

CLUTHA DISTRICT COMMUNITY NEEDS AND STRENGTHS ASSESSMENT

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Prepared for :

Clutha Development

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Disclaimer, limitations and acknowledgements

The authors note that the views presented in the report do not necessarily represent the views of Clutha Development Incorporated. 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 some inaccuracies may remain, where perceptions do not match reality. It would have been good to go further in quantitative analysis of health data for the district, but this was not possible within the scope of the research, and inappropriate since the present research took place without health funding. Readers seeking more information regarding health services and indicators should refer to Te Whatu Ora National Public Health Service, Southern Te Waipounamu Region.

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Summary report and recommendations

Background

Clutha Development commissioned a detailed assessment focused on the capabilities of the communities of the Clutha District, including its residents, agencies, and organisations, that could be used to inform future activities and enable organisational and district priority setting. The research was undertaken by Sarah Wylie, an independent social researcher, with some quantitative input from Dr Nicola Morton. The research commenced in mid-May 2023, concluding in early August 2023.

Methods

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 in relation to the research questions.

1. A demographic profile was prepared for Clutha District as a whole and the geographic communities of interest within it.
2. A wide range of community stakeholders were consulted via focus groups (89 people took part in one of 15 focus groups) and interviews (n=21) and via email and less structured phone conversations (n=3). In total, 113 individuals took part in the research.
3. An electronic survey was shared via social media (boosted for a 7-day period over King's Birthday, promoted in school notices and a range of local newsletters), targeting young people 12-25 years in the Clutha District and seeking their feedback relevant to the research questions.
4. 27 community groups responded to an electronic survey.

Sociodemographics

As summarised on the following page, Clutha is a predominantly rural community, with an older than average population structure. The current estimated population for the district sits at around 18,750, with a current growth rate of 0.8%, up from the 2018 Census population of 17,667.

Compared to New Zealand as a whole, Clutha District is less culturally diverse, with Europeans comprising a larger proportion of population than is the case for the Otago region, and considerably larger proportion than is the case for New Zealand as a whole. 12.7% of Clutha's population identify as Māori, a larger proportion than is the case across the Otago region. The average income is not dissimilar to that of New Zealand as a whole, but this is more variable than is the case nationally, reflecting the strong agricultural underpinnings of Clutha's economy. Compared to New Zealand as a whole, housing ownership is more affordable in Clutha District than is the case nationally. Rents have increased considerably in recent years.

Demographic Summary

All statistics based on 2018 Census, unless otherwise stated.

@ 2018 Census:



Total population

17,667

+0.5% since 2013



44%

Lived in the **five** largest towns:

- Balclutha
- Lawrence
- Milton
- Owaka
- Tapanui

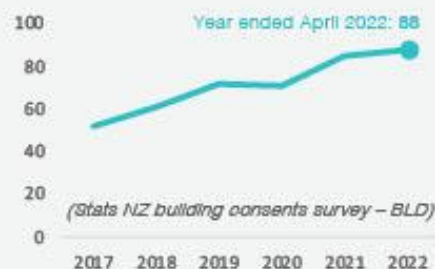


Total dwellings

7,020

Occupied on
Census night,
6 March 2018

Number of new dwellings consented



85 years and over

80–84 years

75–79 years

70–74 years

65–69 years

60–64 years

55–59 years

50–54 years

45–49 years

40–44 years

35–39 years

30–34 years

25–29 years

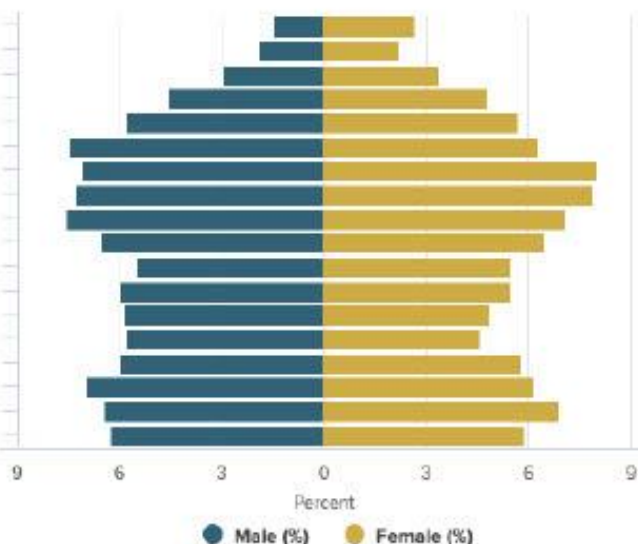
20–24 years

15–19 years

10–14 years

5–9 years

0–4 years



17.5% aged
65 years +

Expected to increase by
25% in next decade
(Stats NZ population
projections)

63.2% working
age population

42.6 Median
age

Compared with national
median of 37.4 years

19.3% aged
under 15 years

Major ethnic groups

	Clutha District	Otago region	New Zealand
European	88.8%	vs 86.9%	vs 70.2%
Māori	12.4%	vs 8.7%	vs 16.5%
Pacific peoples	1.9%	vs 2.7%	vs 8.1%
Asian	3.6%	vs 7.1%	vs 15.1%
Middle Eastern/ Latin American/ African	0.6%	vs 1.8%	vs 1.5%
Other	1.4%	vs 1.4%	vs 1.2%

Average income **\$63,166** (Infometrics 2023)

2.8% Unemployment rate
@ 2018 Census

70.2% Home ownership rate
@ 2018 Census

1,911 People lived alone
@ 2018 Census

Average weekly rent **\$170** @ 2018
Census

Community strengths

Quantitative measures of wellbeing (Infometrics 2022) indicate that Clutha District exceeds New Zealand as a whole on metrics of civic engagement and governance, housing, and jobs and earnings. Compared to the country as a whole, housing ownership remains much more affordable in Clutha, although rental housing has shifted in affordability considerable over recent years and is now slightly more expensive on average compared with the country as a whole. There are strong opportunities to work in the district, with a large number of job vacancies and Infometrics classing the unemployment rate as “ultra-low”. Incomes are more volatile on average compared to New Zealand as a whole, reflecting the dependency of the Clutha economy on agriculture. Clutha remains a predominantly rural community.

It became evident to the researcher very early on in the qualitative mahi that community identity within Clutha District is very much centred at local level – the local towns and their surrounding rural catchments. The district is geographically very large, with a diverse physical environment that presents huge possibilities in terms of recreation and wellbeing. With amazing scenery, brilliant and growing cycle and walking trails, stunning beaches and opportunities for whitebaiting, fishing and surfing, the physical environment readily supports wellbeing through physical activity and moments of wonder and reflection. Feedback from both the young and older people consulted in the present research highlighted the central role that the Clutha River and other rivers of the district play in terms of community identity, sense of connection to place, and enjoyment. While the population remains predominantly Pākehā, the community is becoming increasingly diverse and is undergoing social change, with change feeling quite rapid for some. Change has been driven by immigration changes around 2008-9 which changed the face of the freezing and dairying / milk processing workforce in particular, and more recently by the establishment of the Otago Corrections Facility in Milton. A new wave of population growth is also occurring as new people move into the district, commonly young adults and younger families, attracted by the environment, the lifestyle the community offers, and by relative housing affordability.

The Clutha community is a strong one – it’s a resilient community with a can-do attitude. Across the community, the researcher heard a clear message that Clutha is really supportive, and a tight-knit community which pulls together in times of crisis, especially at local town and catchment level, with strong capacity to provide practical help to those whose needs are known. Probably more than is commonly heard through similar research, feedback suggested it was also a community where a lot of people feel okay about reaching out and asking for help from others when they need it, and that this is just part of what it means to be part of the community: there is reciprocity. People across the community have traditionally been very good at solving their own problems and working together for collective good. Clutha has some amazing community facilities – pools, rugby club facilities, halls, sports courts and the like, which punch well above the weight for the size of the population, and community fundraising and volunteering sits behind most of them. The face of volunteering is changing, but across the Clutha District, there appears to be a real rise in willingness of younger adults and those with families to get involved in their community and make a difference, and especially around specific projects that will bring benefit to their families and to those around them.

Clutha District has a physically active community with high participation and engagement in sport – it is a community which prioritises and values sport, and people are perhaps more accepting of a need to travel for practice and competition than they might be to access health and social supports. The strong willingness to help each other where needs are known mean that where money is tight and/or people are time-poor, there is proactiveness around offering to transport other children and young people to practices and to games. People are also great at passing on sports gear to families who can make good use of it. South Otago was identified as highly represented in Otago representative teams across all major codes, and Clutha District Council’s strategic commitment to sport was identified as having resulted in some great facilities and exciting initiatives, especially catering to the mainstream sports – rugby, netball, hockey.

Very strong and community-engaged Lions and Rotary service clubs exist across the Clutha District, and these are key supports for a wide range of community activities, facilities and initiatives. The district makes good use of available grants, and has some strong philanthropy, especially into education and scholarships. The Clutha Foundation offers huge promise for the community moving forwards. Clutha has a strong tradition of significant philanthropy within the community.

Social, community and wellbeing sector

Some of the community and social services for which the researcher heard most positive feedback are based in Milton, a community which, along with Balclutha, appears to present with more significant and complex social needs. Those services and initiatives identified in Milton also tend to be much more strongly networked with each other than is the case with a number of other services across the district, in part due to the Tokomairiro Hub and the colocation of services within it, and their proximity and purposeful networking with other services in Milton. A wide range of services were highlighted as working well in addressing needs in Clutha.

Community, social and wellbeing needs and gaps

Quantitative measures of wellbeing (Infometrics 2022) indicate that Clutha District underperformed in areas of social connection, safety, knowledge and skills, income and consumption, health, and environment when compared to New Zealand as a whole. The environment metric comprised two factors: carbon dioxide emissions and waste diversion rate, both of which Clutha District scored very low on. Safety figures are likely heavily influenced by accident data: the community has relatively low levels of crime compared to New Zealand as a whole.

Surveys of young people and of community groups conducted as part of the needs assessment asked respondents to rate their community, in the case of young people, what it was like growing up in Clutha, and for community groups, to rate wellbeing of the community. Responses were on average good, but not great, the average rating by young people being 5.3 out of 10, and from community groups, 3.6 out of 5.

The community has had a very strong tradition of volunteering, and on the face of things today, it would be easy to define Clutha as a community of volunteers. This has got harder in recent years as some very long-term volunteers have aged out of key roles, which in some cases has contributed to

the loss of groups, clubs and services. Of the 27 community groups which responded to the community group survey, 22 (88%) indicated that they were totally dependent on volunteers, with a further 2 groups (8%) indicating that they mostly depended on volunteers, and there was strong feedback that many volunteers are active in more than one group – some in many groups, that it is very difficult to attract new volunteers / members and especially difficult filling leadership / committee roles. These themes also came through very strongly in kānohi ki te kānohi consultations. However not all feedback regarding volunteering was negative – there was also quite a widespread perception that the face of volunteering was just changing, with a growing representation of people in their 20, 30s and 40s volunteering in project-based roles, perhaps less interested in long-term office-holder committee roles but happy to step up when needed to make things happen. There was also quite a strong theme around a perceived need for community groups to adapt to better match volunteering capability and capacity in times when most parenting are working long hours and when economic pressures on many households are high and people have to make choices around the way they spend their time.

There is a lot of talk about people wearing multiple hats, being under high volunteer loads, getting burnt out or continuing roles well into old age, but the researcher also saw evidence and heard the perspective expressed that there are tensions among a number of community organisations between the “old and new guard” – an element of clinging to how things were done that worked well in the past, and of resisting change. The community group survey asked what would be useful to build the capacity of their group and its volunteers. Nearly 4 in 5 respondents were keen for more opportunities to showcase their group to newcomers to the community, over two fifths wanted opportunities to meet with funders and develop fundraising and grant application skills, a third wanted more opportunities to collaborate and connect with similar groups / clubs, 3 in 10 wanted guidance to develop their digital presence – using social media, websites etc., and over a quarter wanted improved hard copy promotion of community activities. However, despite one of the strongest themes around volunteering being difficulty recruiting for committee, office holder and leadership roles, only three respondents (11.1%) indicated a desire for access to support to grow governance knowledge and skills. This capacity needs to be purposefully built.

The community needs analysis research conducted in Balclutha in 2018 (published 2019) by Erin Silver identified mental health (especially counselling and social work support for children and young people, along with for single people 40-55 years) and mental health professional development as the strongest community needs, along with addiction services, housing insecurity and homelessness, parenting support, improved opportunities for youth recreation outside mainstream sport, transport support for older people and those who do not drive or face cost barriers, strengthened migrant support – both internal and from overseas, need for strengthened whanaungatanga, need for better service promotion and service navigation and improved advocacy for those dealing with government agencies. The researcher only received this report after consultations were already completed, which in many ways was a good thing: the researcher went into consultations without preconceived ideas regarding community needs. While the 2018 research only related to Balclutha, the findings mirror to a large extent the issues, challenges and gaps which came through most strongly in the present research, and in many ways evidence one of the big challenges facing the Clutha District.

Social service navigation, coordination and collective planning

Clutha was identified as having quite a good array of social and community services and activities for its size, but just as was the case in 2018, service navigation issues were highlighted, with a number of

informants expressing the view that it is hard to know where to go for help: this probably came through more strongly in relation to Balclutha than for some other parts of the Clutha District.

- Community directories were identified as typically out of date.
- The Community Connector roles established post-Covid had been very much appreciated but were being wound up.
- Frustration was expressed that so much government funding is disjointed and short-term in focus.
- Inadequate coordination, and a degree of siloing, “patch protection” and service “cliques” were identified across the social and community sector, to greater and lesser extents for different parts of the district, and some informants in the present study NZDEP expressed the view that there had been a defensiveness around the way recommendation from Silver’s research had been received by groups.
- Lack of an overarching coordination body underpinned with strategic and business planning was seen to hamper responsiveness to identified need: a strategic plan was seen as something that would enhance the effectiveness of the social services inter-agency group.
- Services were variously described as “disjointed” and “disconnected” with some duplication of effort, of facilities and of services.
- Much more purposeful networking and collaboration, reaching beyond Balclutha and into the wider district was seen as needed.
- Different towns and communities of Clutha all differ and are all strongly loyal. They often want different things for themselves, but because the district’s population is small and many of its distinct communities very small, localised services are unsustainable. There is a resistance to combining services (eg. emergency services serving small populations) and in doing so, to build their capacity.
- It can be hard to think bigger, at district level, and to get these kinds of ideas off the ground and into action. A commonality was identified as the district outside Balclutha often having what one person described as a “stuff Balclutha attitude”, motivating efforts to do things locally.

A need for a more data-informed, collective response around wellbeing services across the Clutha District was widely expressed. Informants saw the lack of a clearly articulated strategic plan around wellbeing in Clutha as a significant gap. There was demand expressed for an infrastructure to support smaller organisations in their work and to seek greater unity of resourcing for social services.

Other key community challenges identified through the present research were as follows:

Housing

The district as a whole was identified as significantly under-resourced in terms of housing stock, with this need identified across multiple demographics. Long periods of limited – no growth and subdivision development in many of the district’s towns have resulted in gaps in the housing market, with a shortage of housing appealing to professionals considering moving into the district, a lack of warm, energy efficient step-down smaller one-two bedroom housing for older people and affordable and warm and dry, affordable entry level homes for younger adults wanting to enter the property market.

Across the community there is a significant lack of rental housing, and quantitative metrics regarding housing indicate that rents have increased at a more rapid rate than is the case nationally in the last few years. The rental market across the district is competitive, and as a smaller community where people know each other, it was suggested that the market appears to favour those with a reputation of success. It can be harder for people to secure quality rental housing where they may have made mistakes in the past, or bring a negative family reputation with them, or where negative cultural stereotypes are at play.

A large number of people are living in temporary / transitional and emergency housing in the district, especially in the Milton and Balclutha campgrounds, Cedar Tree Lodge in Balclutha, and in hostel accommodation in Owaka, while a number of whānau are in emergency housing in motels in Milton and the transitional house operated by Gore and Clutha Refuge in Balclutha, some on a long-term basis (several years in the case of some in the motels in Milton) because alternatives have not yet been found. A large number of workers live outside the district, unable to find housing in the community in which they work. Preying on housing need, a large number of rental properties in Milton and Balclutha in particular were identified as well below Healthy Homes standards, cold and damp, and rented to those at the bottom of the housing market, and with desperate housing need and little choice in terms of alternatives. A number of landlords were seen to not be fulfilling their responsibilities under the law. The view was quite widely expressed that some of the large employers bringing workers into the community could be doing more themselves in the housing space.

Recent subdivision in Kaitangata, Balclutha and Milton and in some other parts of the Clutha District was identified as a great step forward for the district, but more subdivision was still seen as needed, as was more social housing. Solutions to local housing needs have to date fallen back on the community. Clutha District Council has partnered with Corrections to build housing units for Taylor Park, Milton for use as short term accommodation. In the case of the Kaitangata development and some subsequent subdivision developments, the Council has worked proactively and in a supportive manner. Frustration was expressed at how slow the consenting process is when rezoning of land to enable residential development is sought.

Recruitment and service capacity

The health and education sectors, Clutha District Council, social services, Clutha Development itself and a range of professions, trades and other areas of employment were all identified as hampered by difficulties recruiting and retaining workforce. A key barrier around recruitment was identified as the lack of appropriate and available housing stock, both rental and for sale. In addition, the district often acts as a stepping stone for new graduates or people early in their professional careers. Many choose not to live in Clutha, preferring the wider socialising options of Dunedin, but commonly find the commute hard to sustain, and move on to larger urban areas, or a job closer to home. For some social service roles, there is appeal in not living and working in such a small community. Because many roles in the social service sector are funded only on a short-term basis with no certainty of renewal beyond one-two year periods, this also impedes successful recruitment and tenure. High turnover in a range of roles in health, the council and in other areas of the community negatively impact on institutional knowledge, but also in relationship building, connections, service coordination and potential for collaboration. Many professionals in the health, education and social service sectors, and in government agencies are under considerable professional stress. Their jobs are getting harder as needs in the community become more complex, and as they commonly cover vacancies or absences

due to illness across their teams: negativity was identified as a “constant” by some of those consulted. It is noteworthy that only two representatives of government agencies (of 14 invitees) attended the focus group specifically tailored to gather their voice.

Cost of living and poverty

While not a challenge unique to Clutha, a sizeable, and growing proportion of Clutha’s population was identified as struggling to make ends meet and to meet their basic needs – paying rent/mortgage, heating their homes, affording medical care, securing the food their families need, and being able to experience wellbeing. Demand on the food banks/hubs has soared. Because most people in Clutha District have to travel to access particular services and for a range of other purposes, travel costs are hitting most households hard, impacting heavily on their discretionary spending, which in many cases takes in those things that uphold wellbeing.

Loss of services

Closure of the Spark shop in Balclutha and closures of banks and of retail across the district were widely identified as challenges facing the community, and especially impacting on older people and those with poorer access to digital technology.

Digital connectivity and literacy

Lack of digital inclusion was strongly highlighted as an issue for many people across the district, and especially older adults and low income families. With bank closures and a push towards online service access from MSD and some other government agencies, library staff across the district are spending a lot of time assisting customers around digital technology. Some areas of Clutha District have poor digital connectivity – an inadequate cellular network and inadequate internet access, and this severely hampers access to a wide range of services, including phone-based counselling services and emergency services. It also hampers economic growth.

Young people with complex needs, including those not engaged in education, training and employment (NEET)

A wide range of issues were highlighted relating to young people in Clutha.

- NEET young people, not engaged in school, education or employment were identified as a particular issue in Milton and Balclutha, and presenting with high and complex needs that are difficult to tackle, requiring specialist skill and strong systemic underpinnings.
- The community was identified as lacking a lot of key supports for youth at risk, with a lot of the specialist services coming from Dunedin.
- There are very limited youth worker roles within the district.
- The community has little in the way of alternative education, with Toko Training’s alternative education places cut in recent years, when they are the only alternative education provider for Balclutha and Milton.
- Where young people are excluded, lack of public transport and the large geography of the district makes it hard for them to enrol and attend at another school.
- For young people at a more general level, a need for a wider range of recreational activities beyond mainstream sports was highlighted, especially in Balclutha, and echoing Silver’s (2019) findings.

Ohi Navigator metrics around youth disadvantage (Te Rourou 2023) identified a decline in the number of rangatahi 12 - 25 years in 2022, experiencing moderate or serious exclusion or disadvantage in

Clutha District, from 597 (23.1%) in 2018 to 516 (19.7%) in 2022, similar to the average national rate (20.6%) in 2022, supporting the view that some initiatives are working to address youth need (eg. the Mayors Taskforce for Jobs initiative) but also suggesting that more needs to be done.

Parenting support needs

More support was identified as needed for parents, but getting those who most need this to access it was also identified as challenging. Again, this need was flagged in the 2018 research, but the need remains.

Cultural inclusivity

Some people within the Clutha District were identified as struggling to accept the changing demographics of the district, and a degree of racism and misogyny, negative stereotypes and prejudices was identified across the community, particularly towards Māori who are newer to the Clutha community. Settlement support in Clutha is almost entirely reliant on volunteers, with the only paid resource being the 10 hours of school-based support for Samoan students through Big River Kāhui Ako (Education Community of Learning), although a support role for the Samoan community is under development within the health sector.

Support needs for the Samoan community are significant. Language is a key barrier to service access around education and health services, especially impacting on mothers and children, and for families connected to Silver Fern Farms Finegand but also to families in the dairy industry. However, newcomer needs appear from the feedback to extend beyond newcomers from overseas. Some areas of the community were identified as cliquey, and more purposeful effort was needed to help newcomers of all backgrounds to settle in, to find and engage in the activities and supports that support their physical and mental wellbeing and to build a stronger sense of community.

Effort is needed to build cultural competency and understanding across the community, and to address the issues of racism identified by informants, this needs to start with understanding of Tiriti o Waitangi and te ao Māori, both for people who have lived in New Zealand for a long time / for their whole lives, and for people new to New Zealand. Building understanding and acceptance of difference was also identified as needed towards the rainbow community: school guidance counsellors were identified as the only real support for LGBTQI+ young people across the district.

Transport

Lack of public transport was quite widely identified as a challenge, but also something hard to address as the population is seen as not big enough to support this. Volunteer driving services exist throughout the district but do not appear to be networked and operate in an informal basis. There is room to streamline these services, with potential to collectively bolster their resourcing. The St John Health Shuttle only works for some people: users have to get themselves to the pick-up points and be independent once they reach Dunedin Hospital until such time as the shuttle comes at the end of the day for the return journey. Feedback suggested that Dunedin Hospital does a poor job at coordinating appointment times with constraints of shuttle timetables. It also does a poor job at scheduling appointments for older people who can drive to less busy times of the day to make this drive more doable for them, and to avoid them having to drive in the dark in winter.

Carbon farming

Carbon farming was quite widely identified as a challenge facing the community. There was quite strong feeling that this should be controlled via council by-laws and long-term planning before it impacts further in the form of loss of community, but also environmentally: the fuel load of pine forests was identified as a significant fire risk in communities where the emergency services are already fragile.

The following other challenges were less commonly identified:

- High use of alcohol (binge drinking culture), cannabis, methamphetamine and vaping by children and young people who were never smokers.
- Like everywhere in New Zealand, the health system is under stress.
- Schools are seeing more children with high and complex needs, but it is extremely difficult to access specialist supports.
- Growth in presence of gangs in Milton and Balclutha
- When churches were stronger, they had a bigger capacity to financially support those in need. With funds much more depleted, they do not have the same capacity to help the community in the way they used to. Many of the churches do not work well together and do not coordinate their efforts in the community.

The following groups were identified most likely to be struggling in terms of mental and physical wellbeing:

- Families on low incomes, and especially those with mental health and addiction needs and without a strong support network
- Young people not engaged in education, training and employment
- Young apprentices and young professionals living and working in the district but without family locally and not interested in sport
- People with complex mental health needs
- Transient families
- Culturally and linguistically diverse migrants with English as a Second Language (ESoL) needs

In terms of service gaps, the most significant across the district are summarised as follows:

Mental health supports

- Accessible support, both geographically and in terms of affordability.
- Mild to moderate level support was identified as hardest to access, especially for under 25 year olds, with nowhere near enough mental health support capacity within schools and a shortage of trauma-informed practitioners.
- Guidance counsellors were identified as key supports, yet not all area schools have such roles, and these positions are hard to recruit for.
- Online mental health tools and supports are not accessible to some of the district's rural population or low-income families due to connectivity issues.

Learning and behaviour support for children and young people, and support within school settings

- Schools struggle to access specialist supports for students with learning needs, and dealing with the Ministry of Education appears extremely challenging.

- Ministry of Education needs to be much more responsive to local needs, and also need to be proactive in identifying and listening to what these needs are.
- School-based health services across the community are extremely limited, and support for rainbow young people was described as “almost non-existent”. As a predominantly rural community, school is the most accessible place for young people to access mental, physical, and sexual health supports.
- A strong feeling was expressed that Ministry of Education and Te Whatu Ora need to work together much more on solutions to mental health, English as a second language and cultural support needs of children, young people and their families.

Places and spaces for young people to connect and be supported

More is also needed for young people in general, to give them places to connect, to play, to learn, and to have fun. Needs for safe youth drop-in spaces and pro-social recreation opportunities in Balclutha and Milton in particular were highlighted.

Newcomers services and supports

There are pockets of support for newcomers - Clutha Settlement Support’s voluntary efforts settling in arrivals from other countries, ESoL classes in West Otago and the Catlins, the part-time Samoan support role in school and variable support provision from employers, one-off community-based newcomer events. Supports such as Tokomairiro Hub and the services based within it also support people new to the community. However, these supports were not seen as extensive enough, or adequately resourced.

Safe drinking water

This was highlighted as a challenge across such a large district, but something which should continue to be prioritised.

Other service gaps less commonly identified included the following:

- Lack of crisis services around homelessness.
- Lack of AA groups in the drug and alcohol space.
- There is a shortage of home-based personal care providers for frail older adults and for people with disabilities in West Otago.
- Lack of home-based ECE options in Tuapeka-Lawrence and childcare via kindergarten poorly matching needs of working families.
- Lack of childcare for under 2 year olds in Tapanui.
- Lack of respite for families with children with a disability.
- Lack of support for children and young people around stopping vaping / risk reduction.
- Lack of community drop-in services across the district – few places where people who are socially isolated, of any age or culture, can come and connect with others in an informal basis.
- Shortage of opportunities locally to gather for Māori and to learn and engage around te ao Māori.

Responding to community, social and wellbeing needs

Clutha has an amazing community, with huge social capital and resilience: it really does seem to be a community of ‘doers’. Many of its challenges in addressing the social and community issues lie in the fact that Clutha doesn’t really see itself as a district: identity lies at a much smaller geographic level, and the populations of these communities of interest are too small to sustain some of the kinds of services and initiatives required to address social needs: recruitment is a barrier across a range of roles, and even more so when these are part-time. In the past, when volunteering was very strong, this maybe did not matter as much, as it was easy to address local needs at a very local level, but with the face of volunteering changing capacity for on-going services reliant only on volunteers, this is much harder, and will continue to get harder. Further, needs are becoming more complex: poverty and mental health crisis are more common, and needs are more complex, and many of those people in need require specialist supports.

Issues identified regarding need for improved coordination and collaboration across community and social services in Clutha and a breaking down of siloed approaches and patch-protection are a challenge, but need to be tackled through a united strategic approach, underpinned with purposeful and goal driven plans of action, which need collective buy-in.

Considering the most significant community and social wellbeing needs/priorities of Clutha – building cultural inclusivity and understanding, breaking down service barriers for newcomers and migrants, making Clutha a more attractive and appealing place to live and work, with adequate and appropriate housing, surety of tenure in key health and social service roles, the Welcoming Communities model and/or its principles are a good fit for Clutha District, and all of the priority areas could in theory be addressed through a strategic approach under this model. Informal feedback from an anonymous Welcoming Communities Coordinator in another part of New Zealand was that the benefits lie in gathering people for a shared purpose and that the framework is good but does not necessarily make outcomes more achievable.

Exploring all approaches to best address the priority of building a more connected social and community sector and a more inclusive community is beyond the scope of the present research, and beyond the expertise of the researcher. A tailored approach to building an inter-agency community wellbeing strategy, striving for a more connected and inclusive Clutha and underpinned by clearly articulated business planning around the needs and priorities identified does seem very much needed, and something that can be achieved without following a generic approach – safer communities, healthy communities, welcoming communities and the like. Several informants in the present research pointed to Gore District’s Hokonui Huanui collaborative (<https://www.cnt.org.nz/hokonui-huanui/>) approach for children and young people 0-24 years.

