To: Kevin Murphy, General Manager, Greytown Trust Lands

From: John Rhodes

31 July 2017

**Draft education funding strategy**

Although you involved me as a member of Greytown Lions Club, I submit this in my personal capacity.

In particular I support helping:

* early childhood education (ECE)
* families in financial hardship
* professional development for teachers
* apprentice and other non-university tertiary training

Specific comments follow.

1. Support for older people’s learning is difficult to target. Two agencies already doing good work in this field are our excellent town library and the Greytown Men’s Shed. However, any new activity that an older (or any) person may undertake provides them with learning opportunities and should be encouraged, whether or not it involves a financial cost. Many of Greytown’s older people are well provided for financially, but a few are not. The challenge is to find them and help their learning. Children in hardship can be identified and helped via their school principals, but no similar arrangement is possible for a person living solely on National Superannuation.
2. The new funding for ECE is most welcome. However, it should be noted that Greytown Early Years and Greytown Kindergarten (although probably the biggest) are not the only not-for-profit ECE providers in our town. Others include Plunket, the Toy Library and the weekly Play Group.
3. I question the disproportionately small allocation of funds to ECE in comparison with the primary and secondary sectors. The importance to human development of the first few years of life is so great that a case could be made for directing all of the Trust’s funding to it.
4. Page 4 of the draft strategy, under ‘Background’, mentions the Trust-funded tablets, laptops and computers used in classrooms at Greytown School. Like most people I was pleased to hear about this initiative. Recently, however, I learned of an OECD study showing that computer use in schools does not enhance children’s learning and may even impede it. See <http://www.bbc.com/news/business-34174796> and <http://www.oecd.org/edu/students-computers-and-learning-9789264239555-en.htm>

Whether or not to invest in IT in schools is properly a decision for educators rather than funders, but the Trust should at least be aware of this research.

1. Applications for community sector funding will be considered twice yearly. But six months is a long time to wait if an individual or organisation just misses a funding meeting. The opportunity to use the funds may disappear in that time. Could the Trust be more flexible?

I congratulate the Trust for taking a step back to re-evaluate its funding objectives and processes, and thank you for the opportunity to participate.

Yours sincerely

John Rhodes