



# Our Community Spaces 2024

## Supplementary Information

Date: December 2024

# COMMUNITY FACILITY CHALLENGES IDENTIFIED BY GROUPS

The research identified a range of challenges relating to the provision of community space. These are predominantly similar concerns to those voiced in 2018.

## **A - AFFORDABILITY**

The challenge of affordability was a common theme, with concerns including:

- Some groups struggling to secure the resources to meet minimum charges (\$10 an hour to use a space).
- Reduced community funding options to support operational facility expenses.
- Increasing rent costs.
- Low quality environments for lower cost spaces, e.g. poor heating and insulation.

*“We are currently able to afford it, however we are getting less funding through for rent costs which is making it harder. Plus, the rent costs keep going up.”*

*“We have tried to find an alternative venue as the door to get our gear out is hard to open, we cannot easily get our equipment out and there is no heating or cooling. However, we cannot afford to move.”*

There appears to be an increasing disparity between community groups and services who are fortunate enough to be in sites that have affordable rent designed for community groups, and those who are paying commercial rates.

It is well recognised that land and space is at a premium in the district, so the costs of commercial rent reflect this.

The Colliers Otago Market Review & Outlook 2023/24 for Queenstown, Wānaka, Dunedin & Central identifies that the high cost of land and construction is challenging the viability of new developments both commercially and community. Rents are expected to continue to increase across all sectors in the future.

Source: 26<sup>th</sup> Oct 2023, [www.colliersotago.co.nz](http://www.colliersotago.co.nz)

## **B - COST OF LAND FOR DEVELOPING FACILITIES**

Another affordability challenge is that some groups have resources (financial and other) to contribute towards the development of a new facility, but the cost for land or to build is beyond their capacity. As in 2018, several groups have indicated that they would build a facility if land were made available to them.

## **C - LIMITED AVAILABILITY**

Competing demand for peak times (after school and evening) is a common challenge experienced by groups and facility managers.

There is also a challenge accommodating a broad range of diverse space needs, e.g. one-off bookings and regular weekly/seasonal commitments. Some facility providers gave feedback about the challenges of managing seasonal bookings, e.g. winter indoor sports.

*“We require regular and sole use on Sundays every week of the year, and one other night. Most spaces do not allow this.”*

The lack of event space in the district means that there are times when groups are ‘bumped’ from their regular spots to allow events to occur. One group interviewed described the level of work it took for their facility provider to find them a new venue and arrange to shift their gear when this occurred.

## D - OUTGROWING CURRENT SPACE

Access to larger spaces has been identified as a need, both as group numbers grow and to host larger community events.

## E - FACILITY LOCATIONS

The importance of having facilities that are easily accessible for pedestrians and via transport routes was highlighted. For example, Wakatipu Plunket’s use of their fit-for-purpose facility has been severely impacted by access issues: *“We have an awesome building but people can’t get to it easily and parking is an issue”*.

*‘Facilities should be in highly visible and accessible locations and act as focal points for the community.’* Source: Te Kirikiri Frankton Master Plan (2020).

Another challenge identified was the potential for issues that arise from community groups operating out of industrial zoned areas.

## F - LACK OF FIT-FOR-PURPOSE FACILITIES

The lack of adequate storage was highlighted in the research. Groups were seeking additional storage in facilities, the ability to store items in reserves/open spaces and to have access to digital storage to house historical resources. Some groups said they need to store sizeable items that do not fit in a standard locker.

Some groups indicated that user needs were not well considered in community facility design, with little opportunity to contribute at all stages of project development, e.g. audio-visual technology is not included as a core feature in some community facilities, so hiring this equipment is an additional cost. Limited/poor mobility access in some facilities was raised in the feedback. The QLDC Disability Policy has been prioritised for review in 2025-2026 and it is key that these issues are considered.

*“The trail makeup of the [Queenstown] gardens does not allow for adaptive/disabled athletes to participate successfully.”*

*“Our current facility does not cater for those with a disability. As a rental property it is not the priority for the landlord to accommodate this. Ideally, we would like a space that is accessible to all groups in our community.”*

## **G - INSECURE TENURE**

A challenge for some groups is the uncertainty of tenure in the facilities they are operating from.

*"We are there as a courtesy and could be asked to not use it at any time."*

*"There is some concern amongst our committee that if the Events Centre Area is redeveloped, we will have to move again, we would like a bit more certainty..."*

One other point raised was the potential for conflict between the host facility and individual groups' operational needs:

*"The operational requirements of the facility we are in limits the ability of our group to independently generate income, e.g. workshop numbers limited by space sizes, sharing commission and pay ticketing fees."*

## **WHAT WE LEARNT ABOUT COMMUNITY FACILITIES**

- The research identified 77 facilities currently used by community groups and services. These facilities include commercial and community-owned spaces, along with QLDC facilities.
- These facilities mainly operate in isolation. There is a significant opportunity to develop a network approach to improve community group/services access to these existing facilities.
- Information about the how existing facilities are used by groups and services surveyed includes:
  - Private facilities: 11% own their facilities, very similar to 2018. The remaining 89% either rent, lease or use spaces free of charge.
  - There was a shift between the 2018 and 2024 data set with a reduction in the number of respondents who use Council facilities, dropping from close to 40% to 20%.
  - In addition, the use of private homes in the 2024 cohort was also significantly reduced from 2018, down from 14% to 1%.
  - 33% of the groups recorded using commercial facilities.
  - Only around 1% of respondents use hospitality businesses as their base.

## Case Study - The Collective Community Hub



The Collective Community Hub is based in a leased facility in Johnsonville, Wellington. It opened in 2020 and was developed and funded by the real estate agency Collective First National.

The shared community space is a “place where local collaborations can take place, where those working from home can come for a change of scene, and where students can have a quiet place to study. The boardrooms give local businesses and community groups somewhere they can meet up, exchange ideas - both in person and video conference. And it gives local artists a place to present their work to the community. The benefits and uses for the Collective Community Hub are truly endless” \*

There is no charge for community groups to use the facilities. Business organisations are asked for a koha.

The Hub manager reports that demand for the space is high, including people travelling from out of the immediate area to use it due to its affordability.

A key benefit out of the facility has been a measurable increase in the level of collaboration across groups.