



Community environmental scan of Mackenzie district

Prepared for Community Development team, Mackenzie District Council

by

Sarah Wylie Social Research and Evaluation

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Disclaimer, limitations and acknowledgements

It should be noted that the qualitative data gathering for the present report took place in mid-2024. Since then, a number of new initiatives have arisen within Mackenzie District Council and elsewhere. Notably, the Community Development team of Council have become much more embedded.

The author notes that the views presented in the report do not necessarily represent the views of Mackenzie District Council. In addition, the information in this report is accurate to the best of the knowledge and belief of the researcher. While the researcher has exercised all reasonable skill and care in the preparation of information in this report, the researcher accepts no liability in contract, tort, or otherwise for any loss, damage, injury or expense, whether direct, indirect, or consequential, arising out of the provision of information in this report.

Some of the information presented in the report, and especially that gathered via interview / focus group / survey may not be accurate. The researcher tried to fact-check this where there were concerns around reliability, but not everyone contacted chose to engage in the research, and some inaccuracies may remain, where perceptions do not match reality.

The author thanks all those community members who gave up their time to take part in the research, assisted in recruitment of informants, or who helped make focus groups and interviews possible.

Executive summary

Background

Mackenzie District Council commissioned a detailed community environment scan which was conducted May - July 2024, utilising a community development lens, focused on the capabilities, challenges, and opportunities currently in the communities of the Mackenzie district. This was intended to inform future activities, and enable organisational, district, and community development priority setting. The research was undertaken by Sarah Wylie Social Research and Evaluation.

Approach

A mixed methods approach was employed in the research, utilising both qualitative and quantitative data gathering techniques and triangulating findings from a range of sources. Flexibility was integral to the research approach. Some consultations were scheduled early on in the project, while additional groups and individuals were consulted via focus groups, interviews and discussions through a snowball approach, with informants added as needed to expand on / clarify information gathered, and to widen the reach into the different communities and populations of the Mackenzie district.

Quantitative findings

2023 Census

As at the last Census, March 2023, the usual resident population of Mackenzie district was 5,115, up 5.1% on the 2018 Census population (compared to 6.3% growth nationally) (Stats NZ 2024). Population growth in Mackenzie occurred at a much slower rate from 2018-2023 than was the case from 2013 – 2018, when it grew by 17%.

Ethnicity breakdowns for the district's population as a whole for the 2023 census usual resident population were as follows:

- European: 4,323 84.5%, compared with 67.8% for New Zealand as a whole.
- Māori: 447 8.7%, compared with 17.8% for New Zealand as a whole.
- Pacific peoples: 75 1.5%, compared with 8.9% for New Zealand as a whole.
- Asian: 459 9.0%, compared with 17.3% for New Zealand as a whole.
- MELAA¹: 108 2.1%, compared with 1.9% for New Zealand as a whole.
- Other: 81 1.6%, compared with 1.1% for New Zealand as a whole.

Of Mackenzie's total population as at March 2023:

- 5.5% were aged under 5 years
- 10.8% 5-14 years
- 10.1% 15-24 years
- 22.1% 25-39 years
- 33.1% 40-64 years
- 12.2% 65-74 years and
- 6.3% were aged 75 years and older.

¹ Middle Eastern / Latin American / African

The district's Māori population is much younger than is the case for the population as a whole, in line with national trends. Of the resident Māori population of Mackenzie district, 46.5% are aged under 25 years. There were 165 tamariki Māori under the age of 15 years living in Mackenzie district in March 2023.

Economic development

The Infometrics Quarterly Economic Monitor for Mackenzie to March 2024 reported that economic activity in the district was continuing to grow strongly as the international tourism sector recovers and dairy prices regain ground. Provisional estimates indicated GDP growth of 4.4% for the year to 31 March 2024, compared to national growth of just 0.2%.

The number of Jobseeker Support recipients within the district increased by 16.7% in the year to March 31, 2024 over the previous year, compared to a regional increase of 6.7% and a national increase of 7.8%.

The unemployment rate as at the March 2024 quarter was 1.7%, compared to 3.7% for Canterbury and 4.0% nationally. As at the March quarter of 2024, Ministry of Social Development data (MSD, 2024) shows that 150 residents of Mackenzie district of working age were receiving a benefit. Of the 150 residents receiving a benefit in the quarter to March 31 2024, 69 (46% of the total beneficiary population of Mackenzie district at that time) were on Jobseeker Support, 51 (34%) on the Supported Living Payment and 30 (20%) were receiving Sole Parent Support.

Infometrics (2024) report the annual average NEET rate, the proportion of young people of aged 15-24 years not engaged in education, employment or training was 6.0%, compared with 11.1% across the Canterbury region and 12.1% nationally. From being relatively static at this level since 2020, this has trended up since in the past year, from an annual average of 3.7% in the previous 12-month period.

Education

At the time of the 2023 Census, 13.4% of Mackenzie district's usual resident population aged 15 years and over had no formal qualifications, whereas (n=794) 18.5% had a university qualification of Bachelors degree or higher.

As at 1 July 2023, there were 187 students enrolled in secondary education (year 9-13) at the two schools offering year 9+ in the Mackenzie district, 79 at Twizel Area School and 108 at Mackenzie College. At the same time, a further 432 children were enrolled in schools within Mackenzie district across years 1-8.

As at 1 July 2023, 13 children and young people of school age were registered with the Ministry of Education as being homeschooled.

A Ministry of Education comparison of key education indicators for schools within the Mackenzie district, regionally and nationally shows Mackenzie as having slightly higher engagement in early childhood education compared to the wider Canterbury region and New Zealand as a whole, slightly underperforming on most education metrics (qualifications of school leavers, school stand-down

rates, school retention, vocational pathway achievement) but with markedly lower suspension and exclusion rates, and with the rate of enrolment in tertiary study post-school similar to regional levels.

Housing

As at March 2023, there were 4,437 dwellings in Mackenzie district, up 18.4% (an increase of 690 dwellings) on the 3,747 dwellings counted in 2018.

As at March 2024, the average value of a house in Mackenzie district was \$745,994, compared to \$933,633 nationally (Infometrics, 2024). Based on the ratio of mean house values to mean household incomes, housing in Mackenzie is less affordable than is the case nationally.

Mackenzie District Council has recently commissioned a comprehensive housing analysis for the district (Rationale Ltd, 2024). That report highlighted the aged housing stock, lack of small-sized dwellings, and lower rental affordability of Fairlie, housing stock not matching population growth in Tekapo and in Twizel, and the fact that 55% of the housing stock in Tekapo is listed under Airbnb and that demand for long-term rental accommodation far-outstrips supply, especially for smaller homes and its high housing prices: the median house price for Tekapo is now over \$1.6 million.

A recent survey of renters in Tekapo found that three-fifths were not experiencing housing stability, and 76% reported that their rental situation was impacting on their / their families' mental, physical and financial wellbeing (Beauchamp, 2024). 2023 Census findings show that more than one in 20 privately occupied dwellings in Mackenzie Lakes (the statistical area including Tekapo) are overcrowded. Across the district, 26.6% of households comprise a single person: nearly one resident in 10 in Mackenzie district lives alone, and for Fairlie this proportion is 12.4% and Twizel 10.6%.

Qualitative findings

Strengths

The Mackenzie is a community surrounded by amazing scenery, clear skies and waterways, strongly engaged in outdoor lifestyles that sit well within such a setting. As a physically active community, strongly engaged in sport, and remote in location with limited health services, most people in the district are relatively healthy. The geography of the district is diverse, as is the economy and the community that sits within it. For a district with a small population, Mackenzie district is made up by totally different towns with totally different histories and geographies, geographically separated – Fairlie is a strong, proud traditional rural farming community, older on average but changing as more young families move into the area, often with intergenerational connections to the community. Tekapo is primarily a tourist town, but part of its identity remains rural, and its population is highly multicultural because of the strong representation of hospitality workers. Isolated and with minimal health services, its population is on average younger. There are significant inequalities of wealth evident, with the worker population generally on quite low wages, while property owners tend to be much more well-off. From a town not intended to remain beyond the hydro construction period, Twizel is proud to now be the district's biggest town and there is growing pride in this history. Twizel has a strong sense of community and now exists as a mix of tourist town and service town, with a scale that means it has a range of amenities, with more on the horizon.

The district as a whole is characterised by safety, a slower pace of life, a passion for sport, recreation and a wide range of hobbies and interests, and the care for one another that is often a hallmark of small-town and rural New Zealand. The volunteer network is huge, and many services and supports depend on volunteers for their survival.

Community strengths identified across the community as a whole at a service provision level included the Mayors Taskforce for Jobs roles, primary health care provision across the district, the Vehicle Trusts based in Fairlie and Twizel, the increased availability and accessibility of counselling and mental health support across the district via private counsellors operating in Fairlie and Twizel, Health Improvement Practitioner roles serving Fairlie and Twizel, Arowhenua Health Services, Te Aitarakihi (Smithfield, Timaru) and a range of online counselling sources.

Challenges

Many of the challenges identified as currently facing the communities of Mackenzie district related to Mackenzie District Council:

- Council (both staff and Councillors) are seen as not involved enough at grassroots community level – they are seen as disconnected from community
- Mackenzie District Council is perceived as not connecting effectively with its Community Boards – there is a perceived disjoint/disconnection between Community Boards and Council – a wide range of stakeholders wanted to see Council and Community Boards work together much more, and stronger connections between Community Boards and Council staff.
- While improving, Council are still not communicating effectively with their community - criticisms of communication from Council extended to one-to-one communication, with phone calls and emails often unanswered, a desire for more regular communication to the community and much stronger use of Mackenzie district's key newsletters - *Fairlie Accessible* and *Twizel Update* to let the community know on a regular basis about Council projects, planning exercises, consultations etc.. There was a strong desire expressed for Council to have a regular page / column in each of these newsletters, seen as the best way of connecting to the local community. Criticisms of Council communication also extended to perceived lack of consultation over key decisions, notably around spatial planning.

All of these factors have led to:

- a significant lack of trust in Council
- perceptions that Council is not strategically where it needs to be – that it needs more enabling processes and to make better decisions to realise the value of Council assets.

A strong message was conveyed that Council staff could be much more effective in supporting the community to get good things off the ground – to act as an enabler and not just a regulator. Feelings around Council needing to be more enabling / supportive around community wellbeing extended to the way community facilities are hired out, and a need for more flexibility / grace in the way that facilities are charged out for use. They also extend to consent requirements, the way these are communicated to community groups and a need for timely communication, and costs of consent and a need to either support in kind by waiving such costs or connecting groups proactively with funding to navigate these processes easily.

Mackenzie does comprise several distinct, quite separate communities and there was a feeling expressed that **too often, the different towns compete against each other**, hindering big picture thinking and planning for community wellbeing as a whole. Council was seen as not doing enough to reduce this sense of competition.

Other themes regarding challenges facing Mackenzie's community as a whole:

- Accommodation / housing was identified as one of the biggest issues across the district, worst in Tekapo followed by Twizel, and driven by the high proportion of dwellings, and especially the newer, warmer, drier housing, operating as Airbnbs / Bookabaches / holiday home rentals. This is strongly borne out in the quantitative findings of the present research, There is a significant lack of appropriate worker accommodation in Twizel and in Tekapo.
- There is a lack of appropriate housing for older people across the district – the cost of transition to smaller, warmer housing is a barrier to freeing up the older housing stock in Fairlie, and a lack of older person social housing in Twizel was highlighted.
- There are now high expectations on volunteers in Hato Hone St John and FENZ - much higher training loads / compliance requirements, along with increased costs of living and a possible shift in the way volunteering is viewed by younger adults mean that it is getting harder to recruit and emergency services locally are under a lot of pressure.
- Healthcare emerged as a key challenge across the district. While Fairlie and Twizel are fortunate to have good primary health services in place, rural GPs are under pressure everywhere, and in Mackenzie district, tourist accidents and sickness place additional strain on local health services. After Hours urgent care - PRIME care is struggling to keep up with demand. Te Whatu Ora have set up a working group to look for more sustainable solutions for the Mackenzie basin. As mentioned, Hato Hone St John are sending an ambulance from Temuka five days / week to the district, but this is not sustainable, and there is a shortfall in the PRIME space. There is a need for succession planning to ensure primary health service access in the medium - long-term.
- The district lacks a dentist – travelling to Timaru / Christchurch / Oamaru to access a dentist is time-consuming.
- Home-based supports to enable older people to age in place – to safely stay in their own homes, leading a life with dignity and with their needs met are inadequate.
- The communities need community facilities to support sport and recreation, but it was seen as very difficult for small communities to get significant projects off the ground.
- A big gap was seen between Mackenzie's well-off and those at the bottom socioeconomically, and the cost of living / financial strain was increasingly evident.
- Tourism puts huge pressure on the local community - tourism numbers are now even higher than pre-covid levels, yet many locals feel the community does not get a good return on investment in tourism. There is strong resentment that Council has to spend so much on cleaning toilets used predominantly by tourists and does not have the money to invest in amenities that would benefit the local community.
- There are a lack of vocational opportunities for young people beyond apprenticeships, and not enough focus on youth engagement and addressing the needs of young people not engaged in sport and in education; the Community Vehicle Trusts could be more strongly utilised to connect young people with employment and learning opportunities.

Priorities for action

Across the district these include the following:

Mackenzie District Council

- Strengthened connections between Council and Community Boards.
- Improved communication from Council to the community.
- Stronger connection between Council and the communities across the district – increased visibility and meaningful engagement of elected members and staff on the ground and understanding of the distinct communities and their varying needs – enabling and actively striving to support community wellbeing.
- Improved culture within Council and between staff and elected members.
- Instigation of regular Council use of Mackenzie district's key newsletters - *Fairlie Accessible* and *Twizel Update* to let the community know in every issue about Council projects, services, funding pools, planning exercises, consultations etc..

Housing

- Addressing the negative impacts of short-term rental housing on housing availability and quality and on community connection in Tekapo (and to a lesser extent Twizel), and the lack of appropriate housing for older people and for people wanting smaller, warm and affordable homes across the district: this is one of the biggest priorities / unmet needs emerging across the research. Strategic approaches to address the identified housing needs, including a bold tackling of the high proportion of housing in Airbnb / short-term holiday rental should be a key priority for Council, and there are many models nationally and internationally to look towards for solutions, even for smaller local authorities.

Community facilities

- Access to community facilities which enable community connection, learning, physical activity, helping one another and opportunities to have fun / celebrate together: unmet needs are strongest and most urgent in Twizel (due to school rebuild proceeding who provide a base for Twizel Community Care and Twizel radio, a community library and field sports clubs) followed by Tekapo.

Healthcare

- Engaging in long-term, strategic planning to ensure continuation of primary healthcare provision and access at local level.
- Enhancement of emergency medical response capacity and capability.
- Facilitating access to dental care locally, perhaps via a mobile service and creative solutions (eg. Exploring potential to access Te Whatu Ora school dental service mobile clinics during period not in use and coupling with collaborative solutions with University of Otago dental school, holiday home owner dentists, etc. – openness to all ideas is likely to lead to a solution.)
- Significantly improve access to supports enabling aging in place, engaging with Older Person Health Supports, Te Whatu Ora South Canterbury and their assessments team and procurements personnel.

Rangatahi

- Enhancing support for young people, especially around cultural identity for rangatahi Māori and strengthening culturally appropriate supports for young people not in education, employment or training,
- Increasing access to career development opportunities and pathways and fostering aspirations, and continuing to value the MTFJ positions in the district

- Continuing to strive to enhance youth-accessible supports around mental and physical health and wellbeing.
- Continuation of efforts to connect young people with affordable and accessible driver licence education.

People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds

- Advocating for and facilitating access to specialised multicultural support for migrant workers and their families, including reinstatement of local, on-the-ground access to advocacy services of Multicultural Aoraki.
- Maintaining, celebrating and building on the existing opportunities in place which bring diverse communities together to learn, connect, be active, help each other and have fun – Tekapo English language group, cultural performances, shared kai, Hospo Sundays (Tekapo), multicultural evenings etc.

Cost of living and social supports for those who need them

- Progression of the locals discount card idea into a reality.
- Enhancing capacity for more specialised support locally, increasing capacity of Fairlie Resource Centre and Twizel Community Care through strengthened connections to each other and to the social services of wider South Canterbury.

Enhancing social connectedness and reducing social isolation - Tekapo

The general consensus from those consulted around the Tekapo community and its needs identified along with enhancing the on-the-ground community development capacity within the town to actively build community connection and progressing development of a sport and recreation hub for the town. The health priorities outlined for the community as a whole are critically relevant to Tekapo, which lacks a permanent medical practice and is some distance from any health services.

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1. Background

While Mackenzie District Council provides funding support for community-based community development roles, an internally based community development function is new within Council. Community development can be a wide and varied function: the team at Mackenzie District Council want to ensure that they can prioritise their actions based on a solid evidence base regarding locals strengths, capabilities and needs. They also want to be able to monitor the progress of what is a new function of council over time, and to do this, they require robust benchmarks and baselines.

Accordingly, Mackenzie District Council commissioned a detailed community environment scan (including compilation of baseline data to measure future progress) utilising a community development lens. This was to be focused on the capabilities, challenges, and opportunities currently in the communities of the Mackenzie district, gathering community voice, and designed to gain insights from its residents, agencies, and organisations, and which will inform future activities, and enable organisational, district, and community development priority setting. They were particularly interested in what the communities within the Mackenzie district feel is important to them: what they like about where they live, what challenges they face, what community resources they have access to, and any 'quick win' or important community-led projects which council can support. The research was undertaken by Sarah Wylie Social Research and Evaluation.

The research was conducted May - July 2024, and the following presents an interim report of findings. The report will be expanded in late 2024 once the full 2023 Census data is available for analysis and inclusion.

2. Scope of the research

The community environmental scan research sought to address the follow questions:

1. What are the strengths, capabilities, challenges, barriers and opportunities currently present in the communities of the Mackenzie district, especially in terms of education, recreation, social services, government services, social cohesion / community connectedness, transport, housing (affordability, quality, appropriateness and security of tenure), employment, health care, food security and safety? What do these look like for:
 - the different geographic communities of Mackenzie district, including Fairlie, Tekapo, Twizel, Albury and Kimbell? urban vs rural?
 - different age groups, with particular attention paid to young people (and their retention/return to the district as adults) and older adults?
 - ethnic communities / newcomers and migrants, and the urban and rural communities?
2. What does the community see as priority areas and opportunities in terms of community wellbeing?
3. What are the demographic characteristics of the population of Mackenzie district as a whole and of the geographic communities of interest within it and how have these communities changed over time? This quantitative component of the report utilised existing reports as well as most recent data from StatsNZ (2023 Census), Work and Income, Education Counts, Infometrics and New Zealand Police to develop a demographic profile of the local community.

3. Approach

A mixed methods approach was employed in the research, utilising both qualitative and quantitative data gathering techniques and triangulating findings from a range of sources to yield robust, holistic findings in relation to the research questions. Flexibility was integral to the research approach. Some consultations were scheduled early on in the project, while additional groups and individuals were consulted via focus groups, interviews and discussions through a snowball approach, with informants added as needed to expand on / clarify information gathered, and to widen the reach into the different communities and populations of the Mackenzie district.

The following research activities were employed:

1. A demographic profile was prepared for Mackenzie district as a whole and of the communities of interest within it upon release the full 2023 Census dataset becomes available in November 2024. The report presents relevant data from Ministry of Education New Zealand Police, Ministry of Social Development, Infometrics along with Census-derived age, sex and gender breakdowns for the total population of Mackenzie district.
2. An electronic survey was disseminated across relevant government and not-for-profit agencies and community organisations across the social, community, recreation and sport and wellbeing sectors, both within Mackenzie district and those mandated/contracted to deliver services to Mackenzie from outside the district (including Timaru and Waitaki). The survey was sent via emailed link to all schools, ECEs, Heartland services, foodbanks, medical practices, pharmacies, to churches / faith-based communities, service clubs, sport, recreation, social and arts clubs/groups and allied health providers along with relevant parties in government agencies. The email explained the community environment scan and invited the recipients to forward the survey link to others in their networks. The survey sought responses pertaining to the research questions. Guidance was sought from Mackenzie District Council in compiling the list of recipients, supplemented with the community contacts identified on Fairlie Resource Centre's website and groups, organisations and service providers identified via scan of recent issues of the Twizel Update and Fairlie Accessible community newsletters, along with others known to the researcher from prior research in the Mackenzie community in 2021.

In total, 29 responses were received for the survey.

3. The following focus groups were conducted²:
A wide range of stakeholders were invited to attend a community stakeholder focus group in each of the three main towns.
 - **Fairlie Community focus group** (n=9) attended by representatives of Hato Hone Hato Hone St John, Te Whatu Ora National Public Health Service, Fairlie Community Library,

² Participants are only named where they gave their consent for this. Some key informants took part in focus groups as well as being interviewed separately, to allow time to gather their insights into particular populations within the district (eg. young people) and so they could hear focus group insights firsthand.

