



The Massey Matters Fund: Small change enables progress

Initiative: Massey Matters

Theme: Community Building

Wanting and encouraging communities to take a lead in their own community building takes a giant step forward in Massey with the Massey Matters Fund. This is a fund for small local projects that contribute to making Massey an even better place to live, work, play, grow and learn.

A core part of Massey Matters from its inception has been releasing new resources into the Massey community to enable community to lead action towards making Massey a better place to live, work, play, grow and learn themselves.

The Massey Matters Community Projects Fund is a key part of this. Provided by Auckland Council, the Fund is capped at \$25,000 per year and encourages applications for relatively small amounts (\$3000 and less) from passionate individuals as well as from not-for-profit organisations to assist locals to carry out new projects in the current calendar year. These projects need to be focused on:

- Building a stronger sense of community in Massey;
- Providing more local community events;
- Communicating and promoting community involvement in the Massey Matters Project;
- Increasing the information base about Massey eg. local history, identifying community issues or needs;
- Encouraging local Massey organizations and other agencies to work together in new ways;
- Building skills, leadership and confidence within the local communities of Massey;
- Building a local economy and provide jobs and training locally; and/or
- Focusing on young people, children and family.

Funded projects also contribute towards the achievement of Massey Matters' stated current outcomes, as well as contributing to the development of new areas of focus for the Massey community and Massey Matters. In this way the fund encourages a two-way street of communication, understanding and improvement in community activity, networks and sense of local identity and pride in Massey as well in the way Massey looks and feels and functions.

Applicants are encouraged to be creative and innovative and over the years it has engaged a wide audience, both in terms of applicants and those who benefit from the funding. As a result, the variety of locally initiated projects funded by the Community Projects Fund has been wide ranging with street barbeques, youth development and leadership programmes, Pasifika cultural workshops, an equine outreach programme are amongst the projects that have been supported.

As an example, the equine outreach programme run by Massey Pony Club (MPC) grew out of an initial connection with Massey Matters through Te Raa Mokopuna back in 2007. MPC is bordered by residential housing and, with local kids inclined to jump the fence and 'play' with the horses, the project aimed to bring the community together through education in order to address growing safety concerns for both horses and local children. The Massey Matters Fund provided the perfect catalyst to begin the process, with 10 local schools also coming on board to run the programme in late 2008. Although not without its challenges, the cards of appreciation show how enjoyable and informative the sessions were and the Club believes that a greater awareness of the MPC has also occurred in the wider community through conversations about the sessions. Since then MPC has gone on to successfully apply to the Fund for several other initiatives and credits Massey Matters and the fund with helping to "re-establish that community kind of feeling" by getting people thinking "about what you can do for the community" and contributing financially so that "things come to fruition".



A record of each project funded is provided in both written and visual form. These reports focus on outcomes and results as well as detailing what the money was spent on, who was involved, how the wider community was participated, and how the project has contributed towards the Massey Matters. Massey Matters staff are able to assist applicants at all stages of the process too, so none of the process becomes overwhelming or too arduous.

Not surprisingly then, competition for funds, which have been available since 2007, has increased each year. Applications are assessed by a community led funding committee which includes a representative of Massey Matters and from the local community board. Each year between 18-23 applications are funded for projects that may well not happen at all otherwise. As well, the opportunity to have local ideas supported on a regular basis has resulted in a heightened sense of

excitement, inspiration and optimism about what has been happening in Massey and given locals the confidence to share their ideas and bring them into reality.

Applicants can apply for funds for three years. Beyond this they are expected to become more self-sufficient and long term goal focussed.

Overall, these small projects have each and all contributed to the visible community building within the area over the past few years. In Massey, provision of a small pūtea that is locally administered demonstrates the value of local communities in a variety of ways, is highly valued by locals and plays a key role in catalysing locally led action.

Intent: To provide small amounts of dollar resource to enable locals to establish and lead local initiatives that contribute to the improved wellbeing of Massey communities.

Key Learnings:

- Small cash injections go a long way, often underpinning initiatives that would not have otherwise occurred. When such opportunities are a regular feature of local community-led development over a reasonable length of time (10 years), a culture of helping locals to help themselves becomes part of how we do things around here.
- Modelling community-led processes is critical: developing a community-led, clear and inclusive assessment process for applications is essential in order to ensure accountability and transparency
- Very local changes may be relatively small but can make a huge difference to local quality of life, to the ability of locals to realise their collective aspirations and to foster local leadership
- Seed funding can assist in developing an idea that can then become a longer term sustainable project/initiative eg the Stars Party – an annual event organised by a collaboration of local churches in Massey. This now attracts its own funding each year.

Key Outcomes:

- Well over 100 local initiatives of all kinds have occurred with support from the Massey Matters Fund since 2007.
- Locals are increasingly confident that they have a voice and role in making positive changes in their community. This is as recipients and beneficiaries of grants as well as knowing that local people are involved in making the decision about what is funded in any year.
- There is also an enhanced sense amongst local communities that their ideas are valued by both their communities and by decision making bodies such as Auckland Council. They increasingly know that their ideas will be supported to make the differences they wish to see in their communities
- Building capacity and testing out new approaches/projects

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