



## Case Study: The Arts community in our district

December 2018

**A clear theme from data gathered for *Our Community Spaces* is that there is a need for increased focus on and investment in facilities for our district's arts community. The facility needs for key groups and services are outlined below.**

### **Queenstown Performing Arts Trust and Queenstown Arts Centre**

These long standing local arts groups operate out of buildings at the old school site on Ballarat and Stanley Streets. The Queenstown Masterplan has identified that the Stanley Street site, partly Council reserve and partly Ministry of Education land, is the preferred location for a community heart, including arts and culture facilities. The plan has identified that co-locating these facilities with the Council building and library will create a vibrant cultural centre in the CBD. Clarity about the design and function of this space needs further research and these groups are making plans to be part of this redeveloped space.

Further research into community needs and the future of arts and culture across the district will enable the Council to plan how it should respond. This is not simply about built structures, but will inform future decisions relating to prospective facilities for both Wanaka and Queenstown and define what these may look like.

This Stanley Street site is opposite the proposed location for a new, combined Queenstown Lakes District Council (QLDC) building. While these groups likely to be affected by this planned development there is also significant opportunity to part of a newly developed community space on this site. QLDC are partnering with Ngāi Tahu Property to look at potential opportunities to offer facilities for arts and performance activities and authentic iwi cultural representation in central Queenstown. Queenstown Mayor Jim Boulton says "This is an exciting opportunity to build something really special and I am confident it would also be a draw card for new and diverse businesses into the area."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> QLDC Scuttlebutt, December 2018: <https://www.qldc.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/QLDC-Scuttlebutt-Dec18-WEB2.pdf>

### **Queenstown Performing Arts Trust (QPACT)**

The Queenstown Performing Arts Trust (QPACT) provides and maintains a facility for the development and practise of the Performing Arts.

Their facility has strong support and a high level of usage. They also receive regular requests from arts groups who want to use space, but as QPACT is fully subscribed, they are not able to accommodate them.



Their current facility was renovated to be fit-for-purpose and contains five large storage spaces, three large studios, and one small studio:

- Three studios are fitted with floor to ceiling dance mirrors
- Two studios have pianos
- All have sound systems capable of AUX or Bluetooth connections

The Trust that runs QPACT has clearly identified that for any change in location, a new facility will be needed. This is in order to have a proper fit-out with larger studios to meet their needs, as well as the necessary acoustics and storage.

#### **Who currently uses QPACT full-time?**

- Margaret O'Hanlon (singing & workshops): 15 children and 15-20 adults
- Whirlwind Productions (drama group): 20-30 members at a time
- Danceworx: 100-200 students and 3-4 teachers
- Queenstown School of Dance: 100-200 students and 3-4 teachers
- Salsa Queenstown: 30-40 members and 4 teachers
- Marianna (Russian Ballet School): 10-20 students
- Flame Entertainment (Milly Begley): 10-15 members
- Amber Stevens (yoga/dance): 30-40 members
- Kerry Hood (private dance): 15-20 students
- Queenstown Karate Club: 30 children members and 20 adults
- Queenstown Pipe Band: 20 members
- Theresa Swain Academy of Ballet: 20-30 students and 1-2 teachers
- Kana Takahashi (piano tutor): 20-30 students
- Anna Maria (Zumba): 40-50 members
- Gavin on Salsa: 20-30 members
- Denisa (ballroom dance): 10-15 students
- Carleen MacKenzie (dance): 15-20 students
- Lisa Cosgrove (dance): 20-25 pre-schoolers and their mothers

#### **Who uses QPACT casually?**

- Visiting musicians (usually pianists)
- Queenstown Winter Festival (preparation space)
- Arrowtown Autumn Festival (audition and rehearsal space)
- Michael Hill Competition (rehearsal with pianos)
- Queenstown Jazz Festival Showbiz Queenstown (casting and workshops)
- Remarkables Theatre (casting and workshops)
- Local bands (rehearsal space)
- Queenstown Ice-Skating Club
- Shotover Jet Remarkables Christmas Show (rehearsal space)
- Local Casting Companies: ICAN Models, Exposure Talent, Storming Theatre (auditions)
- Drama Queenstown
- Children's birthday parties
- New Zealand's Got Talent

### Queenstown Arts Centre (QAC)

The Queenstown Arts Centre (QAC) was established in 1981 and over 3000 people use the facility each year.

QAC provides a space which encourages and nurtures the visual arts amongst all age groups in the Wakatipu and surrounding areas. QAC also provides the opportunity to be available to assist any other community organisation in their events or fundraising activities.



The QAC building contains a Cloakroom Gallery, artists' studios, and a large workroom. These areas enable artists to be supported through:

- holding gallery exhibitions
- having access to studio spaces for artistic development
- attending and holding inspirational or educational art classes and events in the workroom space

In light of the proposed change of use for their existing site on Ballarat Street, QAC is seeking that a purpose-built arts facility is built on the same site to provide a central hub for groups.

“QPACT is hugely overbooked, we'd love more time slots but they just aren't available and haven't been for years.”

“With an increase in transient populations from other countries that are culturally rich (Eastern Europe, British Isles, South America) and therefore possess skills that are valuable to our community, there is already an increase in teachers and dance, music and theatre groups. For example, the art of ballet and circus arts are very developed in Eastern Europe, Zumba, Tango and Salsa from South America, Puppetry and classical music from Europe, Theatre from the British Isles, Martial arts from Asia, Indian dance and music from India. Immigration and two-year working VISA holders will increase, not decrease.”

“Should we be relocated due to demolition of our present building, location is not a big factor as we are a 'destination' of our users, and do not rely on 'foot-traffic'. However if the Council wish to keep a community presence in the CBD, it would make sense to keep a facility with as many users as ours, and operating at an average of 80 hours a week, in the CBD.”

“It is essential that we [The Queenstown Arts Centre] are visually situated in the CBD for both our locals and our visitors. We often are getting remarks from all visitors that this is the only place in the CBD that showcases what our locals are doing, not only that we are able to provide people general information on any questions they have on the area. We need as an Arts Centre a space for: Gallery/Exhibitions; Workroom/Art Classes and Community Events - a place to bring people together; studio artists rooms - a place where artists can have to flourish their Art practice and for our visitors to have the opportunity to interact with them.”

- Comments gathered from the *Our Community Spaces* research

### **Wanaka Arts Centre**

For more than 20 years, the Wanaka Arts Centre has been providing a workshop and meeting space for artists in Upper Clutha area. More recently, it has also been providing scholarships to young artists in order to support them in developing their skills.

The aim of this space is for it to be utilised by a broad range of creative disciplines to create an environment that encourages increased connection between the tenants.



The facility that the Wanaka Arts Centre uses is leased from QLDC on a two year arrangement. The short term nature of this lease does not provide long term security and limits the ability for longer term planning.

The facility is an older building (formerly worker accommodation) and the Wanaka Arts Centre Trust has adapted and maintained it to create a more fit-for-purpose facility that meets the needs of their users. However, in its current state, they are unable to provide space for ceramists as there is no provision for a wet space and they are also limited in their ability to host larger events.

### **Who uses the Wanaka Arts Centre?**

There are currently 12 tenants who use the workshop space and three groups who use the meeting room on a weekly basis (Wanaka Painters Group, Wanaka Embroiders Group and Wanaka Printers Group).

On average, each week the Wanaka Arts Centre has:

- 75 people attending workshops/group sessions
- 16 hours' worth of group activities
- 217 people using workshop spaces (including people attending classes in individual work spaces)
- 251 hours' worth of individual work space use