Fairlie Resource Centre, Mary McCambridge (Mayors Taskforce for Jobs), Barbara Adams, Allan Kerr

- **Tekapo Community focus group** (n=4), attended by Caroll Simcox (Lake Tekapo Community Board and Church of the Good Shepherd), Jasmine Shaw (Lake Tekapo Kindergarten), Brad Morton (New Zealand Police – Tekapo), Penny Wilson
- **Twizel Community focus group** (n=4), attended by representatives of Twizel Community Care and Twizel Community Gym governance, Sandra Rolls (Principal Aoraki Mt Cook School), Hannah Beer (Mayors Taskforce for Jobs), Nicola Collins (Twizel Promotions)

Focus groups were also conducted with the following, representing different demographics and geographic communities across the district:

- **Twizel Area School senior student leaders** (n=9)
- **Mackenzie College senior students** (n=9)
- **English Practice Meeting group**, Tekapo – an adult English as a Second Language group set up by Maria Roche from Lake Tekapo School and Nico Romero, a member of the migrant worker community in Tekapo (n=9)
- **“Forum” older adult’s group** – Fairlie (n=29)
- **Fairlie Music and Movement Group** (n=7)
- **Albury Hall Committee** (n=4)
- **Twizel Patchwork Group** – female Twizel residents, all over 70 years old (n=5)
- **Twizel Little Movers** parent and baby group (n=5)
- **Twizel Residents’ and Ratepayers’ Association** representatives (n=3)

The following community stakeholders were interviewed in person:

- Mayor Anne Munro
- Gina Kilmister and Kaz Lanchester, Fairlie Resource Centre
- Hannah Beer, Mayors Taskforce for Jobs – Twizel
- Simon Waymouth and Maria Roche – Lake Tekapo School
- Two members of Lake Tekapo Community Board, interviewed together (a third member not available for interview responded in writing)
- One representative of Fairlie Community Board
- Three members of Twizel Community Board, interviewed together
- Barbara Nustrini, Community Development Worker, Lake Tekapo
- Councillors Rit Fisher and Phillipa Guerin (Opuha Ward), interviewed together
- Twizel Community Care staff Vicky Hayes and Judith Holland, interviewed together
- Joleen Tanner, Compliance and Regulatory Officer, Mackenzie District Council
- William Beauchamp, Tekapo Community Market
- Anne-Marie Povall, Twizel Community Library
- Nina Boyes, Practice Manager, Twizel Health
- Anne Thomsen, Fairlie Resource Centre older adult activities, Fairlie Community Market

The following community stakeholders were interviewed by telephone or online:

- Councillor Kerry Bellringer (Twizel Ward)
- Councillor Murray Cox (Opuha Ward)

- Councillor Matt Murphy (Tekapo Ward)
- Mary McCambridge, Mayors Taskforce for Jobs – Fairlie
- Keith Shaw, CEO YMCA Central South Island

In total, 116 individuals took part in either an interview, a focus group or both.

All interviews and focus groups followed a semi-structured format, designed to address the research questions, with some of the social or interest groups centred on a more compressed set of questions. All data was thematically analysed.

4. Quantitative Data

4.1 Population

As at the last Census, March 2023, the usual resident population of Mackenzie district was 5,115, up 5.1% on the 2018 Census population (compared to 6.3% growth nationally) (Stats NZ 2024).

Population growth in Mackenzie occurred at a much slower rate from 2018-2023 than was the case from 2013 – 2018, when it grew by 17%.

Mackenzie district is divided by Stats NZ into four SA2 areas: Opuā (rural area to the east of the district), Mackenzie Lakes (geographically large rural area to the west), Fairlie (which follows the town boundaries of Fairlie) and Twizel (which comprises the town of Twizel), as shown.

Populations at the time of the 2023 Census were as follows:

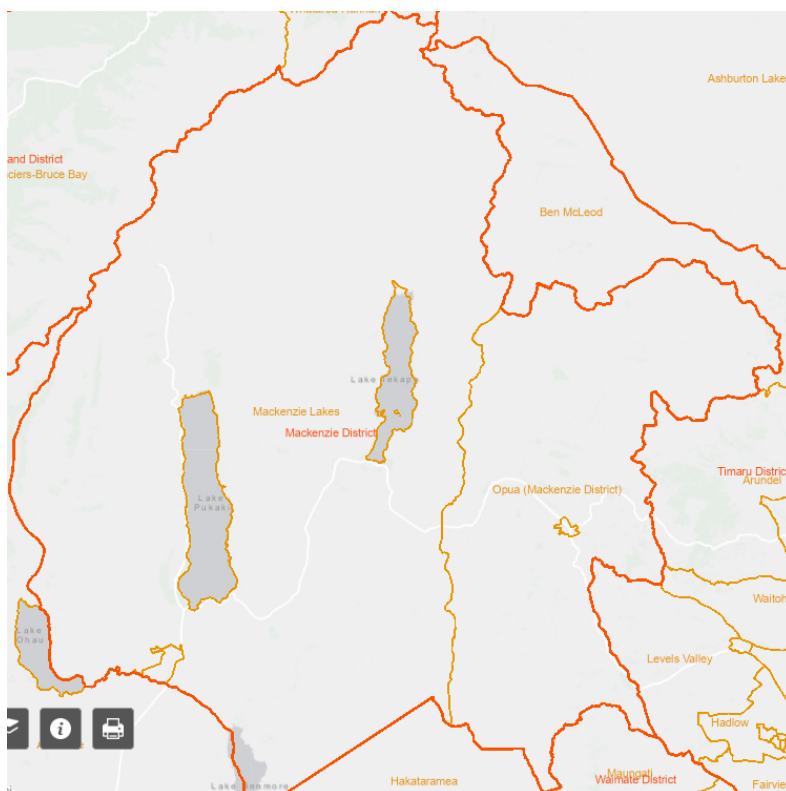
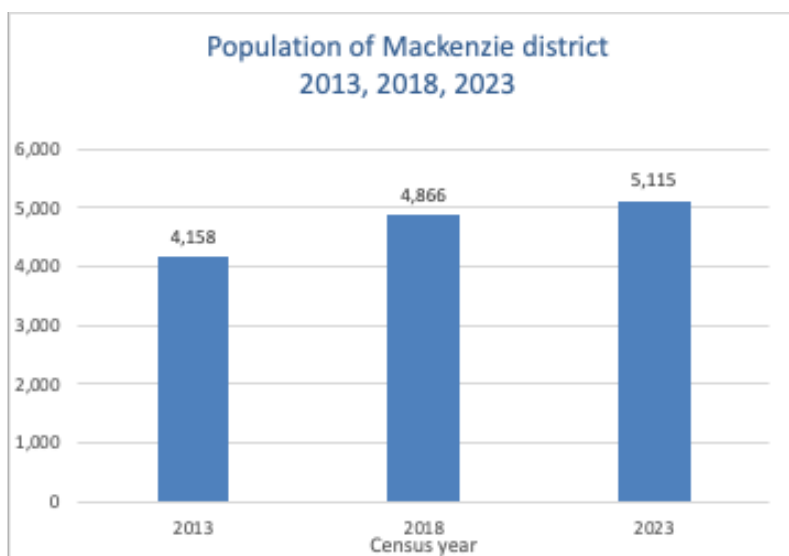
- Twizel: 1,674
- Fairlie: 918
- Mackenzie Lakes: 1,131
- Opuā: 1,398

Just over half the total residents lived in Fairlie and Twizel, (50.7%), so combined with the population of Tekapo, the population is now slightly more urban than rural.

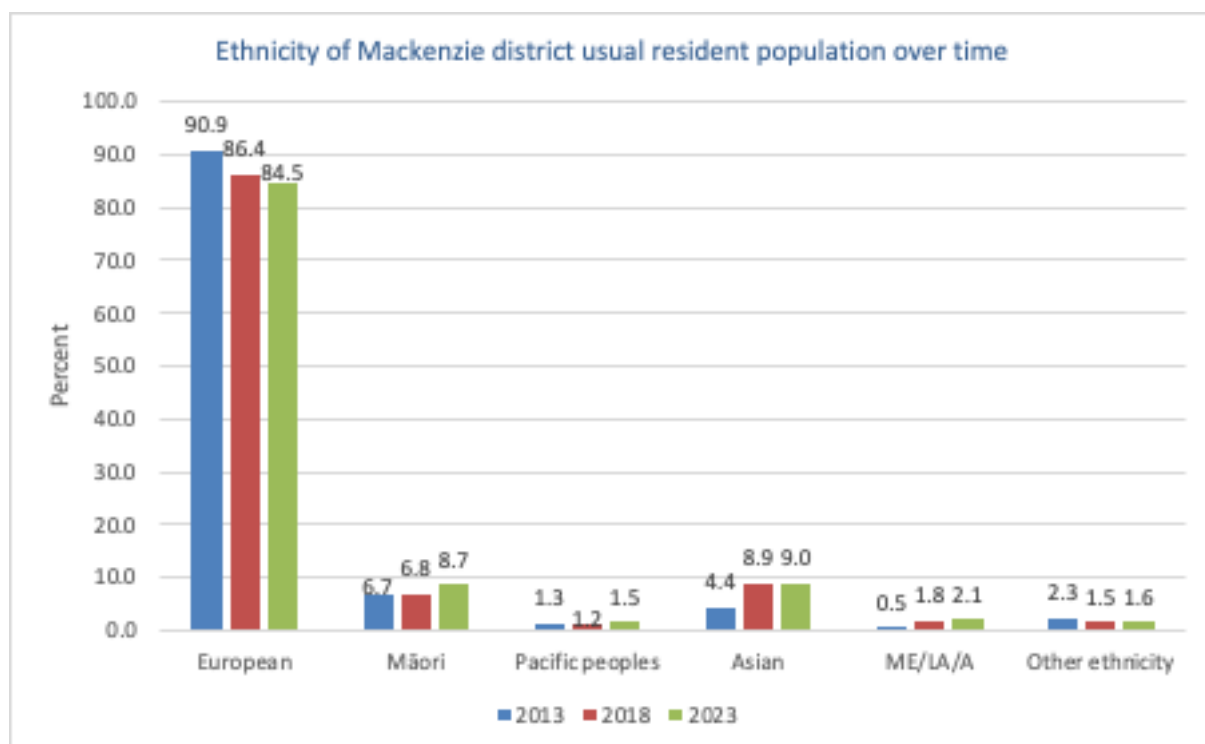
Males represent 52.9% of Mackenzie's usual resident population, compared with 46.6% females. The gender imbalance is more pronounced for the 15-29 years age range (where males are much more over-represented) than for 30-64 years. 0.5% of the population as at March 2023 identified as another gender.

Ethnicity breakdowns for the district's population as a whole for the 2023 census usual resident population were as follows:

- European: 4,323 84.5%, compared with 67.8% for New Zealand as a whole.



- Māori: 447 8.7%, compared with 17.8% for New Zealand as a whole.
- Pacific peoples: 75 1.5%, compared with 8.9% for New Zealand as a whole.
- Asian: 459 9.0%, compared with 17.3% for New Zealand as a whole.
- MELAA³: 108 2.1%, compared with 1.9% for New Zealand as a whole.
- Other: 81 1.6%, compared with 1.1% for New Zealand as a whole.



Of the Māori usual resident population of the district (n=447):

- 42.3% reside in Twizel
- 25.5% reside in Opuā
- 20.1% reside in Fairlie
- 13.4% reside in Mackenzie Lakes

The most ethnically diverse statistical area in Mackenzie district as at March 2023 was Mackenzie Lakes, where 68.9% of the population identified as European (still slightly higher than European as a proportion of the population of New Zealand population as a whole), followed by 85.3% in Twizel, 88.9% for Fairlie and 92.9% for Opuā.

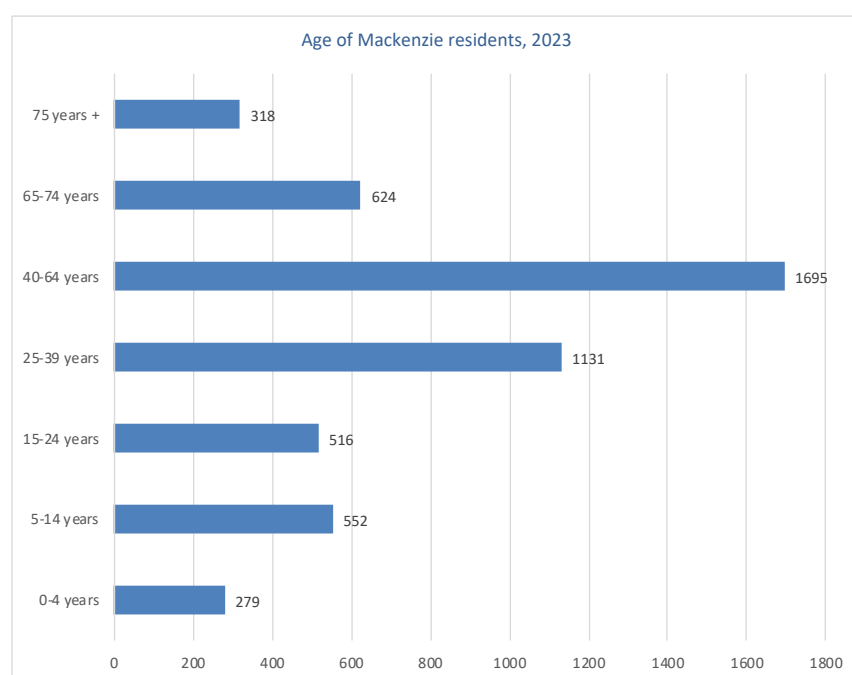
Of the Asian usual resident population of Mackenzie district, the largest group represented were Chinese (n=159), followed by Indian (n=75) Japanese (n=63) and Filipino (n=57). 87 people identified as MELAA were Latin American, while the largest Pasifika population as at March 2023 were Fijian (n=33) followed by Samoan (n=21). The Fijian population are most strongly represented in Mackenzie Lakes, Samoan in Twizel, Latin American in Mackenzie Lakes (n=45) and Twizel (n=33).

³ Middle Eastern / Latin American / African

Nearly three-quarters of the 2023 Census usual resident population of Mackenzie district lived at the same residence a year earlier, but only around two-fifths lived at the same residence five years earlier. 5.1% had lived overseas one year ago, and just under a quarter of 2023 residents (n=1,251) were born overseas, most commonly in Asia (n=384) followed by UK and Ireland (n=300).

The median age for New Zealand's total population at the time of the 2023 Census was 38.1 years, up from 37.4 years in 2018. Mackenzie's median age, as was the case nationally, dropped slightly from 2013 to 2018 (41.7 years in 2013, 40.7 years in 2018), rising to 41.1 years in 2023.

Age distribution of the 2023 Mackenzie population is presented below.



Of Mackenzie's total population as at March 2023:

- 5.5% were aged under 5 years
- 10.8% 5-14 years
- 10.1% 15-24 years
- 22.1% 25-39 years
- 33.1% 40-64 years
- 12.2% 65-74 years and
- 6.3% were aged 75 years and older.

The district's Māori population is much younger than is the case for the population as a whole, in line with national trends. Of the resident Māori population of Mackenzie district, 46.5% are aged under 25 years. There were 165 tamariki Māori under the age of 15 years living in Mackenzie district in March 2023.

Of the 279 preschoolers aged 0-4 years residing in Mackenzie district at the time of the 2023 Census:

- 99 lived in Opuā

- 78 lived in Twizel
- 51 lived in Mackenzie Lakes
- 51 lived in Fairlie

Of the 552 children / young people aged 5-14 years residing in Mackenzie district at the time of the 2023 Census:

- 198 lived in Opuā
- 174 lived in Twizel
- 84 lived in Mackenzie Lakes
- 81 lived in Fairlie

Of the 516 young people aged 15-24 years residing in Mackenzie district at the time of the 2023 Census:

- 159 lived in Opuā
- 147 lived in Twizel
- 120 lived in Mackenzie Lakes
- 87 lived in Fairlie

Of the 942 residents of Mackenzie district aged 65 years and over at the time of the 2023 Census:

- 180 lived in Opuā
- 369 lived in Twizel
- 150 lived in Mackenzie Lakes
- 240 lived in Fairlie

At the time of the 2023 Census, 150 usual residents of Mackenzie district were aged 80 years and over. Of these, 51 lived in Twizel, 60 lived in Fairlie, 24 in Opuā and 15 in Mackenzie Lakes – these figures are not likely to be precise, being subject to rounding (to nearest 3) for privacy reasons. These figures do show that there is a pattern of retiring into the town of Fairlie, this by no means the case for all, and there are more very old residents living outside Fairlie than there are in the town: this also applies to those aged 90 years and over.

Median ages for the four statistical areas of the district are as follows:

Opuā:	40.2 years
Twizel:	44.2 years
Mackenzie Lakes:	35.8 years
Fairlie:	47.5 years

At the time of the 2023 Census, there were 1,317 family households in Mackenzie district, comprising 744 couples without children in their household, 465 couples with children and 111 single parent family households.

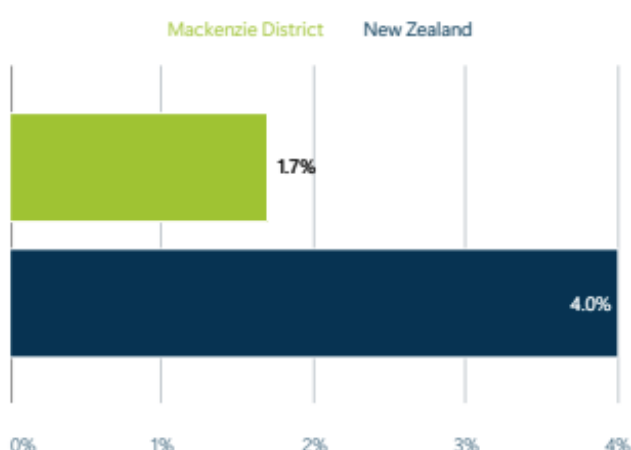
4.2 Economic wellbeing and employment

The Infometrics Quarterly Economic Monitor for Mackenzie to March 2024 reported that economic activity in the district was continuing to grow strongly as the international tourism sector recovers and dairy prices regain ground. Provisional estimates indicated GDP growth of 4.4% for the year to 31 March 2024, compared to national growth of just 0.2%.

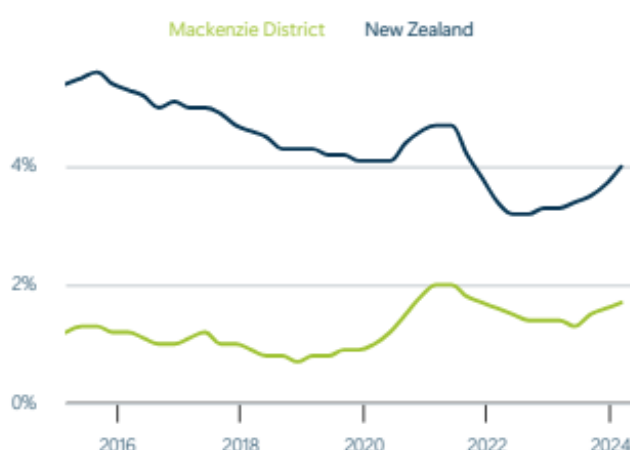
Infometrics observed that for the year to March 31 2024, employment of Mackenzie residents had “continued to surge”, up 8.8% on the previous year, largely driven by accommodation and food services, with 80 jobs added in these sectors. That said, the number of Jobseeker Support recipients within the district increased by 16.7% in the year to March 31, 2024 over the previous year, compared to a regional increase of 6.7% and a national increase of 7.8%. The unemployment rate as at the March 2024 quarter was 1.7%, compared to 3.7% for Canterbury and 4.0% nationally. Unemployment rates over time are presented below.

