



MEDIA RELEASE

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Rātā Foundation wraps up the year with over \$6 million in community grants to the Canterbury region

Rātā Foundation has wrapped up its funding for 2016 with over \$6 million in grant approvals for Canterbury community groups, with \$1.975 million earmarked for building projects.

Louise Edwards, Chief Executive of Rātā Foundation says the \$2 million for building projects reflects the strong desire by Trustees to continue ongoing support of the Canterbury rebuild post-earthquake, as well as promote social cohesion within communities. The remaining \$4 million has been spread across the Foundation's small and large grants programmes.

"The majority of these projects have been locally-led, with a strong focus on providing facilities for community-centered activities and events."

The Bridge South Brighton Trust has purchased an abandoned church to provide a multi-use facility which will include a community hall, space for a wellness centre, a café, pop up restaurants, offices, community information centre, learning centre and a performance venue. Rata Foundation has approved \$225,000 towards the fit-out.

Ms Edwards says the applicant advised after the quakes most of the shops in South Brighton were demolished, including their own local café. Due to expensive land remediation costs, the owner has not been able to proceed with a rebuild. Since the shops have not been replaced, the former church site provides an opportunity to restore some of what has been lost to the local community over the last six years.

Jane Harrison of The Bridge South Brighton Trust says the funding is the best Christmas present South Brighton could have hoped for.

Ms Harrison says the Trust has been formed by a strong group of local residents who have experience and success in delivering community projects.

"The new facility will be run as a social enterprise and our initial budgets show we should be self-sustaining in the first year of operation," she says.

"The whole of South Brighton got behind us. I think because we had lost so much there was a really strong need for us to have somewhere to gather as a community. We will be able to provide a space for our people to express, create, celebrate and strengthen their sense of community and culture."

“The Eastern suburbs were particularly hard hit during the quakes. Six years is a long time to wait for new facilities. This project is focused on building community resilience and well-being by providing a variety of community events and activities across a wide range of people,” says Ms Edwards.

The other six projects, which include building projects in Hurunui and Selwyn are outlined below.

ENDS

Omihi Community and Sports Hall Committee Inc – \$200,000

Omihi Community and Sports Hall Committee Inc was formed to rebuild the Omihi Hall located at Omihi Domain which was destroyed by fire in August 2015. As well as being a community hall, it was home to the Glenmark Rugby Club, and housed decades of rugby memorabilia, with the Club claiming ten All Blacks and a number of Canterbury representatives over the years. The committee will oversee and manage the rebuild.

The new hall will be multi-use, well utilised by the local primary school, and other sporting and cultural groups. The Hurunui District Council strongly supports this project, which strategically aligns well with their Long-Term Plan. The new hall will be used as the Civil Defence Sector Post for the district.

The Committee has strongly stated the previous facility as being “the glue which held a strong intergenerational community together.” This is a great example of a project being driven by the community for the community, particularly given the pressures they have endured over the last three years with drought conditions.

The Arts Centre of Christchurch Trust Board – \$150,000

The \$150,000 approved will contribute towards funding for Stage 2 of the interior restoration of the Arts Centre Observatory Tower.

The Tower is one of the most recognisable buildings within the Arts Centre complex. It is the most visibly damaged building within the F Block having suffered major structural damage during the February 2011 earthquakes. The Arts Centre is often perceived as a restoration project which “will get funded regardless” however in reality there is still a substantial funding shortfall to be raised.

Rhodes Park Combined Sports Body Inc – \$500,000

After suffering earthquake damage and no longer meeting Building Code, the decision was taken by the Rhodes Park Combined Sports Body to rebuild a new community and sports pavilion. While exploring the new sports pavilion build, the issue of repairing or rebuilding the Tai Tapu Hall was also put to the local community for consideration. Proposed plans and information were distributed to community organisations and local residents, with over 93% in favour of a combined facility at the Rhodes Park Domain.

The community itself has realised through a self-driven consultation process that the future lies not in multiple small facilities, but in a larger group hub where economies of scale would result in better long term outcomes for present and future users.

Parkland Bowling Club Inc (with Parklands Rugby Football Club) – \$400,000

Parklands Bowling Club and the Parkland Rugby Football Club, with support from the Ministry of Education, have entered into a joint venture to relocate two buildings from the former Freeville School to land leased from the Christchurch City Council adjoining the Parklands Bowling Club site. The intent is to form a Parklands Community Sports and Recreation Hub to focus on understanding and meeting local community needs, and providing facilities, programmes and solutions which will appeal to a wide range of individuals and organisations.

The Parklands Bowling Club facilities were impacted by the earthquakes, with their pavilion building damaged beyond repair. Both bowling greens were also damaged, but have undergone extensive repairs to allow members to return to their club site. In the last few years the club has incorporated players from South Brighton and Linwood Bowling Clubs which have closed. The club is keen to reinvent itself for the benefit of the wider community, hence the joint venture with Parklands Rugby Football Club who has also suffered significant disruption.

In meeting community needs post-quake, both the bowls and rugby clubs have adapted to the new landscape and are a good example of the development of new and collaborative partnerships between codes for greater community benefit.

Selwyn District Council – West Melton Community and Recreation Centre – \$250,000

The Selwyn District Council serves a fast-growing population of approximately 50,000 with West Melton identified as one of the fast growing areas in the District. While the community has grown, the infrastructure has not kept pace. The Selwyn District Council are developing a new purpose-built Community and Recreation Centre to replace both the earthquake damaged West Melton Community Hall and the West Melton Playcentre. The proposed centre has been designed to incorporate a wide range of current and future community needs. The applicant advises this project will contribute to a large percentage of the community's wellbeing, offering a facility capable of incorporating intergenerational activities.

Food Resilience Network Inc – \$250,000

Food Resilience Network is an incorporated society pulled together from members of Soil & Health Canterbury, Canterbury Horticultural Society, Community Gardens Assn, Christchurch City Council, Canterbury DHB and other leading horticultural groups. The aim of Food Resilience Network is to catalyse a strong local food economy in Christchurch and Canterbury and to work collaboratively across 30 organisations to increase access to fresh, healthy food for our communities.

Their project, Ōtākaro Orchard on Cambridge Terrace, is designed to be Christchurch's first edible and urban food hub and is intended to be a place where the community can gain knowledge and inspiration about sustainable food systems in practice. The site will also house a café which will be owned and operated by a collective of social service providers who will use surplus food from the garden, as well as generating an income for the agencies involved.