Whatever the approach, there is a need for an inter-agency body, with a resourced Coordinator role and a robust strategic plan, that goes beyond the present social services inter-agency group. This needs buy-in to a collective strategic plan from central government agencies, from Kāhui Ako, from health providers, from service clubs and from community development and social service groups operating at local level. It needs memorandums of understanding around what each agency or group partnering in the approach will bring to the table, and what they can expect of others. It needs

business plans around focus groups, aligned to the needs identified in the needs assessment clearly setting out goals, and how these are to be achieved and by when. The present findings most strongly suggest that the focus areas should be as follows:

- Building cultural competency, understanding and inclusion
- Addressing the needs of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities
- Enhancing service navigation, and especially regarding mental health, drug and alcohol support services and transport support

The findings affirm the value of council and community efforts to grow housing stock across the community and suggest that even more effort is needed to encourage continued expansion of housing stock to meet the range of needs across the market, where possible removing barriers around change of land use to enable this. The findings also affirm the need for continued effort by Clutha District Council and its economic development arm, Clutha Development to promote Clutha as a great place to live, work and play. Every effort is needed to attract health, education and social sector workforce to the district, and to retain them.

More supports are needed locally to:

- increase digital literacy and connectivity for older people and low-income households in Clutha, prioritising those in rural communities and towns outside Balclutha and Milton
- engage with and support young people not currently undertaking education or employment, building capacity to support young people with complex needs
- increase in-school supports for children and young people with high and complex needs
- improve access to school-based health and wellbeing supports
- respond to youth need and engage with young people to increase opportunities to connect, learn, have fun and be active outside mainstream sport
- support parents and caregivers struggling in this role
- build cultural understanding and overcome language barriers
- support newcomers to settle well
- creatively address transport needs of populations with least transport access – young people, older adults and households on low incomes
- respond to youth needs regarding preventative education around vaping and quitting/reduced use supports
- enhance service navigation regarding mental health and drug and alcohol support
- increase provision of mild to moderate level support for under 25 year olds
- provide spaces, places and opportunities for people to drop-in and connect on a casual basis: this is a space that libraries could play a key role in, building on initiatives they have already begun.

Recommendations

On the basis of the research findings, the following recommendations are put forward for full consideration:

General

- 1) Full consideration should be given to establishment of an inter-agency community wellbeing strategy, striving for a more connected and inclusive Clutha and underpinned by clearly articulated business planning around the following needs and priorities:
 - Building cultural competency, understanding and inclusion
 - Addressing the needs of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities
 - Enhancing service navigation, and especially regarding mental health, drug and alcohol support services and transport supportbut also strongly connected to efforts to build housing capacity across the district and recruit and retain appropriate workforce to meet community needs. The Regional Strategic Partnership Fund could be explored as a way of resourcing this: the suggested strategic, inter-agency approach needs a full-time coordinator to drive it and give it the best chance of success. It also needs buy-in from central government agencies, and especially Ministry of Social Development, Oranga Tamariki, Police, Ministry of Education, Te Whatu Ora, Department of Internal Affairs Te Tari Taiwhenua (DIA), Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE), from Iwi, from local health providers, Kāhui Ako (education communities of learning) and from local social service and community development providers working at the coalface in Clutha, including volunteer-based services and especially with priority populations – Māori, Pasifika and other newcomer communities, young people, families on low incomes / financially struggling, older people and socially isolated populations.
- 2) The present research identifies the value of ongoing professional development around cultural competency and understanding of Te Tiriti o Waitangi for staff of Clutha District Council and Clutha Development, and across the community, health, education and social service sectors in Clutha District, including customer-facing roles. Looking forward, Clutha Development, Clutha District Council and indeed central government and funders need to listen to Māori desires regarding their community, and to strive to be guided by them, upholding tino rangatiratanga of Māori – their control of their own destiny, and working in a mana-enhancing manner.
- 3) Services working with vulnerable young people with high and complex needs should strive to collaborate and to continue to collectively advocate for strengthening of service provision in Clutha District: youth are an under-served population in Clutha District.

Clutha District Council and Clutha Development

- 4) The needs assessment findings affirm the strong focus around housing in Clutha District Council's Long-Term Plan and Living and Working in Clutha Strategy, and highlight the value of any efforts to rezone suitable land for residential development and to develop affordable and appropriate housing catering for a range of households, from single people to inter-generational households.

- 5) The needs assessment also affirms the ongoing prioritising of water quality and measures to ensure access to safe drinking water across the district.
- 6) Clutha District Council and Clutha Development should strive to support local rūnaka to respond to the needs they are seeing within their communities, be responsive to feedback from rūnaka regarding council services, and continue to build an understanding of the cultural narrative of the district, and to foster this across the community.
- 7) Full consideration should be given to strongly voiced community concerns around carbon farming and its impact on communities in Clutha, the environmental risks posed by forestry conversion, and a desire to see future conversions kerbed through by-law.
- 8) The needs assessment findings affirm the direction of the Living and Working in Clutha Strategy. With regard to the priority area *supporting culture and heritage*, the present research affirms the importance of CDC continuing to strive to strengthen partnerships and collaboration with local iwi, and ensuring that cultural and heritage values are visible, accessible, and celebrated widely.
- 9) Needs assessment findings strongly affirm the role played by Clutha District Council Libraries in supporting development of digital literacy skills for local residents of all ages, but especially older adults and people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds, and the role played in assisting these families and low income households to become digitally connected.
- 10) Full consideration should be given to widening library activities and opportunities which support some of the five ways to wellbeing, guided by the communities themselves – opportunities to connect, learn, and have a bit of fun (eg. drop-in coffee sessions, knit and natter groups, hobby sessions, games sessions).
- 11) Demand for a multicultural, multi-age drop-in space within Te Pou ō Matau-au Clutha District War Memorial and Community Centre should be further explored.
- 12) The value of Tokomairiro Community Hub is strongly affirmed by the present research, along with the groups and services housed / providing services within it, and consideration should be given to expanding its hours of operation to meet growing demand.
- 13) Clutha District Council should strongly advocate for increased resourcing of settlement support services for the district.
- 14) Priority should be given to development of accessible recreation spaces / amenities targeting young people in Balclutha, involving young people in their planning and development.

- 15) Findings from the present research pertaining to young people should be shared to Clutha Youth Council and the Council scaffolded with appropriate support to address identified needs, including fun, appealing youth events.

Clutha District Council, district organisations and Clutha Development should strongly advocate for the following needs to be addressed:

Ministry of Education

- 16) Full consideration should be given to expanding the number of alternative education places for 15 and 16 year olds within Tokomairiro Training, and considering alternative education options for under 15 year olds not engaged in school in Milton.
- 17) Full consideration should be given to increasing resourcing and capacity of in-school English as a Second Language (EsoL) support for Samoan students in Balclutha and the Catlins, at both primary and secondary level.
- 18) Ministry of Education and Te Whatu Ora should be encouraged to work together much more on solutions to mental health, English as a second language (in the context of barriers to education and service engagement), child and youth vaping and cultural support needs of children, young people and their families. Schools need better access to specialist supports for students with learning needs.
- 19) For young people in school, school is the most accessible place for the predominantly rural population to access health and wellbeing services. Ministry of Education, Te Whatu Ora, local health providers and schools could collaborate to improve school-based health service accessibility across the community.

Te Whatu Ora Southern

- 20) Needs assessment findings strongly affirm the value of development of a new role in primary health in Clutha District, focused on addressing service barriers for Samoan community members.
- 21) Needs assessment findings strongly affirm the value of the Health Improvement Practitioner and Health Coach roles across Clutha District.
- 22) Personnel scheduling appointments for Clutha residents at Dunedin Hospital should strive where possible to schedule appointments for older people who self-drive between 10am and 2pm to maximise driver safety. Where the health shuttle is to be accessed for appointments, appointment times should accommodate shuttle timetables, avoiding the start and end of the day's schedule.
- 23) Need for strengthened provision of low-no-cost counselling for mild-moderate mental health need for children, young people and young adults is highlighted.

REPORT IN DETAIL

1. Background

Clutha Development is the economic development agency and regional tourism organisation (RTO) for the Clutha District and is an incorporated society that works independently of the Clutha District Council. As part of a community support framework, Clutha Development have since 2003 held the MSD Heartland Services contract for Balclutha. Heartlands is designed to improve kānohi-ki-te-kānohi (face to face) access to services and support to areas where such services might otherwise not be accessible. The sites operate as hubs for communities and provide a physical space for people to connect with government and community organisations, and with each other. The service offered includes support and advice, access to the community and coordination, collaboration and networking opportunities.

Clutha Development recognise that health and wellbeing within rural communities is influenced by many factors, including individual behaviours, community characteristics, environmental factors, accessibility services, and the types of services delivered by governmental agencies or private and not-for-profit organisations. They also recognise communities as not only geographic constructs, but also based on shared interests and characteristics, including age, gender and sexuality, ethnicity, religious beliefs and interests / occupations. In their RFP, Clutha Development made it clear that identifying and utilising the collective ideas and wisdom across the communities of Clutha would be critical to assessing the community needs and issues, and identifying and prioritising areas for improvement.

Clutha Development commissioned a detailed assessment focused on the capabilities of the communities of the Clutha District, including its residents, agencies, and organisations, that could be used to inform future activities, enable organisational and District priority setting. It was intended that a community needs assessment would provide the framework to inform and identify services and solutions to develop and build a sustainable, resilient community that supports living and working in the Clutha District. They sought a holistic approach across the district that would take into account Clutha's widely spread rural communities and urban townships including Balclutha, Milton, Owaka, Lawrence and Tapanui, be evidence-informed and systematic and could contribute to wellbeing and the range of determinants of this, including education, health care, social services, environment, culture and identity, faith, housing, transportation, childcare, positive youth development, emergency preparedness and response, food, recreation, employment, community safety, government services and social inclusion. In commissioning the research, Clutha Development were keen that each system be assessed through the lens of demographic characteristics including age, culture, ethnicity, and gender.

The research was undertaken by Sarah Wylie Social Research and Evaluation, with some quantitative input from Dr Nicola Morton. The research commenced in mid-May 2023, concluding in July 2023.

2. Scope of the research

The community needs and strengths research sought to address the follow questions:

1. What are the demographic characteristics of the population of Clutha District as a whole and of the geographic communities of interest within it – its widely spread rural communities and urban townships including Balclutha, Milton, Owaka, Lawrence and Tapanui), and how have these communities changed over time? The report would utilise existing reports identified by Clutha Development in the Request for Proposal, along with Stats NZ Place Summary and Stats.NZ datasets, New Zealand Deprivation data, Statistics New Zealand population projections along with data from Work and Income, Education Counts, Kāinga Ora, New Zealand Police, and Ministry of Health to develop a demographic profile of the local community. Recognising that 2018 Census data is now very out-dated, and 2023 Census data will not be available until into 2024, meaningfulness and relevance guided prioritisation of effort.
2. What community wellbeing needs and strengths exist currently and what is anticipated in the future? How do these differ for the different geographic communities that comprise the Clutha District, and for different age groups, gender, ethnic communities, urban vs rural communities etc.? What does the community see as priority areas and opportunities in terms of community wellbeing?
3. What are the strengths/assets, opportunities, and gaps and access barriers locally in terms of the determinants of wellbeing, including education, health care, social services, environment, culture and identity, faith, housing, transportation, childcare, positive youth development, emergency preparedness and response, food security, recreation, employment, community safety, government services and social inclusion?



3. Methodology

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 findings in relation to the research questions.

The following methods were employed:

1. A demographic profile was prepared for Clutha District as a whole and the geographic communities of interest within it. The profile utilised existing reports identified by Clutha Development in the RFP and found online, along with Stats NZ Place Summary and Stats.NZ datasets, Stats NZ urban – rural datasets, NZDEP data, data from Work and Income, Education Counts, DIA, New Zealand Police, and Te Whatu Ora, along with Te Rourou One Aotearoa (formerly Vodafone New Zealand Foundation)’s Ohi Data Navigator youth insights tool, which draws from Stats NZ’s Integrated Data Infrastructure (IDI) data. Recognising that 2018 Census data is now dated, and 2023 Census data will not be available until into 2024, meaningfulness and relevance guided prioritisation of effort. Some data was presented for specific towns, and other data presented by ward area, or for the district as a whole.
2. The following community stakeholder focus groups (and where appropriate, interviews) were undertaken across Clutha District¹:
 - A focus group was held with **representatives of the key agencies involved in the planning of the research** (n=7): Linda Moore and Sarah Hayward – Clutha Development, Jean Proctor and Debbie Duncan - CDC, Gagan Gurung and Tom Scott - Te Whatu Ora Southern, Jane Hutton – Anglican Family Care.
 - Two representatives of Government agencies attended a **Central Government Agency** focus group, to which 14 representatives of 6 agencies had been invited.
 - **Balclutha community stakeholders** (n=4) attended by representatives of Clutha. Budget Advisory Service, Heartland Services, Gore Refuge and Clutha Health First.
 - **Big River Kāhui Ako** (n=12) – attended by the Principals/representatives of South Otago High School, Waiwera South School, Catlins Area School, St Josephs Primary School (Balclutha), Balclutha School, Clinton School, Kaitangata School, Rosebank School, Tahakopa School, Warepa School and Clutha Valley School.
 - **Milton community stakeholders** (n=7) attended by representatives of Project Bruce, Job Opportunities/Mayor’s Taskforce for Jobs, Milton library and service centre, Toko Training, a local counsellor, Te Whare Poawai and a local volunteer in multiple community roles.
 - **Milton Medical Centre and Milton Community Health Trust** (n=3)
 - **Tokomairiro Kāhui Ako** (n=3) – representatives of primary and ECE education in the Bruce community.
 - **Tapanui community stakeholders** (n=7), which included representatives of the CDC library and service centre, West Otago Food Bank, Tapanui New Life Church, Karen

¹ Where named, the person / organisation has consented to be identified as a participant in the research.

McHutchon and Julia Body and two volunteers involved in multiple organisations in West Otago.

- **Pomokaka Kāhui Ako (West Otago)** (n=2) representing both primary and secondary education in the district.
- **Catlins community stakeholders** (n=6), which included representatives of South Otago Forest and Bird, Rural Support Otago, Catlins Community Group, a representative from the library and CDC service centre and others involved in multiple voluntary roles in the area.
- **Lawrence community stakeholders** (n=9), which included representatives from Tuapeka Vintage Club, retired Lawrence librarian, a representative of the library and service centre, representatives of Tuapeka Community Health, Waitahuna Playgroup and Lawrence Toy Library, Tuapeka Visitor's Centre and Museum, Lawrence Presbyterian Church / Mainly Music and another person active in many volunteer roles over a long period of time and a representative of Plunket.
- **Christian church ministers** (n=3) – Milton and Balclutha.
- **Clutha Samoan Society** (n=3, plus CDC Community Development Advisor).
- **Clutha Youth Council** (n=7 young people) – conducted via Microsoft Teams.
- **Older adults attending Jenny's Companions Group, Balclutha (n=14)**

In total, 89 people took part in one of 15 focus groups.

In addition, the following 7 interviews were conducted kānohi ki te kānohi:

- Jovenal Cardinova – **Clutha Filipino Society**
- Susan Evans, Catholic Social Services **Social Worker in schools – Big River Kāhui Ako**
- Arna Smith, Coordinator, **Tokomairiro Community Hub**
- John Auld, Principal, **Lawrence Area School**
- Ruth Baldwin, Waikoau, Māori Advisory role, **Big River Kāhui Ako**
- Dayle Ingram, **Tokomairiro Waioara Inc.**
- Staff member, **CDC Lawrence Service Centre and Library**

Nadia Wesley-Smith, Manager, **Te Rūnaka o Ōtākou** was interviewed via Microsoft Teams, while Jo Brand, Hokonui Rūnaka was engaged with by phone, and findings pertaining to Māori were reviewed by both **Te Rūnaka o Ōtākou Inc. and Hokonui Rūnaka**.

A representative of **Catlins Medical Centre**, unable to attend the Catlins focus group, was interviewed by phone, while the Chair of Clutha District Settlement Support, Ella Broekhuizen was unable to attend a focus group in person but responded to the questions in writing.

Interviews were sought with 10 elected members across the district. **Phone interviews were conducted with the following 7 elected members of Clutha District Council:**

- Mayor Bryan Cadogan
- Cr Alison Ludemann (Balclutha Ward)
- Cr Kevin Barron (Balclutha Ward)
- Cr Gaynor Finch (Bruce Ward)
- Cr Dean McCrostie (Bruce Ward)
- Cr Brent Mackie (Clinton Ward)
- Cr Michele Kennedy (West Otago Ward)

Short interviews were conducted with:

- Parents at Milton Playgroup (n=4)
- Two representatives of Age Concern Otago - Balclutha

In total, 113 individuals took part in the interviews and focus groups, and less formal engagements were also made with residents of the district, with their insights also feeding into the research.

For the community stakeholder focus groups, invitations were extended to medical centres, Heartland and Clutha Development's own staff and community development workers / "movers and shakers", allied health workers (counsellors, physiotherapists, midwives, Pharmacists, GPs / practice managers), local church ministers and youth workers, service clubs, CDC (emergency management and community development and subject to Clutha Development's approval, elected members) volunteer-based organisations and other key community stakeholders as appropriate, identified with guidance from Clutha Development, Heartland services staff and via snowball recruitment.

3. An electronic survey was shared via social media (boosted for a 7-day period over King's Birthday, promoted in school notices and a range of local newsletters) targeting young people 12-25 years in the Clutha District and seeking their feedback relevant to the research questions.

It was originally intended that an electronic survey would be disseminated across relevant government and not-for-profit agencies and organisations across the social, community and wellbeing sector, both within Clutha District and those mandated/contracted to deliver services to Clutha from outside the district, and including schools, ECEs, churches / faith-based communities, Heartland services, foodbanks, medical practices, aged care providers, pharmacies, service clubs, ethnic organisations, sport, recreation and arts clubs/groups and allied health providers along with relevant parties in government agencies, seeking responses pertaining to the research questions. Based on feedback gathered from face-to-face consultations and initial phone conversations, significant survey fatigue was evident, and in-person consultation was preferred. In response, additional focus groups were added to those initially planned.

A Survey Monkey survey link was sent by email to 73 community groups (community development, emergency service, service clubs, sport, recreation, interest and arts groups) across the Clutha District, drawn primarily from a contact list provided by Clutha Development. Eleven emails bounced because they were incorrect, or the group had folded. Of the 62 email contacts that did not bounce, 27 responses were received.

4. It was also intended that a profile would be developed and presented identifying the range of services and organisations being delivered in Clutha and from external providers which are related to wellbeing and its determinants. Because not everyone invited to focus groups attended, it was not possible to fully scope the community service landscape in the time available. The report presents the information gathered.

All data was thematically analysed.

4. Demographic Analysis

Geography

Figure 1: District boundaries *Source: CDC website*



Clutha District comprises 6,334 km² at the south-eastern part of Te Waipounamu, the South Island, the Clutha River extending through the district in a south – south-easterly direction.

Clutha lies within the takiwā (district) of Ngai Tāhu, and falls primarily within the rohe of Hokonui Rūnanga (Gore) and Te Rūnaka o Ōtākou (Dunedin). Awarua, Waihōpai and Oraka also have peripheral interests in areas of Clutha towards its TLA boundaries. Waikoau Ngāi Tahu South Otago whakapapa to the local pre-European Māori who lived a nomadic life style around what is known today as the Clutha District, and settled in at Maranuku after the European Settlers took up land after the Sale of Otago in 1844. They are not a Papatipu Rūnaka.

In terms of local government, Clutha is divided into eight ward areas, Balclutha, Catlins,

Clinton, West Otago, Lawrence Tuapeka, Bruce, Kaitangata Matau and Clutha Valley. Boundaries are displayed in Figure 1.

Nine main urban centres serve the district, Balclutha being the largest, with other main centres as follows: Milton, Waihola, Lawrence, Owaka, Heriot, Clinton, Tapanui, and Kaitangata. For the purposes of this report, Census data is reported for the district as a whole, for the five largest towns, and for the 8 wards.

Population

The population of Clutha District at the time of the 2018 Census was 17,667. The populations of the major towns of the district at the time of the 2018 census (built-up urban areas) were as follows:

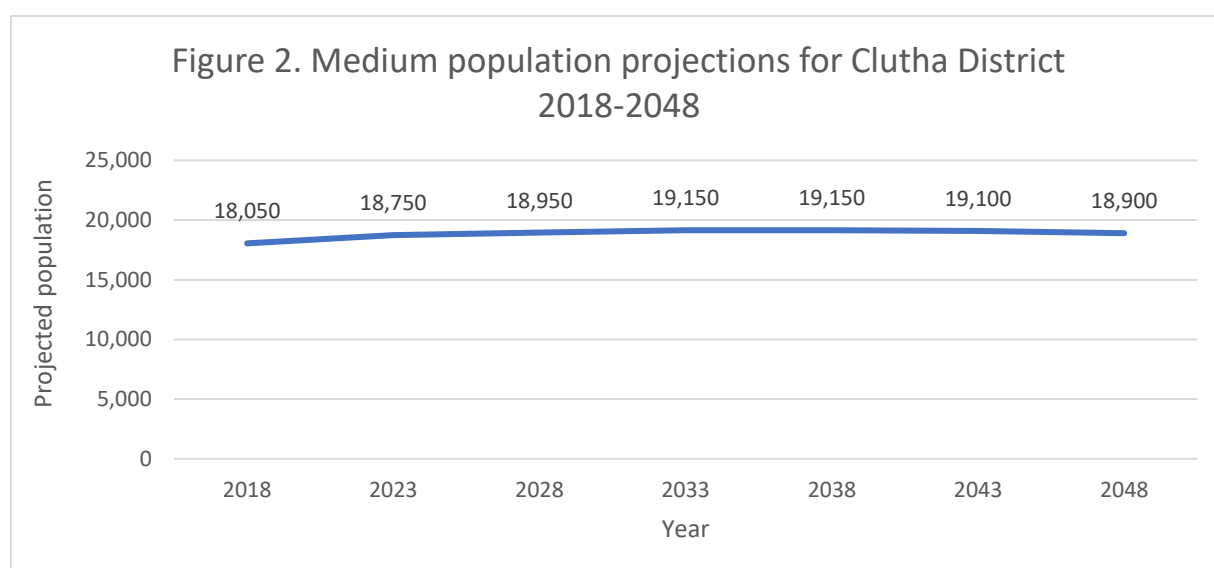
Balclutha	4,110	Milton	2,157
Tapanui	789	Lawrence	447
Owaka	309		

44% (n=7,815) of Clutha's population at the time of the 2018 Census resided in these five biggest towns, with the majority of the population (n=9,852) residing in rural areas or the smaller townships and settlements.

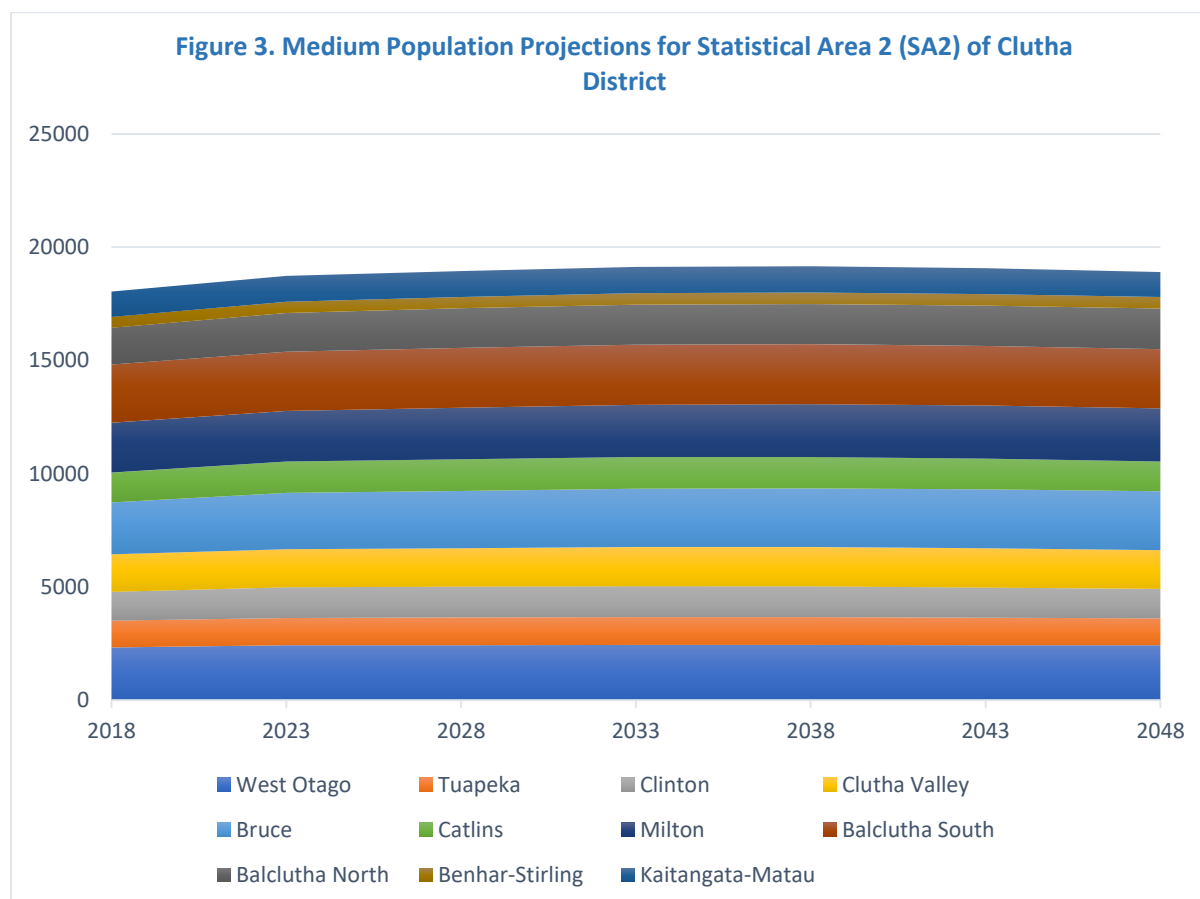
Ward populations (2018 Census) were as follows:

Balclutha	5,229
Bruce	4,407
West Otago	2,289
Clutha Valley	1,233
Clinton	1,230
Lawrence-Tuapeka	1,155
Kaitangata-Matau	1,092
Catlins	1,032

The population of Clutha District has since 2006 experienced a slow rate of growth, growing by 0.3% from 2006 to 2013 and by 0.5% from 2013 to 2018. The rate of growth has continued to increase slightly over time, with 2022 population growth estimated at a rate of 0.8% (Infometrics, 2022). Population projections for the district through to 2048 are presented in Figure 2. The projections are expected to see population to increase to a peak in ten years, with population then plateauing before experiencing a trend of decline.



Medium population projections for the 11 populated SA2 areas of Clutha District are presented in Figure 3. These show quite similar patterns of projected population change over the long term for the different SA2 areas, apart from stronger growth from 2018 to the present day in Clinton (the township and surrounding area), growing by an estimated 80 residents from 2018 to 2023, Bruce (growing by an estimated 200 residents from 2018 to 2023), Catlins (growing by an estimated 70 residents in that period), Balclutha South and North (50 and 90 more residents respectively). SA2 boundaries are mapped in Appendix 1.



Age

Overall, the population of Clutha District is comparatively old when compared with New Zealand's population as a whole, with a median age of 42.6 years as at the time of the 2018 census (compared with a national median of 37.4). Usual resident population by age and sex at the time of the 2018 Census is presented in Figure 4.

In 2018, 19.3% of Clutha District's population was aged under 15 years and 17.5% were aged 65 years and over.

