rightness of what was being proposed. The reasons verbally given for their proposal being declined claimed that it was not necessary because the local authorities were already carrying out remediation and replanting work in the Hokianga area. That excuse did not stand up to any scrutiny as the scale of this by a few volunteer planters was trivial compared with the massive commitment that HHCC proposal determined was necessary over around ten years to carry out the task of restoring the health of their harbour and catchment.

They concluded that coming as they were from under-employed communities in an area with little resources and influence, the reasons for the decline were more likely about political expediency rather than technical evaluation, so determined that for 2007 their proposal would be watertight. In the meantime they have used their international connections to gather in knowledge of some world leading natural remediation technology and are initiating research projects to help make their project even more effective. They have been up-skilling their team as well as connecting with partners and expertise in a wider local and global support network. HHCC Chairman Randall Stensness (26) reminds us that many other Kiwi youth will share the benefits of their project and learning journey. There is no question that they can make this program happen. See their web page at www.kaitiakitanga.net/others/hokianga

2. 2007 Round

HHCC have now advised me that you sent them a letter ref 07/066 dated 27th April telling them that their 2007 application had been declined. I understand this letter stated that the fund had be oversubscribed to the tune of \$28.2m over the three years when the government vote to this fund amounted to around 3.84m per annum. The HHCC team has asked me to advise you that they will not accept the reasons given for this decline and request that MfE immediately makes submissions

that government raise the amount available to a level that matches their recent new policy position re sustainability.

This is not a selfish request on their own behalf, but is in support of all other applicants who also put in much hard work with the objective of obtaining the relatively small amounts of money needed to allow them to lever it many-fold with their own community energy and time. When the funding limit results in little over 10% of the submissions from such communities and others being successful, some serious questions need to be asked about New Zealand's commitment to support community action for the environment. Such a waste of effort by submitters discourages proactive initiatives.

HHCC contends that a funding level of less than \$1 per annum per person in NZ is totally inappropriate, particularly after the government's recent policy commitment to do something about climate change and also considering NZ's 100% pure badge. We understand that other political parties in their sustainability policies suggest that more like \$1B is required to make the difference needed.

The HHCC team remind us that the direct amount they are asking for is an order of magnitude less than what cabinet assigned for the preservation of the stone store and colonial buildings in Kerekere. We note that Statistic NZ figures indicate that 40% of the population of the Far North District Council are listed as Maori and we suggest that the proportion is probably even higher than this in the Western Hokianga Region. Any sense of justice would suggest that they similarly deserve priority to be placed on supporting their actions to preserve the Hokianga Harbour; a taonga their communities value far more, as it's life determines the future health and wellness of all their grandchildren.

3. HHCC is looking for positive solutions and support please.

Please understand that this request is not an attack on MfE or government but rather a "call to action" by some immensely positive people who are frustrated by the degradation that has occurred in their catchment as a result of environmental abuse over many decades. It now urgently requires much dedicated restoration funding and action to rectify our mistakes on behalf of all future generations. Their community will not accept no for an answer. HHCC is convinced that they will find creative ways to help fund their ongoing program and support their youth / community growth in its later years, but this restoration seed funding is essential for them right now please.

4. HHCC offers its support to MfE and Local Authorities to help open doors with government.

In the light of the recent bipartisan official commitment to sustainability and attack on global warming, we look forward to MfE initiating an urgent re-consideration of the Sustainable Management Fund level with government. We and our partners offer you our support and experience in any way we can to help you progress this. We attach a copy of the HHCC funding submission (freely shared off their webpage at www.kaitiakitanga.net/others/hokianga) which clearly shows this program delivers not just long term environmental outcomes but also Enterprise, Social and Cultural one as well.

Please let us know urgently what action you are taking. In the meantime, can you please send me an electronic copy of your letter of 27 April by email. HHCC people are immensely positive and are committed to making this program happen.

Regards
Peter

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