

Aspiring Gymsports Response to QLDC's 10 Year Plan

Our Position

Aspiring Gymsports (AGS) appreciates the support from QLDC in the last annual plan by way of a \$15,000 contribution to our annual commercial rent of \$60,000. This has allowed our not-for-profit community sports club to continue operating in what has been an exceedingly difficult few years within its otherwise very successful 19 years of operation.

AGS has been working with QLDC for several years with the aim of providing an affordable, fit for purpose solution to our now unaffordable, commercial leased premises. Most recently we have been working with QLDC along with community partners such as Kahu Youth, on scoping out the development of a youth community & sports centre at the old Mitre 10 in Recce Crescent.

However, there are still no guarantees that this will proceed. Any costs associated with meeting the Wanaka community's youth & indoor sports needs are always referred to by Council in terms of the opportunity costs to Wanaka residents i.e., that residents may need to pay via increased residential rates or and/or the community board would need to release funds from the Scurr Heights asset sales. These funds are sought after, and we have had feedback that some board members would rather use them on improving the towns aging water pipes (thus an opportunity cost). Surely the purpose of this fund is to support new community facilities rather than replace aging infrastructure, that should be funded through long term borrowing.

AGS appreciates Covid has hit the Lakes District hard but to use the Covid excuse for lack of funding for Wanaka's needs is wearing thin. Especially, when we look at the money being spent over the hill. **Close to 80% of community funds are being spent in Queenstown compared to 20% in Wanaka. Based on relative populations, a relative split of 66% Queenstown and 33% would be far more equitable.**

QLDC's 10 Year Plan is a very disappointing read for Wanaka residents. There is literally no budget allocated to any community projects that need funding within the short term, and that's not just AGS. Netball, Basketball and our youth's immediate needs for larger indoor sporting space are being completely ignored. So too are our active transport needs, which have been pushed well back. It seems that Wanaka's rapidly growing youth population must wait at least another 10 years before there is adequate provision for them, waiting on adequate facilities and sitting on waitlists, waiting for a turn which may never come.

QLDC's 10-year plan has **no funding allocated at all** for the planned expansion of the Wanaka Recreation Centre (WRC) Master Plan. The WRC is already operating at capacity. Rather, there is close to \$24 million invested in new outdoor fields at the oxidation ponds, Ballantyne Road. We are concerned that the reclamation/preparation part of this work, budgeted at \$5.6M, is coming from the Community Facilities pot when clearly it is an infrastructure project that should be funded from wastewater capital expenditure. AGS is aware that the land has not yet been re-zoned appropriately, nor will it be ready for use until 2027. According to the Lakes Regional Sports Strategy there is not an immediate high need for more fields and the community is not screaming out for this investment to be started in the short term. Once again, we expect these fields will be used largely by Rugby and Soccer sports.

According to this plan, the youth of Wanaka simply have to miss out on any improvements in their immediate sporting needs and are asked to seek funding from asset sales and/or community grants for their needs to be met. Whilst Queenstown seems to be given more than their dues without even having to ask for it or having to lose something else as a trade-off.

QLDC are spending more than \$144 million in significant community facilities in Queenstown. This includes 3 new community halls and over \$60million in redeveloping the Queenstown Events Centre vs \$3m for the Wanaka Recreation Centre. Apart from a small new toddler's pool (\$1.6m vs \$4.6m Arrow Town pool), the spend at the WRC is merely a renewal project to fix a poorly installed 2-year-old heating system. No new halls for Wanaka's youth and women to play Netball and ALL to play Futsall and Basketball.

All in all, these are very disappointing figures for ALL Wanaka residents, not just those that need expanded indoor sports facilities. Let's not mention the \$51m allocated to a new "Arts Centre" to replace the Memorial Halls and 3 new community halls (Lake Hayes, Ladies Mile and Southern Corridor). It seems Wanaka residents should be grateful that we have the Luggate Hall, as we are not getting anything else in the next 10 years based on this plan.

Aspiring Gymsports is seeking from QLDC's 10 Year Plan the following:

Short-term (1 to 2 years)

