



# Celebrating new ideas

2009 New Zealand Post Group  
Local Government Excellence Awards

Project Submission Template

JOINED UP LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Name of Project:

**Fit 4 Funding**

Name of entering council/s:

**Hutt City Council**

**Upper Hutt City Council**



Submitted By:

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## 1. Brief Description of the Project

Fit 4 Funding was one day forum for community groups aimed at advising groups on the processes and procedures around applying for funding from funding agencies.

The forum had booths from local funding organisations. Staff from these organisations were available for groups to discuss their particular funding requirements. There was also a variety of fundraising ideas for organisations.

The forum was full of speakers and workshops of which attendees could choose depending on their particular groups needs. Advice was given on the economic recession, fundraising, what funders require, accountability, filling in application forms for funding and selling the groups in the best light possible to funders.

Gift bags were provided for each attendee which included information about places to access funding, governance, fundraising ideas and information about each Council and DIA.

## 2. Organisations Involved

### **ORGANISERS:**

1. Hutt City Council (HCC)
2. Upper Hutt City Council (UHCC)

### **OTHER ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED:**

- |   |  |
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| 1. Department of Internal Affairs (DIA) | 10. Funding Information Services           |
| 2. Community Trust of Wellington        | 11. Office of Ethnic Affairs               |
| 3. Hutt Mana Trust                      | 12. Community Net                          |
| 4. T G McCarthy Trust                   | 13. COGS                                   |
| 5. J R McKenzie Trust                   | 14. Endeavour Trust                        |
| 6. Pub Charities                        | 15. Charities Commission                   |
| 7. Volunteer Wellington                 | 16. Foresee Communications                 |
| 8. Ministry of Youth Development        | 17. Office of Voluntary & Community Sector |
| 9. Funding Institute of NZ              | 18. TechSoup Ltd                           |

## 3. Rationale for the Project and Expected Benefits

Fit 4 Funding was a collaborative event, developed from the growing demand placed on the organisers by community groups requesting information regarding filling in of application forms for funding, finances/budgets, governance issues and also the current economic recession impact.

Not all groups have the same requirements, therefore it was decided that a workshop format would be more beneficial to most groups. The main questions raised by community groups to each respective council funding officer were around application processes, the appropriate places to seek funding, financial requirements (including accountability), governance issues as well as volunteers (around costs, retention, employment).

In the planning process we discussed what the benefits to community groups would be. It was agreed that community groups needed to be better informed about the process of applying for funding, the requirements of the funders (and how the different funding agencies are governed within legislative procedures). Another focus was on introducing groups to each other as a networking opportunity, as well as introducing other major funders available to them within the community.

The expected benefits were better informed community organisations on the procedures and processes for applying for external funding. Fit 4 Funding was designed around these community needs (ie incorporating, application process, governance, volunteers and financial needs). In turn we hoped to see community groups liaising more with other organisations,

council and the funding agencies before completing and sending in applications forms (of which are often incomplete or not researched enough for the particular fund they are applying to).

This was also a great opportunity for both councils to join together to achieve a common goal, therefore creating a regional event.

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## 4. Linkage to Council's Strategic Direction

HCC & UHCC outcomes outlined in the LTCCP documents strongly back the concept of Fit 4 Funding. Both councils incorporate the wellbeing and building strong and robust communities. In this economic climate more and more groups are struggling with the costs of keeping their doors open. Both councils identified this need and have a dedicated Funding Officer to help groups with their financial and funding needs.

This is strongly linked to both Council's strategic outcomes - these are as follows:

### Hutt City Council

#### 'Lifestyle'

Affordable access to community facilities that includes Arts, culture and recreational options. Measures used in the LTCCP are community satisfaction with support programmes and community organisations satisfaction. This was achieved by providing the information about funding, governance and finances to community organisations to enable them to remain sustainable to ensure the continuation of their programmes for the community.

#### 'Strong and Tolerant Communities'

Encouraging community involvement and engagement with civic life. HCC's contribution to achieving this outcome is having a policy of understanding and identifying our communities and their issues, ensuring that we can respond appropriately. This was achieved during Fit 4 Funding as the communities' needs were identified and addressed. The major need at the time of Fit 4 Funding was the economic recession and how organisations would manage through it.

### Upper Hutt City Council

#### The community is safe, healthy and strong

- People of all ages, cultures and abilities participate in community affairs
- Clubs, churches and community groups are strong
- Community groups and service providers take a proactive approach to meet local needs
- Education, social and health services for all ages, cultures and abilities are excellent and easily accessible
- We use our community resources well
- People look after each other
- People are active in local decision-making
- The community and business sectors collaborate to generate maximum local benefit

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## 5. Project Planning

It was agreed by the project team that the date for the forum should be at the beginning of the year. This would enable community organisations to prepare for the year ahead. Most of the major funding organisations close their funds mid year or later.