Figure 4. Age and sex of people in Clutha District, 2018 Census

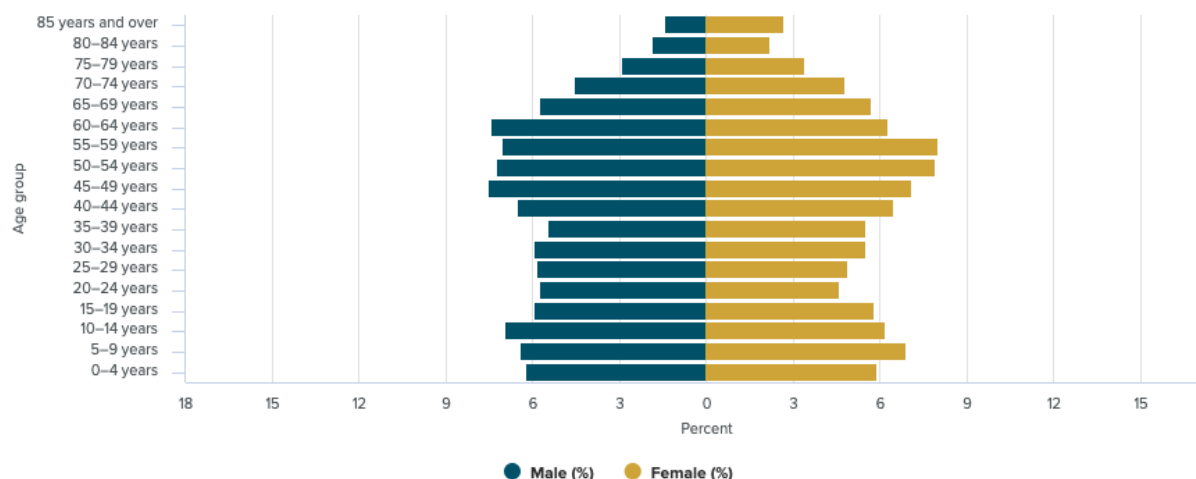
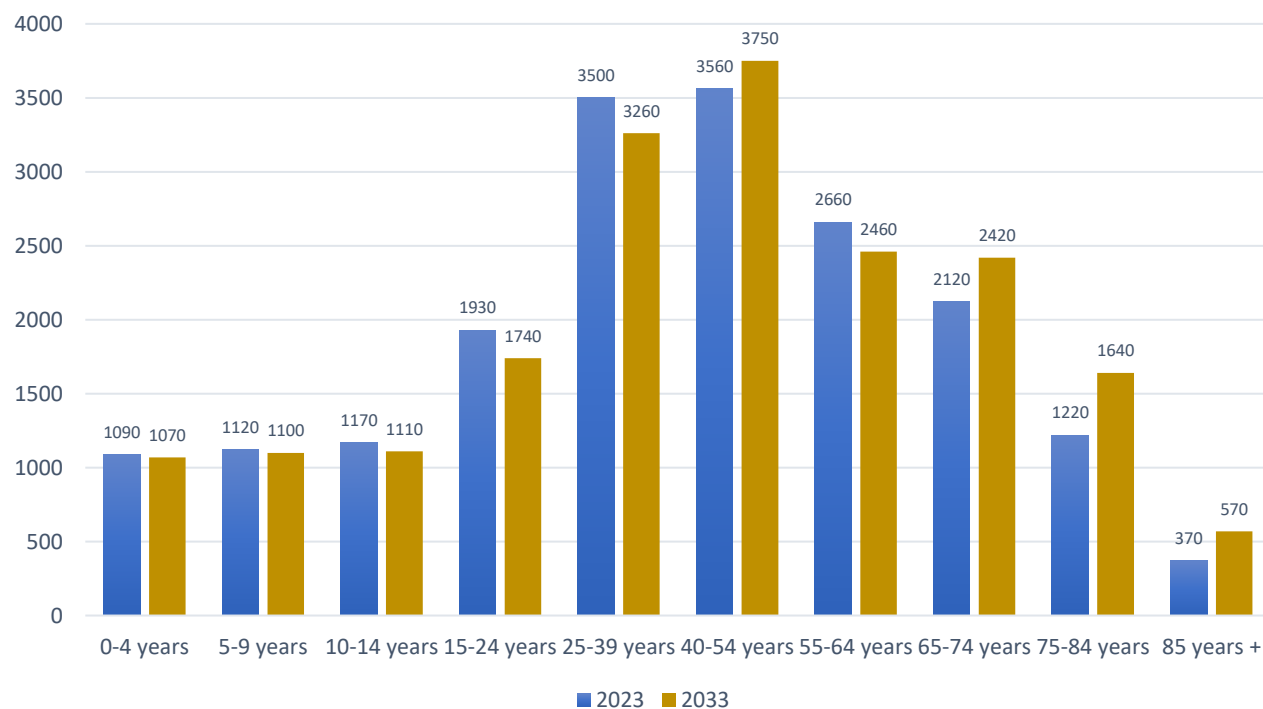


Figure 5 compares the age structure of Clutha’s current estimated population and that of the medium estimated population in 2033. The size of the 65 years and over population increases markedly over the coming decade, and especially for the two oldest age groups, the number of estimated residents aged 85 years and over expected to grow by 200, or 54%, and the number of residents aged 75 – 84 years expected to grow by over a third, (n=420) over the next ten years. Meantime, the number of children and younger people is expected to reduce over the next decade, with notable reductions in the youth and younger adult populations, with the only age group experiencing growth besides those of retirement age being adults 40-54 years. The population is very much an aging one.

Figure 5. Estimated population by age for Clutha District, 2023 and 2033



A breakdown of the 2018 Census night population by age for the five main towns of Clutha District and the total urban and total rural area within the District and the District as a whole is presented in Table 1.

The largest child population in 2018 was concentrated in the towns of Balclutha and Milton, and in the Balclutha, Bruce and West Otago wards. Young people are also most strongly represented these same towns and ward areas.

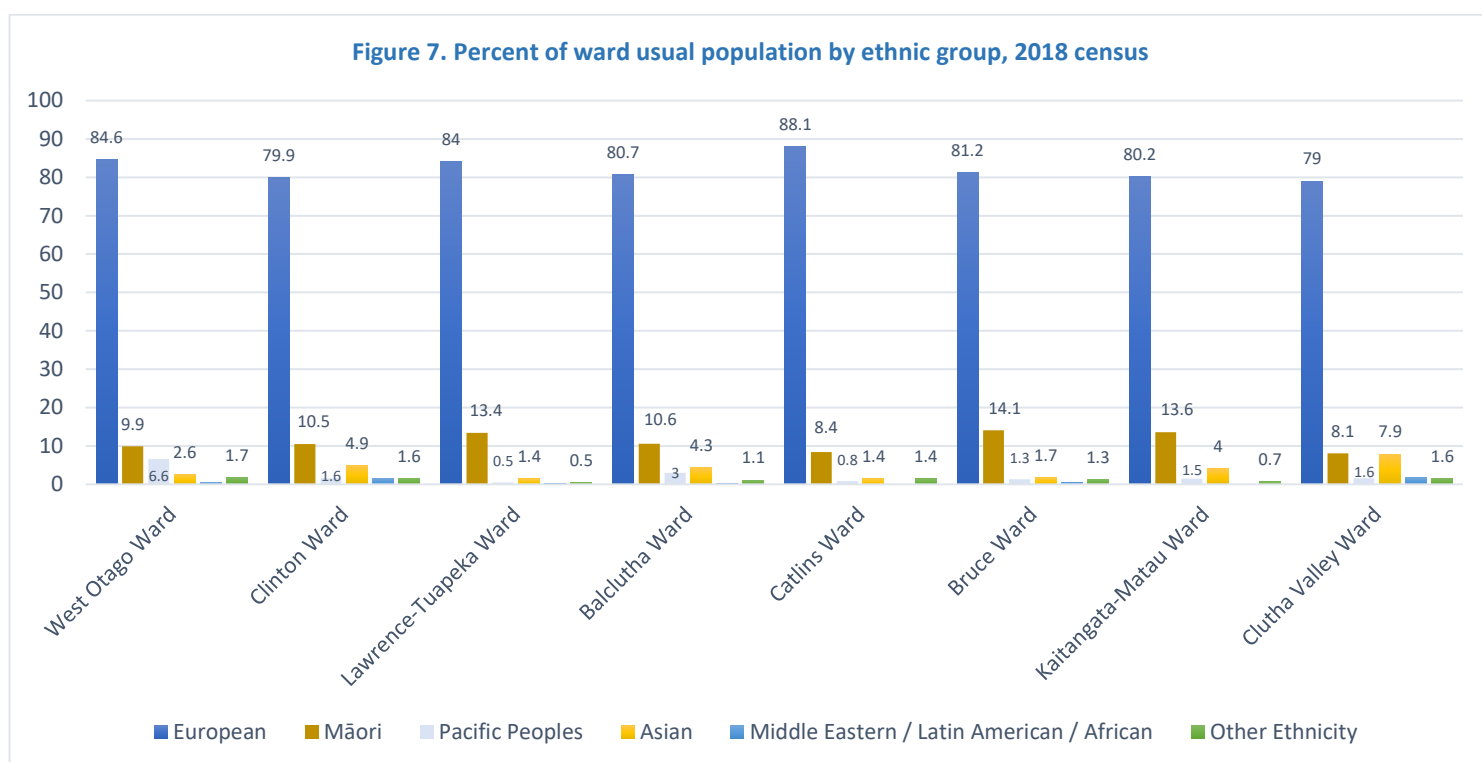
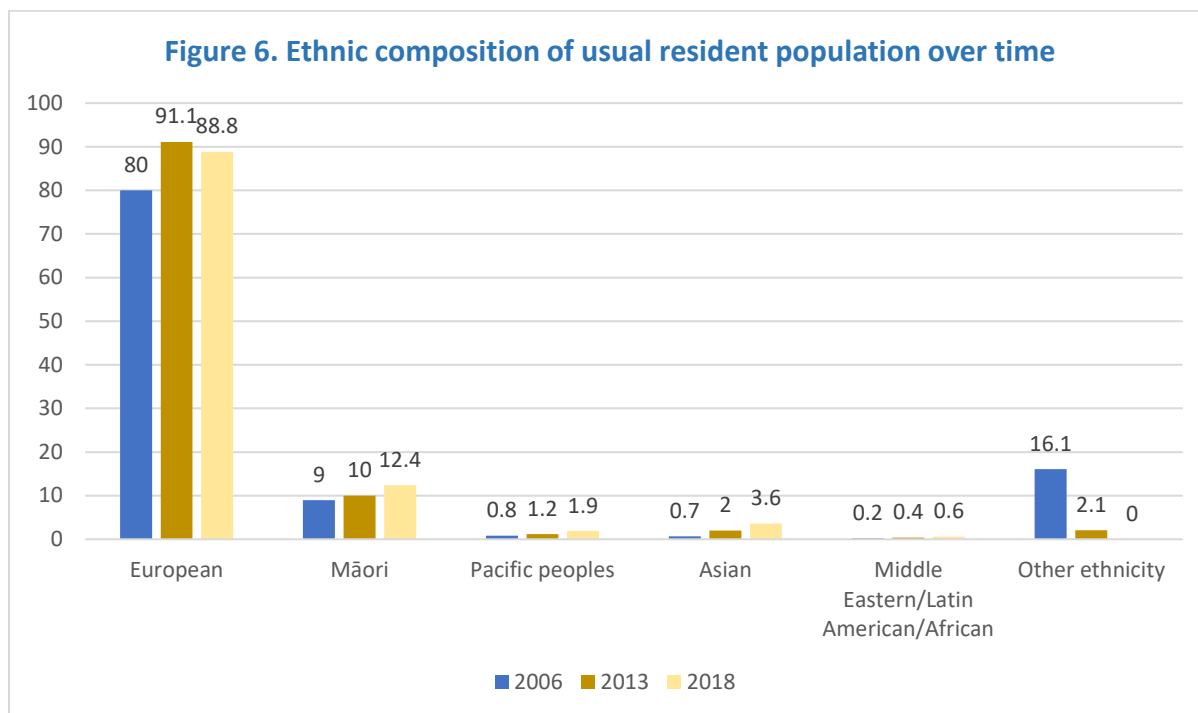
Table 1. Age distribution of 2018 Census population (n)

	0-14 years	15-24 years	25-39 years	40-64 years	65 years +
Clutha District	3411	1950	2916	6300	2587
MAIN TOWN CENTRES					
Balclutha	678	495	631	1362	963
Milton	457	223	336	723	436
Tapanui	138	63	96	246	225
Lawrence	63	27	54	186	114
Owaka	48	28	33	132	75
WARD AREAS					
Balclutha	903	618	819	1785	1107
Bruce	828	453	740	1290	1014
Catlins	168	93	123	340	312
Clinton	288	159	174	390	132
Clutha Valley	288	162	219	423	147
Kaitangata-Matau	210	150	180	423	126
Lawrence-Tuapeka	219	87	174	456	126
West Otago	510	312	396	660	263

Note that numbering of data used is subject to rounding to nearest 3 and that some data is aggregated from SA1s

Ethnicity and culture

Clutha District is less ethnically diverse than New Zealand as a whole, with 88.8% of its usual residents in 2018 identifying as European compared with 70.2% nationally. In total in 2018, 12.4% of Clutha District residents identified as New Zealand Māori, 3.6% Asian, 1.9% Pasifika, and 0.6% as Middle Eastern, Latin American or African. The ethnic composition of the district is changing, albeit slowly. Figure 6 shows ethnic composition of the district over time, based on Census findings. Increase in proportion of population identifying as European from 2006 to 2013 is due to a change in the way data was coded.



Ethnicity data from the 2018 census by ward is presented in Figure 7. Findings show that Māori are most strongly represented in the Bruce (14.1%), Kaitangata-Matau (13.6%) and Lawrence-Tuapeka (13.4%) wards. Pasifika are most strongly represented in West Otago (6.6%) and the ward in which Asian comprise the largest proportion of population is Clutha Valley, with 7.9% of the 2018 population identifying as Asian.

School data give a good up-to-date insight into the ethnic composition of families within communities. Schools and early childhood centres (ECEs) in Clutha District fall within four Communities of Learning or Kāhui Ako:

- **Big River Kāhui Ako**, which has 13 schools and 7 ECEs across central and southern Clutha District, covering Balclutha, Clinton, Kaitangata, Clutha Valley, The Catlins, Waiwera South and Warepa
- **Pomahaka Kāhui Ako**, with 5 schools and one ECE in Tapanui, Heriot, Waikaka and Waikoikoi
- **Tokomairiro Kāhui Ako**, which has 6 schools and four ECEs in Milton, Taieri Beach, Tokoiti and Waitahuna, and an ECE in Lawrence
- Lawrence Area School belongs to the **Southern Area Schools' Kāhui Ako** which covers a much larger geographic area.

In total, as at 1 July 2022, 2,563 students were enrolled across years 1-13 at schools in Clutha District, 1,316 males and 1,247 females. Ministry of Education records ethnicity in prioritised format, where students identifying as multiple ethnicities are recorded as the non-European ethnic group. As at the time of July 1 2022 roll returns:

- 66.6% of those attending school (y0-13) in the district (n=1,706) identified as European
- 20.6% (n=528) were Māori
- 4.4% (n=112) were Pasifika
- 4.7% (n=121) were Asian and
- 3.7% (n=96) Other ethnicity.

Tamariki Māori and rangatahi Māori comprised the largest proportion of school rolls in Lawrence and the Tokomairiro Kāhui Ako catchment covering Milton, Taieri Beach and the area across to Lawrence in the Bruce and Tuapeka Clutha District Council wards. School Pasifika rolls were strongest in Balclutha, with Pasifika comprising 6.6% of the school rolls in the Big River catchment.

Households and housing

In total, there were 7,020 households in occupied private dwellings across Clutha District at the time of the 2018 Census. Of these, 70.2% (n=4,929) of the dwellings were either owned or part owned by the occupant or were held in a family trust. 1,572 households were renting their home at the time of the 2018 Census. The median weekly rent at that time was \$170. Nearly a fifth of dwellings were identified in the 2018 Census as sometimes damp.

Of the 1,572 households in rental dwellings:

- 34.9% (n=549) were in Balclutha ward
- 21.2% (n=333) in Bruce ward
- 12% (n=189) were located in West Otago ward
- 8.0% (n=126) in Clutha Valley ward
- 7.3% (n=114) in Clinton ward
- 6.5% (n=102) in Kaitangata-Matau
- 5.7% (n=90) in Lawrence-Tuapeka ward
- 4.2% (n=66) in Catlins ward

Of the 1,598 households in rental accommodation in 2018, 88.9% (n=1,398) rented from a private landlord (person, trust or business), 5.3% from Clutha District Council (n=84, subject to rounding to nearest 3), 2.7% (n=42) from a government department or State entity, 1.9% (n=30) from Housing New Zealand Corporation (now Kāinga Ora) and 1.2% (n=18) from a non-lwi community housing provider. Kāinga Ora and community provider properties at that time were located in Balclutha and Milton. Clutha District Council housing is spread throughout the district, with 46.4% located in Balclutha.

Of the total households in 2018, 27.2% comprised a single occupant and two-thirds (n=4,701) comprised a couple or parent(s) with children – a “family household”, with multi-person non-family households (eg. flatting situation or single person with boarder etc.) comprising just 2.5% of total households (n=177). Eighteen two family households were identified across the district in 2018, mostly located in the towns of Balclutha and Milton.

At the time of the 2018 census, there were 1,968 families with dependent children in Clutha District,

- 80.2% (n=1,908) were couples with dependent children
- 19.8% (n=390) of families were single parent families with dependent children.

Of the 390 single parent families with dependent children in Clutha District, 309 had a female sole parent and 81 a sole male parent. The number of sole parent families led by a young parent aged under 25 years is small and has decreased over time, from 42 in both 2006 and 2013 to 27 in 2018.

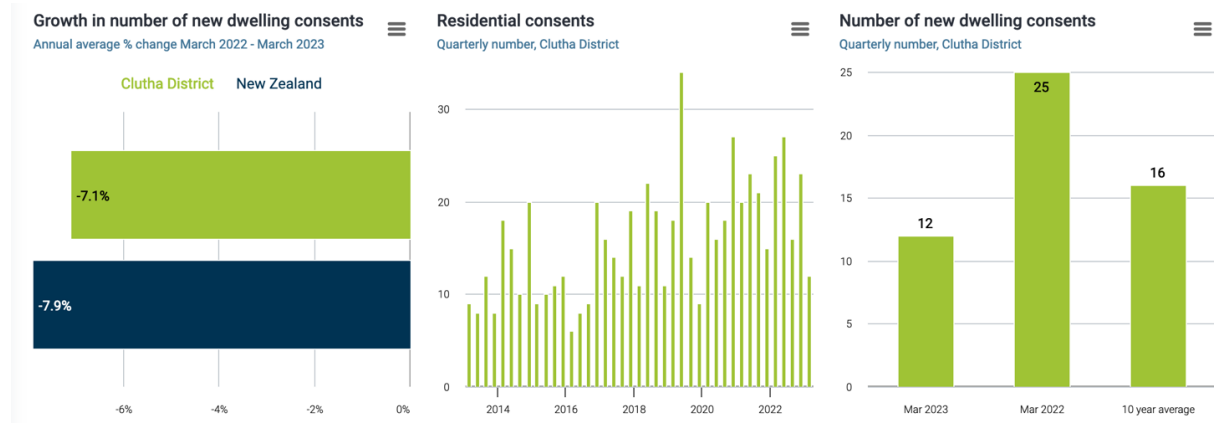
In total, at the time of the 2018 census there were 183 extended family households in the district, with over half (n=96) being households where the grandparents lived with their children and grandchildren. Of these, a quarter (n=24, subject to rounding to nearest 3) were in Balclutha, 21.9% (n=21) in Milton, 18.8% in Bruce ward and 9.4% in the Kaitangata-Matau ward.

As at March 2018, 1,911 people in Clutha District lived alone. Of these, 6.3% were aged under 25 years, 11.5% aged 25-39 years, 31.2% aged 40-64 years and 45.1% aged 65 years or older. As at March 2018, there were 306 people living alone in Clutha District aged 80 years and over (including 165 aged 85 years+).

Like the rest of Aotearoa, new dwelling consents for Clutha District have declined in the past 12 months, down 7.1% in the year to March 2023, and totalling 12 in the March 2023 quarter. The number of new dwelling consents issued has averaged 16 per quarter over the last 10 years, with a peak of 34 consents issued in the June 2019 quarter.

Findings from the 2018 Census concerning housing dampness and mold showed that 19.8% of homes in Clutha were sometimes damp, slightly higher than for New Zealand as a whole (18.5%), but slightly less homes were reported as always damp (2.4% for Clutha, compared with 3.0% nationally). 11.2% of homes sometimes had areas of mold visible that were bigger than an A4 sheet of paper, compared to 12.6% nationally.

Figure 8: Residential consents for Clutha District



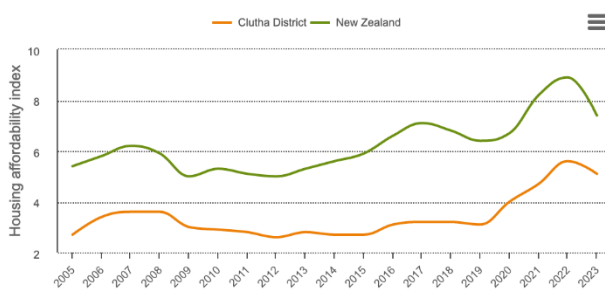
House values have likewise seen a decline in the year to March 2023, though this was not as severe a drop as that seen across New Zealand as a whole (-1.8% vs -7.9% annual change). The average house value for Clutha District (\$412,844) was less than half the national average (\$928,656) at March 2023.

Figure 9: House values for Clutha District

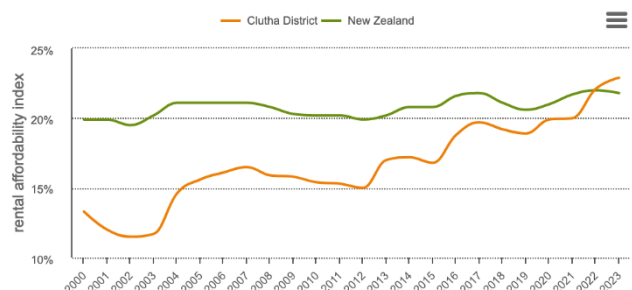


Figure 10: Housing affordability for Clutha District

Housing affordability, 2005-2023



Rental affordability index, 2000-2023



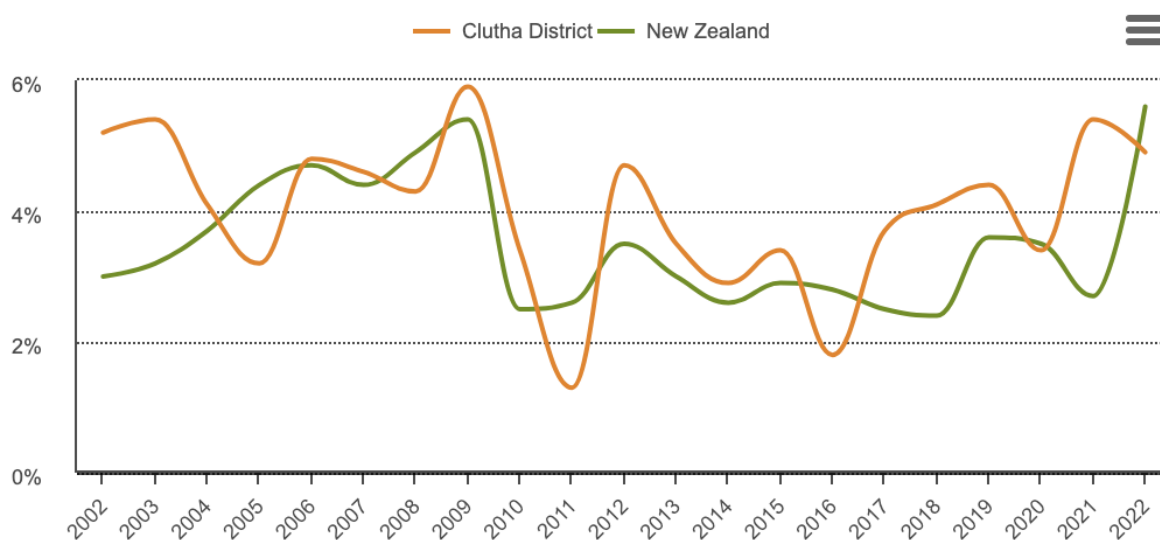
Home ownership is much more affordable in Clutha District than New Zealand on the whole, with a house value to income ratio for the March quarter, 2023 of 5.1 (down from a peak of 5.6 in 2022) compared to 7.4 nationally (8.9 in 2022) in 2023 (Infometrics, 2023). Renting is slightly more expensive in Clutha District than New Zealand on average, however, with a rent-to-income proportion of 22.9%

(vs 21.8%). While nationwide rent-to-income ratios have remained relatively stable over the last 20 years, they have doubled in Clutha District over the same time period (from a low of 11.5% in 2002).

Income and employment

As reported by Infometrics (2023), the average income of residents in Clutha District is \$63,166. Compared to mean earnings growth for New Zealand as a whole over time, this has been more volatile for Clutha District, and while Clutha's mean earnings growth had exceeded national trends since mid-2017, this has recently trended downwards, exceeded by the national rate of growth (See Figure 11).

Figure 11. Mean earnings growth 2002-2022



Infometrics 2023

Of Clutha District's population aged 15 years and over in 2018, 52.9% were employed fulltime, 15.7% part-time, 22.7% were not in the labourforce, and 2.8% were unemployed. For comparison, the unemployment rate nationally based on the 2018 census was 5.8%. Unemployment was highest for Kaitangata-Matau ward at 4.7% followed by Bruce ward (3.4%) and lowest for West Otago at just 1.3%. 28.7% of the 15 years + population at the time of the 2018 Census were not in the labour force, retired, still in education, caring for dependent children or adults or for other reasons.

The Infometrics Economic Quarterly Monitor, March 2023 reported *"Employment of Clutha residents fell 1.5% in the year to March 2023, led by a fall of 230 jobs in agriculture, forestry and fishing. This fall could reflect a combination of a tight labour market making it harder to fill vacancies, and changes in land use. Clutha's unemployment rate held at an ultra-low 2.3% between December 2022 and March 2023 years. The number of Jobseeker Support recipients in Clutha continues to fall and is now at its lowest since 2016."*

Work and Income data for the March 2023 Quarter show that there were a total of 924 people receiving benefits across the district, as follows:

- Jobseeker Support (n=363, 39.3% of benefit recipients)
- Sole Parent Support (n=177, 19.2% of benefit recipients)

- Supported Living Payment (Formerly Sickness / Invalids benefit) (n=375, 40.6%)
- Other main benefits (n=9, 1.0% of benefit recipients)

Of Clutha's 924 people receiving benefits in the first quarter of this year, 53.6% (n=495) were female, 46.1% (n=426) male and 0.3% (n=3) gender diverse. In terms of ethnicity, 79.5% (n=735) of benefit recipients were New Zealand European, 19.2% (n=177) Māori, 1.9% (n=18) were Pasifika, 0.6% (n=6) Asian and 2.2% (n=21) other ethnicity.

Of Clutha's benefit recipients, 21.7 % (n=117) were aged 18-24 years, 29.5% (n=273) aged 25-39 years, 28.9% (n=267) aged 40-54 years and 29.5% (n=273) aged 55-64 years. Almost three-quarters (n=681, 73.7%) of benefit recipients had been receiving this support continuously for more than a year.

Latest data puts the proportion of young people of working age not engaged in education, employment or training ('NEET') at 12.7%, the same rate as for New Zealand as a whole (Clutha District Council 2023).

Education

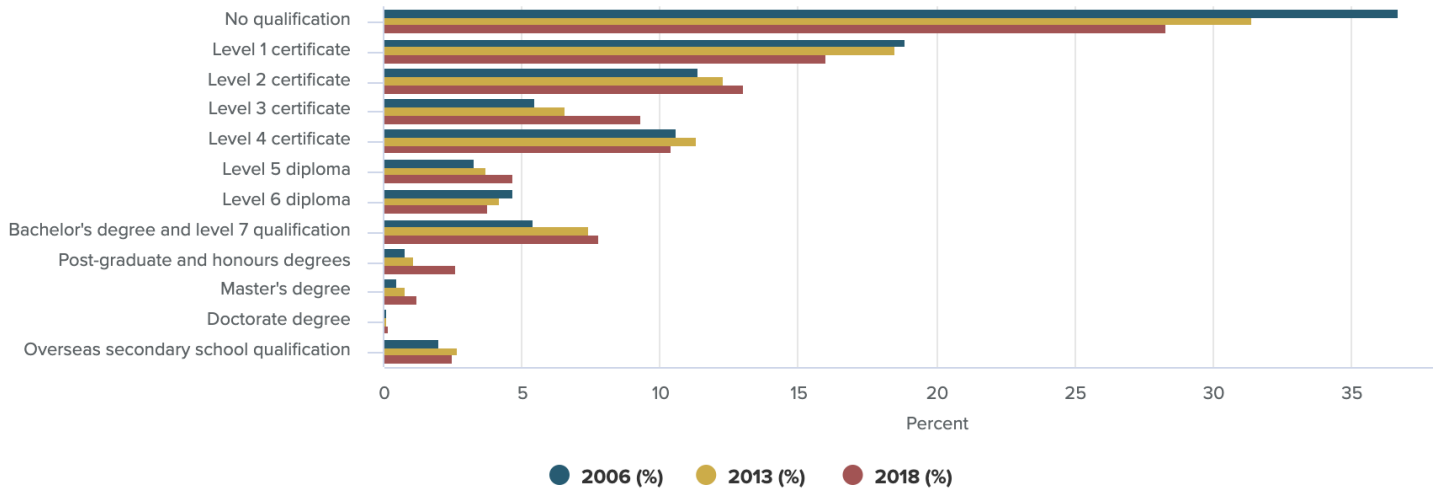
Ministry of Education data (Education Counts website) for the three Kāhui Ako and for Lawrence Area School (ie. all schools in Clutha District) show that in 2021, there were 72 standdowns made for students. Percent of 2021 school leavers leaving school with at least NCEA 1, 2 or 3, and number of students enrolled in degree or level 4-7 non-degree study in 2021 having left school in 2020 is shown for each Kāhui Ako and for Lawrence Area School (which sits within the Southern Area Schools Kahui Ako) in Table 2. Findings show higher proportions of school leavers complete at least NCEA Level 1 compared with nationally across Clutha District, but achievement in L2 is mixed for L2 compared with New Zealand as a whole, and achievement in L3 is lower across the district than is the case nationally. Few students leaving school within Clutha District immediately enrol in degree study.