Unemployment rates

Annual average rate to March 2024



Annual average rate



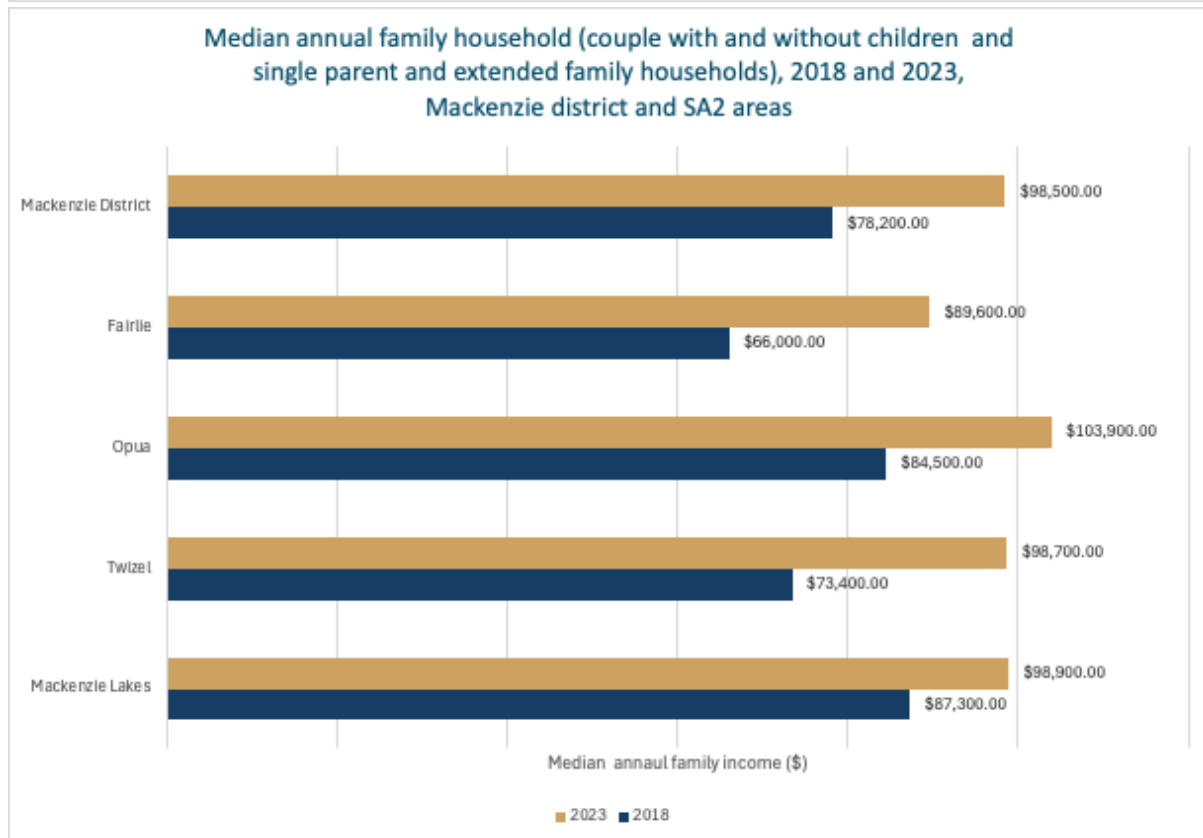
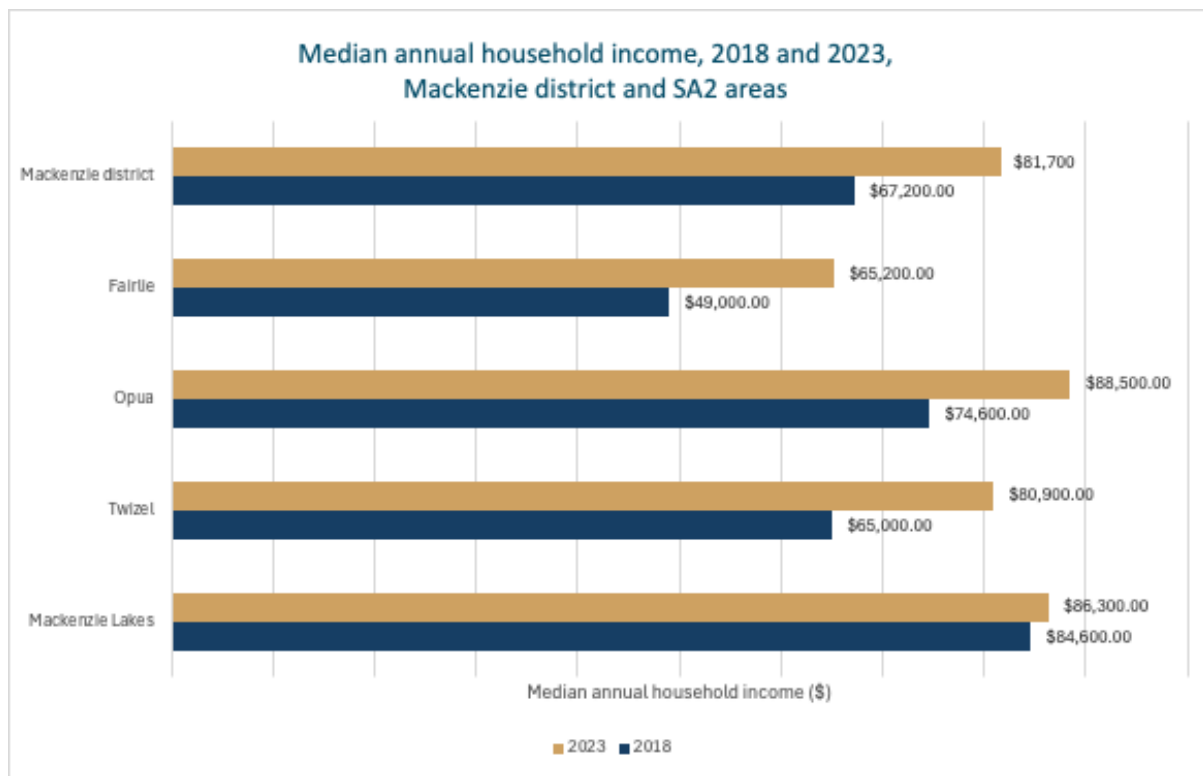
Infometrics, 2024

2023 Census findings show the median personal income for Mackenzie district’s usually resident population aged 15 years and over as \$41,400, with median personal income for each statistical area as follows, reflecting higher incomes for rural areas compared to the towns of Fairlie and Twizel:

Opuā:	\$44,000
Mackenzie Lakes:	\$43,800
Twizel:	\$41,400
Fairlie:	\$36,100

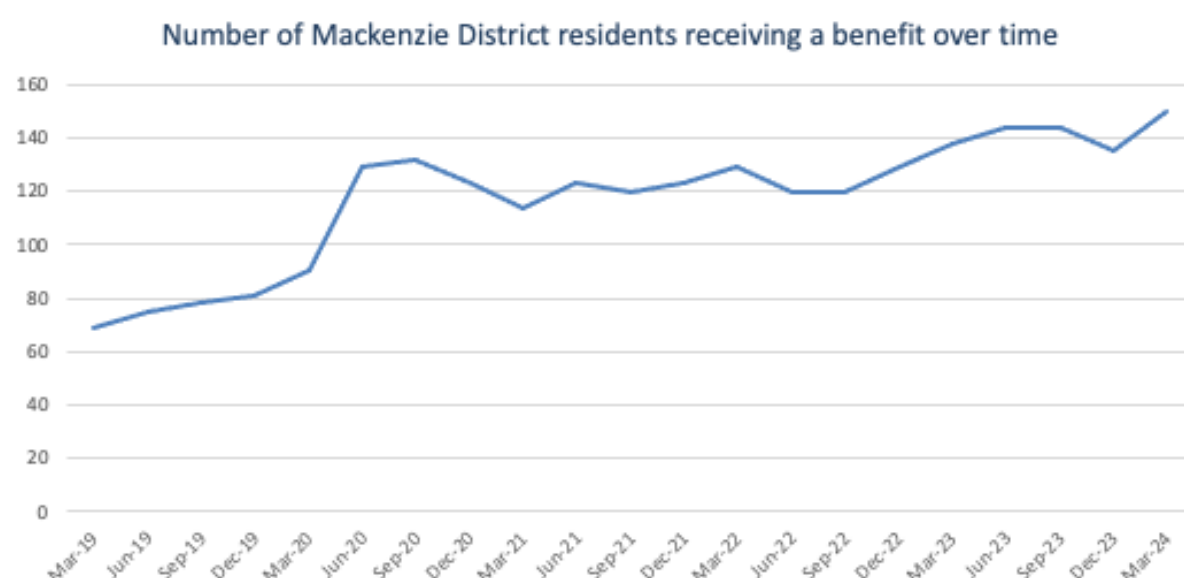
Median personal incomes for each of the four statistical areas are up \$10,000-13,000 on those of 2018. Across the district as a whole, 351 residents had an income of \$100,000 or more at the time of the 2023 Census (55.6% of these people residing in Mackenzie Lakes and Opuā), and just over two-fifths of the resident population (n=1,797, 42.0%) earned \$50,000 or more per year.

The median family income (couples, single parent, two-parent families and extended family households) for the district in March 2023 was \$98,500, up \$20,300 on 2018, while the median household income was \$81,700, up from \$67,200 in 2018.



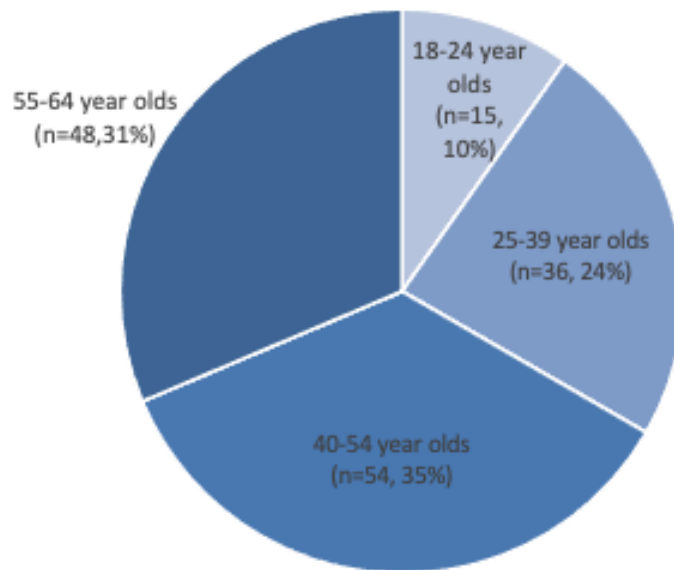
As at the March quarter of 2024, Ministry of Social Development data (MSD, 2024) shows that 150 residents of Mackenzie district of working age were receiving a benefit, with residents of the district comprising less than 0.1% of New Zealand's total beneficiary population at that time. Of the 150 residents receiving a benefit in the quarter to March 31 2024, 69 (46% of the total beneficiary population of Mackenzie district at that time) were on Jobseeker Support, 51 (34%) on the Supported Living Payment and 30 (20%) were receiving Sole Parent Support.

To compare to March 2021 data presented in previous social research undertaken by the author in Mackenzie district, at that time 114 people were receiving benefits across the district, with 58% of these receiving the Jobseeker Support payment, 18.4% receiving Sole Parent Support and 24% the Supported Living Payment (Formerly Sickness / Invalids benefit). Between March 2021 and March 2024, the number of residents receiving a benefit in the March quarter of the year therefore increased by 31.6%, whereas for the same time period, the number of people receiving a benefit for New Zealand as a whole increased by only 1.8%, from 365,937 in March 2021 to 370,251 in March 2024.

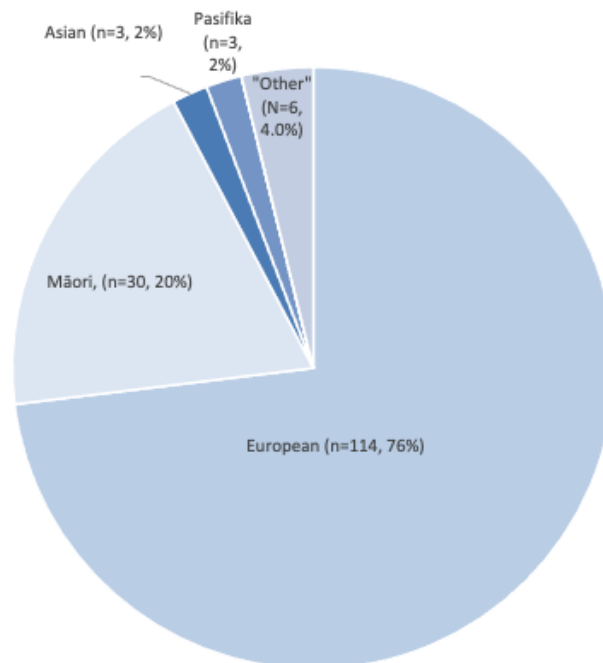


Of the total group of residents of Mackenzie of working age receiving a benefit in March 2024, 28% had been receiving a benefit for one year or less, with 72% receiving a benefit for a continuous duration exceeding a year. Fifty-six percent of benefit recipients were female and 44% male. Age and ethnicity breakdowns of the beneficiary population for March 2024 are presented as follows.

Age of residents of Mackenzie District receiving a benefit in March Quarter, 2024



Ethnicity of residents of Mackenzie District receiving a benefit in March Quarter, 2024



Infometrics (2024) report the annual average NEET rate, the proportion of young people of aged 15-24 years not engaged in education, employment or training was 6.0%, compared with 11.1% across the Canterbury region and 12.1% nationally. From being relatively static at this level since 2020, this has trended up since in the past year, from an annual average of 3.7% in the previous 12-month period. In the last decade, the annual average NEET rate for Mackenzie district peaked at 7.4% in June 2017.

4.3 Socioeconomic deprivation

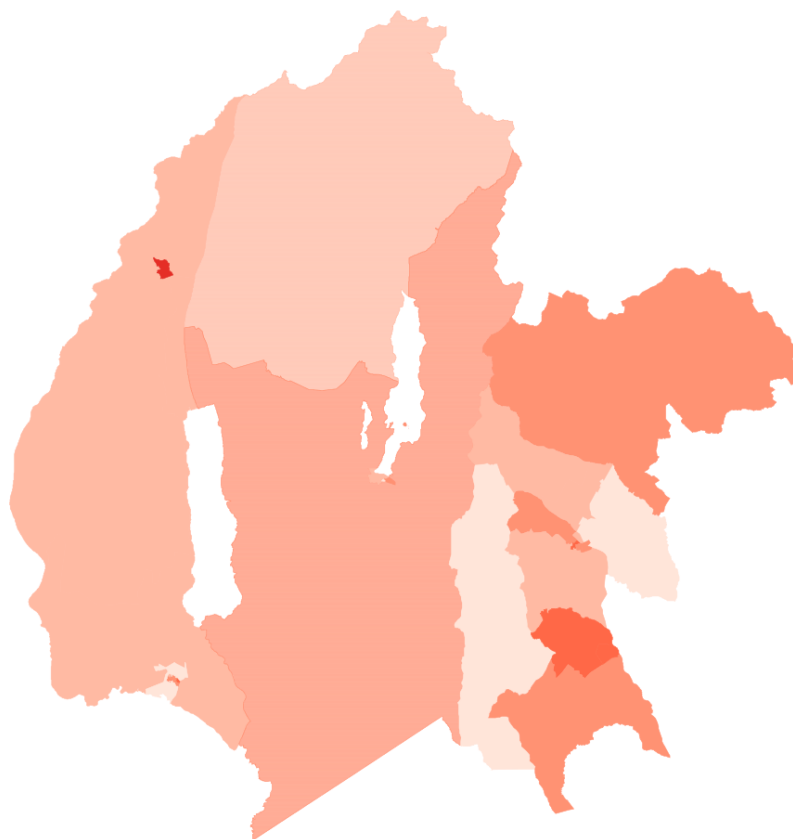
The New Zealand Deprivation Index (NZDep) is an area-based measure of socioeconomic deprivation in Aotearoa New Zealand. It measures the level of deprivation for people in each small area, based on nine Census variables. NZDep is displayed as deciles, with each NZDep decile containing about 10% of small areas in New Zealand.

- Decile 1 represents areas with the least deprived scores
- Decile 10 represents areas with the most deprived scores

Deciles are at times also reported as quintiles, dividing areas into fifths.

Higher levels of socioeconomic deprivation are associated with worse health. There are also connections between socioeconomic deprivation and environmental risk.

NZDep2023 TA065 Mackenzie District



NZDep2023 quintiles

quintile 1 (least deprived)
quintile 2
quintile 3
quintile 4
quintile 5 (most deprived)
Withheld/Missing

NZDep ratings based on 2023 Census data were released in November 2024. The map of quintile ratings for the smallest geographic statistical areas for Mackenzie district is presented on the following page. It shows highest deprivation (in the 20% of most deprived scores nationally) for Aoraki Mt Cook Village, while the Albury area is identified as quintile 4, with high deprivation, most likely connected to the population of the settlements itself. The settlement of Kimbell is also quintile 4.

University of Otago, 2024

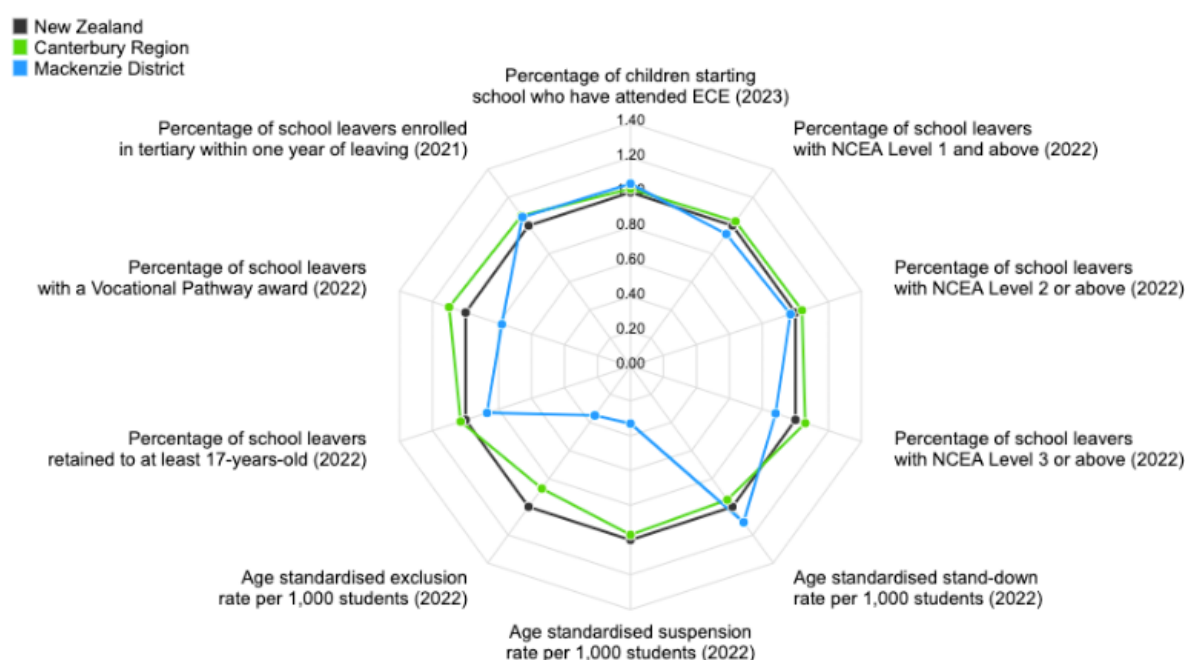
4.4 Education

As at 1 July 2023, there were 187 students enrolled in secondary education (year 9-13) at the two schools offering year 9+ in the Mackenzie district, 79 at Twizel Area School and 108 at Mackenzie College.

At the same time, a further 432 children were enrolled in schools within Mackenzie district across years 1-8, with 157 of these at Twizel Area School and the remainder at the seven other schools within Mackenzie district: Albury School, Aoraki Mount Cook School, Cannington School, Fairlie School, Lake Tekapo School, Mackenzie College (year 7-8) and St Joseph's School (Fairlie).

Comparing the rolls of year 8 and year 9 for the Mackenzie College and its contributing schools and for Twizel Area School, there is no significant difference, suggesting those leaving schools in the district around that stage to board for their secondary education are by far the minority, and there does not seem to be a discernable difference between the two secondary school catchments. However there is a notable difference between the number of children of school age who were usual residents of Mackenzie District at the March 2023 Census (552 5-14 year olds plus those aged 15-18 years, the precise number of which has not yet been released) and its total school population, suggesting that a sizeable number of children and young people residing in Mackenzie district attend school elsewhere. As at 1 July 2023, 13 children and young people of school age were registered with the Ministry of Education as being homeschooled. The number of homeschooled children in Mackenzie district increased dramatically post-Covid-19, at 19 in 2022 and 13 in 2023, up on an average of 2.9 children per year across the decade to 2021. Comparing the number of homeschoolers in the district in 2013 and 2023, the number increased by more than four times, compared to the number doubling nationally.

Key student achievement metrics: Mackenzie district, Canterbury region and New Zealand



Ministry of Education - Education Counts 2024

The previous figure presents a comparison of key education indicators for schools (latest data available) within the Mackenzie district, the Canterbury region and nationally. It shows Mackenzie as having slightly higher engagement in early childhood education compared to the wider Canterbury region and New Zealand as a whole, slightly underperforming on most education metrics (qualifications of school leavers, school stand-down rates, school retention vocational pathway achievement) but with markedly lower suspension and exclusion rates, and with the rate of enrolment in tertiary study post-school similar to regional levels.

Looking further at young people receiving their secondary education at schools within the district, Ministry of Education data (Education Counts website) show that in 2022, 80.0% of females and only 37.5% of males at Twizel Area School stayed at school until at least their 17th birthday. This compares with 96.2% of females and 94.3% of males in 2021, and all female students and two-thirds of male students in 2020. The Ministry of Education suppressed data by gender for Mackenzie College for 2020 due to small numbers, but 81.3% of all 2020 leavers stayed until their 17th birthday, and the same proportion in 2021 (90.0% of females and 76.2% of males), while retention fell for 2022, with 84.6% of females and 70.6% of males (76.7% overall) remaining at school until at least their 17th birthday. In 2022, just over three-quarters of school leavers from schools within Mackenzie district (76.7%) remained at school until at least their 17th birthday, compared with 80.9% for Canterbury and 78.5% nationally.

In 2020, all school leavers from Twizel Area School had NCEA Level 1 or higher, and 95.1% in 2021, while the proportion of school leavers in 2022 with at least NCEA level 1 dropped further to 76.9%. Whereas all females and 92% of males school leavers had NCEA Level 2 or higher in 2020, this proportion fell to 96.2% of females in 2021 and 80.0% in 2022. In 2021, 88.6% of male Twizel Area School leavers had NCEA level 2 and above, falling to 50.0% in 2022. The same trend is observed for NCEA level 3, and in 2022, 40.0% of females and 25.0% of males educated in Mackenzie district had achieved NCEA Level 3 when they left school. This compares to 55.1% for all school leavers across Canterbury and 51.8% nationally.