92% of all community organisations workers are volunteers in our community and we agreed the forum hours should reflect this as well as catering for those with school aged children and we set the hours as 9.00 am to 2.30 pm.

We agreed to cap the numbers at 250 for the first year as this was a number the organisers felt comfortable handling for an inaugural event.

Access was an important consideration to ensure that both the elderly and those with a disability had ease of access. The project team visited a number of venues and finally decided that the Lower Hutt Town Hall provided the best access to public transport, parking, and full disability access. This venue also catered for the workshops we wanted to host which required separate breakout rooms for the different workshops and a large enough space for the funders to set up their booths.

Due to the already established relationships between DIA and local funders, DIA approached various funders requesting their presence on the day. DIA was also the lead in selecting speakers for the panel discussion.

As both Councils have strong relationships with their local communities the topics for the day were generated from both councils community funding needs. Once the programme was developed the planning and ordering started. HCC had an administration person available so the bulk of the administrative tasks were completed by HCC.

The project team also put together all the documentation required for the day e.g. H&S plan, floor plan & running sheet. Each staff member attending on the day was allocated tasks and given times to complete each task.

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## 6. Project Management

The project team consisted of

- Candy Murison HCC
- Keryn Martin DIA
- Kim Cheeseman UHCC

The three organisers have extensive knowledge in the area of community funding needs and requirements and it was decided that there was no requirement to outsource to a project management specialist. The organisations worked together well to ascertain the skills of each individual and an extensive project plan was developed. The project plan evolved to cover the existing needs of the community (also incorporating areas the organisers felt needed covering).

Regular meetings were held over the 6 month planning period. During these meetings task allocations were discussed and updated. It was agreed that the different strengths of each individual and organisation would determine the tasks allocated.

The budget was set before the planning to enable the project team to work within budget.

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## 7. Relationship / Stakeholder Management

All three project managers work within the community funding arena so had strong knowledge of both the communities needs as well as funding organisations available to groups/organisations in each respective local authority area.

The use of other funding stakeholders on the day ensured that relationships were formed not only with HCC and UHCC but with the community organisations attending on the day. By providing an hour and a half lunch break it gave community organisations an opportunity to walk around and speak to the different funding organisations that were onsite to answer questions, provide information about what they fund and also to encourage community groups to apply.

There were a number of sponsors of the forum which included: Cadbury, Aqua Plus and Glow Stick Company. These sponsors contributed valuable fundraising ideas to the day. They were asked to provide an information sheet about their product which was given to each attendee through the gift bags. Regular contact with stakeholders was maintained throughout the planning process, and after the forum, to ensure that their contribution was beneficial to their organisation. This also secured their participation to the forum in 2010.

Koraunui Marae and Te Mangarongo were engaged to cook a hangi at a cost of \$8 per participant (which created a novel lunch, and also provided a fundraising opportunity). Regular contact was maintained with the Hangi providers to ensure that the lunch was delivered on time and that they had enough support and resources to provide the hangi. These organisations have agreed to work with us again next year.

The presenters were regularly informed and provided with a running sheet of the day. The project management team liaised with all organisations following the event to ensure that they were satisfied with the outcomes of the day and to maintain the ongoing relationships built.

We are happy to say that all groups that participated are keen to participate in 2010.

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## 8. Innovation and Originality

Although UHCC regularly holds community forums - this was the first public forum to be held in the Hutt City for the wider community, and a first for the two Councils to combine into a regional event.

The forum developed due to an increased number of contacts made from community organisations to all three funding advisors. The main requests were community organisations wanting assistance on applications, accountability, governance, volunteer issues and the impact the recession is having on organisations (who mainly work in a volunteer capacity, receive no government funding or have no profit making abilities).

HCC and UHCC saw an opportunity to host an event for community organisations to come together in one venue to learn more about the processes and procedures needed in a successful funding application.

These discussions developed into the idea of a funding type forum and Department of Internal Affairs was invited to join the process – Fit 4 Funding then evolved.

Due to budget restraints, organisers had to become creative in the approach and development of the forum. As this was a full day event, and a lunch break was needed – what better way to showcase the innovative fundraising abilities of groups than to taste a hangi provided by a local Marae as their fundraiser.

Community groups are inundated with "forum and workshop" opportunities. Fit 4 Funding was looking to provide true value to community organisations in an original way. Organisers utilised their relationships with various funding agencies and funding specialists of which guest speakers came on board in a voluntary capacity, funding agencies also attended (allowing staff to host their booths for the day).

We approached professional comedians to perform on the day to lighten the mood and help boost morale of the community in such an unstable economic climate. Gift bags were also given to everyone attending with free samples of fundraising ideas (all donated by various local fundraising businesses) as well as valuable funding information from both funding agencies and local councils.