1. The provision of a Community Grant for \$30,000 to help cover our \$60,000 pa rent expense from the 2021- 22 annual budget, and subsequent years if no progress has been made with alternative premises. This would allow AGS to continue to lease a commercial facility until such time an alternative fit for purpose facility becomes available. AGS considers this a small contribution to a largely female based sporting club when considering the investment of \$30,000 per annum in maintaining a single "high profile" turf. Not to mention the \$2.2m being spent in Queenstown on the planned redevelopment of the Rugby Club.
2. Certainty before July 2021
 - a. We are seeking written approval and dedicated funding from QLDC for the development of a Youth Community Indoor Sports Centre in Wanaka. Ideally, within the old Reece Crescent, Mitre 10 building or alternatively,
 - b. Provide an appropriately zoned piece of land (at a peppercorn rent) for a community-led, youth indoor sports facility to be developed by a community trust including Gymsports, Kahu Youth, Snowsports and the existing committed community clubs and groups currently involved in the Sports Central, Mitre 10 facility proposal.
3. Recognition of the Wanaka Mitre 10 Youth Community & Sports Centre Project within the 10 Year Plan as an option for QLDC to purchase or lease. Including an allowance for purchase or lease within the budget and name the source of potential funding.
4. Acknowledgement, listening to, and implementing community consultation feedback. The report back on the public consultation regarding the Queenstown Lakes – Central Otago Sub-Regional Sport & Recreation Facility Strategy 2021 appears to ignore or dismiss community feedback, as coming from a small vocal group/individual who did not get what they want and who believed there was a 'perceived lack of funding'.
5. To support Wanaka's key community group submissions such as The Upper Clutha Tracks Trust and Active Transport Wanaka. We request a readjustment of the overall 10 Year Plan budget split to be more equitable for Wanaka. **We call for funding to be split 66% Queenstown and 33% Wanaka in line with relative ward populations.** The current Community and Sports Funding is more of a 80/20 split and it includes reclamation of oxidation ponds which we believe should not be in the community budget. **The spread of expenditure over the 10 years should also be equitable.**
6. And finally demonstrate that QLDC equitably funds predominantly female vs predominately male sports, by investing in indoor sports facilities across the local government area.

Medium to Long Term

1. Recognition by way of funding the WRC Master Plan early within the 10 Year plan, acknowledging the Wanaka Communities calls for an improved indoor sports facility, given that the WRC is already operating at capacity, only 2 years after its completion.
2. Implement a fully funded WRC Master Plan, start building now, and listen to the community's feedback verses financing a "perceived" need for increased outdoor sporting fields at the oxidation ponds (24 million over 10 years).

Why does Wanaka have to sacrifice its immediate need for indoor sports facilities in favour of more outdoor fields, delivered well over 10 years away. This "one or the other" approach leaves Wanaka's youth with no immediate benefit at all.

Further Background

Aspiring Gymsports (AGS) has been working with the Council now for several years with the aim of having a fit for purpose, affordable community facility for Gymsports. Gymsports is a broad discipline and includes Preschool, Recreational, Competitive, Trampoline, Tumbling, Parkour, Cheerleading, Rhythmic and Aerobic Gymnastics. Despite encouraging feasibility studies and many supporting submissions this aim has so far not been included in any of QLDC's plans for the next 10 years.

AGS is aching under Wanaka's population boom of children. We love being busy, but we hate having wait lists, this term we had had to turn away around 30 children due to lack of space.

Our club has grown from 90 to **300 active members** (Wanaka Trampoline has another 200 members). We have over **1,000** families on our database. We employ 14 coaches and have a committee of 7 women. **75% of our members are female**. 90% of our gymnasts are recreational with the remaining 10% competing in both Women's and Men's Artistic Gymnastics.

In the last 4 years we have suffered skyrocketing commercial rents up 150% to \$60,000 pa. This has turned our previously successful club, which had been operating for 19 years with an annual surplus, into a loss-making entity for the past 3 years. This is despite the demand for our services.

- **We cannot increase our rates to match our increase in costs**
- **We cannot meet our waitlists within our current facility, and**
- **We can no longer afford to continue paying commercial rent.** In the past 6 years of being in Reece Crescent, Aspiring Gymsports has paid rent in the realm of \$250,000. Council has thankfully, supported AGS in 2020 by providing a community grant of \$15,000 to assist with our rent. While we appreciate this support, as one of the largest clubs in the district, we believe that this a very minimal contribution compared to what many other clubs in the region have received in terms of support from Council over the past decade.

Given the demand for Gymsports along with the available built spaces in central Wanaka, we believe the old Mitre 10 building is the right one to meet our community's growth and demand for indoor sports **NOW. Not in 10 years' time, when our kids have grown up and moved on.**

QLDC commissioned a feasibility study in April 2020. It recommended that Gymsports is something QLDC should be getting behind **NOW**, and that the Mitre 10 building could be an ideal solution for the short to medium term. It also recommended that at a minimum, Aspiring Gymsports should be included within the planned short-term expansion of QLDC's recreation centre.

However, AGS was not included in the plan despite the reports' recommendation. Aspiring Gymsports submitted to QLDC's Rec Centre Master Plan on the basis that it should provide for a Gymsports space rather than yet another adult gym. This is now a moot point as unbelievably, there is **NO** current budget allocated within the 10-year plan for **ANY** expansions of the Wanaka Rec Centre let alone a long term "movement centre for youth".