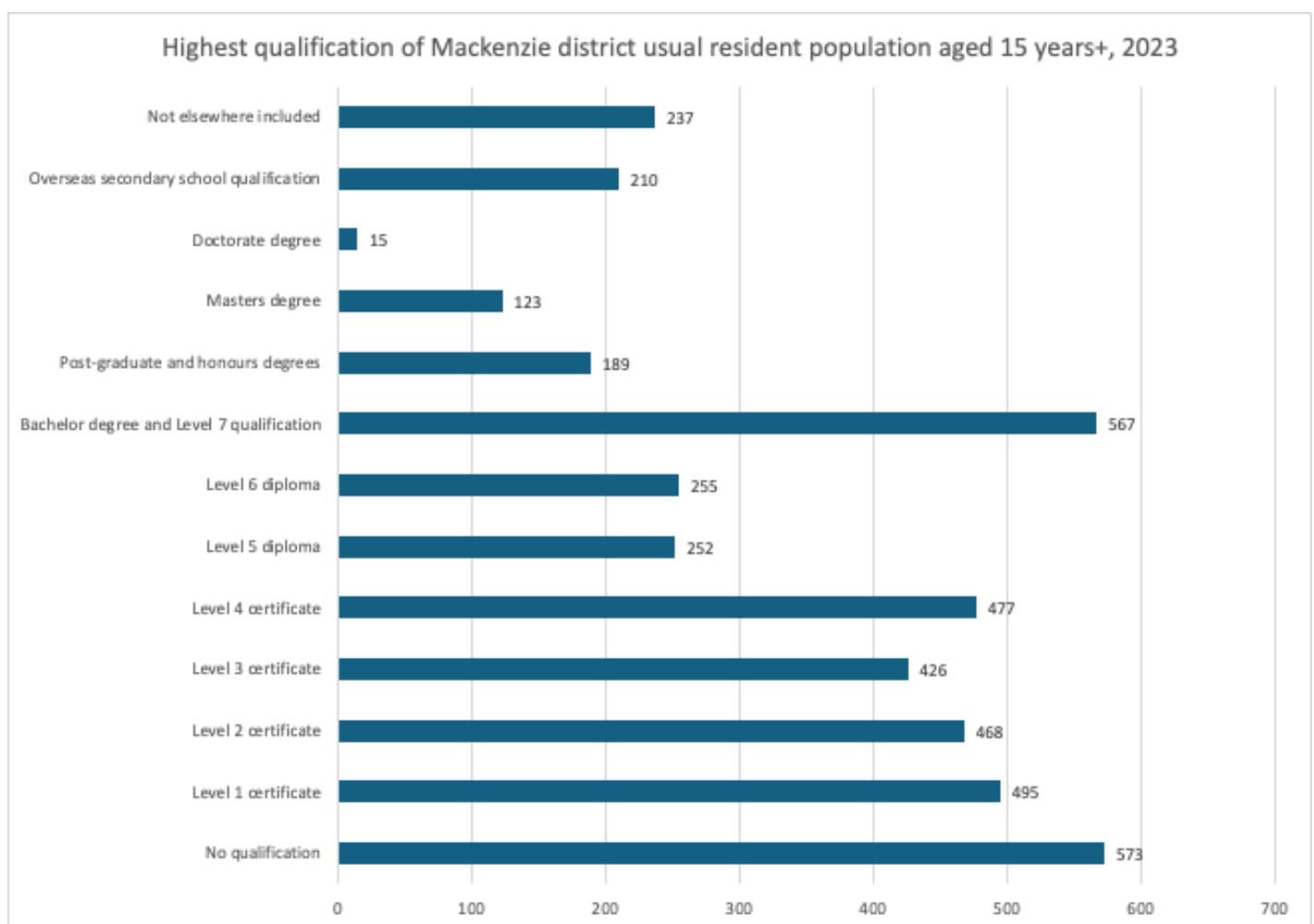
Like Twizel Area School, Mackenzie College has also seen a decline in the percentage of school leavers with NCEA qualifications, more marked than has been observed nationally or across Canterbury, but this may reflect the small numbers of secondary students at the schools and across the district. In 2022, 92.3% of females and 76.5% of males left school with NCEA level 1 or higher, compared with all females and 95% of males in 2021 and 2020. In 2022, 84.6% of females and 76.5 males leaving Mackenzie College had NCEA level 2 or higher, compared with all females and 85% of male school leavers in 2020 and over 90% of both genders in 2021. All females and 58.3% of male Mackenzie College leavers in 2020 had NCEA Level 3, compared with 63.6% of females and 38.1% of males in 2021. However 2022 saw an increase in the proportion of leavers from the school with NCEA level 3, up to 69.2% of females and 41.2% of males.

At the time of the 2023 Census, 13.4% of Mackenzie district's usual resident population aged 15 years and over had no formal qualifications, whereas (n=794) 18.5% had a university qualification of Bachelors degree or higher. Full breakdowns of qualifications are presented on the following page.

Comparing the SA2 areas of the district, of the 2023 usual resident population aged 15 years + stating highest education:

- 31.5% of Mackenzie Lakes residents had a university degree or higher, and only 9.4% had no formal qualifications
- 20.5% of Twizel residents had a university degree or higher, and 15.1% had no formal qualifications
- 19.1% of Opuā residents had a university degree or higher, and 12.3% had no formal qualifications
- Only 14.6% of Mackenzie Lakes residents had a university degree or higher, and 18.8% had no formal qualifications

Mackenzie Lakes had the most qualified population and Fairlie the least.



4.5 Housing

The first 2023 Census data released in May 2024 included the dwelling counts for each local authority area. As at March 2023, there were 4,437 dwellings in Mackenzie district, up 18.4% (an increase of

690 dwellings) on the 3,747 dwellings counted in 2018. Around 75 dwellings were under construction at that time, but this figure is subject to rounding to nearest multiple of 3.

While the Census identified 4,437 dwellings across the district, only 2,487 (56.1%) were privately occupied with a household. Of the households in privately occupied dwellings:

- 52.3% were owned / partly owned
- 12.3% were held in a family trust
- 35.4% were not owned / partly owned by their occupants, with the majority of these rented from private landlords.

Household composition data from the 2023 census is summarised in the following table. The proportion of people living alone has slightly increased since the 2018 census, with Fairlie continuing to have the greatest proportion of its households comprising people living alone, reflecting its older population. Multi-person (flatmate) households are most common in Mackenzie Lakes followed by Twizel.

Household composition, 2023 Census, % total households in privately occupied dwellings (n)

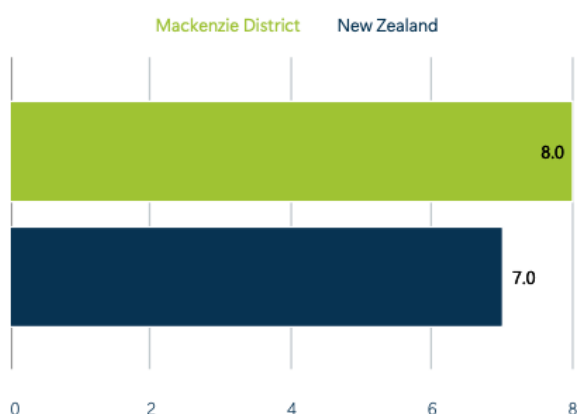
Area	Single person household	One family household	Two family household	Multi-person household
Mackenzie district	26.6% (n=504)	66.7% (n=1,263)	1.4% (n=27)	5.2% (n=99)
Mackenzie Lakes	28.1% (n=102)	59.5% (n=216)	1.7% (n=6)	11.6% (n=42)
Twizel	27.2% (n=177)	65.9% (n=429)	1.8% (n=12)	4.6% (n=30)
Opua	22.3% (n=111)	75.3% (n=375)	1.2% (n=6)	2.4% (n=12)
Fairlie	30.2% (n=114)	64.3% (n=243)	1.6% (n=6)	3.1% (n=12)

Of the households living in privately occupied dwellings as at March 2023, 2.6% were identified via the crowding index employed by Stats NZ as crowded. Comparing crowding status by SA2 area, this rose to 5.1% for Mackenzie Lakes. Across the district, 57.1% of households living in privately occupied dwellings had two or more bedrooms spare, with this proportion greatest in Opua, where 63.4% of households in privately occupied dwellings reported this.

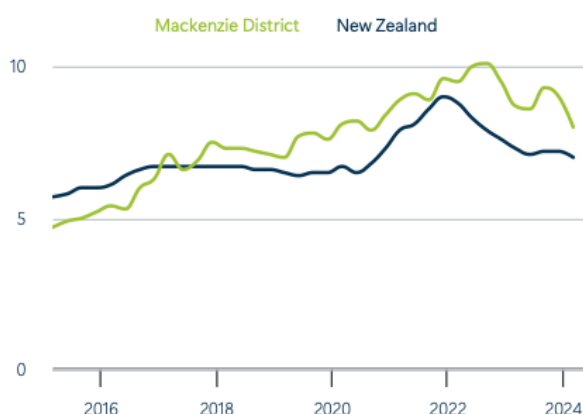
As at March 2024, the average value of a house in Mackenzie district was \$745,994, compared to \$933,633 nationally (Infometrics, 2024). Based on the ratio of mean house values to mean household incomes, housing in Mackenzie is less affordable than is the case nationally. Housing affordability index data, prepared by Infometrics (2024) is presented on the following page.

According to Infometrics (2024), across New Zealand in the year to 31 March 2024, the number of residential consents issued fell by nearly 25% on the previous year, but in Mackenzie, the decrease in residential consents was felt even more sharply, falling by 42.2%. Number of house sales in the district bounced back by 10% on the previous year, compared with 13.4% across Canterbury and 11.8% for New Zealand as a whole. House values increased by a modest 1.2% across the Mackenzie district, compared to increases of 3.0% across Canterbury and 1.9% for New Zealand.

Ratio of house prices to household incomes, year to March 2024



Ratio of house prices to household incomes, annual average



At the time that the March quarterly Infometrics report was published for Mackenzie, residential rent data for the year to March 2024 had not yet been published. For the 2023 calendar year, average rents were up by 12.5% in the district, compared to an increase of 6% nationally. Average residential rent for the 2023 calendar year was \$360 in Mackenzie district compared with \$550 for New Zealand. According to Infometrics (2024), renting in Mackenzie district (20.5%) was more affordable than in New Zealand (21.9%) in the year to December 2023, based on the ratio of mean rents to mean household incomes.

2023 Census data indicated that there were no iwi, hapu or Māori land trust-rented dwellings in the district, and no Kāinga Ora housing. There are up to 3 privately occupied homes rented from community providers in Mackenzie Lakes. There is a very small amount of Council rental housing in Twizel (3 or less) and Fairlie (6 or less) but the numbers reported from the 2023 Census are subject to rounding.

Mackenzie District Council has recently commissioned a comprehensive housing analysis for the district (Rationale Ltd, 2024), and for in-depth exploration of housing strengths, needs and gaps across the district, the reader is directed to that report. Key points raised in that report for each town and for rural Mackenzie district are as follows:

Fairlie

- Aged housing stock, with more than half the town's dwellings more than 60 years old – more likely to be colder, damper and harder to maintain
- Lack of small-sized dwellings, impacting older people and first-home buyers
- A lower income community, influencing housing affordability – rental affordability (average weekly rental relative to average weekly household income) is lower than for the district as a whole, but home ownership is slightly more affordable than is the case for the district as a whole
- Relatively good level of supply relative to population growth

Tekapo

- Very rapid population growth over the past decade has not been matched by growth in housing stock

- 55% of the housing stock in Tekapo is listed under Airbnb, with former long-term rentals shifting to the more profitable short-term visitor rentals: demand for long-term rental accommodation, especially for younger adults far-outstrips supply and especially for smaller homes
- House prices have risen significantly, and the median house price for Tekapo is now over \$1.6 million

Twizel

- Housing supply has not kept pace with the significant population growth of Twizel over the past decade
- Like Fairlie, a lack of small-sized dwellings suitable for older people
- Relatively large number of holiday homes and short-term rentals – 14% of total housing stock is on Airbnb
- Relatively high proportion (55%) of dwellings are unoccupied
- Rental affordability is worse than for the district as a whole

Rural Mackenzie

- Housing stock expanded at a slighter larger rate than population growth from 2013 to 2019
- Older housing stock, with over half the houses more than a century old
- Houses more affordable to rent and to own compared with housing across the country as a whole

The Rationale (2024) report presented a range of housing case studies from other parts of New Zealand and from overseas, presumably for consideration in developing local solutions for the housing challenges facing Mackenzie district.

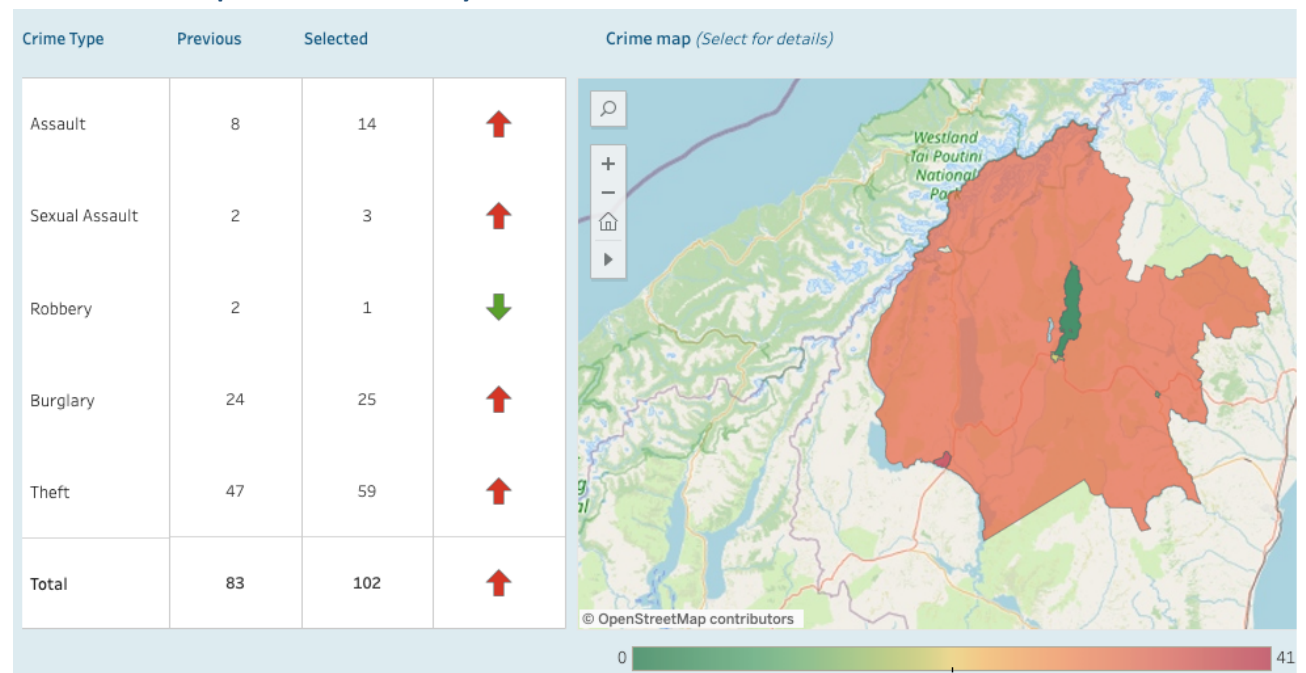
A research paper published in 2023 in the New Zealand Geographer journal (Fyfe, Telfar Barnard, Howden-Chapman & Bennett, 2023), exploring the growth of Airbnb in New Zealand and its impact on the private rental housing market identified Mackenzie district as having the largest percentage of its rental properties listed on Airbnb of any local authority area in the country. Over 10% of rental housing (and over 50% of new rentals) in the district by 2021 were short-term rentals.

A survey of renters in Tekapo has been conducted twice, in September 2023 and May 2024, led by local residents passionate about the housing situation in that community. The two surveys showed downward trends in mental health over time. The more recent survey had 76 respondents, around 43% of whom had working holiday or working visas, with the majority of respondents either New Zealand or Australian citizens or New Zealand residents. Just over a third had lived in Tekapo for less than a year, with 37.3% having lived there for more than 3 years. More than two-fifths were committed to Tekapo as their permanent home. For three-fifths of the respondent group, rent accounted for 30-50% of their take-home pay, and for around 5% it accounted for more than 50%. Three-fifths were not experiencing housing stability, and 76% reported that their rental situation was impacting on their / their families' mental, physical and financial wellbeing (Beauchamp, 2024).

4.6 Public safety

In the year to March 2024, there were 102 victimisations reported in Mackenzie district, with the vast majority property-related: 59 theft and related victimisations and 25 burglary victimisations. Of the total victimisations reported to Police in the year to March 2024, 65.7% occurred in towns (8 occurred in the township of Fairlie, 18 in Tekapo, 41 in Twizel) and the 33 occurred in rural areas. Half of all offending occurred in the weekend, and two-thirds between Friday-Sunday.

Victimisations reported to Police for year to 31 March 2024



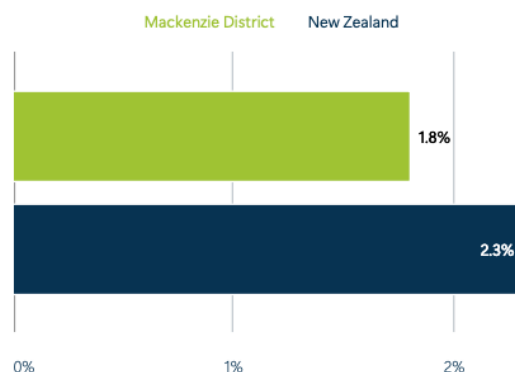
Victimisation data for the year to 31 March 2024 is presented above. This shows increases in all offence types except for robbery compared to the year prior, with largest increases in numbers of assaults and incidents of theft. The map shading shows number of offences by Stats NZ statistical area, with lowest numbers green and highest numbers in red. As has been the case for the district for some time, reported victimisations are low across the district.

4.7 Health

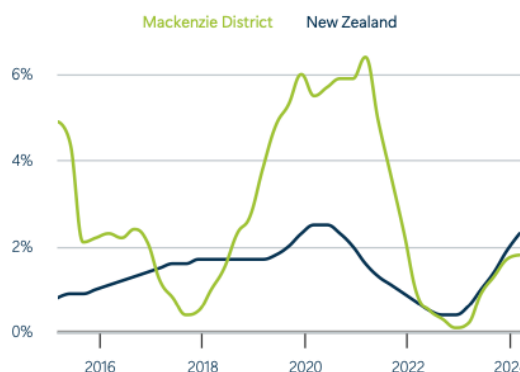
The number of people enrolled with a primary health organisation within the Mackenzie district in the year to March 2024 increased by 1.8% compared to the previous year, a rate of growth slower than was experienced across New Zealand (2.3%) (Infometrics, 2024). Health enrolment trends for Mackenzie district and for New Zealand over time are presented in the following figure.

Annual change in health enrolments (Infometrics, 2024)

Annual average % change March 2023 - March 2024



Annual average % change



2023 Census data for the usual resident population of Mackenzie district revealed that:

- Of the total population count aged 15 yrs and over:
 - 8.8% (n=378) were regular smokers
 - 27.0% were ex-smokers

The 2023 New Zealand Census included a new question about disability, exploring whether a person's daily activities are limited by a disability, long-term condition, or mental health condition. The census was available in multiple formats, including paper and online, to accommodate people's needs. Regarding disability and accessibility needs of the population aged 5 years and over, only 4.8% (n=201) of the usual resident population identified themselves as disabled (compared to 6.0% for New Zealand as a whole), whereas:

- 17.1% of the population aged 5 years and over completing the question indicated some difficulty hearing
- 17.9% of the population aged 5 years and over completing the question indicated some difficulty remembering or concentrating
- 17.5% of the population aged 5 years and over completing the question indicated some difficulty seeing
- 11.4% of the population aged 5 years and over completing the question indicated some difficulty walking.
- 3.0% of the population aged 5 years and over completing the question indicated some difficulty communicating
- 3.0% of the population aged 5 years and over completing the question indicated some difficulty washing

5. Qualitative data: Interview and focus group findings

5.1. Community characteristics and strengths

5.1.1 Community characteristics and strengths of Mackenzie district as a whole

In describing the defining characteristics of the community/ies of the Mackenzie, the following main themes emerged:

- It is **diverse**, made up by totally different towns with totally different histories and geographies, geographically separated – some suggested that strength comes from this diversity, but not everyone perceives the differences across community in this way.

*"You have to have a lens of difference when making decisions and acquiring information."
- elected member⁴*

- Across the district, people tend to lead **strongly outdoor lifestyles** – the mountains and lakes are key attractors to the district and key places of recreation – there is so much to do – it is a very physically active community.
- Mackenzie is a **warm and welcoming** community.

