Item 3: Wānaka Arts & Culture Trust - Precinct Update

SESSION TYPE: Briefing

PURPOSE/DESIRED OUTCOME:

The purpose of this briefing is to provide elected members with an update on the feasibility work being undertaken by the Lake Wānaka Arts & Culture Charitable Trust (WACT) on an arts precinct.

DATE/START TIME:

Tuesday, 6 October 2026 at 11.10am

TIME BREAKDOWN:

Presentation: 20 minutes
Questions: 20 minutes

PRESENTERS:

Marie Day (Community Partnerships Manager)
Olivia Egerton (WACT)

Prepared by:

Name: Marie Day
Title: Community Partnerships Manager
10 September 2026

Reviewed and Authorised by:

Name: Ken Bailey
Title: General Manager, Community Services
25 September 2026

ATTACHMENTS:

A	Presentation - Update on WACT Precinct Feasibility

Wānaka Arts and Culture Trust – Precinct Update

Council Workshop

Tuesday 6 October 2026

QUEENSTOWN LAKES DISTRICT COUNCIL

Recap of Council Direction

QUEENSTOWN LAKES DISTRICT COUNCIL

- Mandate as directed via AP26/27:
  - QLDC funding contribution $125k (Feasibility/Business Case)
  - Staff resourcing
- Community-led project:
  - QLDC advice provided to assist with business case development but there is no commitment for QLDC to invest at this stage.
- Initial areas of focus:
  - Development of Feasibility/Business Case
  - Process for investment to be considered by Council as part of LTP
  - Identification of preferred site

Lake Wānaka Arts and Culture Trust (WACT Presentation

Precinct Project Overview

QUEENSTOWN
LAKES DISTRICT
COUNCIL

WĀNAKA ARTS PERFORMING PRECINCT

A civic heart for generations

A once-in-a-generation opportunity to shape our District's future

"…The question is not simply what we need today. It is what we want this place, and this community, to be in 30, 40 or 50 years' time…."

- Ant Howard, Chair, Lake Wānaka Arts and Culture Trust

THE LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE

How do we meet the immediate pressures facing our community, protect ratepayers and still make the long-term decisions future generations will rely on?

WHY THIS MATTERS

WĀNAKA ARTS PERFORMING PRECINCT

A civic development

An high value investment in people, place and future prosperity

44%

of New Zealanders are lonely every day

~9% p.a.

Average growth in Lake Wānaka Centre in last three years

SOCIAL VALUE

Access for all - all demographics can gather for shared experience – organically or by design. This is how fast growing populations become a community.

Research outlines the role arts play, a role in preventing ill health, promoting wellbeing – especially when purpose built.

Creates an anchor for local identity where a community can tell its story and make a living and gather with each other.

CULTURAL VALUE

Creating a platform to share and celebrate Kāi Tahu identity and expression.

Access for local creative talent to thrive with creative spaces for pathways and presentation.

Create world-class experiences for our community and visitors giving access to high quality NZ art and artists.

ECONOMIC VALUE

Supporting diversification of a high value economy. Currently the Creative Industries contributes $234 million to Queenstown Lakes District.

Alignment to Tourism Policy Statement, June 2026, which outlines that events, museums, public spaces and visitor infrastructure are foundational to tourism.

"The arts are critical for telling our stories, all our stories, for sharing the wonder and pain of being human, to challenge and to question, and to grow and nourish us. They are as vital as any other element of human rights."

— Robyn Hunt, champion of the arts access movement for decades

Designing the right place, while we still can

The opportunity is bigger than replacing a venue

PLAN FOR FUTURE NEED

Shape the civic infrastructure as Wānaka grows, don't retrofit later at expected significant cost. Look at what's required and by the **highest and best use** scenarios.

SOLVE PROBLEMS TOGETHER

By **solving the current lack of and compromised infrastructure** (access, acoustics, transport and size) for the community, arts, events, the library, civic offices and Community service centre requirements.