Table 2 School achievement for all schools in Clutha District

School (%)	Achievement	Big Kāhui Ako	River Kāhui Ako	Pomahaka Kāhui Ako	Tokomairiro Kāhui Ako	Lawrence Area School	New Zealand
NCEA L1		89.7		94.9	83.8	81.8	87.3
NCEA L2		77.6		79.5	64.9	69.2	78.7
NCEA L3		50.5		53.8	27.0	30.8	55.8
Enrolled in degree (n)		0		1	0	1	
Enrolled in non-degree L4-7 (n)		22		4	5	3	

Looking to the population aged 15 and over as a whole, 2018 Census findings show that 28.3% of residents aged 15 years and over have no qualifications, while 7.8% have a bachelor's degree or higher. There has been a steady trend towards a more educated population over time, with proportion of population with Level 5, Bachelor's / Level 7 qualifications, post-graduate qualifications and Masters and Doctorates increasing over the past three Census years and the proportion of those without any qualifications reducing, as shown in Figure 12.

Figure 12. Highest qualification for people in Clutha District, 2006-2018 Censuses



Stats NZ

Economic wellbeing

The Infometrics Quarterly Economic Monitor for Clutha (March 2023) reported that Clutha District's economy grew by a "modest" 0.7% over the year to March 2023, lower than the level of growth for the wider Otago region (3.8%) and New Zealand (2.9%). Employment fell by 1.5% in the year to March 2023, losing 230 jobs in the agriculture, forestry and fishing sector.

Infometrics reported that consumer spending in the district grew by 1.2% in the year to March 2023, well behind annual inflation of 6.7%, and identifying this as indicative of weak population growth and reduced consumer confidence. Nationally, consumer spending grew 11.6% over the same period.

With regard to tourism, Infometrics reported that Clutha District's tourism sector bounced back strongly in the first summer with international tourists since the onset of the pandemic. Guest nights at commercial accommodation rose 34% in Clutha in the year to March 2023 compared with the previous year, but lower than the 52% rise nationally. Tourism expenditure in Clutha rose 7.1%, compared to a 31% rise nationally, over the same period. Domestic visitor spending in Clutha fell \$0.2m between the March 2022 and March 2023 quarters, offset by a \$1.5m rise in international visitor spending.

Latest figures regarding Clutha District's GDP (Clutha District Council, 2023) put this at \$1.078 billion, with a growth rate of 1.8%. This compares to the national growth rate of 1.2%. The agriculture, fishing and forestry sectors comprise 32% of GDP, manufacturing 10% and construction 7%.

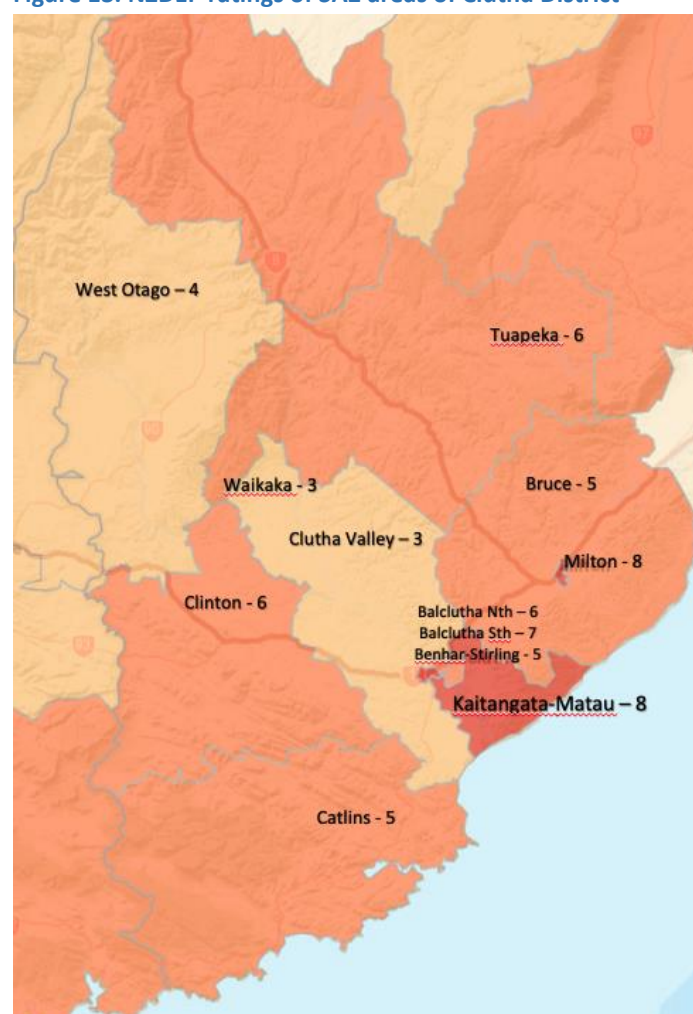
As at February 2023, there were 3,057 businesses across the district, growing slowly at a rate of 1.5%, a rate favourable in comparison to the national growth rate of 0.5%. Productivity (GDP per filled job) is \$114,937, with growth of 0.9%. The effective inflation rate is 7.2% and the CPI: 6.6%. As at February 2023, there were 9,383 filled jobs in Clutha and employment is growing at 0.8%, again slow but favourable compared to the overall national growth rate of 0.1%.

According to the CDC Environment Scan (CDC, 2023), the current outlook is for continuing low growth, growing unemployment, and growth in producer price inflation, observing that with further monetary tightening likely and employment already beyond its maximum sustainable level, unemployment will begin to gradually increase. A tightening of monetary conditions will lead to lower consumption and investment spending, and a slowdown in economic conditions. This will result in a lower demand for labour. Ultimately, the scan noted that the degree to which unemployment rises will depend on how much economic conditions deteriorate.

The NZDEP18 indices developed by Otago University ranks all SA1 and SA2 areas, geographic units used by StatsNZ, into ten quintiles, with 1 representing the 10% of least socioeconomically deprived households in New Zealand and 10 the most deprived. Dimensions of deprivation include income, employment, digital connectivity, qualifications, home ownership, support, living space and housing dampness (Atkinson, Salmond & Crampton, 2019).

Figure 13 shows SA2 areas comprising Clutha District by NZDEP rating, with SA2 areas labelled along with their respective NZDEP rating. Darker colours indicate higher levels of deprivation. Clutha Valley and Waikaka have the lowest NZDEP ratings for Clutha, at 3, indicating low levels of socioeconomic deprivation. Highest levels of deprivation (8) occur in the SA2 areas of Milton and Kaitangata- Matau.

Figure 13. NZDEP ratings of SA2 areas of Clutha District

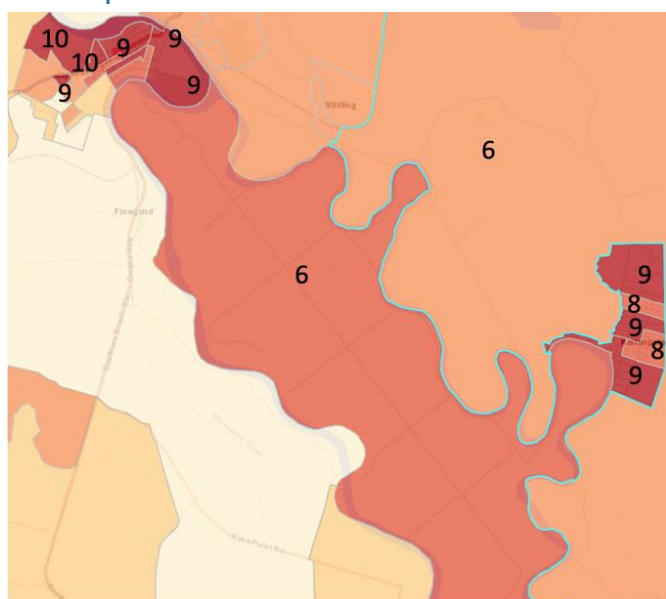


Stats NZ, LINZ, Esri, HERE, Garmin, NGA, USGS

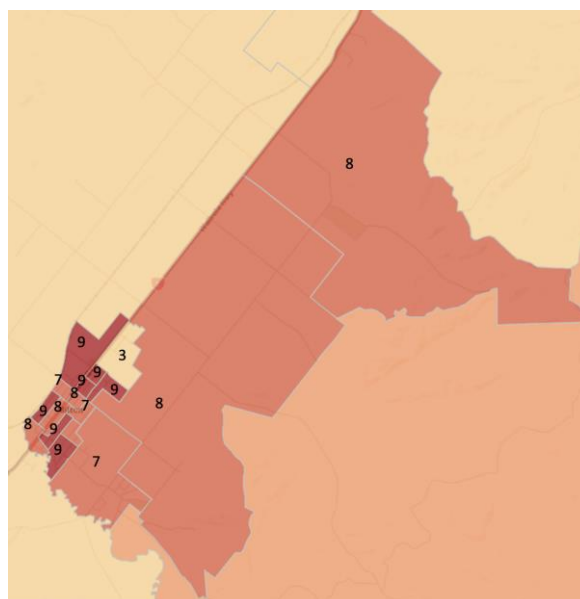
Figure 14 shows NZDEP ratings for Stats NZ's smallest geographic unit, SA1. Looking at these more fine-grained areas, parts of Balclutha emerge along with areas of Kaitangata and Milton (along with one SA1 in Lawrence, NZDEP 9) as having highest levels of socioeconomic deprivation, with some of the areas of the towns ranking amongst the country's 10—20% of most deprived neighbourhoods.

Findings show that rural areas are considerably less deprived than urban areas: socioeconomic wellbeing across greater Balclutha appears to mask poverty in some of its neighbourhoods. Again, darker colours indicate higher levels of deprivation.

Figure 14. NZDEP ratings of SA1 areas of Clutha District with highest concentration of socioeconomic deprivation



Balclutha and Kaitangata



Milton

Health and Wellbeing

Infometrics' wellbeing module provides insight into how different parts of New Zealand compare across a range of wellbeing metrics. The framework uses 30 objective indicators of wellbeing across nine wellbeing domains focussing on outcomes for people and communities.

Figure 15. Wellbeing radar for Clutha District, 2022



In 2022, Clutha District outperformed New Zealand as a whole (see Figure 15) on metrics of civic engagement and governance, housing, and jobs and earnings, and underperformed in areas of social connection, safety, knowledge and skills, income and consumption, health, and environment. The environment metric being comprised of two factors: carbon dioxide emissions and waste diversion rate, both of which Clutha District scored very low on.

Figure 16 presents health enrolment data for the district, while figure 17 shows the proportion of the Clutha population aged 65 years and over

who have received home and community-based health supports over time. This shows a strong trend of decline in such services over time.

Figure 16. Health enrolments in Clutha District

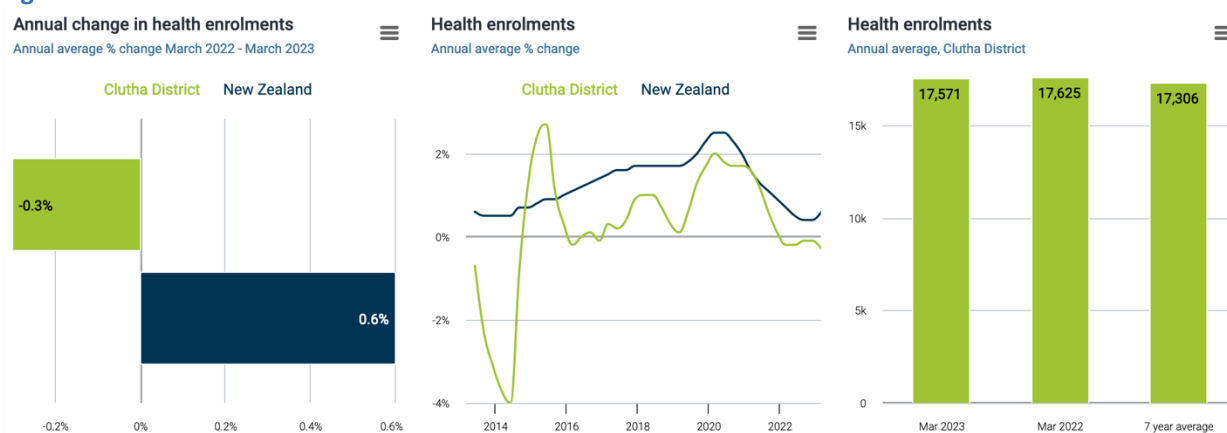
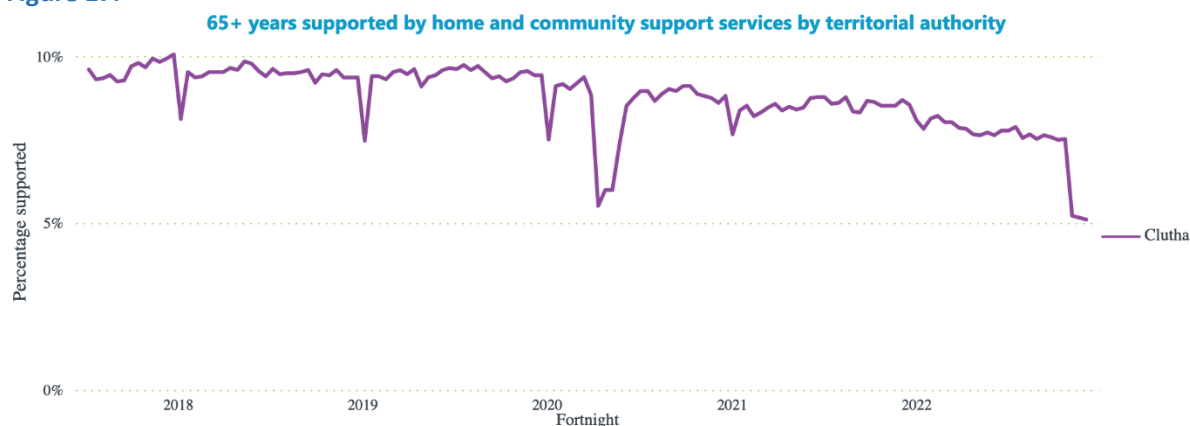


Figure 17.



Te Whatu Ora Southern Health Portal

The following aged care facilities are located within Clutha District:

Balclutha

- Clutha Views Lifecare & Village (22 rest home beds, 14 dementia care beds, 32 hospital care beds, plus respite, carer support and short stay provision plus day programmes)
- Holmdene – Presbyterian Support Otago Enliven (10 rest home beds, 25 hospital beds)

Milton

- Ashlea Grove (20 rest home beds, 17 dementia care beds)

Lawrence

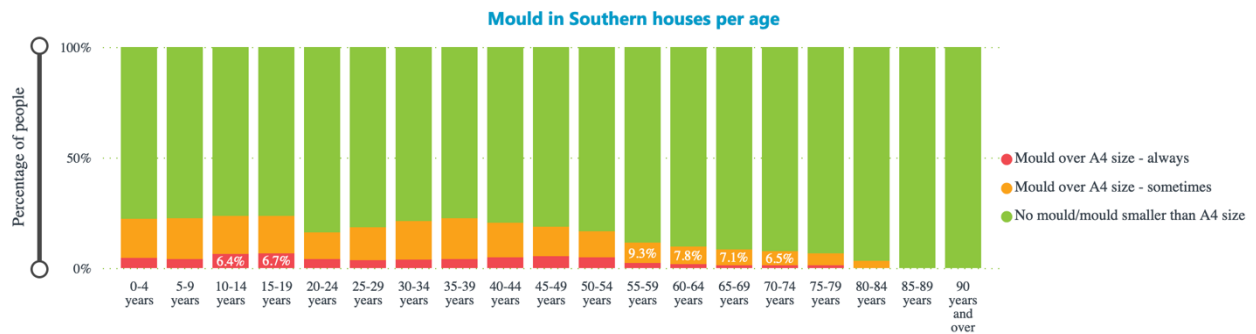
- Tuapeka Community health (5 rest home beds)

Tapanui

- Ribbonwood Country Home has just recently been extended. Once signed off, it will have 19 dual purpose beds (hospital and rest home).

As at 28 June 2023, according to Eldernet.co.nz, only Clutha Views and Ashlea Grove had vacancies.

Figure 18



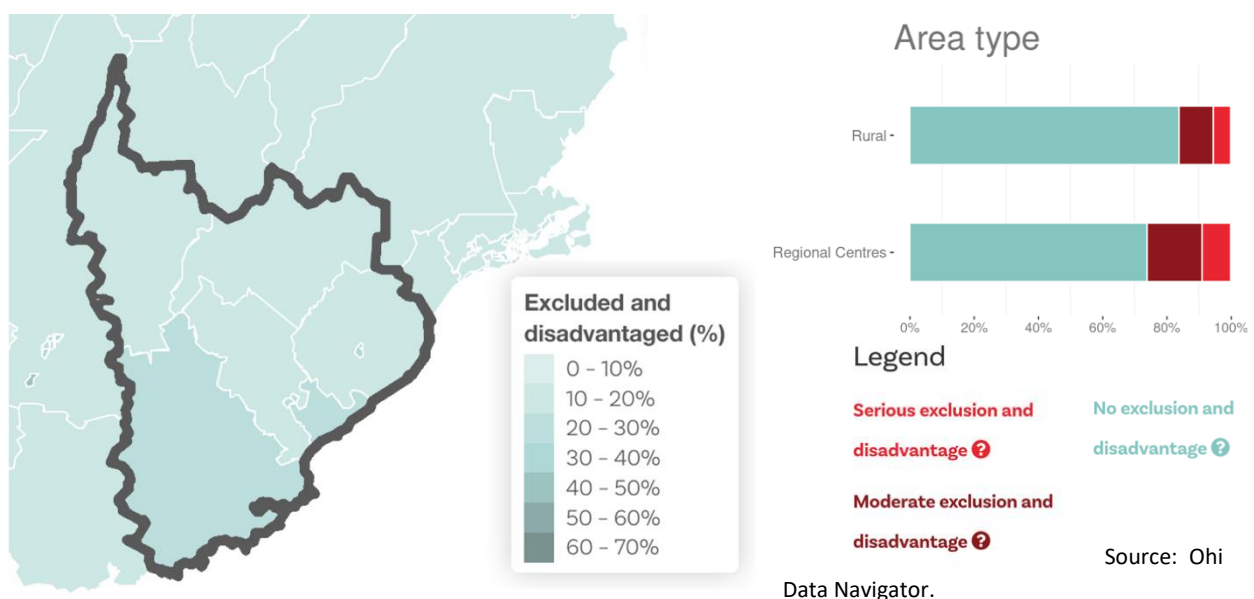
The data presented in Figure 18 is drawn from the 2018 Census. It suggests that families with school-aged children are more likely than other age groups to be living in damp homes.

Youth exclusion and disadvantage

A recent initiative by the Te Rourou One Aotearoa Foundation (formerly Vodafone New Zealand Foundation) – Ohi Data Navigator – uses Integrated Data Infrastructure (IDI) data from Statistics NZ to provide a snapshot of how exclusion and disadvantage is experienced by rangatahi (young people aged 12-25) across Aotearoa. It is based on Care and Protection interactions (with Oranga Tamariki), justice interactions (with Ministry of Justice, Corrections and Police), and education and employment disadvantage (from Ministry of Education, Tertiary Education Commission and Ministry of Social Development datasets), which together are used to derive an indicator of overall exclusion and disadvantage.

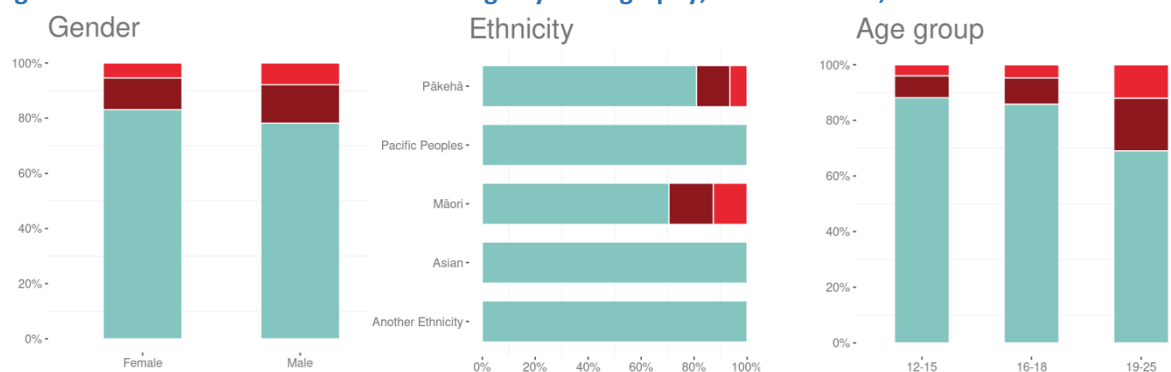
Among rangatahi aged between 12 and 25 years in 2022, the Navigator identified a total of 516 (19.7%) experiencing moderate or serious exclusion or disadvantage in Clutha District. This was down from 597 (23.1%) in 2018, and was similar to the average national rate (20.6%) in 2022.

Figure 19: Youth exclusion and disadvantage by area, Clutha District, 2022



Males were more likely to experience exclusion or disadvantage than females (21.9% vs 16.9%). By ethnic group, higher rates were experienced among Māori (29.5%), and to a lesser extent, Pākehā (19.1% – see Figure 20). Experience of exclusion and disadvantage increased with age, with the highest rates experienced among 19-25 year olds (30.9%).

Figure 20. Youth exclusion and disadvantage by demography, Clutha District, 2022

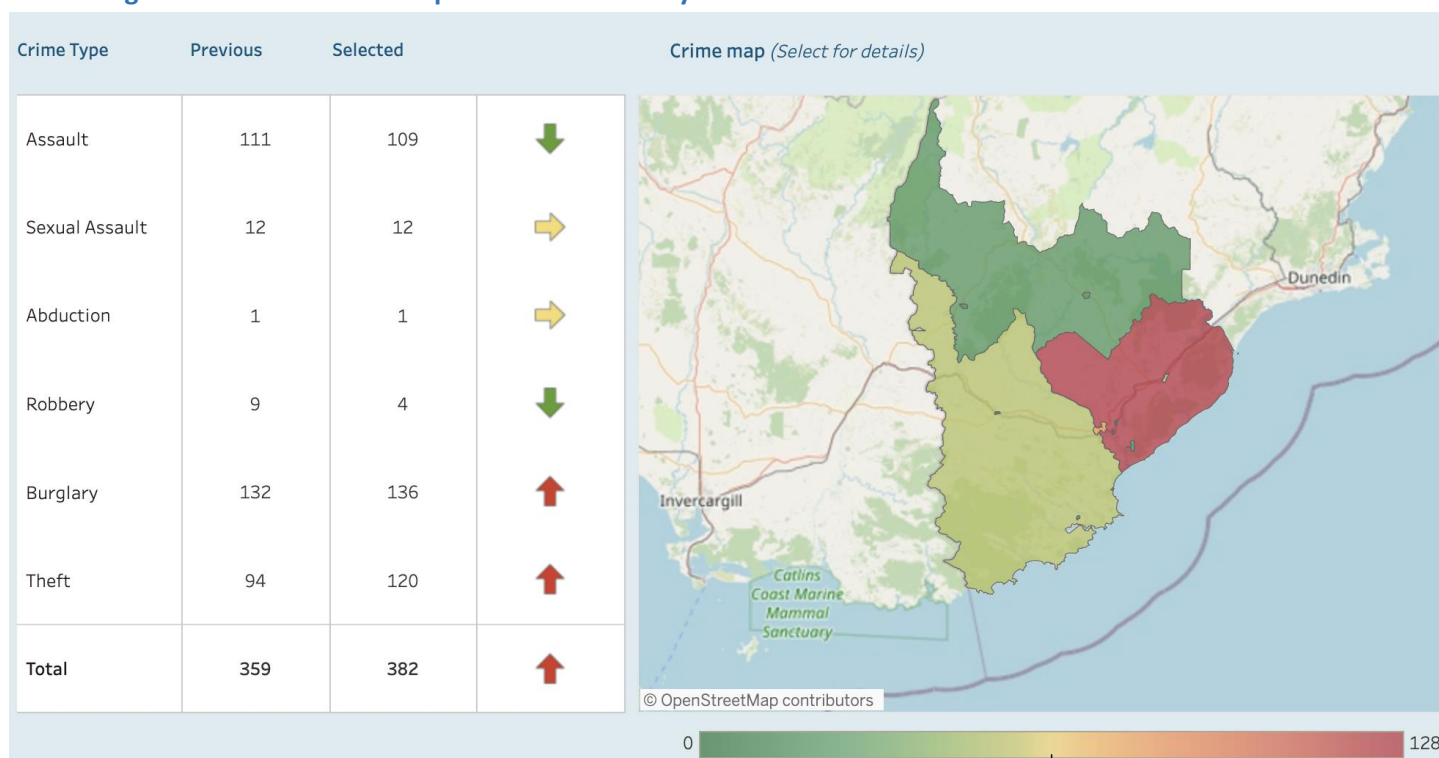


Source: Ohi Data Navigator. Note: Very small numbers of young people of Pacific Asian, or other ethnicities reside in the district, and none were identified as having experienced exclusion and disadvantage.

Public safety

In the year to March 31 2023, there were 462 victimisations reported in Clutha District, with just over half (54.1%, n=250) property-related: 124 theft and related victimisations and 122 unlawful entry with intent / burglary and breaking and entering and 4 robbery, extortion, and related offence victimisations. In the year to March 2023, violence accounted for a significant proportion of reported victimisations with 181 acts intended to cause injury, 28 sexual assault and related offences and 3 abduction, harassment and other related offences against a person reported.

Figure 21. Victimisations reported to Police for year to 31 March 2023



Victimisation data for the year to 31 March 2023 is presented in Figure 21. This shows increases in property offending compared to the year prior. The map shading shows number of offences by Stats NZ statistical area, with lowest numbers green and highest numbers in red. Reported victimisations are low across the district, and are reported for each town and for three rural areas, Bruce (the area in red: 128 victimisations), “Clutha”, taking in Catlins, rural areas of Clinton and Waikaka, West Otago and Clutha Valley (n=51) and “Tuapeka”, the area in green, showing lowest levels of rural victimisation (n=16). Balclutha (80 victimisations over the 12 month period and Milton (n=53) were the towns with highest number of victimisations in the year to March 2023, with others as follows: Clinton (n=10), Lawrence (n=9), Tapanui (n=7) and Kaitangata (n=10).

5. Strategy and planning and prior research relating to the communities of Clutha

Clutha District Council strategy and planning

Clutha District Council developed the Living and Working in Clutha Strategy in 2021, to describe, at the highest level, where the Clutha community wants the district to head, and how Council intends to work towards these objectives. It was prepared by the Council to guide decision-making and overall progress towards three key outcomes:

1. Clutha has vibrant rural towns and communities
2. Clutha is connected and collaborative, and
3. Clutha has a healthy and sustainable environment.

These outcomes were tailored to promote the economic, environmental, social and cultural well-being of Clutha's communities. Council identified seven priority work areas where Council has an important role to play, relating to housing, business and workplace development, the environment, climate change, infrastructure, healthy safe communities, and culture and heritage.

The strategy was intended to guide council over the next ten years, reviewing it every three years as part of the Long Term Plan process. The framework is illustrated as follows:



The strategy recognises investment in infrastructure (much of it ageing – three waters infrastructure, roading, planned community hubs in Balclutha and Milton), and a need for more quality housing as priorities for the community. A Strategic Direction for Housing was adopted by CDC in July 2020. It recognised that *the Clutha District's housing is under pressure, with availability for both rental and ownership an issue, that demand for social housing is also growing, and that migration patterns, an ageing population and the increasing trend of one and two-person households also have implications for the types of housing that are and will be needed in the district.*

The Vision of Council's Strategic Direction document is for "Good quality affordable housing that meets the needs of all Clutha District residents". Its strategic outcomes include:

1. A well-functioning, dynamic housing system with housing stakeholders working in coordination and/or partnership to grow our choice and availability of housing.
2. Homes are of good quality and resilient, where they are warm, dry and energy efficient.
3. Homes meet the needs of Clutha District residents. The needs of all segments of the population need to be understood, so that appropriate responses can be implemented.

4. A housing system that supports sustainable, resilient and connected communities.

Another key focus area articulated in the strategy is retention of existing businesses, growing workforce, and attracting additional investment to the district. When developed, the strategy acknowledged that Clutha District *has a low unemployment rate compared to the New Zealand average, and primary production (food, fibre and forestry) accounts for nearly half of all economic activity in the district. Employers have historically found it difficult to attract permanent staff, despite the number and range of jobs available. As a result, our international workforce is important for some industries, and staff commuting to work in Clutha from outside the district is common. Clutha District Council has made some strategic investments to help stimulate additional economic activity – for example the Rosebank Industrial Estate.* The strategy states that reducing the district's environmental footprint underpins community well-being and is a priority towards making Clutha a great place to live, work, and play. It also prioritises adapting to climate change.

The sixth of the seven priority areas comprising the Living and working in Clutha strategy is improving the communities' health, safety and wellbeing. Regarding where things were at as at 2021, *Clutha communities are known as caring and supportive, with a practical no nonsense approach to addressing any issues. We also have a great range of community facilities which have been built up over many decades. As a result, our communities are great places to live, work and play. However, a small population, together with increasing costs and modern-day expectations means that maintaining this way of life can be a challenge. Volunteers are increasingly stretched, and our population is aging. Drugs and alcohol can also cause issues, and we lack public transport options. Relevant Council activities include community facilities such as pools, social housing, halls and recreational areas. Council also provides regulatory oversight in areas such as dog control, food standards, building standards, gambling and noise control. Roads and other key infrastructure also help to keep our communities safe and connected.* In its long term planning, Council sought to:

- Provide, or support accessible and well-maintained facilities to increase levels of participation in active and passive recreation.
- Fund, and work in partnership with external organisations to increase levels of participation in sport and recreation.
- Work with Emergency Management Otago to build resilience and disaster preparedness for emergency situations.
- Enforce bylaws and legislation to ensure dog owners and residents are aware of safety, protection and etiquette around dogs.
- Ensure that food premises comply with relevant legislation.