"The colder the climate, the warmer the people." – elected member

"It's also very like tight community too. Like when people move from outside, and then, you know, you see on Facebook, sometimes they'll introduce themselves ..., and everyone just takes them in. And people really look out for each other here as well." – young person

"I found that when I came here, it was quite quick. I had family who had moved here like a year before, yeah. So they weren't locals here either yet, but it didn't take very long to get used to living here." – young person

- The area is **defined by amazing scenery, clear skies and waterways**.
- It is a beautiful, **safe** community offering a **slower pace of life** – it offers a great outdoor lifestyle and is more laid-back than Queenstown – people often come for these reasons.
- It's a **proud** community.
- It has **great schools** offering amazing opportunities.
- People are **passionate about their interests**.

⁴ Where quotes are attributed to elected members, this includes both Councillors and Community Board members, in order to preserve anonymity.

- **Great place to raise a family** - a lot of people who grew up in the Mackenzie move back when they reach this stage of life.

"That says a lot about the sort of community that it is." – community member

- It's a **caring** community – people support each other.
- The **volunteer network is huge** – many services and supports depend on volunteers for their survival.
- Its **geographically isolated** and that brings with it challenges in accessing a broad range of services and higher living costs.

Community strengths identified across the community as a whole at a service provision level included the Mayors Taskforce for Jobs roles, primary health care provision across the district, the Vehicle Trusts based in Fairlie and Twizel, the increased availability and accessibility of counselling and mental health support across the district via private counsellors operating in Fairlie and Twizel, Health Improvement Practitioner roles serving Fairlie and Twizel, Arowhenua Health Services, Te Aitarakihi (Smithfield, Timaru) and a range of online counselling sources.

5.1.2 Community characteristics and strengths of Fairlie

Fairlie was widely identified as a "classic New Zealand small rural town", proud of its rural identity and character, with a mix of people from urban and rural lifestyles. The economy of Fairlie is strongly agricultural and it is a service town to its rural surrounds.

"If farming goes well, then Fairlie goes well." – elected member



It was identified as very welcoming and generous, with a large aged population, but a growing number of young families connected with both the farming sector and work in Timaru, often being people who grew up in the area and move back to raise their children and to access housing cheaper than in cities. It was identified as intergenerational in character, with family connections embedded in the way some people do business and communicate.

Key strengths of the Fairlie community were identified as follows:

- There is a good sense of community / sense of caring – the community is well-networked, typical of a lot of rural communities – people mix in well together and look after each other – older people received amazing support during Covid, from Fairlie Resource Centre and from local businesses – they went the extra mile

"Everyone looks after each other." – community member

"People know people and are interested in what you do." – elected member

"It's very supportive - people are less likely to fall through the cracks than in a big community." – community member

"If something goes wrong, people are there in a second to help." - community member

- It has a very wide range of groups and activities to suit a wide range of people - sporting and cultural
- Strong sporting culture

"I think it's definitely sport orientated around here, and it's not always like high intensity sport, like rugby, but like, and these are sort of older people, but they'll have, like, the Cracker Jack, like bowls, like lawn bowls in the summer and stuff. And like people sort of think older people do that, but then you go along. And there's quite often young people there as well." "It's the (young people) who don't play sports who are the worry." – young person

- Strong philanthropy – Lions and Lodge are strong and provide a lot of funding into the community, as does the Fairlie market
- Its big enough to have some key amenities – ECE, secondary schooling, medical practice
- Housing is cheaper than Twizel and Tekapo

The following groups, services, initiatives and activities were most commonly identified as supporting the Fairlie community to live life well:

- Fairlie Resource Centre was widely highlighted as a key community resource, offering great knowledge, connections, and supports to the community in a range of ways including one to one digital literacy support. The Heartlands contract was seen as adding to that with visiting government agencies valued. Its community response team supports everyone locally aged 60 years + and others who need it in times of disaster and crisis, and the centre administers the vehicle trust, runs stronger for longer fitness classes and a food bank for those who need it, offers meal support and firewood for those who need it, and facilitating opportunities for social connection activities for more isolated older adults.

- Mackenzie College was identified as a great high school, especially supportive of young people around sport and ensuring young people can get to games / trainings. Mackenzie College has a social diploma for year 9-10 with Student Volunteer Army a part of this - students are often called on by the Resource Centre to help neighbours in need putting bins out etc. and this connection works well. Students can access low-cost music lessons in a range of instruments, and holds a young performer concert.
- The town has a range of strong sports clubs – especially golf (a strong social Wednesday evening competition in summer), rugby, bowling, squash, and a strong sense of fraternity was seen to exist around these clubs – Mackenzie Rugby Club has teams at all levels and via the Community Vehicle Trust, two vans bring people to rugby for training. There are also a range of fitness classes including pilates and yoga.
- The town was identified as lucky to have two longstanding GPs who know family histories and see patients the same day and even in the weekend if it is an emergency, going above and beyond. The Fairlie Medical Centre holds a PRIME emergency response contract. An older informant shared his experience of one of the doctors taking him in his own vehicle to hospital in Timaru because there would have been a two hour wait for an ambulance.
- Timaru was seen as relatively accessible to people who live in Fairlie (compared with the other communities of Mackenzie district), and the Vehicle Trust assists those who need it.
- Meal support out of Fairlie Resource Centre makes a big difference for more frail older people.
- Mild – moderate mental health support provision has improved in recent years – Brief Intervention Counselling is available, Health Improvement Practitioner and Health Coach are available in Pleasant Point to patients from Fairlie, there is a locally based private counsellor, Arowhenua Health Services delivers support locally and the school counsellor is making a difference.
- The community theatre production held every year is a great source of social connection and wellbeing.
- Fairlie Food Fairies cook meals for families with new babies and who are struggling.
- Fairlie Angels is group of around 10 women who put \$5-10 every week / regularly to a fund and support people having a rough time in a range of ways. Both these community groups and some others are quite low profile but offer a lot - don't promote themselves so not necessarily easy for newcomers to find out about them.
- Forum is a popular activity for older adults, running a range of social events.

Other less commonly identified community assets include the following:

- The adult education classes held by Fairlie Resource Centre - watercolour painting classes held recently, First Aid courses, woodwork (in conjunction with Mackenzie College), a range of

international food cooking classes – they find people who can run them and strive to make these affordable - tap into Creative Communities Funding for these.

- A range of low-profile community activities – some can be hard to find as they rely on word of mouth for promotion.
- Hato Hone St John ambulance currently have 10 volunteers in Fairlie, and Hato Hone St John trialled a dedicated Temuka-staffed ambulance Monday-Friday daytime hours and this has been secured in the longer term.
- Hato Hone St John Health Shuttle which can provide free transport from Fairlie to Timaru Hospital, but which could have a stronger profile.
- Fairlie Community Vehicle Trust, which transports people to Timaru for \$50 return per person and can also transport people to other locations as needed.



- Fairlie MenzShed
- Mackenzie Library offers Skinny Jump low-cost internet connections.
- Wide range of local events on offer to bring people together to connect – dinners etc.
- Fairlie Community garden engages with a lot of older residents, as well as school children and Fairlie Kindergarten.



- Skate park great for older children and younger teens
- Mackenzie Cooperating Parish has just appointed a new full-time minister to be based in Fairlie
- Skiing is an affordable and accessible recreational activity for young people and families locally

5.1.3 Community characteristics and strengths of Tekapo

Tekapo was seen as defined by outstanding natural beauty, and natural landscape is the main attractor for people to reside in the community. Residents were seen as having a shared passion for the area and for the lifestyle.



A number of informants talked about how in the 1970s and 80s, Tekapo comprised holiday home owners who were boaties, with the remainder of population rural and connected with high country farming. The town was seen to change with development/increased profile of Mt John observatory and Dark Skies – it became more a tourist town, but part of its identity remains rural – it was a satellite town, then a transitory place, and now a destination. Today, many of the permanent residents have a historic connection to the town / district, often as former bach owners / visitors. The town's population is also multicultural and highly diverse because of the strong representation of hospitality workers – the 20 children at the kindy represent 12 different nationalities, and the 31 children at the local school comprise 10 different cultures. It is a town that depends on volunteers, and where a small number of people “wear many hats”.

Tekapo's population was identified as “tribal”, with connections often relating to different industries and their hours. The population ranges across a big spectrum from low income to very wealthy – Tekapo has landowners and semi-retired residents with passive incomes living a very comfortable lifestyle, and an incredibly diverse workforce from all over the world, many of whom survive on barely more than minimum wage, and some saw a real disconnect between two.

“The haves and the have nots” – community member

The international workforce are seen by some as only here for a few months and therefore not worth really connecting with, yet many are long-term residents who regard Tekapo as their home. A sizeable proportion of this group are very connected to Tekapo even though they are neither residents nor ratepayers.

While the community variously identified as great, having a community feel, where everyone knows each other, fundamentally a fantastic place, in describing the community, there was also a strong theme of Tekapo having a limited community feel, and a perceived decline in sense of community post-Covid - Covid had pulled the community together through that period but the return to “normal” happened very quickly: the community was seen as divided on a range of issues, and quite disconnected.

*"Covid slammed the community - now we are back like we were and we haven't learned anything."
– elected member*

The community was seen by some as split between “locals” and hospitality workers, with some farming community, but now also including an increased number of remote workers (who were seen as often less connected with the local community) and semi-retired, “super busy” people highly involved in volunteering who have moved into town – Tekapo gives them an opportunity for them to unwind.



Less common feedback regarding the community itself is as follows:

- It's a mini Queenstown.
- The community pulls together for fundraisers - committees are driven by farmers but the rest of community gets behind causes.
- You have to be a certain sort of person to live in Tekapo.
- You have to get involved in order to fit into the community.
- It's a village where people want the best for the place.
- It's a town strongly focused on making money, and it is not in a recession.
- Isolation is a big attractor for some.

The following groups, services, initiatives and activities were most commonly identified as supporting the Tekapo community to live life well:

- FENZ - strong pool of volunteers - around 20, mostly men - great source of social connection.
- Lake Tekapo School has been very purposeful in making it a community hub, and its Board of Trustees purposefully try and welcome newcomers to the community. The school accommodates a range of community activities at no cost and its buildings are well-activated with pilates, Esol, yoga, and community group meetings held at the school.
- Tekapo Kindergarten is a great amenity, open since 2017 and located on land donated by the church a trust rebuilt the facility and handed it over but it has hit max capacity and has no room to grow.

- The kindy and school are strongly connected, offering capacity for great pastoral care of families, great professional relationships – the school has shared professional development opportunities with the kindergarten in the past.
- GP / nurse fortnightly clinics from Twizel Medical Centre at Tekapo Fire Station are working well, with a room converted for that purpose. The service was being accessed by some of the migrant workers consulted with.
- Lions are strong, and where this group used to be older, the average age of members has dropped a lot. Tekapo Lions are very service-focused, and provide a good support for older residents.
- The night market is a key facilitator of community connection – it crosses the divide between property owners and renters.
- Some employers are very supportive of their workers – these tend to be those employers who are owner-operators rather than external owners, more disconnected with issues on the ground locally.
- The Community Rooms are seen as a key asset locally. The Community Development Worker is based in this space.



- A community garden is being established.
- An informal gym/boot camp is operating locally and working well.
- Playgroup runs out of Bright Stars on Mondays, connecting parents with infants.
- Tekapo was identified as having a very functional Community Board.
- The locally based community development role was identified as key.
- Hospitality Sundays are a great initiative designed to connect hospo workers together for support and fun – the different bars in Tekapo take turns hosting this event after hours, giving hospitality workers a chance to experience some degree of a night life and connect together.
- ESOL classes (around 15 participants) operate out of the school during the evening, led by a migrant hospitality worker and a school teacher, and resourced by the school (base, copying). Some of the participants are helping with sports coaching at school and some great ties between the migrant worker population and the school are being forged via this group. Huge capacity was identified within the migrant workforce, with many being highly qualified professionals, even though they are working as cleaners, cooks etc.
- A knitting group and a walking group have been started up with support of the Tekapo Community Development Worker.

- Tekapo Sports Trust is working to build new sports complex – there is a MoU in place with MDC that if Council want to relocate the squash court, they have to fund this. Council's Community Team Leader has attended meetings and Trust members have found this really helpful – money is being put aside for the project by Council, although this was seen as not enough.
- Businesses are generous in their support of community.

5.1.4 Community characteristics and strengths of Twizel

From a town not intended to remain beyond the hydro construction period, Twizel is proud to now be the district's biggest town. It has quite a different history to the rest of the district and a history that increasingly, the community sees as needing to be shared. When the town was established, the families there had moved repeatedly, from Roxburgh - Benmore - Otematata – when they arrived in Twizel, the houses were on bare land with no fences or roads. Over time, some of these workers reached retirement age while living and working in Twizel, and chose to stay in retirement, so strong links to the hydro history remain. Twizel was identified as having a strong sense of community, especially amongst the long-term residents, the “hydro generation” and their children who were seen as the foundation of Twizel as a whole. Twizel today was identified as a mix of tourist town and service town, with a scale that means it has a range of amenities without being a traditional farming town. It is attractive as a safe, quiet place to live highly walkable with little traffic, a sense of space, natural beauty and diverse climate (which does not suit everyone) and supporting an outdoor lifestyle. Informants commonly talked about how people generally move to Twizel thinking that it will be a temporary shift, and then stay.



"If anyone is in need, the community looks after them. There are so many acts of kindness." – community member

A lot of New Zealanders move to Twizel for fishing, biking, paragliding and its wide range of outdoor recreation opportunities. A number of older residents had holiday homes in Twizel and then moved permanently – feedback suggests that it is common to have some connection to the town before moving to Twizel. Concerns were raised by some that so many people re choosing to retire to Twizel, given its remoteness from any hospital or specialised health care.

Twizel, like Tekapo, was identified as socioeconomically diverse, ranging *"from fancy holiday homeowners who can afford expensive groceries to beneficiaries who use the Twizel Foodbank"*. It was described as *"mostly a workers' community" - farmers and industry workers - a lot of residents are employees.*". It was also identified as culturally diverse, with a well-connected Māori population and

leadership at Te Whare Mahana working hard to build the profile and community connection of the urban marae.

Like Fairlie, Twizel was seen as having a “small town country vibe”, where people know everyone, care for each other's kids, and where residents can “*pop into the cafe and have a coffee with someone you know*”. In describing the community of Twizel, some informants felt that the community is accepting of newcomers, but as a strongly sporting community, and with its unique history and heritage, if people don't play golf or have kids, it can be harder to meet people. To settle well, people need to *put yourself out there*.

"I'd say, while the community's like, quite open, I feel like it's also quite cold at the same time, because, like, ... a lot of these people have lived here their whole lives, multiple generations, so a lot of the groups are pretty like, tightknit and don't really open up to many new people, like you kind of have to have already been here." – young person

Several informants commented that it is harder for introverts to settle in Twizel. While it is essentially a rural town, it is not a traditional farming town, with a mix of urban / rural mindsets. The community was seen as quite disjointed, and like Tekapo, with different tribes – the school mums, tradies and their young families, DOC workers, salmon workers, Hydro originals, semi-retired and ex-city retirees. One person commented that farmers look down on the town people, and there was some disconnection between the “originals” and those who have moved to Twizel, and the view was expressed that these two groups were often at odds with each other. It was identified as more common for semi-retired, well-off people to keep to themselves and be less involved in community affairs and volunteering, and that some of these people have maybe “done their time” volunteering already and are seeking the quiet life.

Twizel's population includes a number of families with multigenerational ties to Mt Cook Village – because they cannot retire there, they tend to move to Twizel.

Health providers see Twizel's population fluctuate widely, with high tourist numbers at different times, including the November – February peak, and events like rowing and the salmon festival putting strain on local services.

The following groups, services, initiatives and activities were most commonly identified as supporting the Tekapo community to live life well:

- Twizel was identified as a very sporty town, where a wide range of community sports bringing together children and adults. There are great opportunities for children - basketball in the event centre twice a week in winter, indoor football September - December, community has touch rugby, indoor bowls, gymnastics, ballet and highland dancing, karate – these tend to be promoted via word of mouth.
- Futsal and basketball are key for migrant workers, but also for young people.
- The golf club is a key source of social connection and fun – it was described as “massively social”, a community meeting point and very accessible. - the bowling club was described in similar terms.

- The walking group is great for older people.
- Football skills for under 10s started by local family and charge gold coin - very popular
- Younger children can practice rugby locally but competition through Kurow Rugby takes them into Otago for games - Twizel Rugby Club is building at junior level.
- Twizel Area school has kapa haka with strong leadership from Karatī Metcalfe, the school's Te Āo Māori Leader who grew up in Twizel.
- There are lots of groups to join and these are low cost compared with bigger centres.
- It is a vibrant community with lots of events – Twizel Promotions is a key support.
- Linkage group run by Twizel Community Care reaches the more isolated older people.
- The Heritage Trust is very strong.
- Good squash club.
- The knitter natter and patchwork groups are important sources of social connection and learning.
- Little Movers (at Twizel Event Centre) and Jitterbugs (formerly Mainly Music) at the church are key supports for parents with young children. Twizel Community Board funded \$500 to Little Movers last year to cover rent of community room – this group was set up because there was nothing to do in winter to meet other parents without going to a café: users pay a gold coin.
- Twizel community gym has a large membership, offering affordable gym access with good quality equipment, and serves as a key source of social connection and wellbeing benefits, especially for young adults living alone. Users get to know each other and support each other, and strong intergenerational connections have formed – there is a lot of mentoring of younger ones, some of whom are the rangatahi who were getting into mischief, and who the MTFJ worker has connected with the gym.

In terms of health services, Twizel has two medical centres, Twizel Medical Centre and Mackenzie Health Centre (which sits outside the South Canterbury Te Whatu Ora area). A HIP runs out of Twizel Medical Centre, but users have to be a patient there to access this support. The centre also had a health Coach for 3-4 days per week, but the incumbent was not locally based and half the time went in travel – this service and others like it need to be staffed locally to work well, because of Twizel's remoteness.

Twizel has a crewed ambulance during daytime only, with PRIME (Twizel Medical Centre holds the contract) the first responders at night. PRIME go out with volunteer ambulance personnel. Twizel Medical Centre practice staff are rostered on PRIME one in four nights – they still work their day job, but if fatigue is severe and they have to cancel day appointments, they are not compensated for this. A working group is currently looking at unplanned and after-hours care, with MDC represented. A heavy financial burden accompanies PRIME contracts and carries risk.

- Twizel is fortunate to have a locally based counsellor who accesses Gumboot Friday funding to deliver free counselling, and another maybe setting up a clinic. Demand for counselling is high.
- Arowhenua Whānau Services is resourced 6hrs / week to deliver service in Twizel but use this fortnightly so their worker can stay overnight and maximise client engagement – this is a good

example of how providers need to tailor their approach to work in this rural, remote and weather-impacted community.

- Arowhenua also provide high quality and home-based well child support for new parents and their children, not limited to Māori.
- An Alcoholics' Anonymous group operates.

Other factors supporting wellbeing in Twizel:

- The Twizel Kindergarten were widely identified as a huge support for the local community.
- The library is an important place of connection for more isolated community members.
- Twizel is fortunate to have fast internet thanks to fibre throughout the town.
- There is strong volunteering and a culture of helping each other – people readily access support to get to health appointments if needed.
- Twizel has strong civil defence and emergency capabilities.
- Twizel Community Care Trust provide a range of supports to those who need it, including food bank, community pantry, and connection to government agency support, with a lot of support around Work and Income.
- The Twizel Op Shop is highly valued.
- Mt Cook Salmon were identified as very proactive in providing pastoral care for their migrant workers.



5.1.5 Community characteristics and strengths of Albury



Albury was identified as a strong, supportive community, with its school (roll = 32) at the centre of that, and pride in its farming and rail history, celebrated via the Albury Mob Facebook page and memorabilia collection held at its pub which will hopefully soon reopen. The community is strongly rural, although a growing number of residents work in Fairlie or Timaru, being commutable in distance. The Albury Hotel was a key place of support and connection for farmers (predominantly sheep farmers) who are struggling financially. The farming community appears tightly connected, but less so with residents of the town itself, perceived as predominantly retired or on benefits, and ratepayers rather than renters.

The following groups and initiatives help the Albury community to live life well:

- The Levels Collie Club is strong and social.
- Albury Golf Club has a stable membership with around 28 regular Saturday players – the club operates on leased land February – September.
- The Hall committee are committed and is a source of social connection in its own right. The committee operate under Mackenzie District Council and are keen to become a legal entity: they would appreciate assistance from the Council’s Community Development Team around this process. Albury Hall hosts pilates classes, regular community afternoon teas, and Beef and Lamb use it for seminars and meetings a few times each year. The hall used to be much more activated than is now the case.
- Albury connects to the wider community most strongly through sport and farming networks.
- The community pulls together when needed and supports each other.
- Albury Tennis Club operates on courts resurfaced in half-shares with Ministry of Education, and has a healthy junior club as well as adult tennis.
- The Anglican church still operates.
- There is a locally based Physiotherapist.
- The café is a much-appreciated addition to Albury, and a great bumping space.

5.1.6 Community characteristics and strengths of Kimbell

Without a local school, Silverstream Hotel was identified as the hub of the Kimbell community, and a place of connection for the Kimbell community. The pub runs regular quizzes and events that are well-supported not only by locals but by people from the wider Mackenzie including Fairlie and Tekapo, and puts a lot of funding into local activities and need.

