

## **A NATIONAL AWARDS SCHEME for SPORT and the ARTS**

I should like to commend the idea of **NATIONAL AWARDS** for high achievers in sport and the arts. These would be awarded in response to career proposals put forward by high achievers between school-leaving age and, say, twenty-five. These proposals would outline a personal development plan designed to bring the proposer to national and international standard in their chosen sport or artistic pursuit and intimate the level of financial support required over the length of the plan (which would vary considerably from case to case). The application therefore would not be for a 'scholarship' or fixed grant but for revenue support to be considered on its own merits. A board of experts in each field (perhaps volunteers attracted by the prestigious nature of the task) would meet regularly to adjudicate the applications and make appropriate awards; organisations in each area of activity might be given the privilege of recommending suitable candidates as and when they emerge.

As the achievements of the NATIONAL AWARD winners begin to stack up it may be assumed that sponsors would appear ready to offer further financial assistance incidentally making many of the award winners role models for many more ambitious youngsters.

The NATIONAL AWARD scheme would be a high profile scheme designed to assist talent wherever it may be found in Scotland. It would encourage schools, FE colleges, sports clubs and centres to develop the talent in their ranks; it would maximise opportunity for that talent at the senior and elite levels wherever it exists in Scotland; and it would bring Scotland an ever improving international reputation in sport and the arts of which we may all be proud . . . and enjoy!

It is an innovative scheme and if planned and run with care and good PR would support the government's strategies in health, social inclusion and culture. It is for several reasons an ideal small nation strategy and a good investment for government.

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