The last priority area articulated in the Living and Working in Clutha Strategy is supporting culture and heritage. CDC want to strengthen partnerships and collaboration with local iwi, take a 'whole of Council' approach to proactively work with owners of heritage buildings and features to preserve the district's heritage and work with stakeholders such as the Historic Places Trust to understand and protect heritage values, and review heritage provisions, processes, and schedules during the district Plan review. CDC wants their cultural and heritage values to be visible, accessible, and celebrated widely, and in particular:

- Community stories, objects, and records from all cultures within our communities are accessible.
- Modern innovative methods are used to showcase our culture and heritage to the district and beyond.
- Education, awareness, and celebration of local history is provided through displays, exhibits, programmes, events and trails.
- Local history and culture are incorporated into renewal work on community facilities such as halls and public toilets.
- The protection of heritage buildings and sites in the Clutha District is prioritised, including their adaption for new uses.

Our Place Community Plans

Since 2016, Clutha District Council has developed community plans for many of the communities within the district. The “Our Place” body of work begins with initial development of concepts and options which relate to a particular community, that are then laid out in a discussion document which is sent to all properties in the area. A series of public consultation events are arranged, with opportunities for community feedback and production of a final community plan describing the specific projects to be undertaken in the particular community.

Plans have been developed for Balclutha (2018), Waihola (2018) Milton (2018), The Catlins (2020) Lawrence-Tuapeka (2020), Kaitangata (2021) and West Otago (2022), while then plan for the Clutha Valley and Clinton communities is currently under development, with the consultations completed in April 2023.

Balclutha

Priority projects set out in the plan included rejuvenation of the former Balclutha Memorial Hall into a multi-purpose community and visitor hub, due to open later this year, improved walking and cycling linkages, improved entrances to the Balclutha Bridge, enhancement of the Centennial pool and the adjacent recreational spaces, and park and toilet development.

Waihola

Priority projects set out in the plan included construction of a new water pipeline and pump upgrades, improved sewerage infrastructure, extension of footpaths on a case-by-case basis, improved roading and greenwaste services, extension of the Clutha Gold cycle trail, reserve development, exploration of re-zoning to enable further residential development, road safety enhancements and improvement of community and visitor facilities.

Milton

The priority focus areas for Milton set out in the 2018 plan were around enhancement of the southern entranceway, main street and pedestrian crossings, walking and cycling linkages and as with other adjacent communities, the Clutha Gold trail extension, transition to underground power lines, reserve upgrades, new public toilets and consideration around the Milton pool and library / service centre. A \$13-14 million community facility featuring a community library and six lane swimming pool in Milton was approved by Clutha District Council at their meeting on 4 August 2022. The new multi-purpose

facility is intended to offer a range of services all year-round including swimming lessons, competitions and aquatic play, digital help, library programmes, celebrating local history and access to information.

Catlins

Community consultation in The Catlins identified management of freedom camping and landscape and environment as the most important issues to the community, followed by the ranger, roading and the changing community. Priority projects set out in the plan included renewal work on community facilities, enabling additional housing to be built, supporting business development and managing tourism growth, waste management and recycling, improving walking and cycling linkages within and between towns, protection of natural resources, development of park / reserve spaces, roading improvements, considerations to manage freedom camping and planning for climate change.

Lawrence-Tuapeka

Priority areas for Lawrence-Tuapeka were protection and enhancement of heritage of the town, playground upgrade, reducing flood risks to the town, creation of a mountain bike trail network, enhancement of Gabriel's Gully and a business case exploring options for a community hub in Lawrence, coordination of a programme supporting young people to train and work locally, and Council support for community-owned facilities such as the pool, skatepark, Chinese Camp, Gymkhana grounds etc.

West Otago

The West Otago plan prioritises residential development, recreational spaces for children and young people, renewal work on community facilities, support for West Otago Health Trust, reserve enhancement, enhanced walking and cycling linkages around Tapanui, making the main streets of Tapanui and Heriot more attractive and developing opportunities for people to work and train within West Otago.

Kaitangata

Priority areas articulated in the Kaitangata community plan include improved river access and erosion mitigation around the boat ramp, improving cycling linkages within the town, decision making regarding the future of its pool, which requires major upgrade in the near future, enhancement of Victoria Park, Wangaloa Domain Reserve (and its beach access) and the War Memorial Reserve, development of additional public toilets and seal extension of the roading network.

Immigration

A paper was published in May 2023 in the Journal of International Migration and Integration by researchers from Otago University, reporting qualitative research on settlement stories of Filipino and Samoan migrants in Clutha and Southland, along with Malay migrants to Southland (Alam, Nel, Hill & Bulloch, 2023).

Woods (2018) used the term cosmopolitanism to refer to the change brought about to communities by international immigration, where immigrants help fill vacancies in the primary and secondary sectors. Alam et al. (2018) noted that this pattern was not uniform across New Zealand, being often more strongly felt in more productive rural areas such as Clutha.

In 2007, the Philippines were designated a comparable labour market, with training in that country recognised by Immigration New Zealand. Immigration accelerated from the Philippines after this, with Filipinos the largest immigrant group to New Zealand within the essential skills visa category from 2013/14 onwards. Both Filipino and Samoan workers have been recruited directly from overseas to address labour shortages, and in the case of Samoan and Filipino workers, this has occurred in Balclutha in the meat works and in dairying across the Clutha District. Collins & Bayliss (2020) and others have noted that without regionally focused, place-based policies to support settlement, increased ethnic visibility in small towns has led to challenges for immigrants moving there. Alam et al. (2023) pointed to the Welcoming Communities accreditation system as working well to help immigrants to settle well, but also noted that a lot of the work being undertaken to help newcomers from minority ethnic backgrounds to settle in is being undertaken by their own communities.

Alam et al.'s interview-based research found that many of the Filipino migrants to Clutha had experienced "step-wise" migration, having had several different places of work and residence across the globe and New Zealand before arriving in the region, often moving to the area in search of better work-life balance, affordable housing and strong employment and residency prospects for their skillset. Their research highlighted the value of support networks operating at a local level within their ethnic communities, often with their church at the centre. A range of challenges were identified for Filipino and Samoan migrants to Clutha. Within the predominantly Pakeha population, it was reported that dairy workers are subject to racism and cultural stereotyping – this finding had also been reported by Collins & Bayliss (2020). The latest research also identified racial prejudice in aged care, from residents, along with a mutual learning from each other within the workplace setting. Lengthy wait times for residency (16 years for one participant in their research) was identified as a considerable source of frustration.

Alam et al. (2023) noted the following (p.17):

"For the Samoan immigrants to Balclutha, it was apparent that the first batch of immigrants received settlement support from the local labour migration agent which had recruited them in response to local labour shortages. Over time, however, such support waned, and later arrivals floundered in the absence of support to cope with unfamiliar challenges such as finding accommodation and budget planning. While the local council was sympathetic to their plight, (a Southland Times report in 2018) noted it lacked resources to provide significant support. The arrival of a Samoan pastor and his wife, however, proved critical to recent Samoan immigrants. In addition to setting up a church, the couple helped move Samoan families from the squalor in which many were living – described as whole families living in single rooms—to new accommodation, often with the assistance of faith-based organisations in the town). Additional support on budget planning, advice on living in New Zealand, the provision of social connections, and sporting and community events have, in particular, helped transition the Samoan community into a position of greater social acceptance in the town."

Iwikatea – Balclutha Community Needs Snapshot (2019)

Research was conducted in 2019 by a Social and Community Work student from Otago University, Erin Silver, with support from Presbyterian Support Otago – Family Works and The Salvation Army, assessing the resources and needs in Balclutha, Kaitangata and surrounding communities of Stirling, Owaka and Clydesdale.

Via community surveys (n=106), Silver's research identified a relatively weak sense of community connection among respondents but quite strong feelings of safety, and demand for more low/no-cost family and youth activities, a need for more non-sporting and more arts and culture-based activities, a need for improved transport options beyond the health shuttle and taxi service. Lack of rental accommodation and housing affordability also emerged as dissatisfying for many of the respondents, and especially those residing outside Balclutha. Regarding social services, lack of mental health services and counselling, especially for young people were the most commonly raised concerns.

Key stakeholders (social service and education providers and community groups) were also consulted as part of the research, and their feedback most strongly highlighted the following issues:

- Mental health – especially counselling and social work support for children and young people and for single people aged 40-55 years, professional development around mental health
- Addiction – seen as a growing issue for which existing services could be expanded to include peer support, addiction service navigation, and whānau support
- Housing insecurity and homelessness, and unsuitable accommodation (warmth, size and location), especially for Pasifika
- Parenting support – over-subscription of existing supports, need for support group for grandparents raising grandchildren, need for in-home social work support around parenting
- Strengthened youth recreation opportunities and especially non-sporting options
- Transport support for older people, adults who do not drive / facing cost and access barriers
- Need for strengthened migrant support (both internal and from overseas)
- Lack of pride in the community
- Need for strengthened whanaungatanga – networking, collaboration, coordination and connection between services to overcome service siloing and collectively improve service delivery at both individual and community level
- Need for better promotion of existing services and service navigation
- Need for better access to advocacy when dealing with government agencies

A community hub was identified by the research as the overarching solution to the issues raised. This was seen as key to building relationships between services, promoting whakawhanaungatanga and potentially hosting solutions to some of the other issues raised, including a volunteer driver coordinator, a newcomer network, a service navigator, a dedicated youth space and an advocacy service.

6. Interview and focus group findings

Interview / focus group questions are presented in Appendix 2.

The community of Clutha

It quickly became evident when undertaking consultations for the present research that informants were typically much more able to describe their local town/surrounding area than they were the Clutha community as a whole: there was widespread agreement that community identity in Clutha District is much more about the individual towns and their catchment areas, and that Clutha is characterised by lots of separate communities with distinct local identities. One person mentioned the structure of Clutha District as being “forced” upon the area in local government restructuring in the 1980s, and not aligning well with long-standing community identities.

A number of strong themes did emerge to describe the district as a whole:

- **A large and beautiful physical environment which gathers both mountains and sea within its boundaries**, with large and **challenging infrastructure needs** (especially Catlins) because it is so spread out.
- **Increasingly diverse and undergoing social change**, with change feeling quite rapid for some, driven by immigration changes around 2008-9 which changed the face of the freezing and dairying / milk processing workforce in particular, and by the arrival of the Otago Corrections Facility in Milton, and by recent population growth as **new people move into the district, commonly young adults and younger families**. Dairying, milk processing, the freezing works, health providers and the corrections facility have variously brought growth in Māori, Samoan, Filipino, Indian, Nepali, Kiribati populations in the district. **As well as being increasingly diverse in culture and heritage, the Clutha community was identified as very diverse in terms of socioeconomics**. Some informants talked of an undertone of racism.
- **Farming still lies at the centre of community identity**.
- Historically an area that **felt prosperous**, but where this feeling has diminished over time.
- Schools in Balclutha and Milton are seeing growing socioeconomic hardship among families, and an increased number of families with complex issues.
- **Traditionally very conservative, but with this changing**, especially in the past five years. Changes to long-standing traditions about “how things are done” were identified as pushing some people outside their comfort zones and creating tension.
- A really supportive, tight-knit community which **pulls together in times of crisis** – illness, house fire, rescue etc., with strong capacity to provide practical help to those whose needs are known.
- A place that **feels quite boring for young people**.
- Schools are very much the hubs of Clutha’s rural communities and smaller towns.

Informants from each of the communities were asked to describe their own communities. Their descriptions are summarised as follows:

Balclutha and surrounds: The town of Balclutha was identified as changing a lot in the last couple of decades. Through the 1980s, it was common for farmers to retire to Balclutha, and a lot of the housing stock today reflects the homes built by them. The town has lost a large amount of retail and banking services in recent years, and Central Otago, Dunedin and Gore are the retirement destinations of choice for retirees with more financial resources behind them: the town was perceived by some as not having the same social capital among its older population than it did in the past, and compared to the smaller communities of Clutha. There is a distinct difference between farm owners and farm workers socioeconomically, with strong socioeconomic disparities between the two groups. Schools in Balclutha are seeing more and more split families over time. They see families moving into the community from further north, attracted by lower rent but without the appreciation that access to services is more challenging than in large urban areas. Clinton's rural community is very stable, but the town's rental housing accommodates a number of families with high and complex needs: distance from MSD / Oranga Tamakiri can attract families keen to "hide" from social services. The town was identified as changing a lot over time, from being a vibrant town in the 1980s with two banks, a number of stock agents, a grocery shop and with a visiting GP to "having the guts ripped out of it". Where sheep and beef farms once employed staff, they are now mostly run by a farmer or farming couple, and some dairy farms have absentee owners. Kaitangata was identified as having experienced real change for the better, with the Kaitangata Housing Trust and its affordable house and land packages already making an impact, and some great passion behind the community. There is demand for a similar approach in other small towns.

"It has a disproportionately large number of amazing people for such a small town."

Milton: This community was described as welcoming, friendly and inclusive, family-orientated, with a lot of places to go for help for those in need and strong community infrastructure, and like some of Clutha's other areas, was identified as a place where the community pulls together to help each other in emergency or tough times, being warm and supportive. The medical centre has 85 volunteer drivers on their books, and they know there are lots of people they can ask to help when it is needed. With no public transport, local supports are really important, alongside being a community where people are willing to help each other.

Milton was identified as massively diverse in terms of its socioeconomics, ranging from wealthy to a big cohort of residents who are struggling with poverty (some residents have lived in transitional housing in local motels for 4 years), with a disconnect between these two groups. It was also identified as a "tricky place" where people can be quite negative, and where that negativity is strongly voiced.

"If any whānau goes down for any reason, the whole community goes to help."

Milton has always been a more transient community than some other parts of the district, with seasonal workers comprising some of the population, and because some residents are drawn to the area by cheaper housing: people move to Milton to get on the property ladder, and then commonly move on when they go to buy their next home. It was identified as more connected to Dunedin than to more southern and western parts of the district. Milton and Waiholā have a lot of residents who live locally but work in Dunedin or elsewhere. Like the wider Clutha District, rugby and netball are "big", and whānau consulted at the playgroup noted that it's easy for kids to engage in sport because people always help out transported those who need a ride to games. Milton's medical practice has the largest proportion of over 65s, under 15 year olds and Māori of any across the district.

Development of the Otago Correctional Facility locally brought a lot of new people to the community, some working at the prison, and some relocated to be near whānau in prison. The recent relocation of the High Risk Offender Unit from Christchurch Men's Prison has brought around 150 extra prisoners to the prison. It was anticipated that around 30% of their whānau would follow them to the community.

Milton is fortunate to be experiencing growth in its housing stock, with a 96 house subdivision being developed and another subdivision planned. It was identified as a place seen as having potential to grow, sitting within commuter distance of both Dunedin and Balclutha. However social service providers in the community see a need for more certainty of funding of social supports before growing the community further.

Tapanui – West Otago: This community was described as predominantly rural, with a strong history in forestry, but where many mills closed down and the families remained, and where farm owners are typically Pakeha, and where life is “sheltered and comfortable” for the majority of residents: it was seen as more prosperous than some other parts of the district, and more similar to Lawrence-Tuapeka than Balclutha and Milton, due to similar geographic isolation and self-sufficiency, strong community cohesion, and a strong capacity to “*get things done*”.

The dairy industry has brought increasing multicultural diversity to the community, with Filipino, Indian and Nepali workers and their families moving into the area following dairying conversions in the early 2000s: Chinese and Dutch migrants moved into the community before them. Immigrants also comprise the primary workforce of West Otago Health. The community was variously identified as unique, close-knit, well-functioning strong and generous, welcoming, with amazing people who rally wherever there is need, and especially illness and crisis. The community was identified as much more connected to Gore than it is to Balclutha, and without a strong Clutha identity, not Southland, and also “*not quite South Otago – it's its own enclave*.” Located on the border of the district, it's a community serviced by different towns depending on which service. As an example, Tapanui is served by Oranga Tamariki in Gore but by Dunedin Hospital. Sometimes the location works to the areas advantage, giving them access to services in different locations, while in other ways it also falls through the gaps.

Catlins: Thinking about what was different about the Catlins compared to the community of Clutha as a whole, the area was identified as spread-out, and with a high number of community groups compared to other areas, some of which are very small. The natural environment is very important to many of its residents, and for some, a reason that drew their families to the area. A couple of long-term families in the area are heavily represented in voluntary roles. It was identified as a varied community, with farming at its core. In recent years, the population has become more diverse, with younger families moving in to work in dairying or attracted by cheaper housing, and a growing Samoan community developing around the freezing works, with single men living in the former hospital in Owaka.

Lawrence: The Lawrence-Tuapeka community was identified as having an ageing population, but also an area experiencing a lot of new people moving in, and especially young families. The school has a high proportion of Māori students, with many whānau having multi-generational ties to the area, but also a strong sense of whakapapa, Iwi identity and enduring connection to marae in the North Island. Wananga in te reo have been delivered locally and have had strong uptake. Some community groups are seeing new faces coming in, but many of the newer residents are not ready to become involved in volunteering, with young children and busy working lives. There was an optimism among some of those consulted that these people would get involved in the community, but that volunteering might look different in the future.



Lawrence – Tuapeka was identified as geographically isolated compared to some other parts of the district, and feeling a bit separate with a “different community feel”, but similar in many ways to Tapanui because both areas are quite geographically separate to the rest of Clutha. Both were seen to have a strong sense of “being on your own”, with strong self-reliance and independence, and a strong culture of “grow-your-own” and a deep skill pool amongst the community members, stemming from the farming background. One informant described it as “strong but closed”, and a place where if you ask for help, you will get more than what you need, but also a place where it can be hard to integrate because of its community strength.

Lawrence was identified as well-connected intergenerationally, and a place where people know their neighbours, where the community is quite unified and cohesive, vibrant and diverse (largely referring to the well-established shearing community) and where there are multi-generational connections between many community members. A number of informants from outside Lawrence commented that its community sticks together and looks after themselves, its pub and school were identified as its social hubs.

Youth perspectives

The researcher ran a focus group with 7 members of the Clutha Youth Council via Teams, as part of their normal workshop.

They had the following to say about what it is like being a young person in Clutha:

- Communities are small so **people know each other**.
- It's **boring**.
- A lot of adults are quite **set in their ways**.
- There is some **conflict** at community level in Milton, and it feels like things are getting worse.
- The Catlins feels like a **safe** place to live, and the community is a **diverse** one.

For them, the community strengths of Clutha were as follows:

- There's **lots of sports** on offer and the district has **very high participation in sport**.
- It's a great place to go **fishing**.
- There are **quite a few places to go for those who need help accessing the basics of life** – food, clothing, practical assistance, especially in Milton via the Community Hub.
- Balclutha is growing and **getting lots of new community resources** – **people are moving into the area to have a better life**.
- The **services have improved** over the years.

The Youth Council members consulted saw the main challenges facing young people in Clutha as follows:

- **Addictions** – to nicotine through vaping, and to marijuana.
- It's a **boring** place to live, and for some, school is boring. Especially in smaller towns, there's **not many options for young people to connect, have fun and be active** outside of organised sports, and so some young people get into trouble, especially in Milton.
- **Young people don't want to go to their local family medical practice** – it is embarrassing, and some lack the confidence to go on their own.
- There is **only one youth worker** for Clutha District, and there are **very few youth services** available locally.
- There are really good **guidance counsellors** covering Catlins Area School and Lawrence Area School, but they are so good, they are **really stretched** in trying to meet demand.
- **Underage drinking** is an issue because young people have nothing else to do – and they generally get the alcohol from their parents.
- **Binge drinking** is an expectation at parties for Telford students, with people expected to drink the full box of alcohol they arrive at a party with – this means that some young people, who do not want to drink to excess, avoid socialising altogether.

Thinking about the **services that work best for young people**, the group was strongly of the view that **school-based services work best**, being the most accessible to them both in terms of practicalities of getting to services and minimising feelings of stigma/embarrassment in seeking help. **Tokomairiro Hub** was identified as a really great place for helping people in need and somewhere that is open to everyone, providing a lovely, welcoming environment. **South Otago Budgeting Advisory Service** was also identified as working really well, along with the **local foodbanks**. **Pacific Trust Otago** comes down to Clutha District on a regular basis and provides Pasifika students in schools with laptops if they need them, provides families with food boxes, and administers Covid boosters locally. They also help people get their driver's licences. **Toko Training** was identified as doing a lot of trades training, helping young people who had missed out on key credits needed for next-step learning, and developing trades skills, while **Job Opportunities – Mayor's taskforce for Jobs** was working well at connecting young people with apprenticeships and support in securing employment, helping develop their interview skills, and providing advice around preparation of CVs. Some of the high schools have good **vocational pathways teachers** who help young people secure work experience and enrol in Gateway programmes.

The gaps the young people most wanted to see addressed were **access to support to reduce vaping, but also to educate young people around the harms associated with vaping and working to prevent them starting to vape in the first place**. They also felt that the services which are available locally need to be much more effectively communicated – they wanted **more information on the help services available**, and felt this information is best promoted to young people in the notice display boxes and boards in schools.

Older adult perspectives

The researcher ran a focus group with 14 older adults (9 females, 5 males) who attend Jenny's Companions Club in Balclutha, from the local community and the surrounding area. Of the group, 7 were aged in their 70s, 6 in their 80s and one in their 90s. Most live alone, and most indicated they are happy with the home they are in – around half the group had been in the same house for the past 30 years or more.

What do you most like about living in Clutha and being part of this community?

- The way Balclutha's identity is tied to the mighty Clutha River
- There's **lots of sports** on offer and lots of interest groups appealing to older people – the Widow's group meets monthly, the Country Music Club, the Nugget Fishing Club, Jenny's group
- A range of health services are available either permanently (eg. dentist, physiotherapists) or through visiting services (eg. Optometrist, hearing aid support) and home-based supports via Access were identified as working well
- The town still has one "proper butcher"

The group identified the main challenges facing older people in Clutha as follows:

- **There aren't as many groups and clubs as there used to be** – many have folded
- **Loss of volunteers is a big issue** – the softball club in Balclutha used to have 400 players but folded because nobody would take over leadership of the club, and the district Master's Games competition was discontinued.
- **The town has lost a lot of its shops, pubs and some of its banks, especially post-Covid** - *"The town's changed a lot in the last 10 years – it's gone backwards."* *"There's 21 food outlets but no shops."* From their perspective, it's especially hard to buy clothing – jumpers, socks, good dressy clothes for older men, underwear, and there is no shoe shop, so older people have to travel to Gore, Mosgiel and Invercargill to shop.
- **To see a doctor, you have to make an appointment well in advance**, and for emergency care, you have to ring 111.
- **It's hard to downsize housing due to cost and supply** – if they sold, they wouldn't get enough money to buy a two bedroom.
- **Some Council spending was perceived as wasteful** – they wanted to see a stronger focus on economic development of Clutha, *"growing business."*

They felt that older people being reluctant to put the heating on, and scrimping on food, and young families were the groups most likely to be experiencing challenges to live life well locally.

Others consulted in the research with strong insights into the needs of older adults locally identified the following challenges:

- There is still a **strong degree of siloing of services**, and it can be hard to find out who does what – there is also a degree of duplication resulting from the lack of coordination and collaborative practice.
- The observation above that **many groups serving older adults are folding for lack of leadership** was echoed.
- A number of older adults are **living in inappropriate conditions** – some of the CDC flats have a shower over the bath, and these are a concern for the frail elderly.
- **Older adults do not feel heard** – **assumptions are often made without consulting older people** themselves about their needs.
- **Social isolation** is a concern, as is **elder abuse and neglect** – in some cases, this is partner abuse by retired farmers "used to calling the shots".
- **The driver relicensing process is costly** – people have to travel to Mosgiel or Invercargill for their practical, with appointments hard to secure in Dunedin, and the traffic there much busier than older Clutha drivers are used to.
- **Some older people living alone are fearful.**
- **Many older adults struggle to access government and banking services online or via 0800 numbers** and for those no longer driving, they often do not have the necessary identification paperwork, not having a passport and with old version birth certificates not accepted.
- **Lack of information on entitlements.**
- **Transport is an issue for many** – the community vans operating from Clinton and Owaka work well, and the health shuttle to Dunedin is appreciated but only suits some users – many older people rely on family and friends to take them to appointments and to access the things that support wellbeing – opportunities to connect, be active, learn new things, have fun and help others.

The Māori community of Clutha

The researcher engaged in kōrero with representatives of Hokonui Rūnaka and Te Rūnaka ō Ōtākou, and with Ruth Baldwin (with whānau ties to the Kaka Point area, of Puketeraki and Hokonui descent and with a Māori support role as part of Big River Kāhui Ako) along with a number of other Māori living and/or working in the district, some of whom took part in focus groups, and others in less formal kōrero. The following summary of feedback specific to Māori comes from these informants along with service providers with insights drawn from their practice.

As is the case with many rūnaka, both Hokonui Rūnaka and Te Rūnaka ō Ōtākou have limited paid staffing capacity. Across both the paid and the many voluntary rūnaka roles, their workload is heavy and broad in focus, with significant demands across health, education, environment management and a range of spheres. With neither rūnaka based in Clutha District, neither has a strong on-the-ground presence in Clutha itself, but they are involved at high level policy and decision-making level across the community, and they are fully available to support any rūnaka members, wherever they live. Whānau Ora navigators from Hokonui have in the recent past supported whānau in Clinton, and some other roles (Hokonui have a strong social service presence) reach into the community, including their counselling services. It is likely that Māori residing to the west of Clutha are much more likely to access the range of social services delivered by Hokonui than those to the south and east, purely because of distance from Gore. Hokonui deliver youth employment and leadership development initiatives, alternative education, and a range of other initiatives for rangatahi, aligned with Ngāi Tahu Te Rautaki Mātauranga, along with significant biodiversity mahi. They have Whānau Ora navigators, a community connector role, addiction and trauma counselling services, and a community youth worker and advocacy service, and run nurse clinics and kaumatua health days at their marae in Gore. Some of their services are mobile, delivered across Clutha District.

The mahi of Te Rūnaka ō Ōtākou is generally focused on Otago Peninsula, Dunedin City, Lower Taiari and Waihora and Waipōuri. They have a strong environmental/biodiversity focus with a wetlands restoration project based at Sinclair Wetlands. Additionally there are strong connections with the Otago Regional Council and Clutha District Council.

Clutha District is the takiwā of Hokonui and Ōtākou rūnaka: a significant manawhenua population today is concentrated around Kaka Point and descendants of the Rakiraki, Williamson, Tuawaiki and other whānau: there is an Urupa at Maka Tu. The district has a number of strong mātāwaka whānau, longstanding in the community and part of whānau arriving to the area in the 1950s and 60s, many of whom have businesses in or work in the shearing industry, especially around Tuapeka-Lawrence and Milton. Many of these whānau whakapapa to North Island Iwi, and have strong ties to their home marae, and a strong sense of whakapapa. The district has also always had a transient mātāwaka Māori population, some of whom are part of seasonal workforces, some drawn to the district by cheaper housing, some attracted by the outdoor lifestyle and natural environment, and some to escape to a community where they are less known / to flee trauma. Since the establishment of the Otago Corrections Facility in Milton, that community has seen an increase in mātāwaka Māori population, in part due to Māori staff at the prison moving into the community, and in part due to whānau of prisoners relocating to the area to be near their loved ones and to make visiting viable for their whānau, retaining whānau connections. As with any of the prisoners released, some choose to stay in the area. This has seen an increase in challenging behaviours in Milton, and in numbers of whānau with backgrounds of trauma, dysfunction and complex service needs.

While Clutha District is becoming more multicultural, especially over the past decade or so, the community has been very monocultural in character and outlook over time. A number of informants identified issues of racism and lack of understanding of the Māori ahuatanga or values as deep-rooted in the community, and especially towards those Māori residents who are newer to the area. Cultural competency is not always displayed by service providers locally, yet this is as important for the customer facing roles as it is for professionals for whom cultural competence is a requirement of

their right to practice. While nobody said as much, the researcher saw evidence of a need for on-going professional development around Tiriti o Waitangi across the community while undertaking the research.²

Impacts of colonisation run deep: manawhenua suffered significant impacts of illness from early European arrivals, and significant loss of land and resources, loss of te reo and a devaluing of their culture. A negativity around being and feeling Māori still remains to some extent, and older Māori in Clutha commonly do not have te reo and some feel “unMāori”, because they were made to feel this way by their education and the community, they grew up in. As Aotearoa New Zealand moves towards a growing acknowledgement of all of this, kaumatua are increasingly called on to share karakia and the like – without te reo, this adds to a sense of shame. Recently, anti-co-governance rhetoric, which was perceived to have had quite strong uptake across Clutha, has brought an undercurrent of racism to the surface in some pockets of the community.