5.1.7 Community characteristics and strengths of Aoraki Mt Cook Village

In order to live in Aoraki Mt Cook Village, people have to work there, as private individuals / families cannot own land there, being a National Park: the houses are owned by crown and by businesses. Because of its hospitality and tourism enterprise, its population is very ethnically diverse with 80% of children at the school having English as a second language. ESoL at school. Informants from this community or with links to it identified its infrastructure not coping with high tourist numbers, some flagging a need for a toll road on Mt Cook Road. There is not enough housing for its worker population.

5.2 Mackenzie young people

Youth Voice - focus groups at Twizel Area School and Mackenzie College

What do young people like about living in the Mackenzie?

- The **outdoor lifestyle** – lots to do
- **Amazing opportunities through Mackenzie College** – Coast to Coast, Spirit of Adventure, lots of scholarships
- **Smaller teacher – student ratios** allow for some great mentoring relationships
- Great place to live if you are passionate about **farming / the outdoors**
- **Great array of social sporting opportunities** across district – golf, bowls, ice hockey, basketball, indoor football – lots of young people are engaged in social sports, mixing with different age groups
- Kids get a lot of **freedom**
- **Mayors Taskforce for Jobs** roles really helping young people out of school and work – lots they can offer young people
- **Friendly, supportive communities**
- Young people at Mackenzie College feel well-supported / have good access to counsellor at school, to health services via local medical centre, 1737 phoneline valued, and feel awareness/support around mental health is improving
- **Kapa haka** – both at Twizel Area School and Mackenzie College

What is more challenging for young people in the Mackenzie?

- **Driver licensing is challenging** – hard to get to Timaru or Geraldine for testing – defensive driving and driver education assistance via MTFJ greatly appreciated – licence opens up opportunities in sport/arts-based interests, work and work experience – exposure to work beyond what Mackenzie can offer
- **Career aspirations of young people often limited** to what is available locally – lack of quality career advice for young people, not enough exposure to career and study possibilities/opportunities, limited subject choices at school and lack of vocational training opportunities locally

"A lot of people don't get heaps of exposure, and some of a lot of them get stuck Like, it's really easy to get stuck. They just, you know, end up never leaving."

- **Travel to sports practices / arts-based activities and specialist health support / dentist challenging**
- Small communities – **hard if you don't fit in.**

"I guess the smaller classes make that hard too. Obviously, we've got a great like, we've all got great friendships here, but if you don't fit in, then I guess you don't necessarily have a lot of options. Whereas, in a school in Christchurch, you have, you know, 1000s of different kinds of people. We've all grown up together, as you've heard. We literally, we've known each other for eight years."

- **Less for young people to do if live in town** and don't have the same range of things to do as farm kids – lack of youth-friendly spaces and things for tweens – more likely to get into trouble
- **Mental health supports for young people still need enhancement** – in Twizel Area School students feel that academic focus outways wellbeing supports and school chooses who gets to see counsellor. For young people out of school, any mental health support is hard to access
- **Poor access to indoor recreation spaces for young people – especially Twizel** – courts too expensive for young people to access for fun / practice, can't access gym under 16 years and very cold outside in winter, school spends a lot of money on access to Twizel Event Centre, leaving little money for sports and drama equipment
- **MTFJ worker needs to be able to work with young people struggling before they leave school** – this is happening in Fairlie, and is beginning to happen in Twizel as relationships between the school and MTFJ coordinator grows.

"These students need to feel like they have people within school on their side."

- **Inadequate supports in place for young people not in school or work**
- **Kapa haka not valued** by school (TAS) – academic focus over-rides cultural and wellbeing needs

"We've got kapa haka. It's only what we run at the school and we don't have any allocated slots for anything. We have to try and fit it in where we can in between periods and morning teas and stuff."

- **School use of Twizel Event Centre not given priority**, and this negatively impacts on school's drama and PE students
- **Gossip** is bad – easy to gain a reputation / be stuck with the reputation of your family / whānau

Priorities?

- Greater value placed on cultural activities and the wellbeing benefits these bring – especially kapa haka, including access out of school
- Affordable access to indoor recreation spaces to engage in physical activity in winter – basketball etc
- More engagement with career expos, university road shows and open days, work experiences, quality careers advice
- Enhanced access to mental health supports for young people out of school
- Culturally appropriate supports for young people not in education, employment or training eg. Strengthened outreach capacity for Te Aitarakihi rangatahi services
- Continuation of efforts of MTFJ and MDC to connect young people with affordable and accessible driver licence education
- Improved access to health services for young people including school-based health services

The feedback received from young people aligned well with the feedback from key community stakeholders working with young people and with insights into this population. The following points supplement the views shared by young people:

- Youth unemployment has got harder in recent years, with a slowing in hospitality businesses associated with the economic downturn.
- Mackenzie College has lost its careers advisor role but is working to replace this.
- The guidance counsellor at Mackenzie College has been funded by the school's Board of Trustees, and is an additional part-time role alongside access to the part-time counsellor serving all schools within Te Kāhui Ako o Te Manahuna cluster – this support has been welcomed by students at the College
- Learning needs are often not diagnosed, with the cost of assessment compounded by the need for families to travel to Christchurch or Timaru to secure an assessment for their child – The Fairlie Saturday market group have been providing funding for children and young people to secure assessments.
- It is great to now have kapa haka groups active in both secondary schools in the district but there remains little outside school for rangatahi Māori to access to develop their connection with te ao Māori – kaimahi from Te Aitarakihi are doing some great work one on one with rangatahi but it would be great to see more resource go into rangatahi Māori disengaged with school.
- YMCA are going to deliver driving education in Twizel, and this will fill a significant gap.
- Young people breaking into Twizel Event Centre really amounted to kids accessing it for basketball – some stakeholders felt that young people don't have a strong voice in the Twizel community and don't have much to do, yet basketball is really popular – young people play it lots outside in really cold weather while a great community facility sits unused.
- Four Square fulfills a key role in Tekapo as the primary youth employer and a place where young people develop a lot of life-skills.
- A lot of young people leave the community to board for high school, often because this is the easiest way for them to progress in sport and arts-based pursuits.
- There is strong access to apprenticeships across the district, and this remains the main kind of job placement for MTFJ workers.
- Good uptake of Clear Head online mental health support.
- Counsellor at Twizel Area School is male – perceived as not appropriate for all students.

5.3 Mackenzie older people

Of the three main communities of the Mackenzie, Fairlie has the greatest concentration of older people, comprising a mix of long-term locals, often connected to the district for generations, and people who have retired to the district or moved in retirement. Of the 29 people at the Forum meeting with whom a focus group was held, around half had retired to the district. The face of Fairlie's very old community was identified as changing in recent times as a number of very frail older adults have left the district to access care / care / passed away; it is common for older people to move out of the district once they can no longer drive. Older people across the district were identified as well-supported through friends and informal community networks, often by older people themselves. They were also identified as commonly community-active and engaged, with many retirees living very busy lives across voluntary roles and involvement in a range of interests, sports, physical recreation pursuits.

Lack of retirement living continues to be seen as a significant gap, and a working group has recently paused as they did not manage to progress a proposal to develop a retirement complex. However a number of other options continued to be pursued locally, including the Abbeyfield concept. Across the district there is a notable lack of smaller, modern and warm dwellings suited to older people and especially those on a fixed, lower income, and in both Fairlie and Twizel, and in rural areas, older adults commonly live in homes much larger than needed, poorly insulated and hard / costly to heat, often with large gardens to maintain. In Fairlie, the sale price of such houses would not generate a return adequate to secure a new-build 1-2 bedroom dwelling: solutions are complex.

One of the key factors sitting behind the perceived need for locally based retirement living is a dire lack of home-based care - especially personal care. Access home-based support is in place in Twizel using workers from outside the district, but it is under-resourced and the provider apparently hard to deal with, and some people contract ex-Access workers privately for home-based care in both Twizel and Fairlie. Fairlie has two Access workers. Feedback from older adults suggested that it is hard to get more than half an hour 1-2 times per week, and in that time, a worker may be expected to shower/wash the person, dress them, clean the house and prepare the evening meal. Incontinence, dementia etc. supports are available from Timaru but people are often not willing to reach out for help or connect with it. The community trust vehicles connect people from Fairlie and Twizel with Christchurch, Timaru, Queenstown, often using older drivers and support is available to get people to health appointments, but for people used to driving themselves, some prefer to ask a friend than access these services. South Canterbury Driving offer regular driver safety courses for older drivers in Mackenzie district, but the courses tend to not attract the numbers they could. Linkage, Forum, service clubs, local church communities and Fairlie Resource Centre's older adult trips and meet-ups all work well in connecting older adults who are more isolated, but some people choose not to engage in the community.

5.4 Newcomers and migrants

Findings of focus group with migrant workers, Tekapo

Nine people attending an English Language class at Lake Tekapo School took part in a focus group. The classes are facilitated by a member of the migrant worker community of Tekapo and a teacher at the school. The participants, 6 from Latin America and three from Japan had most commonly been living and working in Tekapo for a 12 – 18 months. A small number had residency or were well on the pathway towards this, working to pass or having just sat the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) test that is now a requirement for residency in New Zealand. The majority of the group had professional qualifications and careers behind them ranging from web design, graphic design, radiography and teaching. They were working in Tekapo as chefs, kitchenhands, housekeepers and waitresses.

They love the peaceful environment of Tekapo, the landscape – the lakes and mountains, the sense of safety and the friendliness of the community, and most of those at the focus group were strongly motivated to stay in Tekapo long-term.

“You can feel free in the street, in your house. It feels safe and that feels really good.”

Work was the main way that they had made friends in Tekapo, and most had come because they had a friend living and working there already. Different cultural communities within the town were very connected, generally with social media groups in place that had helped them before they even arrived.

They found that people are good at helping each other when needed. They work hard but socialise by playing football on the school tennis courts, futsal in Twizel, going to the market, skating and playing disc golf, and apart from the Hospo Sundays where all the hospitality workers come together at a different bar each time to socialise until late, they tend to socialise in each other’s homes. The EsoL classes were appreciated and seen as very important at a time when residency and visa regulations and requirements are changing. They tended to ask friends for immigration advice, because they always know someone ahead of them in the process and found that employers are often very unhelpful around immigration, lacking knowledge. Immigration advisors were unaffordable for them.

The biggest challenges facing this group were 1) accommodation and how hard it is to find rental accommodation and overcrowding: some of the participants lived in a 5 bedroom house (one bedroom being a sleepout) with 7 occupants, one small fridge and one bathroom, 2) lack of a medical centre and pharmacy: some of the group used the Twizel Medical Centre’s clinic at the fire station, and others did not access primary healthcare, 3) having only one pricey supermarket was hard, and their overcrowded, small houses mean it isn’t feasible to stockpile grocery items from cheaper supermarkets in Timaru. They would love it if locals could show a locals card and get a discount at Four Square. Those keen to stay and work in their profession, often in areas New Zealand desperately needs workforce were struggling to convert qualifications because they cannot study while on a working holiday visa, and the process is expensive. Recent changes to immigration happened very quickly and without much communication.

The migrant workers we heard from try and support each other by car-sharing when going into town or picking things up for their friends. They’d love to see a sports centre developed in Tekapo with a gym, and see more cultural activities on offer, including movie screenings. The Community Centre was identified as too costly for musicians living locally to access for practices or performances. Recently some migrant workers put together a show sharing their culture, but could not afford to use the community centre for either performance or practice. Dark Skies Project let them perform at their venue. Better access to the community centre would provide opportunity for the musical talents of the migrant workforce to be shared and showcased.

Other informants consulted as part of the research identified a range of initiatives working to purposefully connect newcomers and migrants to the wider community – the monthly multicultural lunch held at Moreh House, international cooking classes of Fairlie Resource Centre and Diwali celebrations in Fairlie, Tekapo’s EsoL classes and inclusion of Pasifika farm workers into Young Farmers and Mackenzie Rugby Club, Fairlie. Multicultural Aoraki used to have quite a strong presence across the district, but the researcher did not hear from anyone who had seen them on the ground in

Mackenzie district in recent years, and was told they were no longer resourced to service either Fairlie or Twizel. They did not respond to the survey sent as part of the present research. The apparent reduction in accessibility of this service (people now need to travel to Timaru during working hours to see them) was seen as a considerable loss. While Heartlands providers try and support migrants, this group is seen as very under-served with specialist support at a time when recent changes to visa requirements have placed migrant workers and their families under considerable stress.

5.5 Challenges and service / support barriers

5.5.1 Mackenzie district as a whole

In coding the data collected via interviews and focus groups, much of the feedback received relating to challenges faced by the communities of the district currently concerned Mackenzie District Council and its operations. The researcher conducted research in the district in 2021: the scope of the research was different, but the themes that came through at that time rarely overlapped with themes relating to Council this time around: there does seem to have been a fundamental shift in the way Council is now perceived at community level. Some informants expressed the view that some very vocal groups locally had fuelled animosity towards the Council.

Relating to Mackenzie District Council, the following themes emerged most strongly:

- **Council (both staff and Councillors) are not involved in enough at grassroots community level** – they are seen as **disconnected from community**, and part of this perception appears to be driven by the community's understanding that some Council staff, especially those based in Fairlie, are not "local", not residing within the district. To a lesser degree, the same perception came through of some Councillors. Accompanying this perception was a feeling that decision makers who do not live in the Mackenzie, or who are not involved in community activities in the area outside of work are not "invested" in the local community, don't really understand history and don't reflect the community. These views came from a range of informants including community members and elected members at Council and Community board level.

"Council have become an island – they see things as them and us." – community member

"Nobody feels like they can engage." – elected member

- **Mackenzie District Council is not connecting effectively with its Community Boards – there is a perceived disjoint/disconnection between Community Boards and Council** – a wide range of stakeholders wanted to see Council and Community Boards work together much more. As it stands, there was a strong feeling that Community Boards get undermined, often coming up with good ideas / initiatives but finding these very hard to implement, of having Council make decisions which do not align at all with needs perceived / plans made by Community Boards. Lack of understanding around delegated authority applying to Community Boards may be part of this picture. The view was expressed that Council does not use Community Boards enough, and that Community Boards could link more strongly to

Council than they do: Community Board Chairs can come to council meetings but tend not to, perhaps in part because Community Boards have been “held at arm's length by Council” resulting in negativity. Perceptions of disconnection between Council and Community Boards were strongly expressed by a range of community stakeholders, by a number of Community Board members and by at least two Councillors who took part in consultations. One of the Community Board members consulted with could not recall the name of the Councillor representative on their Board. Representatives of a Community Board reported struggling to get items on Community Board minutes accurately reported and acted on.

“The councillor just reports to the Community Board what the Council have been up to. The best stuff actually happens in the informal catch ups before the meeting.” – elected member

“It’s a them and us mentality between Community Board and Council.” – elected member

The disconnection between Boards and Council also extended to the relationship between Boards and staff, who were seen as not connecting enough with Community Boards. One Community Board member expressed the view that staff need education around the different towns to better understand their different needs and “really step up” in their roles.

- **Council are not communicating effectively with their community** - Communication from Council was identified as poor / “very average”, but in saying this, a number of informants noted that communication is improving, and there has been a stronger focus on community engagement, but that there is still some way to go, with some staff understanding this more than others. Criticisms of communication from Council extended to one-to-one communication, with phone calls and emails often unanswered, a desire for more regular communication to the community and much stronger use of Mackenzie district’s key newsletters - *Fairlie Accessible* and *Twizel Update* to let the community know on a regular basis about Council projects, planning exercises, consultations etc.. There was a strong desire expressed for Council to have a regular page / column in each of these newsletters, seen as the best way of connecting to the local community. Criticisms of Council communication also extended to perceived lack of consultation over key decisions, notably around spatial planning. Where stakeholders wanted to see meaningful engagement with community as part of these processes, the view was quite widely expressed that spatial planning meetings were just “tick-box consultation”.
- All of these factors have led to:
 - a significant **lack of trust in Council** – feelings of lack of accountability
 - perceptions that **Council is not strategically where it needs to be – that it needs more enabling processes** and to rid itself of what one person described as an old school mentality – that it **needs to make better decisions to realise the value of Council assets**. It was noted that a lot of Council land has been sold – the current Council has put a moratorium on land sales and is actively trying to be more strategic with the land it has left. However Council is associated with an “Old School mentality” and a

need was identified for a much more strategic approach from Council that puts the needs of local residents front and centre.

- **Council staff could be much more effective in supporting the community to get good things off the ground – to act as an enabler and not just a regulator.** Council was identified as having a perceived high staff turnover and heavy reliance on contractors.

“Staff members are always changing and contractors move in and out”.

Some staff were perceived as less experienced because a small council perhaps does not attract the same calibre of staff as a large council, and there was a fairly widely expressed feeling that staff could be more nimble, more willing to support action to address community needs, more “human” / show more “humility”, listening to locals and following through on promises.

“Council needs to move into a position of an enabler - it doesn't have the money so what it needs to be is an enabler and support and advise.” – elected member

“There's not an attitude of helping the people - Council is always fighting the people, or it's all about the tourists.” – community member

Feelings around Council needing to be more enabling / supportive around community wellbeing extended to the way community facilities are hired out, and a need for more flexibility / grace in the way that facilities are charged out for use. Facilities are hired out room by room, yet many user groups need access to multiple spaces within a complex like Fairlie Community Centre or Twizel Event Centre (eg. Access to the kitchen to grab refreshments, space for dressing room for drama practice, use of the main space) and cost becomes prohibitive, even though use of some spaces may be light.

“There's no grace towards the school when it comes to renting places like that, because I suppose the relationship between the council and school needs to be a bit stronger than it really is in the moment. Because when we need to book a theatre, you're booking a theatre, not just a big room that's got stuff that you're not allowed to go into, you also need access to the kitchen, the changing rooms, but the lock was changed... It's the same for the sports hall there.” – young person

They also extend to consent requirements, the way these are communicated to community groups and a need for timely communication, and costs of consent and a need to either support in kind by waiving such costs or connecting groups proactively with funding to navigate these processes easily. Multiple examples were shared where it felt like Council, and often individual staff members, were obstructive of measures that were all about community wellbeing.

The Fairlie playground in the town centre used to be shaded by a tree which fell down. Local parents, associated with Plunket, fundraised for shade sails to be installed to protect their children in summer, but have met with nothing but obstructiveness in making this happen. A

small tree has been planted but it will be years before it provides the shade needed. Similarly, these parents are concerned that the playground does not have a fence to protect children from the traffic on the nearby road, and were told by a Council staff member that the low railing by the playground, which is not even continuous, follows Plunket guidelines, when it clearly does not afford safety. Those involved are frustrated by a lack of Council support for the things that young families need/want.

- Mackenzie does comprise several distinct, quite separate communities and there was a feeling expressed that **too often, the different towns compete against each other**, hindering big picture thinking and planning for community wellbeing as a whole.
- Council was seen as not doing enough to reduce what was described as the historic Twizel - Fairlie competitiveness - Fairlie was seen as having relatively easy access to supports and services in Timaru, and much more so than Twizel, yet Twizel does not have anywhere near the community facilities and amenities even though its population is larger.
- The two Council offices were seen as having very different cultures, with staff seen as more accessible / approachable in Twizel compared with Fairlie, in part because of the design and procedures in place in the buildings. There was a feeling that increasing Twizel-based staffing should be prioritised moving forwards, recognising the growth of that town.

Other themes regarding challenges facing Mackenzie's community as a whole were as follows:

- **Accommodation / housing** was identified as one of the biggest issues across the district, worst in Tekapo followed by Twizel, and driven by the high proportion of dwellings, and especially the newer, warmer, drier housing, operating as Airbnbs / Bookabaches / **holiday home rentals**. People make a lot of money out of Airbnb in Tekapo and Twizel, and not enough was seen to be happening to address housing needs of tourism staff. There is a significant **lack of appropriate worker accommodation** in Twizel and in Tekapo.
- There is a **lack of appropriate housing for older people** across the district – the cost of transition to smaller, warmer housing is a barrier to freeing up the older housing stock in Fairlie, more affordable for those entering housing market, and many older adults in Fairlie, are living in cold houses too big for their needs. Paucity of older person social housing in Twizel was highlighted.
- There are now **high expectations on volunteers** in Hato Hone St John and FENZ - much higher training loads / compliance requirements, along with increased costs of living and a possible shift in the way volunteering is viewed by younger adults mean that it is getting harder to recruit and **emergency services locally are under a lot of pressure**. Ambulance and fire services need to plan for the future and a lower reliance on volunteers, including a need for a helicopter pad in Fairlie as more airlifts may be required in the future as ambulances get harder to secure.

- **Healthcare emerged as a key challenge across the district.** While Fairlie and Twizel are fortunate to have good primary health services in place, rural GPs are under pressure everywhere, and in Mackenzie district, tourist accidents and sickness place additional strain on local health services. After Hours urgent care - PRIME care is struggling to keep up with demand. Te Whatu Ora have set up a working group to look for more sustainable solutions for the Mackenzie basin. As mentioned, Hato Hone St John are sending an ambulance from Temuka five days / week to the district, but this is not sustainable, and there is a shortfall in the PRIME space. While they assure the researcher that this will not happen any time soon, the two GPs in Fairlie will eventually retire and there is a community expectation that they will probably not be replaced with a like-for-like service, and instead a more corporate model of primary health - great to have health hub serving all of Mackenzie and not so dependent on Timaru.
- The district **lacks a dentist** – travelling to Timaru / Christchurch / Oamaru to access a dentist is time-consuming. Mackenzie comprises smaller communities, and Tekapo, Twizel and Aoraki / Mt Cook Village in particular are **geographically isolated** with some distance to main centres, yet not enough population to warrant some of the health and medical services and supports which people need to thrive.
- **Home-based supports to enable older people to age in place** – to safely stay in their own homes, leading a life with dignity and with their needs met are inadequate. The community strives to look after these people but the gaps in care from the health system are significant.