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## 9. Evaluation Framework

Evaluation forms were created prior to the event, to ensure that the forum was beneficial to both the target audience (ie participants) as well as the funding organisations on site.

Feedback was also requested from internal staffs from UHCC and HCC that were in attendance on the day.

The evaluation forms were extremely positive and community organisations were keen for the event to become an annual event. The organisers will put in place the suggested changes noted in feedback for next years event. This type of feedback is vital for event planning to ensure that the needs of the community and stakeholders are met.

The evaluation forms were designed to reflect the outcomes expected from the day. As there were a variety of workshops and information given on the day each part was assessed individually. This enabled the project team to then relate the results back to the original outcomes expected from the day.

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## 10. Outcomes for Council

This event was the first collaborative public event for the two local authorities, and while both have differing LTCCP outcomes the Fit 4 Funding event clearly connects directly with both Councils outcomes.

The networking advantages gained by this event were unprecedented, with both the diverse range of organisations working hard in our respective communities (A large amount of the organisations present representing a crossover of both local authorities), as well as the connections made between organisers and the funding bodies and fundraising businesses represented, and last but not least the strengthening of the relationship between the two funding officers of each council, who now connect frequently to discuss various funding applications from cross over groups, community needs etc.

Due to the huge success of this event, both Councils have agreed to hold this event annually, with both Councils contributing financially, making available various resources and providing staff availability for the event.

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## 11. Benefits to Other Parties

As shown through the evaluation process the benefits to the participants were invaluable.

Koraunui Marae and Te Mangarongo gained valuable funds from the lunchtime hangi, highlighting the need for community organisations to fundraise.

The Glow Stick Company and Aqua Plus both reported an increase in sales in the months following the forum. An additional benefit of this would be a flow down effect when the community groups sold the products purchased from these companies for fundraising then the benefit of that would be to the community they provide a service too.

One of the biggest benefits to the attendees was the ability to network with both their peers and funding agencies available to them. Relationships formed on the day will be beneficial for years to come – both for the funders having face-to-face knowledge of applicants when funding applications and with their peers. Organisations found there were links between each other, common issues and ways that they could collaborate and work together.

Finally the enhanced relationships between the funding officers of both Councils and the Department of Internal Affairs, these three organisers are the ‘face’ of funding for their respective organisations to the wider community.

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## 12. Results

223 people registered for Fit 4 Funding and an additional 30+ turned up to register on the day – with some coming from Wairarapa and Kapiti and two people attending from Marton. This was a great attendance, with these representing over 142 different community organisations.

Below are results of the day taken from the evaluation forms:

- 83% of the people that answered the evaluation question regarding whether they are more confident about applying for funding after attending Fit 4 Funding agreed they were.
- 98% of the attendees rated the overall Fit 4 Funding Forum as satisfactory or higher.
- 99% of the participants rated the initial discussion ‘Basics of funding’ and it’s relevance to their organisation as satisfactory or higher. This result was valuable, as the speaker of this workshop spoke about the economic recession and how to prepare your organisation for funding (funding WOF).
- All of the other workshops rated highly and deemed beneficial to those that attended.

One of the organisations that attended on the day was Kapiti College Board of Trustees. Through attending Fit 4 Funding and speaking to lotteries funders they have successfully received \$689,400 towards their Gymnasium community facility. Their application was submitted 7 days after forum and they were notified in July of success. This would not have been possible if they had not attended Fit 4 Funding.

It has been agreed by both HCC and UHCC to work together to continue the forum as an annual event. DIA will be involved in the planning each year. At this stage other local funders have agreed to participant in the event and some have agreed to support the event financially to ensure that it continues. This alone confirms the value of the forum to the stakeholders.

The priorities of the forum each year will reflect the current issues and needs in the community and will be confirmed following consultation with our communities.

**Below are just a few of the comments from organisations that attended on the day**

*I just wanted to say how much I enjoyed the funding forum. It was a fantastic event, really well organised and great to see so many people there. It was extremely useful for me, being new to the Department, to get a sense of what DIA does in the community, and get a sense of some of the issues facing community groups at the moment.*

*Firstly – congratulations on a fabulously run Fit for Funding day. I was so inspired I bought glow-sticks to sell at Fiesta! Was great to hear from the funders too, as to what they need from us.*

*Just a thank you for a well organised Fit 4 Funding event. The governance session was especially helpful & I have invited Bidy Grant to help sort out a few things at Taita. Her korero has given me some light at what has been a very dark tunnel.*

*We found it very informative; we have started using some of the things we learnt already.*

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### 13. Supporting Material

- Fit 4 Funding Report

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### Contact/s for further information

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