Most of the transient Māori whānau in Clutha are disconnected from their whenua, many from their whakapapa and from te reo. Many, especially those connected to inmates at the Corrections facility, but also whose move to the district was motivated by a desire to “hide” from social services or to disengage from whānau / ex-partners etc. also carry with them significant trauma.

A range of opportunities are increasingly being offered across Clutha for Māori and non-Māori to learn about te reo, tikanga Māori, and about Māori healing and cultural practices. Wananga have been held around te reo in Lawrence, with strong uptake, and Te Whare Poawai in Milton has offered a range of workshops / wananga with different areas of focus, all building a sense of cultural identity for Māori. Telford ran NCEA Level 1-2 night classes in te reo through Te Wananga o Aotearoa, and this may be offered again in the future. These classes required quite a high level of commitment from participants.

Some consultations revealed an understanding within some Kāhui Ako that efforts within schools to support Māori students and their whānau should be guided by Kai Tahu and its local rūnaka, but also a recognition that rūnaka members are busy and need to prioritise mahi relating to their own rohe. That said, both Hokonui and Ōtākou rūnaka have been responsive to requests from Kāhui Ako and from schools – education providers are likely still developing an understanding of whanaungatanga and what this looks like in practice. Kapa haka groups are strong in some schools across the community, and the cultural advisor from Hokonui supported South Otago High School’s squad around their performance at the 2023 Maaruwai Matariki. One of the Kāhui Ako employs the same tutors across all their schools. It is important that those people filling these roles are paid in a manner reflecting the value of such a role.

Looking forward, Clutha Development, Clutha District Council and indeed central government and funders need to listen to Māori desires regarding their community, and to strive to be guided by them, upholding tino rangatiratanga of Māori – their control of their own destiny, and working in a mana-enhancing manner. They should strive to support local rūnaka to respond to the needs they are seeing within their communities, be responsive to feedback from rūnaka regarding council services, and continue to build an understanding of the cultural narrative of the district, and to foster this across the community. The new community hub facility in Balclutha is to present the Hokonui cultural narrative in its design: a first in many ways for this community. The researcher heard expressed a hope that this space will be welcoming, open and available to support rūnaka-led initiatives for Māori at local level.

² It should be noted that the researcher is Pakeha and is herself on a journey of developing cultural understanding.

The Filipino community of Clutha

A representative of the Clutha Filipino Society was interviewed. His feedback was combined with other feedback which came through from others consulted as part of the research.

The Filipino community of Clutha District

Like the Samoan community, Filipino workers have been part of Clutha District's seasonal workforce since 2008, brought to the community to work in roles in the dairy industry, as welders, in milk processing (Clydevale) and in elder care. A lot of dairy conversions in 2007-2009 drove this migration. Many intended to come to Clutha, earn money and return to their families, but ended up gaining residency, bringing their families and settling. Some have brought out their parents to live with them and to help with childcare, and so they can in turn care for them in their old age. Others have moved into Clutha from other parts of the country, and some of those who started in Silver Fern Farms' Finegand freezing works have moved on to other employment in the area. The catholic church is a significant place of gathering and support for the Filipino community.

The Clutha Filipino Society was set up in response to the growing Filipino population and needs that were being seen – Filipinos being shy to speak up and advocate for their rights, and lack of transport due to driver licensing, and a need to connect and celebrate their culture, and do the things that support their wellbeing. Starting as an informal group, they ran festivals, dinners and had a presence in the Balclutha Santa Parade. Operating informally for a while, they formally established as an incorporated Society 4-5 years ago so that they could access funding to help deliver their activities. The group runs a basketball competition – the main sport for their nationality. They have also worked hard to help Filipino settle in Clutha and build cultural understanding, especially through social gatherings. They expressed strong appreciation for the work undertaken by Clutha Resettlement Support in the past few years – before this group was established, there was a real lack of support from outside the Filipino community themselves to newcomers. Members of the Filipino Society work to support newcomers to the area from the Philippines – they know from their own experiences what a culture shock it was to move from 35° weather to 2°, and a very different lifestyle. In the Philippines, it is normal to work from 8am to 5pm, in daylight hours and the early starts of dairying are very hard to adjust to. Arrivals tend to bring with them lots of cotton clothing, and they take them to buy the right winter clothing and explain about thermals. The English as a Second Language (EsoL) classes run in Clydevale were identified as a key support, but motivation to improve English language skills as seen as stronger when people are seeking residency.

The main challenges facing Filipino people in Clutha were identified as follows:

- **Housing** – like the Samoan community, it is very common for Filipinos in Clutha to be sending money home to support family – this was identified as a source of pride, and home ownership is very uncommon for Filipinos in Clutha. They cannot start a Kiwisaver until they get residency, so many cannot save at the rate that long-term New Zealand residents can. Accessing rental housing is very difficult, and a need for rental housing is a frequent request for help from the Filipino Society. Difficulties around housing were identified as a key driver for Filipinos with residency to leave Clutha and move to Australia. Some of the original Filipino migrants who came to the community around 15 years ago to work on dairy farms are now finding this work physically challenging and are ready for something different, but their house comes with the job – if they leave their employment, their family needs to find somewhere else to live, and finding rental housing is very difficult for some Filipino families. It also requires a new job and finding a house to align timewise. Around 70 Filipino workers at Silver Fern Farms' Finegand freezing works are living in Mosgiel and have access to transport to work by bus, but if they work over-time, they miss the bus home, meaning many are choosing to car-pool to work instead, bringing with it fuel costs and safety concerns in winter when roads are icy.
- **Cost of living** – this is especially challenging for those not on farms where housing, and often meat, is employer-provided
- **Uncertainty when contract milkers move** – when employers move farms, some Filipino workers stay with the same employer (which means moving their families too) and others stay but work for a different employer – it brings about change outside their control.
- **There is a need for a youth hub in Balclutha where Filipino and other young people can come together** in a safe place and have fun. A shortage of youth activities was identified as a need, especially after school, as it was by the Samoan informants. Lack of fun activities makes it hard for young people to feel settled in their community. The Filipino basketball competition which runs on Saturdays in the South Otago High School gym is a big focus for the community and they are keen to raise the funds to run this year-round.

The Clutha Filipino Society would love to have a physical presence in Balclutha in a drop-in space, potentially shared with other groups supporting people from different cultures.

The Samoan community of Clutha

The researcher ran a focus group with 3 representatives of the Clutha Samoan Society. Two other members of the Samoan community took part in other focus groups as part of the research, and feedback is combined as follows, along with other feedback gathered pertaining to this community.

The Samoan community of Clutha District

Many of the Clutha's Samoan residents have moved to the area from other parts of New Zealand, and most commonly to work at Silver Fern Farms, Finegand, just outside Balclutha, to earn money to support themselves, but also to send money back home to family in the islands. Samoan freezing workers have been part of Finegand's seasonal workforce since 2008, and many of the original workers settled in the district and have brought other family to join them, either from Samoa or from other parts of New Zealand. Families have also brought older parents to live with them, and there is a small population of older Samoan people in the area. Church is central to Samoan life in Clutha – to connection and wellbeing, and to supporting newcomers to the area with practical support (furniture, clothing, household item donations) with 3 Samoan churches serving the community in Balclutha (Voice of Christ, which has historically had a close relationship with Finegand and its recruitment, Inspired Faith and the Congregationalist Church, the newest of the three in Clutha and one which many workers have ties to from their island) along with the Catholic Church and City Impact. Some Samoan residents are part of the Church of the latter Day Saints in Gore. The Samoan population is mostly located in Balclutha and Owaka (where many of the young men lodge), and to a lesser extent in other areas.

Representatives of the Samoan community identified the main challenges facing Samoan people in Clutha as follows:

- **Language barriers are a significant issue** and are considerably under-resourced within schools – there is a considerable need for greater support of ESoL students in Owaka School, Catlins Area School and a number of schools in Balclutha including South Otago High School, Rosebank School and others servicing areas of higher socioeconomic deprivation and the small amount of Ministry of Education – resourced support is far too thinly spread. Currently the Bicultural Support Worker role covering Catlins Area School, Owaka School and a growing number of students in South Otago High School, set up by the Big River Kāhui Ako is only resourced for 10 hours per week, down from the original 30 hours (20 hours bicultural support, 10-hour counselling). Eleven more Samoan students are arriving at South Otago High School in term 3 with families new to the district when their fathers commence at Finegand. The worker is already supporting a number of students and their families who are struggling with NCEA assessments. In Catlins Area School, a lot of the support needs are behavioural. Whereas Filipino children were the first to arrive with their families following immigration changes in the late 2000s, Samoan children now comprise the greatest group with language needs across the Big River Kāhui Ako.
- **Language barriers are a considerable barrier to health service access**, and this need was highlighted by health providers consulted as part of the research. Many Samoans do not know where to go for health support, and some families are not registering with medical centres even when they are entitled to do so, even though Pasifika are hugely over-represented in terms of health need: up to half were identified as not enrolled with a health practice. It is common for health needs to reach crisis level before help is sought. For seasonal workers, Finegand has a nurse at the works, and when further medical support is needed, the nurse refers to a GP and this service is paid for by Finegand. Lack of Samoan nurses / doctors in the area, and lack of Pasifika health and social services was seen as a gap. Language barriers are also an issue in the workplace – language was identified as a big barrier to engaging to the full with the community.
- **Language barriers also hamper driver licensing, and life was identified as hardest for those Samoan residents / families who do not have a New Zealand licence.** Clutha District Council was identified as working to put together ESoL classes along with driver licence support. A church minister has been coming once a month to help with translation for those sitting learner licences, and there are other people helping the community around driver licensing but this is all unpaid: the community identified a need for a paid role to assist Samoans in Clutha to get their driver's licence.
- **Relationships between the churches are challenging** – there is a competitive relationship between some of the churches, and with most Samoan residents actively involved in a church, this spills over to the community and efforts and initiatives to support people around language, housing, and access to basic supports for those in need.
- **Poverty – housing and food security** – many of the Samoan families in Clutha comprise a working man, his stay-at-home wife and 7, 8 or 9 children. These big families are under a lot of financial stress. There are a number of households which comprise three – five families in one house, an example being one house which has 18 people living in it, and

only one toilet. Accessing adequate housing was identified as a challenge. That said, the informants from Samoan Society felt that Samoan people have different expectations around housing to the New Zealand norm, and for them, 10 people in a four-bedroom house was quite okay as long as the house was warm and had adequate facilities.

- **Budgeting support** – very few Samoan families in Clutha own their own homes, and most send money home to the islands. Budgeting skill development was identified as a need – informants felt that many would benefit from learning how to develop and sustain a budget, and how to save. Some informants from outside the Samoan community felt that Silver Fern Farms felt like Samoan workers and their families were being “set up to fail” but not being connected with adequate support around health, housing, and budgeting: they need encouragement to set aside money for the off-season. A support package was seen as needed, tailored to the needs of Samoan workers and their families.
- **There is a need for a youth hub where Samoan and other young people can come together** in a safe place and have fun.
- **Development of stronger engagement in Polyfest across the schools**
- While not identified by Samoan informants themselves, other informants were aware of racism and discrimination towards Pasifika locally.

The Clutha Samoan Society was recently established in response to people struggling but being confused around who to listen to, and unsure where to go for good advice, and a need for Samoan people locally to have more information around their rights and entitlements. The group wanted “a point of truth” which protected and honoured the Samoan culture, and supported Samoans to learn and engage in the wider Clutha community.

Settlement Support

Clutha District Settlement Support are a group of volunteers who work to help newcomers settle in the district, mostly supporting workers and their families in the dairy, freezing works and milk processing industries, along with health care roles. Support is wide-ranging – ESoL classes to assist in understanding immigration rules and gaining residency, building understanding of New Zealand law, assisting in the setting up of houses, connecting them with health services, supporting around driver licensing and teaching basic life skills for New Zealand – lighting a fire, school lunches, learning to swim etc., and hosting cross-cultural celebrations, meals etc and opportunities to connect.

*Clutha District Settlement Support can only support newcomers when they know about them – they rely on people in the community connecting newcomers to their organisation, and getting employers to do this has proven difficult. Like others, they identified **housing** as a significant need facing newcomers and the community as a whole along with **need for newcomers to be integrated and accepted** in the community. Churches and local libraries were identified as key supports, and they were keen to see **more drop-in spaces** developed across the district’s towns so that newcomers can connect with others and be supported, especially with information. They are keen to see more **community gardens** established locally: a big vegetable garden in Balclutha was identified as something being worked on. **Service navigation and strengthened connections between groups/support services** was also identified as a need – it’s hard to know where to direct people to access different kinds of support.*

*Most of the key support for newcomers to Clutha is being provided by volunteers – much more support is needed, and this **requires paid roles, especially regarding building ESoL capacity for migrants**. Support appears to be more strongly focused on newcomers from other countries, or from non-European migrant populations in other parts of New Zealand rather than newcomers to Clutha District from other parts of New Zealand.*

Community, social and wellbeing strengths

At a general level, the strengths of the district and its people most commonly identified were as follows:

- **People are very welcoming, friendly and engaging**
- A place where **people are resilient**, and have traditionally been very good at solving their own problems.

"It's small so people know each other, and if something goes wrong, the community rallies."

"The number 8 fencing wire mentality is stronger here than in urban areas."

- **Willingness to help others** where their needs are known.
- It's common for **people to feel okay to ask for help** when they need it, especially regarding basic needs – housing, food, transport.
- A place with a lot to offer in terms of the **physical environment** (especially the Catlins, Toko Mouth), character and heritage (especially Lawrence) and outdoor recreational opportunities (eg. hunting, fishing, whitebaiting, trail and bike riding) - attracts people / make people want to stay.
- Clutha is a community with a **high level of social capital** across the district.



- Historically, there is a **strong tradition of volunteerism and of community groups** – it's how a lot of great things "got done" in the community. While a lot of volunteers are getting older and have contributed decades of amazing community service, some great volunteering and community passion was identified as coming through amongst the 20s and 30s age groups. The community was widely identified as still having high capacity and willingness to come together to volunteer and help for specific needs: when the national dog trials were held in South Otago earlier this year, the volunteer base behind the event was huge, creating an "amazing and successful" event.
- It's a physically active community with **high participation and engagement in sport** and a community which prioritises and values sport. South Otago was identified as highly represented in Otago rep teams across all major codes. Clutha District Council's Physical Activity Strategy was identified as having resulted in some great facilities and exciting initiatives, especially catering to the mainstream sports – rugby, netball, hockey.

"It's a community with heart."



- Some **great things are happening in the youth employment space** – Jobbortunities – the mayor’s taskforce for Jobs project, has seen a high number of young people placed into apprenticeships locally.
- Clutha has some **amazing community facilities** – pools, rugby club facilities, halls, etc. - this came through with regard to every community across the district, and community fundraising and volunteering sits behind most of them.
- **A lot of young people in Clutha are hugely** resilient – active in sport, in hunting and fishing and enjoying recreational pursuits with their families.
- Tourism has considerable potential for further growth.

Informants were asked to **identify those services which are working well to reach engage with and support people in need. Most commonly, the following services were highlighted:**

- **Clutha Food Hub** food bank, delivered by Clutha Budget Advisory Team and well-networked with medical centres, churches, schools, Tokomairiro Hub and others, with good systems in place and distribution from Milton, Balclutha and West Otago. Other food banks also operate in the district and all seem to work well together.
- **Clutha Budget Advisory Service**
- **Tokomairiro Hub and Project Bruce in Milton** – the hub was identified as addressing a wide range of local needs, that has “improved year on year”, and is accessed by people from beyond Milton and its surrounding community. Colocation of services was identified as one of its key strengths.
- **Jobbortunities**
- **Tokomairiro Waiora Whānau Ora navigators and other services** – hugely valuable and provide a great support alongside other social services. Tokomairiro Waiora also holds a Youth Inclusion Programme contract for 20 hours per week which is being redesigned to better match current needs, along with its navigators and an Oranga Tamariki – funded High Intensity In-Home worker (pilot that has since been expanded, going into homes and implementing strategies around parenting for families at risk of Care and Protection, but also now accessible as a preventative support for whānau referred from navigators). Its holiday programmes were appreciated by local parents interviewed.
- **The range of other navigator roles across the district and supporting Māori, including Community Connectors**, the latter winding up due to funding no longer being in place.
- **Gore and Clutha Refuge**
- **The Clutha District Council’s libraries throughout the district** – these were identified as running a full programme, tailored to local needs, and for which there is strong uptake: people know that the libraries are a good place to go for help and assistance to address a wide range of needs. The free internet access is heavily utilised, the no-fees policy appreciated, and it was identified as known as a safe space for young people, in communities where there was typically little else for young people to do after school. Located in each of Clutha’s larger towns, they were an accessible support for many.
- **All Clutha District’s medical centres were highly valued.** The Health Improvement Practitioners and very soon, Health Coaches available across the district, were highly valued.

“They are hubs of support.”.

- **Local Service Clubs – Lions and Rotary clubs** were identified as hugely valuable to the local communities which they serve. This theme came through in each of the communities in which consultations were undertaken, and related to the local Rotary and Lions groups in particular.

“The service clubs are a real backbone of our community.”

- **Clutha Foundation** was identified as a massive step forwards for the community, and an initiative already making a difference.

Other services identified as working well included:

- Toko Training
- Anglican Family Care
- ESoL classes in Clydevale/West Otago
- Tauri Te Tu Kaupapa Māori marae-based falls prevention programme at Hokonui Marae (located outside Clutha District but likely to be accessed by some older adults from West Otago) developed by Te Rūnaka o Ōtākou and now in place in 28 rohe around the country.
- Police Education Officer
- Volunteer drivers to health appointments (some parts of the District only)
- Presbyterian Support’s rest homes, buddy programme and financial advisors
- Mana Rangatahi which evolved from the Youth Fund of Otago Youth Trust
- The Sports Activator role within Clutha Sports, which works across 19 schools in the community
- STAND, which comes into the District from Dunedin to support whānau
- Youth Horizons
- Heartlands
- School attendance support - truancy support has improved with a FTE committed for South Otago, and one FTE for Milton - Ministry of Education funds the two attendance officer positions for South Otago and these have filled a gap – attendance has become more of an issue post-Covid, and not helped by industrial action.
- Department of Corrections
- Good disability support services in place locally
- Telford
- Otago Community Trust and its support into the district
- Drive My Life driver education programme – a CDC and Police initiative
- ACC Sensitive Claims-funded counselling – number of local providers
- CCTV in Balclutha, Owaka and being developed in Kaitangata
- Local playgroups – Milton, Waitahuna
- The community pools are real hubs
- Local schools (Lawrence Area School was identified as providing good wraparound support and pastoral care)
- Meals on Wheels (Lawrence, Milton)
- Steady as You Go classes (Lawrence, Owaka, Balclutha) and disability-focused fitness groups like Parkinsons exercise class, Balclutha – social connection
- Plunket coffee mornings

Primary health services

Catlins Medical Centre has one GP working for two days per week, along with locums, some of whom return to the practice on multiple occasions. The district nurses from Balclutha service that community, and the practice has a Health Improvement Practitioner one day / week and will soon also have a Health Coach also working 0.2FTE, both via Well South. At the time of interview, their books were open.

Tuapeka Community Health has a GP and a nurse practitioner, and also operates a district nursing service and has a number of visiting health practitioners. They share their PHO with West Otago health and Catlins – Well South and have the Health Improvement Practitioner one day / week and will soon also have a Health Coach also working slightly more than 0.2FTE. These roles are helping address mental health needs in the community. Tuapeka Community Health runs a pay it forward initiative so people can help others access health services such as flu jabs. They also utilise South Otago Community Health Trust vouchers to ensure equitable access to health services.

West Otago Health is aligned with Well South and has the same Health Coach and Health Improvement Practitioner arrangement as Tuapeka and Catlins. The community has 16 hours of after-hours care weekly, and the health centre has access to speech and language therapists, occupational therapists etc., and has a community-fundraised helipad. There are a few private counsellors based locally, and Hokonui Rūnaka has two counsellors with open books.

Clutha Health First operates a practice in Balclutha. Clutha Health First have a Health Coach and a Health Improvement Practitioner position. The Clutha Health First Health Coach picks up a lot of the need that was addressed via this role. Clutha Health First tries to get vouchers and funding to those who need it in order to access health services, and offer payment plans as an option. At the time of the research, they were in the process of developing 4 additional roles targeted at high needs rural, Māori and Pasifika across the district: Physiotherapy, Pharmacist, Care Coordinator and Kaiāwhina.

Milton Medical Centre in Milton sits under Southlink, and works in closely with Milton Community Health Trust which delivers district nursing, occupational therapy, Meals on Wheels and which is the umbrella group for Tokomairiro Hub. The Milton Medical Centre was not taking on new patient enrolments at the time of the research. The centre had a full quota of clinicians at the time of the consultation, 1.2FTE GPs plus a Nurse Practitioner, with two clinicians on duty four days out of five each week.

Milton Community Health Trust has a pool of 80 volunteer drivers who help people get to their appointments – their efforts are supported where possible via koha in form of petrol vouchers funded through donations at funerals, and people are at times assisted with vouchers to get themselves to appointments. For a time, the Trust had a community specialist (multiple incumbents) who worked across the community 2 days / week, grants-funded and subcontracted from Methodist Mission, but this position was hard to fill and to sustain

Tokomairiro Waioara have a nurse clinic once a fortnight, along with mirimiri weekly practice and Mahana drug and alcohol counselling from Dunedin for Māori clients.

All medical practices in Clutha struggle to recruit personnel, and mentoring support for Nurse Practitioners and Nurse Prescribers was identified as under-resourced.

- Menzshed Milton and its partnerships with other community groups – eg. built community pantry for Taieri Mouth, and through that initiative, a project was set up growing potatoes for the community.

- Community gardens
- Tiny Tots affordable swimming sessions for families at Clinton Pool
- A number of local trusts and with strong philanthropy, especially into education.
- Bless boxes for families with new babies in the Clutha community
- Southern Rivers and Well South deliver funded counselling services at mild – moderate level
- Some church initiatives – the strong youth programmes delivered by City Impact Church in Balclutha and Mt Zion Church in Milton, and the community chaplains which are supported by a number of churches work hard to connect with more isolated people.

Sports clubs were identified as a strong support for young people, and businesses across the district were seen as very supportive of their communities. Playgroups and sports clubs were seen as key mechanisms for forming supportive connections between families with capacity and those who are struggling.

Strengths for individual communities within Clutha are summarised below.

Balclutha - The following strengths were most commonly highlighted for Balclutha:

- It has quite a good amount of amenities and services compared with similarly sized towns
- Amazing philanthropy from some well-established farming families in the wider community.
- Friendly community where it is small enough that people know each other.
- Rallies to support people when things go wrong.
- Recent rise in volunteering from people in their 30s and 40s especially around facilities – the Balclutha Hub, the new playground and some local clubs.
- Balclutha Rotary and Clinton Lions Clubs are both strong fundraisers for the local community.

The initiative led by Evan Dick in Kaitangata, Kaitangata Housing Trust, developing house and land packages was widely praised by informants.

Milton / Tokomairiro

Milton was identified as a community with a large number of community groups and where these are quite well-networked at local level, especially around the hub, and where the “bush telegraph” was strong between help agencies. The community infrastructure was commonly identified as stronger than is the case in Balclutha. This is seen as supporting a growing sense of social cohesion locally. Covid was identified as having drawn together organisations more purposefully, resulting in more tools to connect people. Used to a reasonable degree of transience, it was identified as easier for newcomers to connect into than some other communities across the district.

Tokomairiro was identified as a community where people help others, and where there is a feeling of pride. It was identified as well-catered for in terms of early childhood education, elder care and activities for older people, with strong service clubs and local philanthropy and strong community leadership. Tokomairiro Hub, Tokomairiro Waiora, Te Whare Puāwai o Tokomairiro, Project Bruce, and the health trust were all identified as innovative, delivering “cool initiatives.” The community was also identified as having great opportunities for physical wellbeing via its cycling / walking trails: these were also expected to bring more tourists to Milton and Waiholā. In the farming community, awareness of mental health needs was identified as changed for the better in recent years, with some

good pockets of support but room for more. Milton was identified as having a strong district nursing service – Meals on Wheels were also identified as a strength locally.

Milton has recently seen a rise in volunteering from residents in their 20s and 30s, especially around projects such as the pool. The Waihola community raised over \$400,000 for its new playground, very much a community-led initiative.

Lawrence – Tuapeka: Lawrence was identified as a town that “pulls together” when there is a need, and a community in which people are very willing to “step up and do”, and with rich assets in its pool, hospital, medical centre and Police station and skatepark, but also connected to other communities in Clutha through sport: the community has fought hard to retain some of these community assets (medical centre and Police station in particular).

“It’s a community of volunteers – acts of kindness go on all the time, often unnoticed.”

It was identified as united and supportive, and a stable community where people tend to stay. The community groups do talk to each other, and coordinate their efforts at the local level. Because volunteers typically wear multiple hats, groups tend to know what each other are doing and the different needs and challenges being faced. The community has strong capacity to fundraise, including accessing large grants.

The Catlins – Its community has historically been amazing at fundraising to meet local need through some “solid committees”, especially during the 1970s and 1980s but also recently (eg. an amazing swimming pool, recently developed CCTV, fundraised by Owaka Going Forward, and Lions fundraising for a helicopter pad at the sports grounds in Owaka. Capacity to fundraise was identified as stronger in the Catlins than in Balclutha. It was identified as a friendly and supportive community, where the same people do “everything” and are passionate about their voluntary roles. Local employers are very supportive of emergency services, releasing workers to take up volunteer emergency service roles: informants were keen to see more honouring of this support publicly.

Tapanui / West Otago - The following strengths were most commonly highlighted for West Otago:

- There are lots of church options, and the churches remain strong and are connected: they hold combined services and collaborate around the foodbank and run a number of social groups for different age groups.
- Everyone gets involved in local projects – businesses “jump” to sponsor local initiatives, the Lions club is strong and very community-connected – “phenomenal”, strongly supporting local schools, groups and people in need.
- There is purposefulness around welcoming and supporting newcomers, and good supports including newcomer functions, and ESOL classes.
- There are lots of opportunities to get involved in community activities.
- People commonly wear different hats which helps connect community groups with each other.
- Access to healthcare was identified as better than Balclutha – very receptive and supportive.

- It has some good community amenities – a supermarket, a great library and service centre and expanded aged care facilities, and all this is allowing growth in the area. People are choosing to retire to Tapanui because they know it has a good health facility.

Community, social and wellbeing challenges, weaknesses and gaps

All informants were asked what the main challenges were that they were seeing facing the community of Clutha District a whole, to what extent these challenges had changed over time and what change they expected in the next few years. Their feedback is presented thematically, with strongest themes as follows:

Housing

The district as a whole was identified as significantly under-resourced in terms of housing stock, with this need identified across multiple demographics. Long periods of limited – no growth and subdivision development in many of the district's towns have resulted in gaps in the housing market, with a shortage of housing appealing to professionals considering moving into the district, a lack of warm, energy efficient step-down smaller one-two bedroom housing for older people and affordable and warm and dry, affordable entry level homes for younger adults wanting to enter the property market. Across the community there is a significant lack of rental housing, and this situation has perhaps worsened over the past couple of years, as rental properties have been sold as tax laws regarding rental incomes changed and people capitalised on higher sale prices when the market peaked in 2022. The rental market across the district is competitive, and as a smaller community where people know each other, it was suggested that the market appears to favour those with a reputation of success, and it can be harder for people to secure quality rental housing where they may have made mistakes in the past, or bring a negative family reputation with them, or where negative cultural stereotypes are at play. Rental housing appears to be especially hard to access in Milton and Balclutha, but also Lawrence, Owaka and Tapanui.

A large number of people are living in temporary / transitional and emergency housing in the district, especially in the Milton and Balclutha campgrounds, Cedar Tree Lodge in Balclutha, and in hostel accommodation in Owaka, while a number of whānau are in emergency housing in motels in Milton and the transitional house operated by Gore and Clutha Refuge in Balclutha, some on a long-term basis (several years in the case of some in the motels in Milton) because alternatives have not yet been found. Preying on housing need, a large number of rental properties in Milton and Balclutha in particular were identified as well below Healthy Homes standards, cold and damp, and rented to those at the bottom of the housing market, and with desperate housing need and little choice in terms of alternatives. A number of landlords were seen to not be fulfilling their responsibilities under the law. The view was quite widely expressed that some of the large employers bringing workers into the community could be doing more themselves in the housing space.

Recent subdivision in Kaitangata, Balclutha and Milton and in some other parts of the district was widely hailed as a great step forward for the district, but more subdivision was still seen as needed, as was more social housing. Kāinga Ora can only view the housing need in Clutha Housing in comparison to that of other parts of New Zealand and priority to date has gone to areas of larger population density. Further, the housing waiting list is managed nationally. Solutions to the local housing needs

have to date fallen back on the community. Clutha District Council, partnering with Corrections to build houses relocated to Taylor Park, Milton for short-term housing and in the case of the Kaitangata development and some subsequent subdivision developments, working proactively and in a supportive manner were seen as contributing to progress. As subdivisions develop, the situation was expected to improve, but more subdivision and housing development was still seen as needed. Frustration was expressed at how slow the consenting process is when rezoning of land to enable residential development is sought.