"Health and wellbeing are really big issues going forward. Most people in their older years may have to move out of the area like older people already do in Tekapo and Twizel. Rural communities across New Zealand have this issue and are under-served by health." – Fairlie community member

- Likewise, small communities with smaller rating bases need community facilities to support sport and recreation, but the **cost is out of proportion for the number of people** - it costs as much to build a community facility as what it would for a facility serving a larger population. It was seen as **very difficult for small communities to get significant projects off the ground, with a retirement village / aged care facility being a good example** – some felt that a retirement village development locally would act as catalyst to get more health services into the community, but such a facility would struggle without such infrastructure.
- A big gap was seen between Mackenzie's well-off and those at the bottom socioeconomically, and the **cost of living / financial strain** was identified as showing, especially for fixed income seniors and families with young children, yet some people seem reluctant to reach out for help when needed.
- **Tourism puts huge pressure on the local community** - tourism numbers are now even higher than pre-covid levels, yet many locals feel the community does not get a good return on investment in tourism. There is strong resentment that Council has to spend so much on

cleaning toilets used predominantly by tourists and does not have the money to invest in amenities that would benefit the local community.

- There are a lack of vocational opportunities for young people beyond apprenticeships, and not enough focus on youth engagement and addressing the needs of young people not engaged in sport and in education; the Community Vehicle Trusts could be more strongly utilised to connect young people with employment and learning opportunities.

Other less commonly identified challenges / service barriers facing the community as a whole included the following:

- Mackenzie has a small labour market and it can be hard to attract highly competent or specialised workers – the lack of worker accommodation adds to this.
- A digital inclusion outreach bus came to the community recently but had low uptake – it can be hard to engage with those struggling, yet there are a lot of unsafe digital practices eg. Older people trusting others with their pin number.
- Banking services are a real issue across the district.
- Funding cuts from central government are impacting on a range of important / valued services at local level. Art on Tour funding has reduced, and the community is not getting as many art and cultural events as it used to – those funded through the scheme were very popular.
- ECEs are under pressure with a growing number of young families in the district, and all carry large waitlists.
- People who live locally rely heavily on motor vehicles to access the good and services they need, and this is costly.
- There are no local radiology / X-ray services.
- Building consents are perceived as expensive compared with other communities.
- Road accidents put a heavy toll on local emergency services and speed limits (there is demand from local residents to reduce this to 80km/hr on this stretch) and road condition / hazard warning signage in some locations are inadequate (eg. State Highway 8 near Lake Pukaki: it should be noted that this issue was raised prior to the crashes in mid-July 2024).
- Mackenzie lacks any early intervention supports, yet locals are ineligible for Christchurch-based services even if they travel to access these (eg. Champion Centre).

5.5.2 Fairlie

The themes outlined above all came through for Fairlie with the strongest themes focused around concerns for **shortfalls in health care (especially home-based care for older people and concerns around ambulance services)** and an expected decline in healthcare access in the future, **lack of appropriate step-down housing for older people**, either Council-owned or in the private housing market and lack of incentive or proactive planning to build small, affordable homes on small sections.

"It's really scary when you have to move out of the town." – older adult

Other challenges facing the Fairlie community included:

- ECE waitlists

- Social isolation of multicultural farm workforce
- Footpaths and kerbing tricky to negotiate on mobility scooters
- Inaccessibility / unaffordability of Fairlie Community Centre and perception it could be much more activated if it were more affordable
- Need for disc golf course and more recreational amenities for older children and younger teens (eg. Halfcourt near existing playground and skate park) – this area is the main destination for this age group, including the train carriage
- Basketball court needs resurfacing (this work is planned)
- Need to attract wider range of businesses to Fairlie to grow diversity of employment opportunities and in doing so, grow the population base

"I think there is very limited jobs of what you can do around Fairlie ...my mum travels to Timaru for her job. So I think, like, we've got builders coming out our ears around here. There's lots of trades and stuff, but I think sort of different jobs, you do have to travel for a lot of them. Some people might just see that and be like, Oh, not so much. No. No point coming." – young person

- A lot of volunteers are older and new volunteers are getting harder to recruit - younger people less willing to step up, even in groups serving their own demographic – there has been a real change in volunteerism in recent years. eg. Museum, preschool groups
- The swimming pool is great in summer but great if had a longer season, perhaps via key access, and if the age children could be left alone aligned more to other centres
- Pool changing rooms would benefit from an upgrade
- Shade sails at the playground and adequate fencing on the roadside are a high priority
- The new toilets are disconnected from the playground and much less accessible to families using the playground space – there was quite widespread disgruntlement about the location of the new toilets
- Need more adult education opportunities, expanding on what Fairlie Resource Centre are offering
- Need to build governance capacity across community groups, including assisting groups to become legal entities, align operations with charities legislation / regulations, set up workable and compliant banking arrangements
- Potential to increase strategic underpinnings for Fairlie Resource Centre
- Increase supports for young people struggling at school or NEET

5.5.3 Tekapo

The themes outlined concerning challenges facing the district as a whole relate to Tekapo, with the strongest themes focused on lack of adequate worker accommodation and poor access to primary, emergency and specialist healthcare.

Challenges around housing came through much more strongly for Tekapo than for other parts of the district, intertwined with the sense of community, with themes as follows:

- Accommodation is the biggest challenge facing Tekapo, impacting on recruitment and retention (eg. The kindy struggles to recruit teachers because they can't find accommodation,

it is reportedly hard to recruit managers / more skilled roles because of lack of affordable family housing and many jobs really need accommodation as part of the package).

"It impacts on how long people stick around."

"Accommodation impacts in every way."

- 57-58% housing stock in Tekapo is Airbnb, meaning that it is not being used as homes for people living and working in Tekapo, either as owners or renters – some expressed the view that people are more interested in financial gain (short-term rental yielding higher returns than long-term rental) than for caring for people, and that there seems to be little appetite to address the issue face on, with what one person described as *"a short-sighted focus on tourism as economic saviour"*. There was a strong feeling that Council needs to address this if Tekapo is to have a real sense of community, with Airbnbs negatively impacting on this- fulltime residents can feel isolated without neighbours around them.

"There's a lot of shaking of heads at housing needs but a lack of action." – community member

- The long-term rental stock predominantly comprises the 1960s and 70s holiday homes, with the exception of a few newer homes that businesses own and rent to staff - a lot of the rental housing is cold and hard to heat, and not Healthy Home compliant, not of a standard to be rented as a holiday home and owned by locals who "can't be bothered" renovating or have built newer holiday house adjacent and keep the old one as rental for what one person called *altruistic reasons* - around 6 such landlords were known locally.
- Most tourism and hospitality workers are mid-30s in age and past the stage they want to live in shared flats, while accommodation is also hugely challenging to secure for families and for single parents - need purpose-built accommodation. Home ownership in Tekapo is far out of reach of most people who work locally.
- The Tekapo housing situation was identified as desperate – the view was put forward that some great ideas have been put forward around developing community housing but with no money in, nobody will touch it. The community was seen as needing a different kind of housing stock, and locals spearheading solutions to this issue would like to see affordable housing development on leasehold land, similar to approaches taken in Queenstown, Christchurch and other centres. No organisations with any financial resource behind them were doing anything practical to address the housing situation in Tekapo, and stakeholders feel like Council are not listening around this issue.

Social isolation and needs around community connectedness / sense of community – Tekapo was identified as having a lot of groups for people to connect with, but they do need to look for these with groups not necessarily easy to find: Tekapo does have a regular page in Fairlie Accessible, compiled by the Community Development Worker, but the content is to a large extent decided by Fairlie Resource Centre, and while there is a local community Facebook page, there is not a local newsletter. With the pressures of work in the tourism industry, a predominance of lower paid employment and workers

working long hours to afford to live in Tekapo, commonly not 9-5, people tend to be time-poor, and this also hampers development of stable community groups: it can be hard for people to join in to groups, and also hard getting new community activities off the ground. Alongside this, social isolation / loneliness was identified as an issue for some migrant workers (with alcohol misuse a part of this issue especially for those single workers in their 30s and 40s), for mums with young children (there is no antenatal group so prospective parents in Tekapo don't get to build a "tribe of new Mums" in this way – the playgroup used to fulfil this role) and for remote workers or middle-aged newcomers. Some informants saw Tekapo as a community not well-defined and struggling with identity, where it is often hard to reach a consensus on community issues.

For some time, Tekapo has had a Community Development role which sits under Fairlie Community Centre. Previous workers have found the role takes around 30 hrs / week to effectively deliver it and activate community, because of some of the issues highlighted above, yet the role has never been scoped at this size, and the role has turned over twice since 2021. Currently resourced for 12 hours / week at minimum wage and scaled back over time there is only room for the role to act as a referral source with little scope for community activation. The role was identified as needing structure and support around it, capacity for strong linkage / connection with Aoraki Multicultural and much more room grass-roots community connection, advocacy for facilities to meet community needs. Within the constraints of the present 12 hours / week, and requirements to write the column for Fairlie Accessible including profiling of a different community member for each issue, it is hard to find time to be out and about in the community, following up on community's ideas about what they want / need. There appears to be little supportive connection between Fairlie Resource Centre and the role, and a lack of professional development around it. It was suggested by those who know the role well that this either needs to either be scaled up to the 30 hours / week the role takes in practice to deliver well, or be redefined as a voluntary role, and the community development needs of the Tekapo community met in other ways.

Other issues particular to Tekapo were as follows:

- The town's master plan is being updated, and this needs to plan for growth carefully as Council land in the town is very limited. The master plan centres on the lakefront around domain but Council does not have the financial resources to complete any projects that come out of planning, and this process has been repetitive and ongoing, with plans seeming at times to pull against each other, hampered by staff turnover and the 3 yearly election cycle. **Tekapo stakeholders want to see Council make firm, long-term commitments to developing community facilities to meet the needs of a growing town.**
- Tekapo **desperately needs recreation facilities** – sports fields and an indoor recreation space are in Council's long-term plan. The local squash courts are at the end of life, and a local Sports Trust is working with Council to relocate these and develop a gym and climbing wall - this needs full Council support to happen. Tekapo does not have a skate park. In a youth-led initiative, local builders are willing to donate their time to build a skate ramp as a first step, but funding is needed to purchase materials, and so far, this has not been successful.

- Tekapo wastewater is at capacity and supports 15 times the resident population of Tekapo - to upgrade would take Council to its borrowing cap so interim measures are being proposed, but a number of informants wanted to see burdens such as this carried by those benefitting from the tourism dollar.
- Tekapo is a hard place to live for people with disabilities or high health needs and people tend to leave town when such needs arise: the people of Tekapo tend to be fit and strong, with low levels of health support need. The **town lacks local healthcare provision** (apart from the fortnightly clinic) – it needs the population to grow to enable health services to be based locally yet it is hard to grow without these in place. One informant commented that it would be good to see Council set aside land for the purpose of a health facility in the future.
- Families need to both be working to afford to live in Tekapo but with no under 2-year-old ECE capacity and the kindergarten at its maximum roll of 20, running a waiting list, **lack of childcare** is a significant gap: there are currently 14 under 2s currently who do not have access to ECE spaces and the ECEs struggle to attract teachers and lack space to expand.
- A number of business owners are not acting as good employers, and **migrant workers reluctant to complain** for fear of repercussions "it's a bit of wild west" - eg. Not getting breaks entitled to, some migrant workers working two jobs to afford to live there and single workers and those with families especially hard done by, with higher rental costs
- As is also the case in other parts of Mackenzie, **Multicultural Aoraki don't seem to be coming to Tekapo** anymore - workers have to go to Timaru to see them, but this is hard to fit in around work and available transport. The outreach service had been highly appreciated and utilised.
- As with other Council facilities, **Tekapo Community Centre was identified as under-utilised** because of cost and difficulty accessing it. Lake Tekapo School uses the community centre periodically but at a cost per use, where normally a similar school would either be able to use at no cost or for a one-off annual cost subject to availability. The rental cost of facility was widely identified as too high and unaffordable for community members. Recently some migrant workers put together a show sharing their culture but could not afford to use the community centre for either performance or practises at the normal charge-out rate, \$25/hour. Dark Skies Project let them perform at their venue free of charge, and the show was very well-attended and wonderful celebration of different cultures. **More affordable access to the community centre** would provide opportunity for the musical talents of the migrant workforce to be shared and showcased to the wider Tekapo community, and for movie nights, something the migrant workers consulted were really keen to be able to access and help deliver, especially in their own languages.

5.5.4 Twizel

The themes outlined concerning challenges facing the district as a whole relate to Twizel, with the strongest of these themes focused on poor access to primary, emergency and specialist healthcare and dentists, distrust of Council, frustrations around planning and consultation processes and decision

making and feelings that the community of Twizel is less-well served by Council than Fairlie is, and unaffordability of housing and lack of rental accommodation.

"Fairlie gets everything - it feels like Twizel is an afterthought."- community member

Community facilities and spatial planning - A strong theme in Twizel concerning challenges facing the community related to lack of community facilities. Twizel Area School has been in dire need of a rebuild for some time. From its hydro origins, the town has always shared use of a number of spaces within the school campus: the library serves both school and town in the same manner as does Mackenzie College's library, the only sports fields in the town are the school fields, the community uses the school basketball courts and Twizel Community Care and Twizel Radio operate out of buildings owned by the Ministry of Education within school grounds. Despite growth of the community and extensive housing development with more on the cards – it was reported that 2,500 sections would be developed in Twizel within the next 30 years, this scenario has not yet changed.

"What other town doesn't provide sports fields for its community?" – community member

The population was identified by an elected member as at a tipping point beyond which more services and businesses would be attracted to the community: it is at a key stage of growth.

There has been uncertainty over the timing and extent of the rebuild for some time, but the school now has the following firm advice, provided recently via a press release to the school:

"The Ministry of Education has completed its value-for-money review and prioritisation of our redevelopment project. We're pleased to share that the new school building will proceed soon. We'll be getting an entirely new building that will include a technology block and multipurpose space. Once the new building is completed, the existing school will be demolished. Detailed design will be finalised over the next two months, with construction estimated to start towards the end of the year, subject to completion of the consenting process."

It has been the community's understanding for some years that a school rebuild will not include the buildings used by the community, and notably the library, and that the Twizel Community Care and radio buildings will not be retained. There is a high level of frustration with a perceived lack of engagement between Council and the Ministry of Education around this - a lack of planning and strong advocacy for shared facilities in rebuild plan, and a lack of planning and budgeting on the part of Council regarding development of alternative community spaces. Meantime, Twizel Event Centre is seen as not fit for community hub purpose in its existing state, and is not serving the community well, generally locked and not accessible (someone has to physically open the doors for users without a key to access anything within the building) and costly to access. The community want to know that once the school is rebuilt, they will still have a library, and that Twizel Community Care will have places to operate from that meet their needs. With a growing population, they also want to have community-owned sports fields and facilities.

A spatial planning meeting was held by Council in which the local community were engaged. At this meeting, those present settled on Dump Hill as the best location for sports fields to be developed, being located in the heart of the new subdivisions, and a plan to redevelop Twizel Event Centre (without jeopardising the existing fitness gym and sports space and incorporating a library and

community space suitable for communal club rooms, rooms that health practitioners and other businesses can come for a day, home for community radio, and space for hot desking etc.) as a community hub: \$4-6 million was apparently identified by Council representatives at the meeting as available for this from the Reserves Contributions fund, but since then, stakeholders feel that the spatial plan seems to have been shelved, and a number of people consulted expressed the understanding that the Reserves contribution funds of Twizel are now almost depleted, despite not having been spent in Twizel. Council has apparently turned to Manmade Hill as the site to be developed as sports fields and has developed a car park and bike tracks already in this area and has walkways and plantings in the Long-Term Plan. Locals see this site as less suitable for sports fields than Dump Hill.

Some expressed the view that Council has spent too much time on consultation and not enough effort has been placed on forward planning around the buildings, and that in decision making regarding Twizel, local knowledge and views are not being taken into account. A robust master plan was seen as critical, with too much piecemeal decision making to date, and not enough value placed on community voice: consultations like “Let’s Talk’ have not felt meaningful to some of those who engaged in the process. Several informants expressed frustration around the industrial area set aside in the spatial plan, but apparently seen as not needed by Council, with Fairlie targeted for such growth instead.

"They don't know us, they don't understand our needs and they don't ask us." – community member

It was suggested by one person that this has contributed to a level of distrust so high in Mackenzie District Council that people won't help fundraise for development of community facilities if Council is going to be involved.

Concerns were raised that Mackenzie District Council has disposed of some important land in the past without adequate consultation, with the example of the site of Meridian offered by several informants. A shortage of council-owned land today made it much harder for Council to accommodate community needs. There is a need for further retail space to be developed as the town continues to grow, and this needs to be planned for. As an interim measure, it was suggested that it would be good to develop a container mall on some of green space in Market Place.

Concerning **health services**, the following challenges came through most strongly:

- Twizel has a profound lack of emergency care, and especially at night. There is no consistent ambulance cover at night, and while the PRIME contract with Twizel Medical Centre covers after hours - paid first responders, with nobody on roster overnight from Hato Hone St John, nobody can do transfers after hours. Hato Hone St John Twizel covers a 300km radius to the top of Lindis Pass – it is reportedly the most remote ambulance centre from a hospital anywhere in the country.
- While mobile mammogram services go into rural areas, Twizel and indeed Mackenzie district does not receive this service: people have to go to Timaru to access a mammogram, with the time and cost presenting a significant barrier to service access.
- Antenatal services are lacking – there are no local midwives and rural midwives require people to travel to Timaru for check-ups. Children cannot accompany parents to scans, so the person either has to take someone to mind their child while they have the scan or arrange childcare:

with travel times and wait-times, this takes the better part of a day. There is no special provision for the needs of rurally remote patients. With Twizel a long distance from hospital and roads treacherous in winter, expecting mothers tend to relocate to town well ahead of their due date, at least in winter, and this comes at a cost. Plunket are limited in the support they can provide, and there is a lack of continuity of care for antenatal complications.

- While there are local counselling services, significant mental health needs were identified as remaining and demand for counselling exceeds availability. There is still stigma in reaching out for help.
- In spite of the very poor access to emergency services and large distance from hospital, a growing number of people are choosing to retire to Twizel, often even when they have higher health needs.
- There is a lack of funded home-based care for older people in Twizel

In terms of **housing challenges**, Twizel has a large number of short-term holiday rental housing, though proportionally less so than Tekapo, but it also is experiencing a shortage of rental accommodation, and this hampers business growth. Some businesses provide staff accommodation in order to attract staff, as is the case in Tekapo. Like Tekapo, some of the rental housing is well below Healthy Home compliance level, and people spend a lot of money trying to heat these homes. There is demand for more incentives for landlords to rent properties as housing rather than Airbnb/holiday housing: many of the Airbnbs in Twizel are secondary dwellings on sections, with owners occupying the main dwelling.

Other challenges facing the Twizel community were identified as follows:

- The library is only open 9am -5pm on weekdays, where it used to also be open on Saturday mornings. Working people cannot get to a library, even though it was expected that people would volunteer to man it on Saturdays in order to have it open. The library is not utilised as a community hub as it could be.
- The playground, along with those of Tekapo and Fairlie, are not disability-accessible, being raised and with stones hard for people with mobility issues to walk on and inaccessible to wheelchairs. The Twizel playground is quite disconnected from the public toilets.
- The banking hub, while better than nothing, is very limited in the services it can provide. People have to travel to Timaru to open a bank account or to set up not-for-profit group banking arrangements. It would be good to be able to do these things, even on certain days.
- Cost of living is high, and some families are really struggling – transport costs (and time) are considerable, groceries are costly compared to in larger centres (and demand on the local foodbank high), heating costs are high, yet many people who live in Twizel were identified as earning only modest incomes. Many families spend a lot of time and money ensuring their children have access to sport, recreation, health services etc. A local resident is trying to get a locals card underway that will give residents a discount on goods and services in Twizel.

"We take a four hour return trip for a 20 minute swimming lesson." – community member

- The MTFJ worker is dealing with people with complex needs, tending to be out of work for longer.
- There was a desire to see young people have a stronger voice in the Twizel Community.

