

# Community Environmental Scan of Mackenzie District

Summary Report for Mackenzie District Council – November 2024

## Purpose of the Report

Mackenzie District Council commissioned the environmental scan to assess the strengths, challenges, and opportunities in the district's communities. The study provides an evidence-based foundation to guide future planning, community development, and service provision.

## Demographic Overview

- As of the 2023 Census, Mackenzie District's population was 5,115, reflecting a 5.1% increase since 2018 but slower growth compared to the 17% rise from 2013-2018.
- The population is aging, with 18.5% of residents over 65 years old. However, the district also has a younger Māori population, with 46.5% under 25 years.
- The district is predominantly European (84.5%), but Tekapō has a highly multicultural workforce, including significant Asian and Latin American communities.
- The unemployment rate is low (1.7%), yet there has been a 16.7% increase in Jobseeker Support recipients. This is worth noting, however needs to be considered against the relatively low population number.
- Housing affordability is a major concern, especially in Tekapō, where 55% of homes are listed on short-term rental platforms.

## Key Findings

### Health Care

- The district faces challenges in emergency healthcare response, a lack of local dental services, and increasing strain on rural GPs due to growing demand and tourism-related medical needs.
- PRIME emergency medical services are struggling to meet demand, particularly in tourist-heavy areas.
- Mental health services have improved, but access to specialized support remains limited, particularly for youth and older adults.
- The absence of a local dentist forces residents to travel long distances for care.

## Housing Security and Availability

- Short-term rentals dominate Tekapō and Twizel, limiting long-term housing options.
- Fairlie lacks small, affordable homes for older residents and first-home buyers.
- Tekapō has 55% of its homes listed on short-term rental platforms, creating a severe housing shortage for permanent residents.
- The high cost of housing and lack of rental options impact workforce retention, particularly in tourism and hospitality sectors.

## Youth Development

- Limited vocational opportunities exist beyond apprenticeships, and engagement with young people who are not in education, employment, or training remains a challenge.
- Young people often leave the district due to limited career pathways, emphasizing the need for more local training and apprenticeship programs.
- There is a need for more youth-oriented services, including social and recreational opportunities.

## Aging Population

- The district has a growing elderly population, with a need for more accessible housing and aged-care services.
- Home-based support services for aging in place are inadequate, leading to increased pressure on families and out-of-district care facilities.
- Social isolation among older residents, particularly in rural areas, remains a concern.

## Availability of Social Services

- Social service access is limited across the district with many people having to travel to Timaru or Oamaru to access them. Some services are available online or at outreach clinics in the district; however, access depends on residents being aware of these services.
- Volunteer networks provide essential services, but increased expectations and compliance requirements are making recruitment difficult.
- Local recreation facilities in Tekapō and Twizel were highlighted as a priority from some of the community

## Migrant Support

- The district has a significant migrant workforce, particularly in Tekapō, but there is limited structured support for newcomers.
- Language barriers and lack of access to culturally appropriate services contribute to social isolation among migrant communities.
- More initiatives are needed to integrate migrants into the community and support their long-term settlement.

## Community Group Support

- Volunteer networks are a crucial part of community life, providing essential services and social support. However, increasing expectations and compliance requirements are making recruitment and retention difficult.
- Community groups need stronger financial and administrative support to sustain their activities, particularly in rural areas where professional services are scarce.
- Enhancing collaboration between community organizations and Council can help streamline funding access and reduce bureaucratic barriers.
- More resources are needed to support local initiatives focused on social connection, mental health, and recreational opportunities.

## Link to Current Community Development Workstreams

### Health Care

#### Current

- Health Plan – A partnership has been formed with the Twizel Medical Trust to complete a piece of work looking at the current health provision in the Mackenzie District. This will allow us to more effectively advocate for the provision of greater health services in the district, and for the Trust to plan for the next 10 years.
- Urgent Care working group – Last year a working group was formed by Te Whatu Ora to look at the PRIME emergency care model in the Mackenzie and how it can be supported. The outcome of this working group is pending.
- St John Volunteer engagement, Twizel. We facilitated a public meeting with St John, Te Whatu Ora, and the Twizel community and have indicated support for any volunteer engagement and recruitment.
- Advocacy – We have engaged in advocacy with Te Whatu Ora around increased health services in the Mackenzie.