Recruitment and service capacity

"The major issue is in our workers – we're one and a half workers down. We've got these lovely contracts, it's a bloody big frustration being unable to recruit." – social service provider

The health and education sectors, Clutha District Council, social services, Clutha Development itself and a range of professions, trades and other areas of employment were all identified as hampered by difficulties recruiting and retaining workforce. In the social services, it has taken years to recruit for various

social worker, counsellor or specialist youth worker roles, while the hospital and medical practices also struggle to recruit medical personnel. A key barrier around recruitment was identified as the lack of appropriate and available housing stock, both rental and for sale. One Council employee consulted had been unsuccessfully looking for rental accommodation in the local area for many months while continuing to commute a considerable distance each day.

This was however not the only barrier identified. Feedback suggested that Clutha District often acts as a stepping stone for new graduates or people early in their professional careers. Many choose not to live in Clutha, preferring the wider socialising options of Dunedin, but commonly find the commute hard to sustain, and move on to larger urban areas, or a job closer to home. For some social service roles, there is appeal in not living and working in such a small community. For lots of reasons, many of Clutha's workers live outside the district, and are not personally invested in the district and its wellbeing. Because many roles in the social service sector are funded only on a short-term basis with no certainty of renewal beyond one-two year periods, this also impedes successful recruitment and tenure. High turnover in a range of roles in health, the council and in other areas of the community negatively impact on institutional knowledge, but also in relationship building, connections, service coordination and potential for collaboration. Many professionals in the health, education and social service sectors, and in government agencies are under considerable professional stress. Their jobs are getting harder as needs in the community become more complex, and as they commonly cover vacancies or absences due to illness across their teams: negativity was identified as a "constant" by some of those consulted.

Cost of living and poverty

While acknowledged as not unique to Clutha, a sizeable, and growing proportion of Clutha's population was identified as struggling to make ends meet and to meet their basic needs – paying rent/mortgage, heating their homes, affording medical care, securing the food their families need, and being able to experience wellbeing. Demand on the food banks/hubs has soared, fuel cost increases have severely impacted on families, and people are making tough choices. Where in the past, this was always true for a small portion of single parent households and for families characterised by intergenerational benefit-dependence,

"Some don't have the petrol to get to the foodbank."

informants from across the community noted a trend of increased need coming from two-parent working families, and from a wide range of backgrounds. Because most people in Clutha District have to travel to access particular services and for a range of other purposes, travel costs are hitting most households hard, impacting heavily on their discretionary spending, which in many cases takes in those things that uphold wellbeing – socialising with others, playing sport or engaging in hobbies etc. Service Clubs and churches play an active role in quietly dropping off firewood and food to those in need in Clutha in a way that probably would never happen in a big city, but need is significant. Informants from the health sector noted that while Clutha is doing well in terms of health outcomes compared to other areas, there are pockets of high socioeconomic deprivation.

Social service navigation, coordination and collective planning

Clutha was identified as having quite a good array of social and community services and activities for its size, but service navigation issues were highlighted, with a number of informants expressing the view that it is hard to know where to go for help: this probably came through more strongly in relation to Balclutha than for some other parts of the district.

“There’s plenty of services here but I’m not sure if people understand them.”

Community directories were identified as typically out of date. The Community Connector roles established post-Covid had been very much appreciated but were being wound up: For the Southern region, where there had been 33 roles, these have been reduced to 6, and only one role covers Dunedin and Clutha District combined. Frustration was expressed that so much government funding is disjointed and short-term in focus.

Inadequate coordination, and a degree of siloing, “patch protection” and service “cliques” were identified across the social and community sector, to greater and lesser extents for different parts of the district. Some informants pointed to the research undertaken in Balclutha in 2019 by Erin Silver, an Otago University social sciences student, and felt that there had been a defensiveness around the way recommendation had been received by groups. Lack of an overarching coordination body with a strategic and business planning underpinnings was seen to hamper responsiveness to identified need. Services were variously described as “disjointed” and “disconnected” with some duplication of effort, of facilities and of services. While the inter-agency meetings held in Balclutha were appreciated by some, others wanted to see much more purposeful networking and collaboration, reaching beyond Balclutha and into the wider district.

A small number of informants expressed the view that some services are very “personality-driven”, not necessarily sustainable when particular staff members move on. Some people expressed the view that the different towns and communities of Clutha all differ and are all strongly loyal, and that they often want different things for themselves, but because the district’s population is small and many of its distinct communities very small, localised services are unsustainable. It can be hard to think bigger, at district level, and to get these kinds of ideas off the ground and into action. A commonality was identified as the district outside Balclutha often having what one person described as a “stuff Balclutha attitude”, motivating efforts to do things locally. The geographic size of the district adds to this difficulty: small services with limited staffing struggle to achieve real district-wide reach.

Frustration was expressed around Council's perceived historic lack of community service strategic planning and coordination, and of investment in community and economic development but not from all quarters: some informants wanted Council to focus on infrastructure and environment, recognising the challenges faced by Council to deliver well-maintained roads over such a huge network, and to ensure safe drinking water and effective three waters. Frustration was also expressed that the Our Place local master planning process had been long and drawn-out, and had not resulted in a lot of action to date. Some informants however felt that the tide was turning in Council, with a stronger interest in wellbeing from elected members beyond "just three waters", and they were excited about this.

Loss of services

Closure of the Spark shop in Balclutha and closures of banks and of retail across the district were widely identified as challenges facing the community, and especially impacting on older people and those with poorer access to digital technology.

Digital connectivity and literacy

Lack of digital inclusion was strongly highlighted as an issue for many people across the district, and especially older adults and low income families. With bank closures and a push towards online service access from MSD and some other government agencies, distribution of free Jump modems by CDC libraries has filled an important gap. Staff at all libraries across the district are spending a lot of time assisting customers around digital technology, and digital classes run in Balclutha from a senior citizens service from Dunedin every 4 months are in heavy demand. The only online access for some families is via smartphone, and not all sites work well on this platform. Some people are engaging in risky behaviours to access the banking services they need – eg. older farmer trusting a young staff member to do his internet banking, older people getting home-based care workers to get their money from ATMs.

Some areas of Clutha District have poor digital connectivity (eg. large areas of the Catlins, Waitahuna) – an inadequate cellular network and inadequate internet access. This severely hampers access to a wide range of services, including phone-based counselling services and emergency services. It also hampers economic growth.

Young people with complex needs, including those not engaged in education, training and employment

A wide range of issues were highlighted relating to young people in Clutha. NEET young people, not engaged in school, education or employment were identified as a particular issue in Milton and Balclutha, with a small group of Milton young people described as "hanging in a pack and terrorising the town". The community was identified as lacking a lot of key supports for youth at risk, with a lot of the specialist services coming from Dunedin. There are very limited youth worker roles within the district. Further, the needs of some of these young people are high and complex, making these difficult to tackle. Child to parent violence is increasing in prevalence, yet there is a lack of services to address this.

Many young people, and indeed children, have formed poor patterns of school attendance on the back of Covid and recent strike action, and truancy was identified as a significant issue across the district. The truancy service has improved over time locally but its focus was identified as more at

secondary level and less at primary, where truancy is also an issue. The community has little in the way of alternative education, with Toko Training's alternative education places cut in recent years, when they are the only alternative education provider for Balclutha and Milton. The community used to have Salvation Army employment programmes, but this ceased due to loss of funding, while Limited Services Volunteer programmes with Defence have got harder to access. Tokomairiro Training only have 3 places for under 16 year olds, yet if funding was in place, this could be expanded. There was a desire expressed for more training pathways for young people into shearing and wool handling. The view was expressed that while a number of families across the district are home schooling, a lot of this schooling is not of high quality.

Where young people are excluded, lack of public transport and the large geography of the district makes it hard for them to enrol and attend at another school.

For young people at a more general level, a need for a wider range of recreational activities beyond mainstream sports was highlighted, especially in Balclutha.

Some families move into the district for a while, and then move on, never enrolling their child in school in the district. The community was identified as having a "high proportion" of children and young people in Oranga Tamariki care, and a number of grandparents are raising grandchildren with limited support around them.

Parenting support needs

Many families are seen as under financial stress, and some move to the district in search of cheaper housing or to reduce pressure on them from Work and Income or Oranga Tamariki. Feedback from a number of quarters identified many parents as struggling in this role, and some primary schools are seeing challenging behaviours spike before it is time to go home. More support was identified as needed for parents, but getting those who most need this to access it was also identified as challenging.

Cultural inclusivity

Some people within the Clutha District were identified as struggling to accept the changing demographics of the district, and a degree of racism and misogyny, negative stereotypes and prejudices was identified across the community, particularly towards Māori who are newer to the district. Settlement support in Clutha is almost entirely reliant on volunteers, with the only paid resource being the 10 hours of school-based support for Samoan students through Big River Kāhui Ako, although a support role for the Samoan community is under development within the health sector. Support needs for the Samoan community were identified as significant, outlined in a separate section earlier in this report. Language is a key barrier to service access around education and health services, especially impacting on mothers and children, and for families connected to Silver Fern Farms Finegand but also to families in the dairy industry. However newcomer needs appear from the feedback to extend beyond newcomers from overseas. Some areas of the community were identified as cliquy, and more purposeful effort was needed to help newcomers of all backgrounds to settle in, to find and engage in the activities and supports that support their physical and mental wellbeing and to build a stronger sense of community. Effort is needed to build cultural competency and understanding across the community, and to address the issues of racism identified by informants, this needs to start with understanding of Tiriti o Waitangi and te ao Māori, both for people who have

lived in New Zealand for a long time / for their whole lives, and for people new to New Zealand. Building understanding and acceptance of difference was also identified as needed towards the rainbow community: school guidance counsellors were identified as the only real support for LGBTQI+ young people across the district.

Transport

Lack of public transport was quite widely identified as a challenge, but also something hard to address as the population is not big enough to support this. The volunteer driver programme in Balclutha has about a dozen people who will take those who need transport assistance to appointments in Dunedin for a donation, but this often does not even cover their petrol. A number of initiatives across the district utilise volunteer drivers to get people to appointments, but all rely heavily on goodwill, and in the face of fuel cost rises, these are getting harder to maintain.

Carbon farming

Carbon farming was quite widely identified as a challenge facing the community, with quite large numbers of farms across the district converted to forestry over the past few years (eg. 9 farms in Bruce ward in the past five years, apparently resulting in a loss of 160,000 stock units), and carbon farming also raised as a concern in Lawrence-Tuapeka, West Otago, Clinton Gorge and Owaka Valley. There was quite strong feeling that this should be controlled via council by-laws and long-term planning before it impacts further in the form of loss of community, but also environmentally: the fuel load of pine forests was identified as a significant fire risk in communities where the emergency services are already fragile.

The following other challenges were less commonly identified:

- High use of alcohol (binge drinking culture), cannabis, methamphetamine and child – youth vaping.
- Like everywhere in New Zealand, the health system is under stress.
- Many of the committee members and voluntary leaders in the community are getting older. With loss of population a decade or so ago, the present population is light on people in their 40s and 50s, and many older volunteers held onto roles because there was nobody to “hand the baton to”. The face of volunteering is changing, with less appetite for long-term roles such as committee office holders, and volunteers more typically time poor due to work and family commitments, but there is also a new wave of volunteerism from adults in their 20s and 30s, more passionate about project-based volunteering. A number of informants identified tensions between these different groups, both hugely valuable, but sometimes doing things in different ways. Looking to the future, community groups and projects might look very different to how they operated in the past. Some services will struggle to survive in their current form.
- Schools are seeing more children with high and complex needs, but it is extremely difficult to access specialist supports.
- Loss of smaller clubs and community groups is reducing access to activities which support wellbeing.
- Growth in presence of gangs in Milton and Balclutha

- When churches were stronger, they had a bigger capacity to financially support those in need. With funds much more depleted, they do not have the same capacity to help the community in the way they used to. Some have quite elderly congregations, which brings with it its own hardships: one minister consulted had conducted 49 funerals for parishioners in his first seven years in the role, and the experience of loss ran deep within the congregation.
- Many of the churches do not work well together and do not coordinate their efforts in the community.

Asked to think of those groups within the population most likely to be struggling in terms of mental and physical wellbeing, the following groups were most commonly identified:

- Families on low incomes, and especially those with mental health and addiction needs and without a strong support network
- Young people not engaged in education, training and employment
- Young apprentices and young professionals living and working in the district but without family locally and not interested in sport
- People with complex mental health needs
- Transient families
- Migrants with English as a Second Language (ESoL) needs

However there was a strong feeling expressed that wellbeing needs are present across the district without clear demographic patterns. Some families were seen as really struggling currently financially, and lacking the knowledge and willingness to reach out for help, and the strategies to cope. Some employers of migrant workers were identified as doing a great job at supporting the wellbeing of workers and their families, while others needed to step up considerably in that area.

In terms of service gaps, the most significant across the district are summarised as follows:

Mental health supports

Supports around mental health were most commonly identified as a significant service gap in Clutha District, and especially in terms of accessible support, both geographically and in terms of affordability and access to low-no cost mental health supports. Anxiety was identified as a significant issue affecting a large number of children and young people across the district, as is also the case nationally. Mild to moderate level support was identified as hardest to access, especially for under 25 year olds, with nowhere near enough mental health support capacity within schools and a shortage of trauma-informed practitioners. Guidance counsellors in high schools and in area schools were identified as key supports, yet not all area schools have such roles, and these positions are hard to recruit for. Online mental health tools and supports are not accessible to some of the district's rural population or low income families due to the connectivity issues identified earlier in this report.

Regarding rural mental health, barriers to talking about and seeking help around mental health were seen as breaking down, with strong uptake of Matt Chisholm's recent community talks around mental health targeted at farmers, but the community was still seen as having a very blokey culture. Younger farmers were seen to be much more proactive at looking out for one another's mental health than is the case for older farmers. Some younger farmers have formed their own support mechanisms and private counsellors are operating in a number of locations across the district. The Rural Support Network is working to set up a rural chaplaincy, but it is hard to get supports to reach farmers who

are struggling, and who often work very long hours under high levels of stress, especially in the current economic climate.

Learning and behaviour support for children and young people, and support within school settings

While a small number of schools have access to a social worker, these roles have been hard-fought, and were also / are also hard to recruit into. Schools struggle to access specialist supports for students with learning needs, and dealing with the Ministry of Education appears extremely challenging. The following example was given by a rural primary school:

The school is soon to receive an enrolment for a new entrant who is on the autistic spectrum and is a runner. The school is located on a 100km speed zone road. Ministry of Education will not fund a fence adequate to contain the child until they actually start at the school and actually run from the grounds. Meantime, the school is part of a Kāhui Ako that has a Learning Support Coordinator. They can get access to \$80,000 for an office for this worker, based at the school only part-time, a space that they do not require, but cannot access a \$40,000 fence until such time as a child with special needs runs onto a 100km speed zone road.

Speech and language therapists are hard to access, and come at most once a term. Resource

“Learning support in schools is broken.”

Teachers of Learning and Behaviour (RTLBs) will not come if a parent refuses their support, leaving teachers on their own to deal with in many cases high and complex behaviour needs. Transport is a significant barrier to many specialist supports around learning. The view was quite strongly expressed that Ministry of Education needs to be much more responsive to local needs, and also need to be proactive in identifying and listening to what these needs are. School-based health services across the community are extremely limited, and support for rainbow young people was described as “almost non-existent”. A strong feeling was expressed that Ministry of Education and Te Whatu Ora need to work together much more on solutions to mental health, English as a second language and cultural support needs of children, young people and their families.

Places and spaces for young people to connect and be supported

Many of Clutha’s young people are thriving, but across the district, and especially in Balclutha and Milton, a pool of young people sit, either outside the school system or very poorly engaged with it, commonly with a background of family dysfunction and trauma, and have significant support needs which are not being effectively addressed by existing supports. With funding changes, Tokomairiro Training could do much more to address their needs around learning, training and employment. More support was also seen as needed in terms of specialist youth work support for these high needs young people. There is a real paucity of youth work capacity across the district. More is also needed for young people in general, to give them places to connect, to play, to learn, and to have fun. Needs for safe youth drop-in spaces and pro-social recreation opportunities in Balclutha and Milton in particular were highlighted. These could include skate park upgrade in Balclutha, a youth pop-up space (something like this is working well in Owaka), games evenings, homework clubs. Whatever is developed needs to be youth-informed.

Newcomers services and supports

There are pockets of support for newcomers - Clutha Settlement Support's voluntary efforts settling in arrivals from other countries, ESOL classes in West Otago and the Catlins, the part-time Samoan support role in school and variable support provision from employers, one-off community-based newcomer events. Supports such as Tokomairiro Hub and the services based within it also support people new to the community. However these supports were not seen as extensive enough, or adequately resourced.

Coordination of and strategic approaches to social services

A need for a more data-informed, collective response around wellbeing services across the district was widely expressed. Informants saw the lack of a clearly articulated strategic plan around wellbeing in Clutha as a significant gap. There was demand expressed for an infrastructure to support smaller organisations in their work and to seek greater unity of resourcing for social services. A small number of informants highlighted a need for a more coordinated approach to volunteer recruitment and use to avoid so much duplication.

Safe drinking water – one school consulted has been on a boil water notice for over a year.

Other service gaps less commonly identified included the following:

- Lack of crisis services around homelessness.
- Lack of AA groups in the drug and alcohol space. Some informants identified a lack of drug and alcohol rehabilitation locally, but the research encountered at least two drug and alcohol counsellors during consultations.
- There is a shortage of home-based personal care providers for frail older adults and for people with disabilities in West Otago, and significant delays (6-8 weeks) for assessment for this support, and this situation seems to be worsening.
- Lack of home-based ECE options in Tuapeka-Lawrence and childcare via kindergarten poorly matching needs of working families.
- Lack of childcare for under 2 year olds in Tapanui.
- Lack of respite for families with children with a disability.
- Lack of support for children and young people around stopping vaping / risk reduction.
- Lack of community drop-in services across the district – few places where people who are socially isolated, of any age or culture, can come and connect with others in an informal basis.
- Lack of places locally to gather for Māori and to learn and engage around te ao Māori.

Challenges for specific geographic communities:

Balclutha

The following challenges were most commonly highlighted for Balclutha:

- **Lack of housing stock** - Rentals are increasing in price and are hard to find. **Lack of rental housing** poses a barrier to recruitment for schools. Young teachers often prefer to live in Dunedin, enjoying the leisure opportunities it offers them and commute to Balclutha, and this makes it hard to retain them in the long term. Paucity of modern housing stock Balclutha also makes it hard to attract people to professional roles – *“1970s split-level homes are the nice houses in Balclutha”*. The low housing asset base was seen to perpetuate a low wage economy. Houses often do not meet Healthy Homes standards, and there is a lack of pet-friendly rentals. There was also an identified need for more smaller and accessible homes. The housing situation was seen as a significant barrier to economic and population growth.

- Many families are struggling financially with **cost of living pressures**.
- **Lack of pro-social recreational opportunities for young people who aren't into sport** – Balclutha needs a decent skate park, more cultural activities
- **Lack of community-based Māori cultural opportunities**
- **Main street is struggling – need to encourage more business into the town**
- **Social isolation** for older people “stuck at home”
- **Youth drinking and vaping** – alcohol and vapes are often supplied by parents and siblings
- Schools across the Big River Kāhui Ako struggled to secure **specialist supports for students with mental health needs**, with an extremely high threshold set by Ministry of Education before specialist supports can be accessed. With funding from local trusts, from Ministry of Education and from the Kāhui Ako's own budget, they secured a counsellor across the schools from Year 0-8. This role has made a big difference and they are very keen to retain this. The worker had supported 108 clients across 11 schools, just in term one of this year. More sustainable funding is needed to secure this role long-term.
- Balclutha has one taxi but **no public transport**, and no transport connection to Dunedin apart from the St John Health Shuttle. For non-health related appointments or needs in Dunedin, people have to rely on others to take them if they cannot drive themselves. Clinton has a Senior Citizen's bus that takes people to Gore once per fortnight. With transport options very limited, some people do drive without a licence or without WOF or registration on their vehicles – the Drive my Life programme is valuable at addressing transport needs.
- **GP services are under pressure**, and there are big waits for appointments which especially impact on older people.
- The hospital was identified as under-staffed.
- **Significant health, education and housing needs were identified for Balclutha's Samoan community, with ESoL support central**. This is addressed in a separate section further on in this report.

Milton / Tokomairiro

The following challenges were most commonly highlighted for Milton and its community:

- There is **ongoing difficulty recruiting professionals to fill gaps** in education and social services: There are significant mental health, behaviour support and ESoL needs in the community that are not being addressed.
- A significant sector of the population is **struggling and living in poverty**, commonly in inadequate housing, either substandard and rented by private landlords targeting the bottom of the market or in emergency accommodation in motels.
- **Under-resourcing of ESoL support in schools** (Schools get \$200 per term per child needing ESoL support, but schools cannot find anyone to help for that amount.) Schools in the Tokomairiro Kāhui Ako have a number of children from Indian and Filipino families working in the dairy industry where the child is the best English speaker in the family.
- There are a number of **young people who have high and complex needs and are struggling and presenting challenging behaviours in school and out in the community**. Some of these young people are not engaged in school, training and employment, but there are no spaces for them in alternative education. **Toko Training** have the capacity to take in some of the NEET young people but are not resourced to take them: they cannot take any under 14 year olds,

and Government cut their number of alternative education places for 15-16 year olds from 7-8 down to 2 places.

- There are a number of **whānau with complex needs**, and it is very hard to get the supports in place needed to address these. Milton School is working with Project Bruce, Barnados and Tokomairiro Waiora to try and secure a social worker. It used to get the Chatbus, which was government-funded but funding ended. Tokoiti School has a counsellor for a day per week, contracted by Ministry of Education from Rethink but factoring in travel time, the worker is only on the ground for five hours per day. Lack of after school care was highlighted as a challenge locally.
- Access to drugs has increased with relocation of the high-risk offender unit to Otago Corrections Facility and accompanying relocation of inmates' whānau to the area.
- The **Tokomairiro Hub fills a critical gap** in the community but only opens 3 days per week: it was identified as hugely needed five days / week, yet it **struggles for funding**: funding needs to be more long-term.
- Transitional / emergency housing via motels and the campground has people who have been there for years: a **critical need was flagged for Kāinga Ora housing locally, and for development of more smaller houses**.

Lawrence - Tuapeka

The following challenges were most commonly highlighted for Lawrence - Tuapeka:

- **Farming in 2023 has been challenging**, with prices down and costs remaining high, and as a consequence, farmers are pulling back on spending in the community, and this has knock-on effects to all local businesses. This was also highlighted for Milton.
- Many **volunteers are getting older**, and physical fundraisers that worked well in the past (eg. firewood cutting) are getting harder. **Some clubs are seeing declining membership** and some clubs have combined, and it's harder to fill committee roles, but there are still younger members happy to help with more one-off tasks, and a lot of new members are joining a range of local clubs including the Waitahuna Fire Brigade, the dog trial club, while the Waitahuna Playgroup remains strong.
- Some older people, and especially widowers, are not keen to get out and socialise, and there are **pockets of social isolation**. **Caring Calling (St John) used to operate locally but lost its volunteers, and this has left a gap**. The community is keen to re-establish this service locally but meantime, Meals on Wheels continues to operate.
- A lot of **farms have converted to forestry**, leading to a loss of some families from the area and some jobs, but other families are moving in, including professionals who work from home and with no historic connection to Lawrence, attracted by the heritage character and the house process.
- There is a **lack of rental housing**, and **this makes it harder to fill jobs locally**, including jobs at the school. This has always been a small rental market, but it has worsened with conversion of some rentals to Air BnB, and some rental housing was being used to accommodate workers on the Beaumont Bridge project, the contractors paying quite high rent.
- **Transport is an increasing issue for the ageing population**. Older people locally do tend to keep driving for a long time because they do not have to deal with much traffic, but it is hard for older people and others who don't drive to get to hospital appointments. The hospital does not coordinate appointment times well with the St John health shuttle (which services

Lawrence) and district nurses sometimes have to drive people. A volunteer driver initiative used to operate in Lawrence but has ceased.

- **It is an ongoing challenge maintaining the services in place for the community**, and including things like trades, and of course the local health services.
- **Specialist supports are hard to access for the school** both due to distance but also scarcity of resources. The school secured a school counsellor for 2023, funded by the Board of trustees for one day per fortnight. This role has taken “years to recruit” but was identified as making a huge difference for local young people.
- **The only childcare option for families with preschoolers is the kindergarten** which operates 9am – 3pm, Monday – Thursday, a mismatch to hours of work, and presenting a challenge for those families who need two incomes, or for single parents. Those working, and especially with school-age children also, have to juggle childcare with help from family or paying a nanny.
- Lawrence **lacks a bank** and only has an ATM that charges \$2.30 per transaction – the community would like a smart ATM. The town used to have Credit Union Otago based locally, and most locals had an account there to give them local bank services. It was identified as a big loss for the community, and especially its older population when it closed.
- The Clutha Gold trail is a great asset for the town but the town lacks **food and hospitality** to support this, especially when demand grows through the trail extension.
- There is a need to engage in **succession planning to ensure that the success achieved in fundraising and making things happen by committees up until now continues into the future**, and that the newer members coming into groups are supported to take on volunteer roles, but in a way that works within the context of modern lifestyles: short and sharp meetings, and business via email.

The Catlins

The following challenges were most commonly highlighted for the Catlins:

- **Transport** – Owaka Senior Citizens have a van, but as the population is ageing, transport was seen as becoming more of an issue, with more people needing support and less volunteers to drive them. To access the health shuttle to Dunedin Hospital, people have to get themselves to Balclutha.
- **Lack of rental accommodation.**
- **There is nowhere in Owaka to develop additional housing**, which is much-needed – informants felt the town needs land to be rezoned as residential in order to expand.
- **High number of community groups with the same people involved in many and volunteers stretched** across many roles, which some feel could be consolidated if groups and committees did things differently. Volunteer capacity is a significant issue in this community. This was expected to worsen when the impact of constitutional review for not-for-profits comes into action later in 2023. The population in the Catlins has grown after a period of decline, but a lot of its newer residents are yet to step up to volunteer roles, and don’t necessarily understand how dependent community services are on volunteers.
- **Emergency services are fragile, with inadequate numbers of volunteers** to sustain them. Training is a big turn-off for emergency service volunteer roles, which require a significant time commitment, as is national body “red tape”.
- **Need for greater emergency and disaster resilience** – when floods occur, there are places in the Catlins that are hard to get in and out of, and a need was flagged for stronger planning

and preparedness to ensure everyone has access to what they need to survive at these times. The Catlins is divided into 11 Civil Defence Sub-sections, and each requires 3-5 volunteers to oversee, yet these roles are hard to recruit for. When things do go wrong, people are happy to step up and help their neighbours, but they don't want to formalise their role.

- **Reduced capacity to volunteer in younger generations** due to two-parent working households/ families, financial pressure and being time-poor, but some younger people are “stepping up” in community roles – especially if their own family will benefit directly from this.
- **Lack of opportunities for older people** to get out of their homes and connect with others.
- Facing **telecommunication and digital connectivity challenges** – poor internet and cellphone coverage, which especially impact access to emergency services, but also the visitor experience.
- **Fragile infrastructure** – power drops out, roads were identified as in many cases in a poor state, and with more and more visitors coming to the area, the need was highlighted for the Catlins to be supported with sustainable infrastructure – waste management, recycling and reliable electricity supply.
- **Need for stronger monitoring and protection of natural environment** – many people are drawn to the Catlins by the natural environment, and agriculture and tourism both depend on the environment being cared for and protected. There was a strong feeling expressed that CDC could respond more strongly when environmental damage is occurring, and should take its monitoring roles more seriously, not relying on volunteers to do this, and resourcing the enforcement of by-laws pertaining to environment, such as compliance around vehicles on beaches and around illegal logging. CDC currently has only one compliance officer. Strong concern was expressed around conversion of farms to forestry in the area, and a desire expressed for stronger by-laws to limit this.

Tapanui / West Otago

- Tapanui's location means that it falls within the boundaries of different places for different services, meaning that often, the **community either has access to multiple services or to none**.
- While some counselling is available via private counselling, brief intervention counselling via the Health Improvement Practitioner, and counselling via the Rūnaka in Gore, publicly funded **counselling was perceived as more difficult to access** in West Otago than in some other areas.
- **Transport is a challenge** for older people who do not drive. For appointments at Gore Hospital, Red Cross operates a shuttle door to door, while the St John Shuttle takes people to appointments to Invercargill and Dunedin, but operates to a schedule, which often does not match appointment times or the needs of the individual. A pool of local women do take people to health appointments. Distance means that transport for everyone is costly.
- **Tapanui used to have a bus to Gore twice daily** – the lack of public transport impacts on older people, but also on young people.
- The school and health services all **struggle to secure adequate staffing**.
- There is a **lack of affordable rental accommodation** locally, and this impacts staffing / recruitment.
- There is a **lack of childcare for under 2-year-olds**: there are three home-based care providers, but all are full. With childcare hard to access, a lot of younger Mums work nightshift and then try and stay up during the day for their children, operating on minimal sleep. Some cope by bringing in extended family to live with them and care for the children.