- There were some perceptions raised regarding a disconnection between school and community, seen as potentially historic. Shared use of the library by the community, for some of those consulted, seemed like an inconvenience to the school, and recently installed fencing around the school by Ministry of Education was seen as an example of trying to keep the community out. On the face of it, this seems like it is most likely in place to manage risk for students with learning needs, and better communication might have made the community see this differently.
- There is a lack of community learning opportunities, yet there are lots of skills across community that could be tapped into with activation in this space.
- There is demand for a kids-only climbing session at the event centre - kids need their own session and Alpine Recreation are willing to train some volunteers as supervisors to make this happen.
- There are a wide range of community groups and activities for women but less on offer for men outside of sports. There is demand for a MenzShed in Twizel, but people have been reluctant to step-up to office holder roles to get it up and running. Assistance from the Council's Community Development team would be appreciated, as the MenzShed and perhaps an associated tool library would fill a notable gap locally, facilitating social connection, creating sustainability outcomes and saving people money.
- Twizel Early Learning only has 7 under 2 spaces, currently with an 18-month waitlist – families can't get full week care because the care is shared around, there is no home-based care provider, but some people have nannies or au pairs in order to be able to return to work.
- Twizel can be a harder community for people to settle in who do not “fit the mould”.
- Twizel locals would like to have second location for food caravans with lighting and tables, and the Man Made Hill carpark is seen as a potential site for this, but it needs a plan change to become a reality.
- The town was identified as looking shabby - Council removed irrigation without consulting the Community Board, and allegedly wanted to reinstate using township budget: at the time of consultations, a petition was underway calling for there to be no more planting on Council land until irrigation was provided. Locals were keen to see the tourism information area in the town centre upgraded with maps showing key points of interest in and around Twizel.
- Twizel Community Care's Heartlands contract is not working as well as it used to, with understaffing / reduced staffing of Work and Income in Timaru impacting negatively on the quality of support that Twizel Community Care are able to broker. For example, it has taken a year to sort out a firewood supply contract with Work and Income. Twizel Community Care is supporting many more Work and Income clients than they used to.
- As in other centres, Multicultural Aoraki are no longer visiting Twizel, reducing access to specialist support for migrant workers in the community.
- Community groups in Twizel could do better in pulling together with a collective voice.
- Council was renting the community gym space for \$2000/year and its governance body was paying \$1000 / year to Council for management of the gym (payments and access cards/keys), but a council staff member recently proposed that since the commercial rate for the space would be \$25,000, the gym trust should pay 60% of that. The group have done a lot of upgrades to the facility (heat pumps, carpet, paint, double glazing) and is working to establish as a Trust.

5.5.5 Albury

Challenges facing the Albury community were identified as follows:

- Albury feels “forgotten” by Council.
- There are currently only 3 members of FENZ Albury - struggling because of regulations and too much training load.
- Digital connectivity is better than it was but is still limited.
- Council ignored the advice of the Hall Committee regarding the location of covered tables, with this guidance gathered by the Community Board – they are ending up with one instead of the two promised, located by the hall and not as agreed on the Village Green, and it is not new but an old one recycled from Fairlie.
- Council is reportedly not always meeting its obligations (eg. financial reporting, fire compliance) to the hall committee - Council sets out expectations of committees but does not always meet its own obligations – it needs to be two-way relationship.
- Albury Hall committee manage day-to-day operations of the hall and take bookings, but the hall is also bookable via Council, and sometimes bookings clash.
- Farmers are struggling financially at present, but it is harder to connect for support without the hotel being in operation.
- A lot of older residents live alone.
- Ambulances sometimes struggle to find Albury.
- Albury lacks representation on the Community Board.
- Work showcasing Māori trails has not been coordinated with development of the Central South Cycle Trail and the two could have connected much better in terms of promotion.
- It would be good to see Albury celebrated / demarcated with banners and with photo boards highlighting the history of the town.
- The Hall Committee would like help from Council to become a legal entity.

5.6 Priorities and opportunities

5.6.1 Community Development roles within Mackenzie District Council

Some, though not all community stakeholders interviewed or consulted with via focus group were asked what they thought the Community Development staff of Mackenzie District Council should be focusing on / prioritising in their work. The following areas of focus were put forward:

- Connecting with each of the Community Boards
- Connecting with the Resident and Ratepayer groups and listening to their views
- Supporting community groups already delivering community services on the ground, and helping them build their capacity in terms of governance structures and capabilities, helping them become legal entities and/or obtain charitable status, fostering connection with new funding streams, building funding capacity
- Developing a sense of whanaungatanga between community groups and Council – connecting in person wherever possible

- Facilitating networking opportunities and collaborative planning within the distinct communities of Mackenzie district and across the community at sector level (eg. Health – emergency, primary and home-based care, young people and education, training and employment, housing and especially exploring possibilities regarding levies on short term holiday housing rental)
- Better leveraging skills and resources in place at local level
- Supporting development of local business networks

5.6.2 Priorities relating to the district as a whole

Across the district these include:

- access to community facilities which enable community connection, learning, physical activity, helping one another and opportunities to have fun / celebrate together
- strategic approaches to address the identified housing needs
- support for young people, especially around cultural identity, career development and fostering aspirations, mental and physical health and wellbeing, strengthening culturally appropriate supports for young people not in education, employment or training and continuation of efforts to connect young people with affordable and accessible driver licence education
- long-term, strategic planning to ensure continuation of primary healthcare provision and access at local level
- enhancement of emergency medical response capacity and capability
- access to dental care locally, perhaps via a mobile service
- improved access to supports enabling aging in place
- strengthened connections between Council and Community Boards
- improved communication from Council to the community
- improved connection between Council and the communities across the district – increased visibility and meaningful engagement of elected members and staff on the ground and understanding of the distinct communities and their varying needs – enabling and actively striving to support community wellbeing
- improved culture within Council and between staff and elected members
- regular Council use of Mackenzie district's key newsletters - *Fairlie Accessible* and *Twizel Update* to let the community know in every issue about Council projects, services, funding pools, planning exercises, consultations etc.
- specialised multicultural support for migrant workers and their families (eg. Advocacy with Multicultural Aoraki and its funders to get workers back delivering a service on the ground in Mackenzie district)
- progression of the locals discount card idea into a reality

5.6.3 Priorities relating to the Fairlie

Reiterating needs identified earlier, the fencing of the Fairlie playground and installation of effective shade structures were highlighted as priorities, along with more visual storytelling of the history of the district for Māori and for non-Māori settlers and a master plan for the town, especially focused on

its roading and pedestrian infrastructure. More challenging but much-needed, proactive planning to support development of more small dwellings on small plots of land was a key priority, along with the same health priorities as are outlined for the community as a whole.

5.6.4 Priorities relating to Tekapo

The general consensus from those consulted around the Tekapo community and its needs identified a bold tackling of the high proportion of housing in Airbnb / short-term holiday rental as a key priority, along with enhancing the on-the-ground community development capacity within the town to actively build community connection and progressing development of a sport and recreation hub for the town. The health priorities outlined for the community as a whole are critically relevant to Tekapo, which lacks a permanent medical practice and is some distance from any health services.

5.6.5 Priorities relating to Twizel

The biggest priorities for Twizel are to develop true community facilities and spaces to meet the needs of a growing community and to be in place to ensure continued operation of Twizel Community Care and Twizel radio, a community library and field sports clubs when the rebuild of Twizel Area School occurs: with work set to start later in 2024, this is critical. Emergency medical services and access to specialist medical services including maternity / antenatal care are also among the highest priorities identified by those consulted regarding this community.

6. Qualitative data: Survey findings

6.1 The respondent group

Of the 29 responses received to the survey of community organisations and groups, government agencies and not-for-profit and health service providers delivering services to the Mackenzie district, responses came from the following:

Not-for-profit health and social service providers	n=10
Council partnership roles (MTFJ and library roles)	n=4
Churches	n=3
Individuals representing multiple community groups	n=3
Early Childhood Education providers	n=2
Te Whatu Ora	n=1
School	n=1
Recreation group	n=1
Service club	n=1
Medical centre	n=1
Business	n=1
Unknown	n=1

Of the respondent organisations, the majority were based in Mackenzie district, with around a fifth (n=6) based in Timaru district. Of the respondent organisations, 34.5% were based in Fairlie, 20.7% Tekapo, 17.2% Twizel and 6.9% Aoraki Mt Cook Village. Asked which areas within the district their services covered / their members came from, just over half (51.7%, n=15) indicated they covered Tekapo, 44.8% (n=13) Fairlie, 34.5% Albury (n=10), 31.0% Kimbell (n=9), 6.9% (n=2) Aoraki Mt Cook Village, 27.6% (n=8) Twizel, and over a third indicated that they covered the whole district / South Canterbury.

The voice of Twizel was under-represented in the survey findings.

6.2 Wellbeing strengths and capabilities of the Mackenzie community

The survey asked respondents to rate, on a 5-point scale, the wellbeing of Mackenzie district's community as a whole. The average rating was 3.4, with scores ranging from 2 (n=2) to 5 (n=1). Wellbeing was rated 3 by 13 respondents and 4 by 9 respondents. Several people chose to comment to qualify their rating. The following themes were identified:

- Too much emphasis on tourism and too much short-term accommodation / lack of affordable housing in Tekapo – permanent resident population not growing, little sense of community, housing need impacting negatively on mental health and stress (n=4)
- Cost of living is hitting a lot of people hard, and especially seniors (n=1)
- Farming sector under pressure – drought, lower payouts (n=1)
- Lack of understanding around poverty (n=1)
- More families are moving into the area who live on low incomes (n=1)

- Lack of recreational spaces and frustration with council (n=1)
- Isolation for farm worker families impacts mental health (n=1)

The following key strengths and capabilities were identified for the community:

- Caring and close community (n=11)

“There are some very good networks in place to respond in an emergency or to keep an eye on older residents. A lot of this is based on informal neighbourly and extended family connections. Also local business provide good support and step up if there is a defined need.”

- Resilient, cohesive and independent community, especially in terms of emergency preparedness and response (wildfires) and responding to known need (n=10)

“Very independent, roll up the sleeves and get on with it mentality. Strong community links especially amongst rural.”

- Because the community(ies) are smaller, they can be more agile, and are cohesive and closeknit (n=4)
- Lots of groups and organisations, and because these have a lot of overlap in membership, there is natural connectedness (n=3)

“People here know each other well, so it feels naturally connected. The 'muck in can do' attitude of smaller communities. There is a lot of support and cross over between groups, organisations and individuals to share resources and skills, partly because of the membership overlap.”

- Culturally diverse (n=2)

“Friendly community. Incredibly multicultural”

- Strong volunteerism (n=2)
- Strong support for local initiatives and services (n=2)
- Heartlands (n=2)
- Sporting community (n=1)

6.3 Wellbeing challenges facing the Mackenzie community

The biggest challenges facing the community were identified as follows:

- Lack of accommodation / affordable rental housing (n=7)

“Nobody can find accommodation - this is due to unregulated short term accommodation problems. These are a worldwide issue and needs to be regulated by government.”

“Lack of accommodation. There is too much allowance for Airbnb and not enough accommodation provided for people working in the area.”

- Lack of health services – ambulance services, mental health, in-home care for older people (n=6)

“No pharmacy - only a depot, no effective Hato Hone St John ambulances - have to come from Timaru most of the time if come at all, Dr's close to retirement and not easily replaceable.”

- Uncontrolled tourism growth in face of small resident population (n=3)
- Cost of living (n=3)

“Cost of living increases and distance from a main city can cause issues for people.”

- Can be hard for newcomers to break into social networks / really feel like part of the community, and find supports when they need them (n=3)

“How do people find out what's available here, support-wise, and how do they access available support. Are there vulnerable people in the community that are not known about? Lots of new people coming to the area.”

“Accessibility - in the form of geography and travel, but also accessibility for non-Pakeha to feel involved and included, accessibility for newcomers in to a sometimes entrenched 'locals' circles.”

Less commonly, the following were identified:

- Lack of housing/care options for older people (n=2)
- Small population = smaller pool of volunteers (n=2)
- Small funding base (n=1)
- Lack of investment from Council (n=1)
- Socioeconomic inequality (n=1)
- Lack of services (n=1)
- Support well-known and connected to some but harder to find / less quick to reach out for others (n=1)

“Mental health, particularly for younger males, is a concern. Fairlie is very 'suck it up' rather than encouraging people to be open and honest about their struggles.”

- Digital literacy – older people (n=1)
- Need to attract more businesses to area (n=1)
- Lack of representation of newcomers in community decision-making (n=1)
- Distance and willingness to engage (n=1)
- Decentralisation of services (n=1)
- Road safety (n=1)
- Loneliness and isolation (n=1)
- Staunch independence and reluctance to ask for help (n=1)

6.4 Extent to which different community needs are being met

Need	Mean rating /5	Range
Recreation - access to activities and amenities of interest and that bring joy, connect people, get them active, engage people in learning and get people helping each other	3.4	2-5
Health care - physical health	3.1	2-5
Healthcare - mental health	2.5	1-4
Social services - supports for people who are struggling	2.7	1-5
Access to government agency services (eg. Work and Income, Immigration Services, IRD)	2.8	2-5
Opportunities to connect with others and feel a sense of belonging	3.4	2-5
Transport - especially for people who cannot/do not drive	2.4	1-4
Adequate housing	2.1	1-3
Employment	3.0	2-5
Food security - having access to healthy food	3.0	1-4
Physical safety	3.9	3-5
Safety from crime	3.8	3-5

The survey asked respondents to consider a range of different wellbeing needs and rate on a 5-point scale (1=very poorly, 2=poorly, 3=okay, 4=well, 5=very well, with a don't know option included) how well these were currently being met for people who live in Mackenzie district. The higher the number, the more positive the rating. Findings, presented in the above table, show that safety, followed by recreation and opportunities for social connection are the wellbeing needs seen as most strongly met in Mackenzie district, with housing and transport the poorest, followed by mental health care and social supports for people who are struggling.

A number of people qualified their ratings with comments.

- *Recreation:* several respondents felt that tourism was squeezing out locals from some recreation activities, while individuals highlighted lack of sports fields, lack of non-sporting recreation opportunities and lack of year-round swimming pool.
- *Healthcare:* concerns were raised around lack of medical centre or pharmacy in Tekapo and appreciation of visiting service now operating, lack of succession planning for local GPs, unreliability in Hato Hone St John ambulance service, lack of older persons health services, poor women's health services, funding pressures on primary care, inadequate access to mobile health services (mammogram, dental services etc.), reliance on medication to treat mental health issues, improvement in access to counselling support and willingness to reach out for help but still a service shortage, difficulty reaching out for help for migrants and isolation a challenge. Health Coach and Health Improvement Practitioner roles plus grants funding for workshops were seen as valuable but hard to staff.
- *Social services:* needs highlighted for newcomers and migrants and for in-home support for older people.
- *Government services:* clinics at Fairlie Resource Centre and Twizel Community Care appreciated but many locals still need to travel to Timaru to access these services. Lack of social support capacity in Tekapo.

- *Social connection and belonging:* Community Development role in Tekapo critical but role under-scoped, market in Tekapo is key place of connection, Fairlie can be cliquey and groups hard for newcomers to break into.
- *Transport:* having a car very important in Tekapo and people use social media to connect with rides, community vehicle trust great in Fairlie but many people don't know how to access it / what it offers.
- *Housing:* huge lack of rental housing in Tekapo, declining rental affordability elsewhere, lack of social housing, old housing stock in Fairlie, need to tighten up Airbnb regulations, business owners need to take some responsibility re worker accommodation.
- *Employment:* Plenty of work but low pay and some workers exploited, lack of diversity in employment opportunities – need wider range of businesses locally
- *Food security:* lack of competition in supermarkets, some good initiatives operating (community pantries, foodbank, bulk buy via hospitality industry), good fishing and foraging opportunities.
- *Safety:* biggest concerns are road safety and poor reliability of Hato Hone St John ambulance.

6.5 Extent to which different sectors of the community are facing challenges / service barriers negatively impacting on capacity to live life well and flourish

Need	Mean rating /5	Range
Children / Tamariki 0-11 years	2.7	1-5
Young people / rangatahi 12-17 years	1.8	1-5
Young people / rangatahi 18-24 years	3.0	1-5
Families / whānau	2.9	1-5
Adults without dependents	2.4	1-3,5
Older people	3.8	1-5
People from culturally / ethnically diverse backgrounds	3.5	2-5
People living in rural parts of the district	3.0	1-5
Twizel residents	2.9	1-4
Tekapo residents	3.3	1-5
Fairlie residents	2.8	1-4

The survey asked respondents to rate the extent to which different groups within the Mackenzie population were facing challenges and service barriers negatively impacting on their lives. The following 5-point scale was used: (1=not at all, 2=to a small extent, 3=to some extent, 4=to a large extent, 5=to a very large extent), so a higher number reflected higher levels of challenge. Findings, presented in the table above, show that older people were identified as facing greatest challenges impacting on their capacity to live life well. Followed by people from culturally /ethnically diverse backgrounds and residents of Tekapo. Young people 12 – 17 years and adults without dependents were identified as on average, facing least challenge. However it should be noted that young people were not part of the respondent group and response from organisations working with this age group was low.

Comments offered for different sectors of the community were as follows:

Tekapo

"There is a wide range of wealth (or lack of) in Tekapo, which has a great impact on factors affecting wellbeing, such as housing security and access to health services. Home owning retirees and remote workers mostly enjoy passive income from property investments and live a very different life to the workforce of Tekapo."

"I have based my answers on the work undertaken by Homing Beacon on behalf of the number of individuals, couples and families with young children that are underrepresented in the wider communities - awareness of the issues they face when trying to live well and flourish within a community that many see as grossly unequal in allowing access to a quality of life which should be available to all who wish to call this place Home. The pressures a rampant real estate industry riding the wave of mass tourism that brings with it a demand for short term accommodation is hurting many within this community. The so-called social license given any industry by the community it operates within is showing signs of wearing thin."

"Tekapo has the demands of a larger village but low permanent population."

"Older people seem to need to leave to Timaru for proper care. Tekapo is unaffordable to live in."

Fairlie

"The Mackenzie's isolated location, and the increased cost of living, means that it is very expensive to live here - expensive supermarket, cost of petrol to access shops and services in Timaru, no public transport available (thank goodness for Community Car), hospital/medical appointments in Timaru and Christchurch are hard to access if you are elderly/don't drive/have limited finances, local ambulance under-staffed, housing stock is limited and of poor quality, difficult for working parents to access childcare (great After School Club but currently limited operational hours & funding), health care support for mental illness and menopause is very limited..."

6.6 Service gaps

Housing, and the shortage of safe, secure and affordable rentals (especially in Tekapo) was most commonly identified as a gap, identified by 10 respondents. Transport accessibility was the next-most identified gap, especially in relation to accessing health services, adult education opportunities and sport (n=6). A lack of social cohesion was identified as a gap by 3 respondents, as was lack of lifelong learning opportunities within the district and inadequate promotion and presence of visiting government and specialised support services based out of Timaru, and access issues to these services. Other service gaps identified were as follows:

- Hato Hone St John ambulance (n=2)
- Aged care (n=2)
- Home-based care for older people and people with disabilities (n=2)
- Youth services (n=2)
- Locally based district nursing service (n=1)
- Higher waged employment (n=1)

- Mental health services (n=1)
- MSD (n=1)
- Sports fields (n=1)
- Social housing (n=1)
- 24/7 road safety policing (n=1)
- Medical centre (Tekapo)
- More permanent residents in Tekapo enabling larger range of services (n=1)
- Swimming pool (n=1)

6.7 Positive initiatives that could be built on / require ongoing support

A wide array of great things were identified as already happening to strengthen the communities of Mackenzie:

- Sports clubs and competitions
- Social gatherings
- Interest groups
- Fairlie Resource Centre
- Twizel Community Care
- Library digital technology supports
- Tekapo Night Market
- Fairlie Meals on Wheels
- Fairlie Angels
- Facebook community groups
- Fairlie Foodbank
- Fairlie Kids' Club
- Community Vehicle Trust
- Rural Health Plan under Pae Ora (Healthy Futures Act (2022))
- Te Manahuna Kahui Ako is running a registered counsellor and a mentor service, available each Thursday through the Mackenzie cluster of schools to all students from Year 0 to 13. They are also getting all year six students to meet in the one place to take part in activities such as first aid or playing sport.

The following suggestions were offered regarding how Mackenzie District Council could build on and support these:

- A number of respondents wanted to see, as one person expressed it, Council move from a “don't tell us what we can't do but rather a 'how can we help' culture”, actively striving to enable positive community initiatives, and removing barriers or assisting those in the community to overcome these.

“On strengthening communities: The amount of regulations involved with negotiating approval for basic community initiatives such as markets and festivals is off-putting.”

- Follow on from the Rationale housing report with action to actively address housing issues.
- Utilise libraries as community hubs – locations for lifelong learning opportunities.

- Develop a library service for Tekapo.
- Ensure that the Vehicle Trust is not solely reliant on volunteers and is accessible at affordable cost.
- Strengthened community engagement from Council.
- Enhance the accessibility and management of Fairlie Community Centre
- Increase capacity of Fairlie Resource Centre and Twizel Community Care and strengthen their connections to each other and to the social services of wider South Canterbury through stronger networking and collaboration.

“Some of the supports provided through the Fairlie Heartland Resource Centre are excellent and the same in Twizel. But they have limited resources and funding and don't always have access to more specialist expertise or knowledge. They need more funding. Also need to be encouraged to network/liaise with the wider South Canterbury support services - opportunities to collaborate with other specialist health and support services. All of the issues we have raised are present in other areas such as Waimate and rural Timaru District - there are opportunities for MDC to collaborate with others to increase service levels but would also need some additional funding.”

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