#### Future Priorities

- Utilise information from Health Plan to advocate for an increase in services to the Mackenzie – i.e. dental care, community workers, mental health services, and more robust in home care services.

### Housing Security and Availability

- Housing partnership - A housing partnership is being explored to address district-wide housing concerns. A report is being prepared to present to council which will provide further detail.

### Youth Development

#### Current

- Mayors Taskforce for Jobs – an externally funded project with the key purpose of supporting NEETs or young people at risk of becoming NEET into employment.
- Advocacy has been undertaken resulting in the Y Central South Island committing to the delivery of services in Twizel. They initially committed to offering youth services in Twizel two

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days per week, however, have recently employed a local person to expand their delivery to four days per week in the near future.

- Driver Licensing and Driver Training – MTFJ funding and our partnership with The Y is being leveraged to support young people to obtain drivers licenses in the Mackenzie. We are actively looking for ways to support this outside of MTFJ to ensure sustainability.
- Advocacy – We are actively engaging with funders and service providers to encourage additional funding and service provision in this space.
- A partnership proposal is underway with Sport Canterbury to investigate increase presence in the Mackenzie.
- Youth Strategy – A partnership is being formed with Sport Canterbury to facilitate the creation of a Mackenzie District Youth Strategy.

### Future

- Identify ways to support the district's growing population of young Maori.

### Aging Population

- Health Plan – the health plan being will help us to understand the gaps in health care provision for older adults and allow us to advocate more effectively for increased services, particularly for supports that enable aging in place
- Advocacy – Advocacy is ongoing with organisations who work with older adults to promote the need for services that better enable aging in place for longer.
- Housing Partnership – Appropriate housing is an identified area of need that aims to be addressed through the developing housing partnership.

### Availability of Social Services

- Health Plan – The health plan will help us to understand what services are currently available, what is working well, where the gaps are.
- Advocacy – We continue to advocate for increased social services through social service networks, Te Whatu Ora, MSD and the Public Service Commission. We have seen organisations like; The Y Central South Island, Presbyterian Support Services Trust, Sport Canterbury, Multicultural Aoraki, and others expanding their services into the district.
- Promotion – We are currently working with providers who already operate in the district to better understand how we can support them to increase public awareness.

### Migrant Support

- Multi-Cultural Aoraki – During the Covid response Multi-Cultural Aoraki received targeted funding to provide support to migrant workers and employers of migrant workers in the district. This service was well received and has been missed since the funding ended. A partnership is being explored between MDC and Multi-Cultural Aoraki to reinstate this service in some form, providing more structured support and enable greater social connection.

### Community Group Support

#### Current

- Mackenzie Grant Finder – An online database of funding is now to community groups in the Mackenzie district. The database allows community groups to search for available funding.

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- Funding Advocacy – Advocacy is ongoing to encourage philanthropic funders to prioritise increasing funding and awareness in the Mackenzie District.
- Funding Clinic – The first in a series of funding clinics was recently held in Twizel. The event saw 40 community members attend and engage with some of the major funders in the Mackenzie District. This was made possible due to ongoing advocacy with funding providers.
- Funding Support – Assistance is available to community groups to support with accessing external funding. Support to date has included helping groups apply for funding, acting as an intermediary between funders and applicants, and identifying appropriate funding opportunities.
- Ongoing Operational Support – Support is available to community groups with establishing robust operational and strategic processes. Support to date has included; help establishing groups as an incorporated society, helping to establish strong governance practices, supporting with strategic planning and providing any other support that encourages high functioning community groups.
- Council Grants – In August 2024 MDC controlled grants were transitioned into the Community Development Business Unit. Work has been undertaken to understand the processes, ensure compliance with external funding bodies, streamline the processes and increase community awareness of the funds.

## **Future**

- Professional Development Opportunities – planning of opportunities to address the increased legislative burden being put on community groups is underway. We aim to deliver education opportunities for groups that includes; the changes to the incorporated societies act, adhering to health and safety requirement, traffic management plans, child protection, and others that arise.