

Applications open for 2026 Community Awards

Applications for the 2026 round of the Sumner Ferrymead Foundation Community Awards Programme are now being sought.

The community awards are for groups, clubs, and organisations within the foundation's catchment area – from Taylors Mistake through to Mt Pleasant, around to Heathcote and across to Brookhaven – and are for sport, arts & culture, the environment, and education. They range in value up to \$20,000.

“We have heard from several sources that it's getting harder for community groups to access community grants and awards, particularly in communities that are not considered to be an area of need,” said foundation chair Martin Hawes.



Martin Hawes

“This contributed to the idea that this year a number of awards should be offered in each category.”

Another contributing factor was the ongoing debate about the future of the foundation.

“Without a significant injection of capital, around half a million dollars, we lack the scale to make a significant long-term difference within our community,” Hawes said.



Recipients of the 2025 Community Awards Programme, from left Sumner Silver Band, Sumner Community Residents Association and Hub, Heathcote Cricket Club, Sumner Community Pool, Heathcote Valley Riding School.



“We explored several options for the foundation's future but after some robust debate the trustees have made the very hard decision not to offer the academic scholarships and the apprentice award this year, and to make 2026 the final round of community awards.”

The Sumner Ferrymead Foundation was established more than 30 years ago with a grant from former Sumner resident Dora Grut.

Over the years it has evolved from providing grants to

COMMUNITY AWARDS PROGRAMME

Environment Awards

Awards ranging from \$5k-\$20k are available to create a cleaner greener community

Arts & Culture Awards

Awards ranging from \$5k-\$20k are available to help arts & culture flourish in our community

Sports Awards

Awards ranging from \$5k-\$20k are available to improve sporting facilities or the health and physical wellbeing of the community

Education Awards

Awards ranging from \$5k-\$10k to encourage learning and development at all ages

individuals living within the catchment area, to the launch of the primary school Puawai Awards for year 8 students, to the Scholarships and Awards Programme for individuals and finally the Community Awards Programme.

The latter was launched to recognise 30 years of service to the community and has been a great success.

“The real value of the Community Awards lies in the benefit to the community rather than the individual” Hawes said.

“The establishment of the academic scholarships and apprentice award enabled us to attract some loyal and generous sponsors, but we never managed to find that significant capital injection that would have ensured the foundation's future.”

“I would like to recognise the work of current and former trustees, as well as the generosity of current and former sponsors and donors. They have enabled us to leave a legacy.”

• Application forms for the 2026 Community Awards Programme can be found on the Sumner Ferrymead Foundation website sumnerferrymeadfoundation.co.nz Applications close on March 31, 2026