

# Trust grant boosts centre

Less public funding needed

Rhonda Markby



An \$800,000 grant from Trust Aoraki has significantly reduced the public funding required for the new CBay Aquatic Centre.

Trust Aoraki, which operates gaming machines at several South Canterbury venues, will add another \$200,000 to the project's coffers each year for the next four years.

The donation comes on top of the \$650,000 the trust made to the Timaru District Council for its new aquatic centre.

Timaru Mayor Janie Annear described the donation as a "truly wonderful Christmas present".

The project required between \$8-\$9 million in external funding, but four months ago it was revealed the figure could be \$2m short of that as a major lottery grant was not available, and Alpine Energy's donation of \$750,000 was considerably less than the \$3-\$4m which the council had initially thought would be forthcoming.

The donation means at worst the council is still \$1.55m short of the external funding required for the \$23.5m project. It could be a lot less, but that will not be known until the council's budget is finalised.

Mrs Annear said when the council made its original assumptions for external funding, it was hopeful of receiving \$1m from the trust, but the latest announcement meant the trust would contribute \$1.45m to the project.

"We are absolutely delighted with this wonderful gesture and thank the trust members for their amazing support for our community."

Mrs Annear was hopeful lottery funds, which were not available this year because of the Christchurch earthquake, might return in the coming year, allowing the council to apply for a significant amount.

The trust was confident the aquatic centre donations would not come at the cost of other groups, principal officer Murray Cleverley said yesterday. It had made several grants of between \$50,000 and \$150,000 to the CBay project over the last three years, so would effectively be continuing to do the same.

"The facility is excellent and we wanted to be able to help without penalising others."

A change in legislation allows trusts to make multi-year grants, with this being the first one the trust has made.

"It helps trusts work with communities in future planning," Mr Cleverley said.

The trust made grants of almost \$855,000 in 2010/11 and he anticipates a similar amount for 2011/12.



**Christmas gift:** Toasting the latest donation from Trust Aoraki to the CBay project yesterday were the trust's principal officer Murray Cleverley, left, Timaru Mayor Janie Annear and trust chairman Quentin Hix. Photo: NATASHA MARTIN/FAIRFAX NZ

Its funds come from gaming machines at The Old Bank Cafe & Bar in Timaru, the Crown Hotel in Temuka, the Otematata Lakes Hotel, the Kurow Hotel, The Top Hut in Twizel and The Stadium Sports Bar and Bistro in Phillipstown, Christchurch.

Mr Cleverley said the sites had all traded well, which would lead to more funds being available. By law the trust must give away 37 per cent of its takings, and has been donating close to 40 per cent.

The trust undertakes to put 70 per cent of its grants into sport and 30 per cent into community and education.

**Water fun:** The \$230,000 AquaPlay interactive playground has arrived at Timaru's new CBay Aquatic Centre. Council district services manager Ashley Harper checks out the equipment which will be a feature of the leisure pool area. A donation from the Lion Foundation paid for the equipment.