CREATE A CIVIC HEART THAT CELEBRATES COMMUNITY IDENTITY - NOT JUST A BUILDING

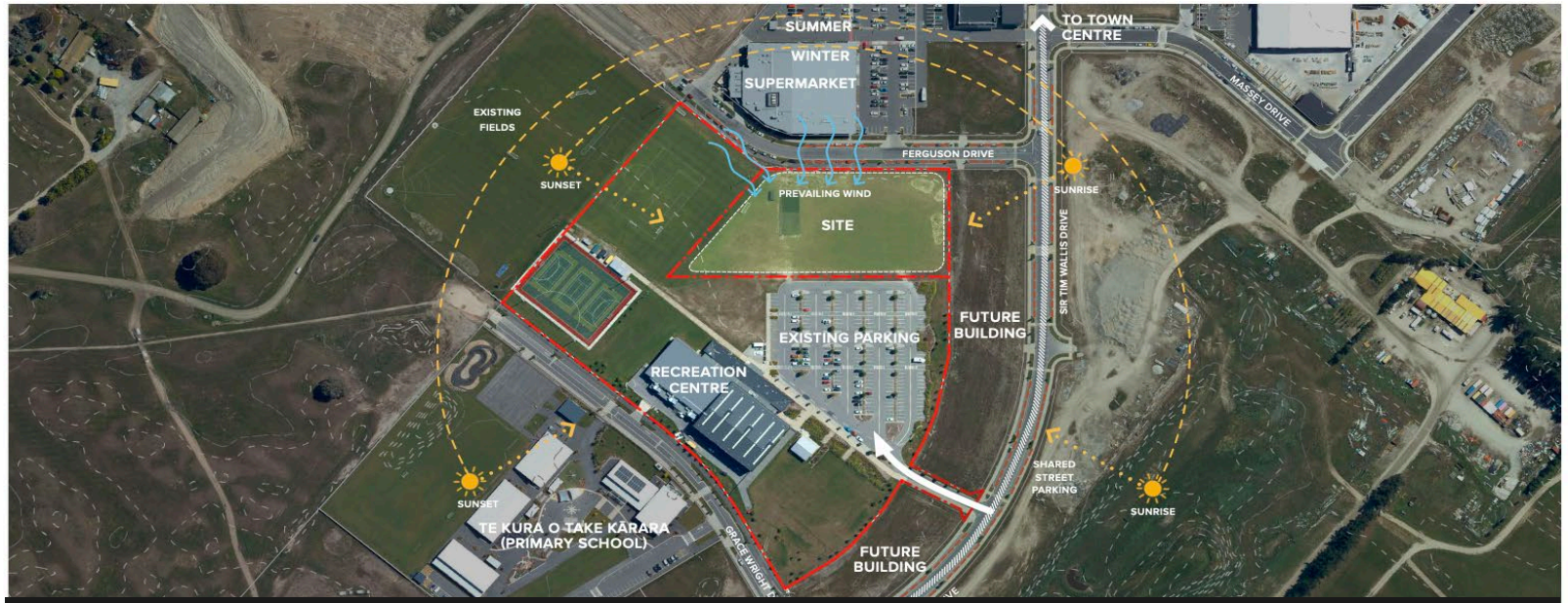
The proposed precinct brings an opportunity **for economic and social value.** It is much bigger than the cost to build or run, while these need to be sustainable, the scale of the opportunity is much bigger.

POTENTIAL REVENUE

Development revenue opportunity of the sale of the Lake Wānaka Centre, Ardmore Street site.

SITE CONTEXT STUDY

SCALE 1:2500 @ A3



THREE PARKS LOCATION IS THE PREFFERED SITE:

- A desired, flat site with great views and closely located to other recreation facilities
- Three Parks is a growing residential, recreation and retail area - proximity to future community demand and complementary amenities
- Located in the Community Purposes Zone which supports libraries, halls, recreation centres and community buildings
- Currently Fee Simple.

WĀNAKA ARTS PERFORMING PRECINCT

Access for all

Inclusive and accessible by design - we are exploring with the community how people will use the space and what their journey will look like.

DESIGNING FOR EVERY USER GROUP, NOT JUST ONE AUDIENCE

The precinct will serve a wide range of users — audiences, performers and touring companies, technical crews, businesses, council officers, community groups and hirers, schools, and staff. Each has different needs, so the buildings must work well for all of them, both functionally and experientially, with clear wayfinding, appropriate amenities, and spaces that are intuitive and easy to use.

STARTING WITH THE NEEDS, THINKING FOR THE FUTURE

Meeting with local arts groups, mana whenua, young people, older residents and accessibility experts to help shape the brief. Providing multiple opportunities to share ideas and experiences, through coffee meetings, workshops and surveys, to ensure the precinct is flexible and responsive to a changing community.

A PLACE THAT REFLECTS AND CELEBRATES THIS PLACE

Users should recognise Wānaka in the building, through its relationship with the landscape, the materials used, and the stories told with mana whenua. This helps create a genuine sense of place and belonging, shaping not only how the precinct functions, but how it feels to be there.