This leaves us with many questions around the priorities of the Council and the Community Board for Wanaka's immediate **indoor sporting needs**. Especially, knowing that the Wanaka Recreation Centre and pool has been operating at capacity since it opened over 2 years ago.

We ask that Gymsports, and other indoor sports which have a predominantly female participation such as Netball, be supported in the same way that predominantly male, mostly outdoor field sports like Rugby and Soccer continue to be financially supported. By continuing to fund these mostly male dominated outdoor activities as a priority, over other indoor options, QLDC is seen to be favouring men's sport over women's and continuing the perception that men's sports are more important.

By deferring, and not budgeting for, a gymsports facility within the next 1-3 years as advised by both QLDC's own RSL Consultant's Feasibility study along with the guiding *Queenstown Lakes Central-Otago Sub-Regional Sports & Recreation Facility Strategy*, QLDC are not being supportive of or prioritising the aims of the *National Strategy of Women and Girls in Sports and Active Recreation NZ*. **Budgeting for and providing a fit for purpose gymsport facility in the short term, would meet the aims of this national strategy by encouraging girls and women to participate from a young age and stay in the sport long term.**

Inequitable Expenditure

The following Community Facilities budget highlights the inequity between Queenstown and Wanaka expenditure and the ongoing investment in predominantly male sports such as Rugby:

QUEENSTOWN & SUROUNDS

Arrowtown Pool Upgrade	\$4,483,650	2024
NEW Hall - Ladies Mile	\$4,509,709	
NEW Hall - Lake Hayes - Replace Hall & Upgrades	\$8,421,300	
NEW Hall - Land Acquisitions & Build, Southern Corridor	\$6,718,787	
Frankton - NEW Golf Course	\$3,353,884	2024
Frankton Library - Fitout + Renew	\$1,485,549	
NEW Arts Centre	\$51,276,279	2024
Events Centre - NEW Club Rooms, 2 NEW Courts, Redevelop Playing Fields + Renewals	\$61,115,039	2021
Events Centre - Alpine Health & Fitness NEW Gym Equipment	\$1,132,006	2021
Rugby Club Replacement	\$2,202,524	
Total Queenstown 10 Year Plan - Significant Community Projects	\$144,698,727	79%

WANAKA

Oxidation Ponds - NEW Fields, Ballantyne Road	\$24,213,760*	2021-27
Lake Wanaka Centre – Renewals	\$1,107,006	
Water Sports Centre - NEW Carpark	\$916,845	
Wanaka Rec Centre - NEW Heating, Renewals, Amend Parking + NEW Pool (\$1.6m)	\$3,246,593	
Lakefront Development Plan	\$8,608,317	Now
A&P Showground + Rugby Ground + Pembroke Park Irrigation	\$1,352,146	
Total Wanaka 10 Year Plan - Significant Community Projects	\$39,444,667	21%

* This \$24.3M includes \$5.6M for reclamation of the oxidation ponds which we believe should be included infrastructure, this makes the split of Queenstown/Wanaka expenditure for community facilities even worse than 79% vs 21%

Community Consultation Process

Our community voices are not being recognised and are being dismissed as a small vocal group who didn't get what they wanted.

Queenstown Lakes – Central Otago Sub-Regional Sport & Recreation Facility Strategy 2021 (Community & Services Committee 25 February 2021)

QLDC received 90 response to the Wanaka Recreation Centre Master Plan (which is informed by the Lakes Sub-Regional Strategy). In total QLDC received 206 submissions for the Strategy, 90 from the Upper Clutha of which 36 were from gymnastics individuals and the club. However, we feel that our voices have been ignored and trivialised, as follows:

*"It is apparent that a number of submissions received were **from a small number of groups** who disagreed with the Strategy as the accompanying Masterplans did not provide enough detail or did not include their particular activity." Pg 8*

*"As identified in the Strategy, underinvestment in community sport and recreation facilities in the past has meant many groups have not seen facility development or investment keeping up with population growth and increased participation in the District. This has led to some groups/individuals being very vocal around their specific needs and projects and **the perceived lack of funding from Council for their specific facility needs.**" Pg 10*

Clearly with zero investment in the WRC Master Plan, within QLDC's 10 Year Budget, this is not a perceived but an actual lack of funding for indoor sports facilities in Wanaka.

In addition, the following is quoted in the report "Disadvantages (of adopting the strategy): Item 29 *The Community does not believe the Council has listened to them*" despite this, Council staff recommended adopting the strategy anyway (pg 10).

This infers that consultation is not a genuine process and begs the question as to why the community should spend the time on submitting when their views are ignored or trivialised?