- Fear that the town will lose its petrol station, identified as a key asset.
- A lot of older people live alone and the **number of older people in the community without family in the area is growing** – its challenging when things go wrong.

7. Survey Findings

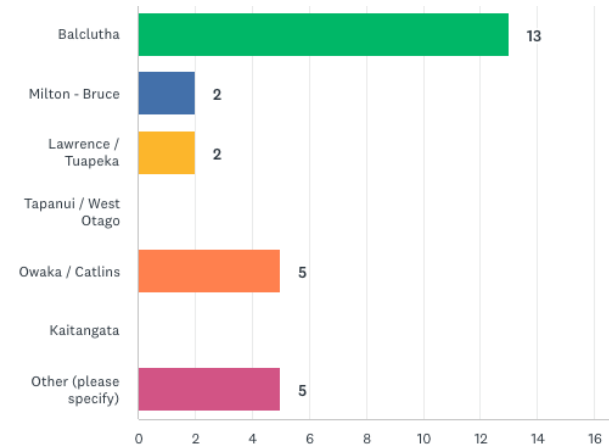
Survey of community groups

The respondent group

A Survey Monkey survey link was sent by email to 73 community groups (community development, social service, sport, recreation, interest and arts groups) across the Clutha District, drawn primarily from a contact list provided by Clutha Development. Eleven emails bounced because they were incorrect, or the group had folded. Of the 62 email contacts that did not bounce, 27 responses were received. It is not possible to determine how many survey invites ended up in Spam folders. It is also likely that some responses were provided for multiple organisations from the same people – the email did offer this as a suggestion. Responses were received from a broad range of community groups across the following categories:

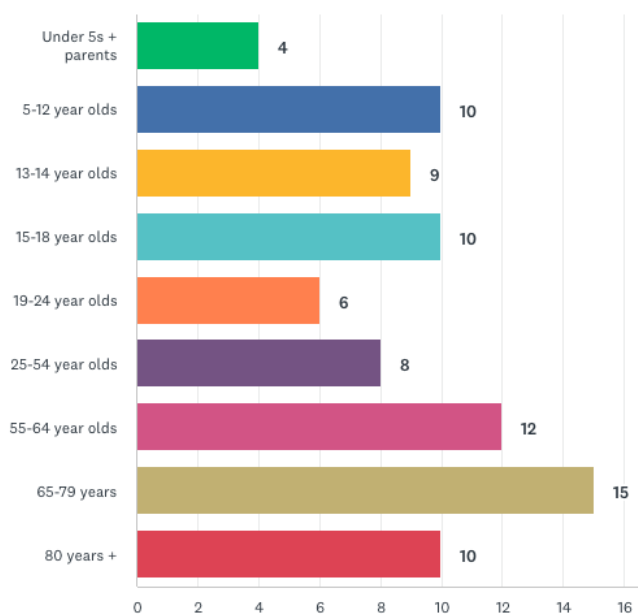
- Sports / physical recreation 7
- Arts and crafts 3
- Service club 3
- Youth 3
- Emergency services 2
- Environmental 2
- Local community group 2
- Heritage 2
- Parenting support 1
- Elder advocacy and support 1
- Other (a church-based group) 1

Figure 22. Location of groups responding to survey



Respondent groups were most commonly located in Balclutha, as shown in Figure 22. Groups more commonly served a membership / participants aged 55 years and over, but many serviced a range of age groups, as shown in Figure 23.

Figure 23. Age groups currently served by group



Volunteering

Of the 27 community groups which responded to the survey, 22 (88%) indicated that they were totally dependent on volunteers, with a further 2 groups (8%) indicating that they mostly depended on volunteers. Asked what patterns their group was seeing in volunteering, responses were summarised, with the strongest themes as follows:

- Many volunteers are active in more than one group – some in many groups (n=9)
- It is very difficult to attract new volunteers / members (n=9)
- It is especially difficult filling leadership / committee roles (n=9)

“Over the past few years it has become extremely difficult to recruit committee members, let alone fill office bearer roles. And when it comes to doing things, it is always the same people who volunteer their time.”

- There is an ageing pool of volunteers across the community (n=5)

“An aging membership means that we can no longer easily undertake projects and fundraisers that we did in the past. Dwindling numbers also mean the same core group are doing the majority of the tasks. Due to most of the group being retired it is hard to get younger members who don't find the demographic that appealing. Older members also struggle to keep up with technology and modern means of communication, and the changed environment around volunteering and the modern, busy lifestyles of young families. We do try to connect with other groups and help out other organisations.”

Other feedback:

- With Clutha's small communities, there is only a small pool of volunteers and being involved in such roles across multiple organisations, there is a high incidence of burnout (n=2)

“The same volunteers are part of many local groups, so they are becoming exhausted - therefore it is becoming challenging to recruit/sustain groups. The Catlins is a large geographical area with a low population, so it is challenging to recruit new volunteers.”

- It's hard to attract young people into volunteer roles (n=2)
- People are reluctant to attend meetings (n=1)
- It's hard to retain volunteers (n=1)
- A few people end up doing everything (n=1)
- Volunteering comes in waves – people drop off but then more people will turn up (group serving 20s-30s age group)
- Manage okay except for committee roles (n=1)
- Some people are keen to volunteer but other members have done their service and are now less involved due to age (n=1)
- Don't have any problems getting volunteers (n=1 - sports club serving predominantly older age group)
- We try hard to encourage volunteering (n=1)

Capacity building

Respondents were asked, from a list of options, what would be useful to build the capacity of their group and its volunteers.

- 78% (n=21) were keen for more opportunities to showcase their group to newcomers to the community
- Over two fifths (n=11) wanted opportunities to meet with funders and develop fundraising and grant application skills
- A third (n=9) wanted more opportunities to collaborate and connect with similar groups / clubs
- Nearly 30% (n=8) wanted guidance to develop their digital presence – using social media, websites etc.
- Over a quarter (n=7) wanted improved hard copy promotion of community activities.
- Despite one of the strongest themes around volunteering being difficulty recruiting for committee, office holder and leadership roles, only three respondents (11.1%) indicated a desire for access to support to grow governance knowledge and skills.

Other needs identified by respondents themselves were around capacity building included increasing the group's membership, frustration at the community's lack of understanding of environmental threats, a need for more knowledge of the community they serve and their particular needs, a need to upskill local groups around changes to the Incorporated Societies Act and Constitutional requirements, and help to make groups like service clubs appealing to a younger demographic.

Group's own impacts on wellbeing

The survey included the question: *Clubs and group of all sorts are really important at supporting wellbeing, by providing opportunities for people to connect, to be active, to learn new things, to have fun and help others. It would be awesome if you could share an example of something that your group / club has done that you are really proud of and that you know impacts positively on wellbeing.*

Every respondent shared something, which in itself shows the impact that community groups have on community wellbeing. Some examples:

- A founding member of a craft group, now aged 80 years, had recently had a work accepted in the national exhibition for their craft. She expressed joy that she is often asked for advice on her craft from others, and that people in their group all learn from each other every time they meet up.
- Age Concern is active in recruiting volunteers for a national programme connecting people living in their homes with volunteers who visit them – local older adults who are socially isolated are benefitting from this service.
- Taieri Mouth Amenities Society recently partnered with Otago University students to develop a map and brochure promoting Taieri Mouth. They have a successful community Facebook group and have a range of initiatives which are successfully improving the natural environment, connecting local residents together to have fun and socialise, and have improved local recreation amenities.
- One of the groups expressed pride in the relaxed alcohol-free social environment they provide to their members.

- The Kaka Point Bowling Club fundraised to support a local family whose child had serious health needs.
- A local run club meets for coffee or breakfast after each run for people to connect with each other.
- Arts-based groups identified the mental wellbeing benefits arising from their creative activities.
- St John Balclutha hosted the Balclutha Emergency Services family fun day on the 23rd April 2023. This was a great way to showcase the emergency services that are active in our community and have an educational day for families to learn about these services and perhaps remove any sort of worry for if they are in an emergency.
- A church-based group provides practical support to families in need in the community.
- Balclutha Rotary Club funded the placement of books relating to wellbeing in the library, which doctors could "prescribe" to those who would benefit from that sort of intervention for wellbeing. They also support a lot of youth based initiatives, as well as doing collections and cooking for the local Foodhub. They run an annual book sale to raise funds for community projects, and are currently renovating the flying fox structure at the Balclutha Bridge playground.
- St John youth programmes across the district see young people develop a wide range of skills, including leadership. Many go on to leadership roles across the community.

Assistance to increase community group impact

Asked what would help their group achieve more in their community, most commonly, respondents wanted to see stronger, free promotion of local organisations to build membership. Around half the respondents wanted this for their groups. Suggestions around this included an expo in the Balclutha Recreation Centre promoting the groups and activities on offer in the community, better signage from Council around the community, and a central community directory.

"Having more awareness of our program in the community. It is hard to get our name out there to grow membership - we have done advertising, go to schools and things, but often it's not acted on. We often get "we didn't know you existed". Having a central place that helps awareness of the opportunity to join the program for children would be hugely beneficial."

The following other responses were also provided:

- Balclutha's Creative Arts Centre is community-owned, but with an ageing user base. The group would like to see this facility utilised by newcomers and other cultural groups for their crafts, but need help promoting the facility to these communities.
- More promotion of the need to connect and support older people within the community – encouraging people to reach out and connect with older neighbours and support them with the little things – changing light bulbs etc.
- More funding to assist with rising compliance costs (eg. Public Liability Insurance for facilities) – some groups are still recovering from loss of hall hireage income through Covid.
- Removal of stigma that bowls is an "old person's sport".
- A move from annual funding to 2-3 year funding to give more certainty and sustainability to established community organisations.
- Refreshing of service cubs to increase appeal to younger age groups.

Wellbeing of the district as a whole

The survey asked respondents to rate, out of 5, the wellbeing of Clutha's community as a whole. The average rating was 3.6, with 10 people rated this 3/5, 8 rating is 4/5 and 2 rating it 5/5: 7 respondents did not rate it but made a comment, two indicating that this was too hard to do given that they only knew their own locality, and one feeling that the district differs in terms of wellbeing, commenting:

"While our community has pockets of 5 star wellbeing, it also has pockets of those much less fortunate. We are also experiencing a period of uncertainty around our future, especially due to our being a rural-centred community. The rural sector is under a lot of pressure at the moment, and much of this stress is unseen by the general public, as rural people are often isolated and solitary beings. We have some very well run organisations within the community, including our local health facility and our new Clutha Foundation organisation. There are a lot of experienced local community members involved in several areas of the community, but it would be good to be able to encourage younger/socially diverse/financially diverse people to be involved in more governance roles, and share the knowledge of what is going on, rather than it being held by the same handful of people on multiple platforms."

Other comments:

"Hard to quantify - certainly in The Catlins there is a lot of challenge and change occurring in terms of high cost of living and farms being sold to grow 'pine trees' which impacts on communities/ brings in pests i.e. possums, deer, pigs, stoats etc."

"It is improving but there is still much to be done. Taieri Mouth is so often LEFT OUT. Clutha forgets we exist sometimes."

"Social activities, (for) example CWI (are) not a big presence today. This was great for rural woman to learn & mix. Poor usage of swimming pool, Covid has kept people from going out - hopefully the new complex by the Bridge (referring to Te Pou ō Matau-au Clutha District War Memorial and Community Centre) will be of great value & that we get visiting artists etc , & folk really get interested in joining in."

The survey asked "What are the most significant wellbeing needs you are seeing across your membership, or the people who access your services?", but this item did not work quite as intended: some people identified needs that exist, while others were clearly referring to needs they felt their organisation was addressing. Both however are relevant and useful. The following wellbeing needs were identified as being met by the groups and activities:

- Friendship, social connection, sharing and caring for each other (n=7)
- Sports participation (n=3)
- Learning new skills (n=3)
- Physical activity (n=2)
- Good health outcomes (n=1)

The following unmet needs were highlighted:

Lack of public transport and need for more ride share options (n=3)

- Loneliness and social isolation (n=2)
- Elder abuse and neglect (n=1)
- Difficulty renewing driver licences for those aged 80 years+ - cost and access (n=1)
- Difficulty accessing Dunedin Hospital (n=1)
- Difficulty engaging with young adults (n=1)
- Patchy/ lack of digital connectivity (wifi, cellular) (n=1)
- Need for more youth activities (n=1)
- Complex health and wellbeing needs among some families involved in activities (n=1)
- Busy lives impacting on volunteering capacity while older people carry the volunteer burden

“Our membership is aging, and the younger ones have extremely busy lives outside of our group and are stretched and stressed when called on to volunteer. And our older members are tired of shouldering the whole burden of running the group.”

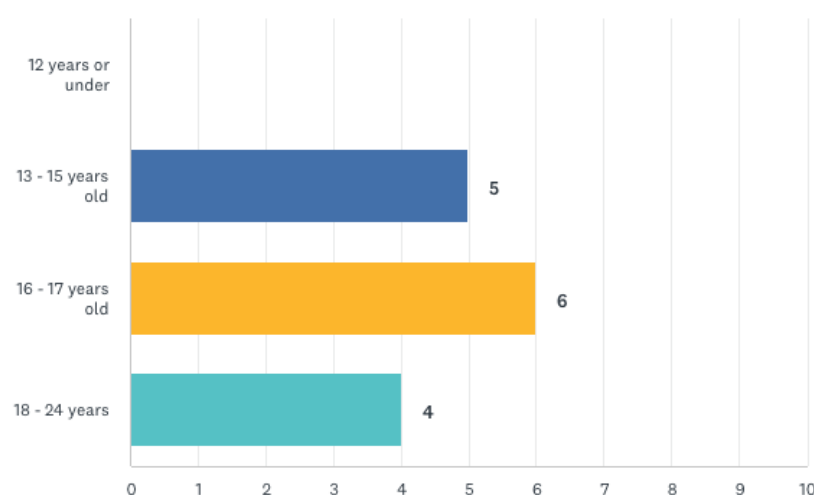
- Difficulties having health needs met - this impacts on capacity of older members to stay involved (n=1)
- Promotion of the great activities that are available, thanks to volunteer efforts (n=1)
- Fuel costs (n=1)
- Costs of operating organisations (n=1)

Youth survey

The respondent group

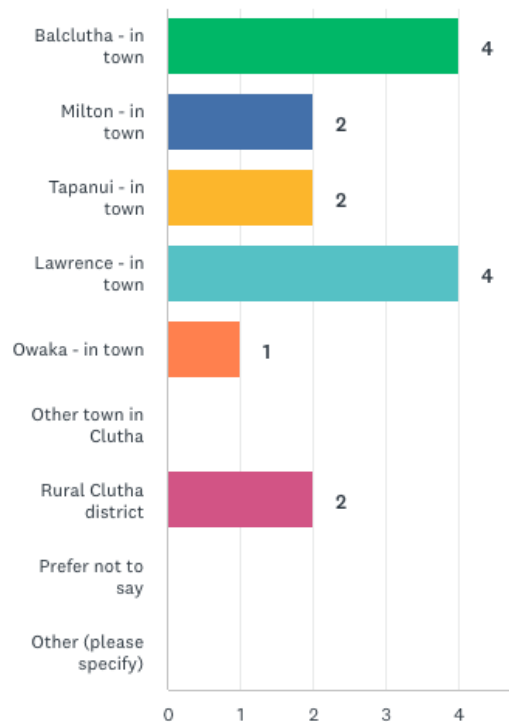
The youth survey was conducted using Survey Monkey, with the link promoted at least 3 times on a range of community Facebook pages, and once in at least two local newsletters and via school student notices in some local high schools / area schools. A boosted post also ran for a seven-day period over King’s Birthday on Facebook and Instagram – this reached over 470 young people within the target age range and in the Clutha District. The Clutha Leader newspaper ran a story on the survey, but failed to share the link for the survey. Despite wide promotion, the survey achieved a low response, much lower than the researcher has achieved with similar surveys of young people in other communities, including those with populations considerably smaller than Clutha District. In total, 15 young people responded to the survey in the seven-week period it was open, aged as follows:

Figure 24. Age of youth survey respondents



Of the 15 respondents, two-thirds (n=10) were female, 26.7% (n=4) male and one respondent identified as gender diverse. The respondent group was predominantly Pakeha: 13 identified as New Zealand European, 2 as New Zealand Māori / New Zealand European and one as Middle Eastern. Then young people who responded to the survey were spread throughout the Clutha District, as shown in Figure 25.

Figure 25. Where in the District youth survey respondents lived



Nine (60%) of the 15 respondents attended school in Clutha District, a third of whom (n=3) travelled by bus to school. One respondent was home-schooled and another attended school outside the District. Two of the students who responded to the survey were also in part-time employment.

Three of the respondents (20%) had left school and were working full-time, while one was not in education, training or employment.

Life in Clutha as a young person

The survey asked “Thinking about what is it like being a young person growing up in Clutha, what star rating (out of 10) would you give your life here? The average rating was 5.3: one respondent rated their life as 1, one as 2, 4 as 4, one as 5, two as 6, three as 7, one 8 and one 9.

The survey asked respondents to identify the three best things and the three hardest things about being a young person in Clutha District. These were thematically analysed as follows:

Best things	n
• Friendly / nice people + community	6
• River(s)	4
• Feeling safe	3
• Night n Day dairies	3
• Walkability / proximity to amenities	3
• Sports	2
• School	2
• Fishing / hunting	1
• Childcare	1
• My job	1
• Playground (Lawrence)	1

• South Otago Theatrical Society	1
• Bush	1
• Cafes in Milton	1
• Amazing opportunities	1
• Good food options	1
• Rural life	1
• Getting into scraps at the pub	1

Hardest things **n**

• Boring / nothing to do / lack of social activities	9
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“The social environment can be difficult if you're not someone who drinks alcohol - and people around my age already have their social circle and don't tend to go out to meet new people as they already have their friends.”

“Options aren't too diverse for people around my age for activities - we're a bit too old for the park, and a bit too young for enough of us to meet new people at for various groups including knitting, sewing, creative arts or more.”

• No Maccas / takeaway options	4
• Lack of job opportunities	3
• Lack of services (banks, Spark shop, shopping)	2
• The people	2
• Poor cellular coverage/digital connectivity	1
• Racism	1
• Potholes in the roads	1
• Missing people I care about	1
• Having to travel for sports	1
• Distance	1
• Being barred from the pub	1
• Lack of affordable, quality housing	1
• Cost and lack of supply of rental housing	1
• Small town	1
• Balclutha skate park	1
• Cost of alcohol	1
• Climate in winter	1
• Cost of living	1
• Lack of part-time employment for young people	1
• School	1

Youth issues and needs

Asked what the biggest needs and issues that they would like to see decision makers address for young people in their community, five of the respondents could not think of anything. The following needs and issues were highlighted:

- A third of the respondents identified a need for young people to have more activities and a place to connect (n=5)

"A place for young people to hang instead of being on the street."

"Young people are awesome. They are the future of the Clutha District - and things need to be done to give us more opportunities for socialising, as I'm very aware of many people around my age who I'm not completely familiar with that are sitting at home by themselves instead of getting out there and meeting new people."

"The lack of activities for youth to do. Peers have started to do bad things as a symptom of their boredom and often drag others with them. If there were more youth based activities to do in the area, kids wouldn't be as bored."

"There is a movie theatre coming in which could be a game changer, but things like social events that don't always include alcohol, or getting to know others in the district in a specific place or something. It feels as if something is missing. A formal or social ball in Balclutha itself could be awesome."

- More opportunities for young people to earn money and take charge of their future (n=3)
- More local businesses, and preservation of those which are still operating (n=2)
- Development of more housing stock to support community growth (n=1)
- A mosque in the local area (n=1)
- Upgrade of the Balclutha skate park (n=1)
- Make it easier to get from one place to another without a car (n=1)
- Improved roading (n=1)

Mental health and wellbeing supports for young people

The survey asked *"For young people who are struggling with mental health or other wellbeing challenges, what are the best supports available locally?"*. Three of the respondents commented that there weren't supports in place for these young people, while 4 identified school counsellors as the only support, and two knew of Clutha Health First / Clutha Hospital Brief Intervention Counselling, one person commenting that they had heard good things about the mental health support available.

Individuals identified the following:

- *"Going to the gym, crying on your best mate's shoulder, channel the energy into an addiction (for me gaming), "Be a man""*
- Talking to friends or others experiencing the same things
- *"Probably get some cement and harden the fuck up and get on with ya life."*

The following were most commonly identified as barriers to getting help for young people who are struggling:

- Knowing where to go for support
- Lack of people to talk to in confidence, and feeling alone in their struggles

"They sometimes feel they don't know where to look for help, and seeing as everyone else seems to be doing okay, they just "suck it up" and pretend. Which isn't how it should be."

Other barriers were:

- Rural stigma around reaching out for help
- Money
- “White Police”
- Lack of options, due to poor digital connectivity
- Cost of alcohol

Messages from young people to Clutha District Council, Te Whatu Ora, Schools etc. to help young people thrive

The respondents had a range of messages for different audiences to help young people feel good and live great lives in Clutha: two-thirds of the young people had something to say, as follows:

Clutha District Council:

“It would be awesome to set up (through the Clutha District Youth Council or other) events or options for young people from all Clutha regions to meet each other, through a social ball or formal, or even an event of some sort. Get connections going, bring dances and formals to Clutha. It's a great way for us young ones to get out of our shells and bringing confidence by dressing up fancy and meeting new people. That's what they did back in the day and how many people used to meet. Of course, social media is a big thing nowadays - but promote it on there! These events could be ground-breaking for Clutha and bring many youngsters out of the woodwork who would usually sit at home and alone. As a person who has grown up in the area and doesn't have the most friends, it's difficult to stay in touch with the few I have, or make new connections that aren't bland online conversations. Would be great for something like this to be considered. Thanks for doing this survey.”

Initiate more things to do locally (n=3)

Schools:

“Don't make us talk to teachers - actually get a professional in.”

“Get school to stop putting so much pressure on kids for example: teachers saying “if you don't pass this you won't get far in life” - have more people to go talk to in the community - there aren't enough people to help with people's emotions especially teens that find it hard to open up and that have been struggling in school with having covid interrupt and teacher strikes.”

The community:

“Stop the hate.”

“Get you're A into G: The kids need help.”

Other young people:

“Take care of yourself, you just have to, life is really hard if you haven't got a good foundation of self care.”

“If someone looks sad, don't tap them on the shoulder. Just don't. Unless your their CLOSE mate then don't. Instead, get one of their best friends to try and cheer them up. Tell them to invite them for a weekend over, or something else. Whenever a concerned adult or teacher comes up to you, you just wanna say that your fine. So you do.”

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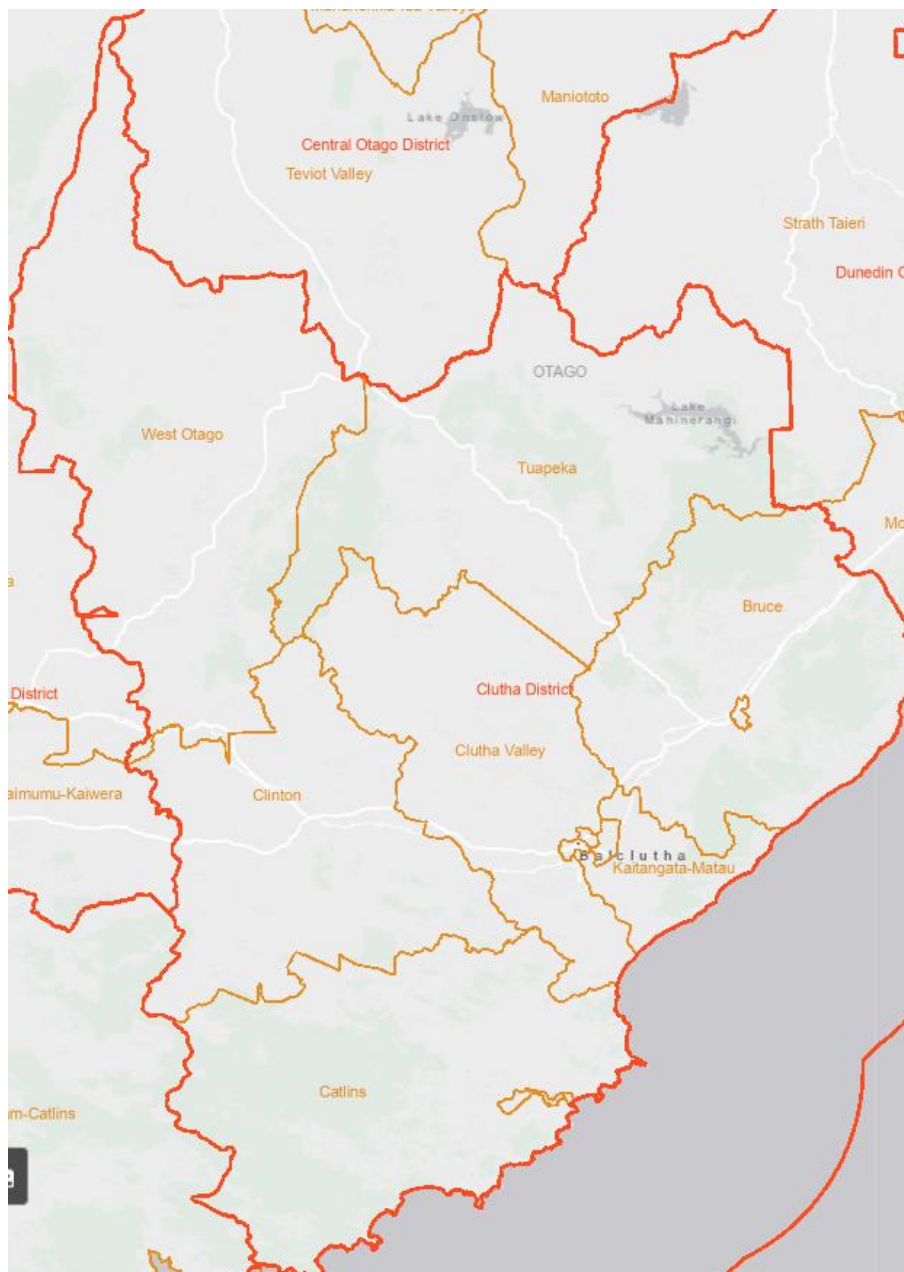
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Appendix 1

Balclutha District comprises 11 populated Stats New Zealand Statistical Area 2 areas:

- Balclutha North
- Balclutha South (the two areas comprising the town of Balclutha)
- Benhar-Stirling (the rural area to the east of Balclutha)
- Bruce
- Catlins (large rural area and taking in the township of Owaka)
- Clinton (large rural area and taking in the township of Clinton)
- Clutha Valley
- Kaitangata-Matau (large rural area and taking in Kaitangata)
- Milton (the town of Milton)
- Tuapeka (large rural area and taking in the town of Owaka)
- West Otago (large rural area and taking in Lawrence and the township of Waitahuna)



StatsNZ

Appendix 2

COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL WELLBEING, RESILIENCE AND RECOVERY NEEDS AND CAPACITIES IN CLUTHA DISTRICT

Focus Group: _____

N= _____

Whanaungatanga – introduction from Sarah

Attendees – Name and organisation(s) and role(s), extent of reach of organisation across Clutha

If you had to describe your local community to a stranger, what would you tell them?

What about if you had to describe the community of Clutha District as a whole?

Social and community sector

What are the community wellbeing strengths of Clutha District as a whole?

What about your town and its surrounding area – anything different in terms of the strengths of your very local community?

Have these strengths changed in recent years?

Do you expect these to change in the next few years? How?

What are the main challenges you see facing the community of Clutha district as a whole currently?
What about locally?

To what extent have these challenges changed over the past few years?

To what extent do you expect they might change in the next few years?

If we think about living life well – we are thinking about people having their basic needs met in terms of housing and food security, access to resources, access to healthcare and feeling safe. We are also thinking about the 5 ways to wellbeing and the things that help people experience good mental and physical health – having opportunities to connect with others, to be active, to help others, to experience fun and joy and to learn new things.

Are there some groups within the population of Clutha (eg. specific age groups, cultural groups, family or living situations, worker/occupation/employment situations) who are more likely to be experiencing challenges in terms of the things needed to live life well?

What about in your town and the surrounding area?

What are the services that are already working well in Clutha to reach / engage with these people and address these needs? What?

What are the most significant service gaps or barriers that you are aware of in Clutha – these could be geographic, or these could be age, gender or culture-based – services not being available to meet the needs of some people

- What does this mean for these groups?

Do you expect any of these gaps or barriers to change in the next few years?

What opportunities are you aware of that could address these gaps or barriers?

What else do you think can realistically be done to address these gaps and barriers?

- Government agencies
- Council
- Community-based service providers
- The community in general

If you had to identify the priority areas for action to address community needs in Clutha, and in your local area within the district, what would these be?

(EXPLORE FOR DIFFERENT POPULATIONS)

Are there any other things you want to share regarding community strengths, needs service gaps and access barriers that we haven't covered but that you feel are important to acknowledge and explore in the research report?