

Featherston Community Centre Chairman's report for 2022-2023

As always, time flies when you're having fun.

Our Centre Manager, Jo Bowden, has developed the facility offering, partnering with Foodbank and other community groups, extending our services on multiple fronts. The Community Centre has also become the de-facto information centre and a hub for supporting community members who have difficulty finding their place in society or technology – often a combination of both.

Jo is backed up by some strong and enthusiastic people or course. At the risk of unintentionally excluding someone important I'd like to make mention of:

Peter Paton, who many have now come to know and rely upon for day-to-day facility administration. A friendly face and a willing pair of hands – and always ready to take time to discuss your interests or needs.

Joanne Monk, who is regarded a mainstay at the Centre. If anything needs doing, Joanne is there – Cook some morning tea? Weed a garden? Clean a room? If there is nothing obvious, Joanne will ask what she can do.

Hana Makin – Hana is Jo's 'work wife'. Jo and Hana have developed a synergy that goes far beyond a simple tenancy agreement – supporting one another in their efforts to improve the lot for people of Featherston and beyond.

And there's Jen Bhati, who has swung in behind the Community Centre with a vision and energy that has enabled community support services and groups to function and our people to benefit in ways that would otherwise have been exceedingly difficult to achieve.

Then, or course, there are our Board members.

- Our secretary Chery Linge keeps us on track and keeps our documentation tight.
- Marianne McMillan is making inroads into restructuring our financial systems and monitoring our overall position.
- Darrin Goulding joined us last year and continues to provide wise counsel as we navigate the niceties of governance versus operational thinking.
- Jay Jensen, who joined our ranks this year brings more experience in corporate governance and financial systems. He is also guiding us on our journey to a greater understanding of Te Ao Māori and implementation of closer collaborative efforts.
- Rupert Watson has been a board member for many years, predating all current members and still provides a level-headed and constant counsel in all our deliberations.
- Ian Grigor brings a focussed knowledge of IT systems and their management, enhancing our ability to respond appropriately to challenges in those areas, while translating that knowledge into broad support of our business goals.
- Lynda Moore is a local entrepreneur who is always ready with innovative ideas and a different take on existing procedures. Lynda is also a dab hand with a hammer and screwdriver, helping assemble the kitchen cabinetry recently.

Our perennial supporters – the Featherston Knitters, Mahjong, Senior cards, Ukelele, Rupert's Feldenkrais classes, all make the facility hum with life and vigour.

The Kitchen project is taking shape. The cabinetry is mostly in place awaiting the plumber, and once the pipes have all been connected, linings, extractors and wall cupboards go in and the flooring brought up to commercial grade. We have several kitchen projects lined up to address community food security needs and issues.

The entranceway has been enhanced, with a wide and welcoming window to the office, allowing visitors to access admin support easily and to engender an environment of collaboration and support. It's still probably a bit small, as it is used for the winter jacket project repository and a range of fund-raising activities as well as providing the traditional information hub.

Speaking of hubs, our Support Hub concept is gathering steam too. This started as a hazy concept which we decided to simply enable and allow to grow organically. There are some exciting success stories coming out of that initiative and with the advent of the national Heartland project, is looking to be leading the way in our region.

Thanks to Darrin's intervention and with Jo's dogged determination, the DHB has now stepped up and paid for re-painting the Carpark, repairing the exceptional wear occasioned in large part by heavy vaccination centre use.

Our Phoenix rescue project continues to be a bit of a challenge. Jo has stepped up as the interim editor, thereby reducing its direct costs, and she has implemented a raft of changes that are designed to improve viability. While it still loses money, it is on a recovering trajectory. We will give it a few more months but if we cannot get it into the black, we will look at further ways to get it to break even. The community is as proud of the publication as we are, but we will need to find a way to extract more support to keep up the quality we are currently enjoying.

The Featherston Community Centre continues to grow both in quality and reach and we look forward to facilitating that as we gear the Board away from management committee mentality and more towards providing a broader governance body role.

Paul Mason

Chairman

Featherston Community Centre Trust Board