FRED, 3
The curious explorer

PLAY
DISCOVER
LEARN

SALLY, 62
The active participant

VOLUNTEER
SOCIALISE
CONTRIBUTE

MACAYLA, 16
The emerging creative

CREATE
REHEARSE
BELONG

JO, 45
Looking for connection

MEET
PARTICIPATE
SIMPLY BE

WĀNAKA ARTS PERFORMING PRECINCT

Unlocking benefits for generations

An high value investment in people, place and future prosperity

Option 1: Status Quo	Option 2: Deliver an integrated civic precinct	Option 3: Deliver a masterplan vision in stages
The district continues without facilities able to adequately accommodate its arts and cultural groups. Demand continues to grow while the supply of fit-for-purpose space declines, with costs increasingly carried through maintenance and operating inefficiency rather than new investment. It is unconfirmed if there is creative, cultural or civic space is proposed in the 2027–2037 Long-Term Plan for Wānaka Upper Clutha.	This option directly supports WACT's purpose and creates an opportunity for QLDC to work with a community-led Trust, providing greater certainty of outcome and a model capable of responding to future growth. It addresses the District's infrastructure shortfall and rapid population growth through the development of an integrated Civic Precinct in Wānaka, bringing Council and the community together to create lasting social, cultural and economic value for generations to come. The precinct comprises three buildings arranged around a shared public plaza.	This option delivers the Precinct vision by securing a centrally located site and masterplan through this Ten-Year Plan, followed by staged delivery as philanthropic funding and Council commitment allow. An adaptive, staged pathway. The first stage would develop the Creative Hub, responding to immediate demand for creative space, generating revenue for the Trust, and growing pathways for local talent. This would be followed by the Performing Arts Centre, and then civic offices and library.

WĀNAKA ARTS PERFORMING PRECINCT

Working together for the community

NB. These numbers are DRAFT WORKINGS and subject to professional review

LAND

Estimated 1 hectare, part of Lot 1 DP471996 off Sir Tim Wallace Drive, next to Wānaka Recreation Centre.

QLDC designation and allocation at nil cost
(value $tbc)

CAPITAL FUNDING

NB. Please note these are working numbers

WACT circa $63 million
Proposed to include:
Building 1: Performing Arts Centre
Building 3: Creative Hub
QLDC circa $39.7 million
NB. currently all of this investment is allocated in proposed Ten-Year Plan 2027–2037 budget.
Proposed to include:
Library and civic offices c. $26.9m
Plaza and outdoor amenity c. $7.8m
Contribution to Creative Studio spaces c. $5m

OPERATING FUNDING

NB. Please note these are working numbers

$100,000 per year contribution from Year 1 to 5 to support project development and delivery.

$2.60m from first full year (FY2032), CPI-indexed.
Intended to start from Year Five of the Ten-Year Plan. Represents 39.7% of revenue

Expected visits: 240,700 in Year 1, rising to 345,600 by Year 5
Benchmarked operational contributions: Toi Tauranga Art Gallery – 73% of operating budget, Te Tuhi (Auckland) and Corban's Estate Arts Centre are 33%.

WĀNAKA ARTS PERFORMING PRECINCT

What do you think?

What resonates?
Which elements of the vision and approach feel strongest?

What gives you pause?
Where do you see concerns, risks or areas needing more work?

What should shape the next step?
What would you want to see reflected as the proposal develops?

Councillor questions for WACT

Followed by QLDC officer-only discussion with Council on next steps

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Next steps – key discussion points

QUEENSTOWN LAKES DISTRICT COUNCIL

1. **WACT business case:** The detailed business case needs to be assessed by QLDC, noting the request for the investment of land, major capital and operating contribution. To agreed by Council.
2. **Placeholder in LTP Capex/Opex budgets:** Does Council want "placeholder" figures included in the draft LTP budget for the next LTP workshop, based on the high-level figures provided by WACT today?
3. **Council Meeting 12 Nov 2026:** WACT business case due to Council for noting and direction on LTP considerations and preferred site.
4. **QLDC review of business case:** Officers will require time to review the business and due to staff capacity may also need to outsource support for a comprehensive review of the business case (cost TBC).
5. **Legal advice on status of preferred site next to WRC:** Provided alongside the business case.
6. **Assessment of Lake Wānaka Centre site:** Further analysis on Lake Wānaka Centre land and wider reserve to understand opportunties that could be provided by this location in relation to the WACT precinct concept, alongside analysis of the WACT business case.
7. **Community Consultation:** Use of the preferred site for the WACT proposal would require a full community consultation to be undertaken. Unless done before or as part of the LTP consultation, timing of any investment decisions may provide challenging.