

Featherston Community Centre



2020 Annual report from the Board Chair

The Featherston Community centre turns 28 this year, thanks to the efforts of a group of concerned community members in 1991 who responded to the 'wake up Featherston' initiative, established the Community Centre and then worked to raise the funds for the purchase of the old telecom building they had been renting. Key organisers Dick Smith and Claire Bleakley are still intimately involved with the Community Centre today.

Issues around the COVID-19 pandemic response can tend to overshadow what has been a year of growth, but growth brings with it a certain amount of upheaval.

Our centre Manager, Siv Fjaerestad, has formed a strong volunteer task force handling social media, website, and customer liaison. The team has been instrumental in attracting many new guests and user groups and has increased the facility's overall use significantly. Current figures place facility use at around 800 people per month.

New guests range from lawyers, psychologists, and counsellors, to Dance groups, youth conferences, and education and support focus groups.

We have welcomed the Featherston Medical Centre as neighbors, sharing our car park and main entranceway. It has been a personal thrill to see this come to fruition. Many other community members and landowners have contributed to this outcome and we salute them all.

I view the Medical Centre arrival as the beginning of a partnership. Together we can create what has now become a much anticipated and widely supported goal. A 'Wellness Hub'.

We already have a range of complementary services and as we seek to improve the quality of facilities offered by the property, we hope to broaden that still further.

The Community Centre Board has approached the District Council, through the Community Board, to explore ways in which we might raise the required funds to carry out significant upgrades to what was a utilitarian workshop and offices. The property was built to a high quality for that purpose but lacking in the finer detail required by an evolving community need.

We have carried out several user surveys and we are using those to drive our appreciation of developmental needs. The Toy library complex has 'grown like Topsy' as they say, this needs to be rationalised, and we are working on inclusiveness and diversity and ways to make the centre more accessible to all community members.

Paul Mason

Featherston Community Centre Board of Trustees Chairman.