

LINK Upper Clutha

Annual Report to the Alpine Community Development Trust, covering January 1 – December 31 2019

AGM June 9 2020

2019 was a year of transition for LINK Upper Clutha, the community development operation of the ACDT. Birthed by a three-year grant from the Department of Internal Affairs (DIA) in 2015, ACDT established LINK under its governance and with focused guidance from the LINK Steering Group. It largely operated alongside but separately from Community Networks during this time. After broad community research and relationship building, LINK is recognised as a valuable resource hub for facilitating connection, collaboration, and action, and is uniquely placed at the heart of community conversations on growth and the Upper Clutha's future.

In early 2019 as the DIA funds finished, the LINK Steering Group was disbanded, and a closer link was forged with the ACDT in terms of direction and management. LINK's community development goals were fully incorporated in the ACDT strategic plan, helping meet its mission of "providing a community development hub that coordinates, connects, and enables community wellbeing in the Upper Clutha." While we maintain the two brands, the same governance body guides the work and we have achieved operational efficiencies. This has enabled ACDT to seamlessly serve its community members across the full community wellbeing spectrum, especially helpful as we have moved into the new Wanaka Community Hub and seek to create a collaborative environment in the community sector.

With the DIA previously being the primary funding source for LINK, in 2019 ACDT sought funding from multiple streams. We obtained funding from the QLDC, Lottery Community, and the Callis Trust, for which we are grateful. Our workplan presented to each funder was the same – continuing the key activities established during the previous years:

1. Support place-based community connection, collaboration, and resilience
2. Facilitate effective communication and engagement across community segments
3. Enable youth engagement and citizenship

Aligned with these objectives and adding to them, our deeper partnership with QLDC also led to supporting specific Council planning processes. This was an effective way to engage with residents and encourage them to use their voice as we collectively grappled with growth issues.

Here is additional detail on these activities during 2019:

2019 KEY ACTIVITIES

- **Neighbours Day Aotearoa** – created 5000 "Have a Cuppa" 2-teabag packs to comprehensively cover the Upper Clutha -- distributed to letterboxes across the region – thereby offering 10,000 cups of tea to encourage neighbourhood connection. Great volunteer involvement from Students in the Community and adults to create teabag packs. Communicated neighbourhood connection messages through radio, newsletter, FB channels, media coverage.
- Continuing to support community groups and their collaboration through our **incubator services** – offering advice, information, networking.

- Maintained **communication channels** of the LINK website, newsletter, and FB page to share information and resources
- **QLDC Wanaka Town Centre Master Plan engagement support** – 2019 began with a big focus on this future planning process – an important opportunity to consider options for how Wanaka will look for generations to come.
 - LINK had a role planning and engaging with local residents around the town centre temporary activations in March – a four-day experiment with a variety of changes to the town centre that may be considered in future people and traffic management.
 - LINK led an extensive youth engagement exercise, visiting primary schools and Mt. Aspiring College to talk with students, teachers, and parents about town centre design options, encouraging them to use their voice in shaping these key decisions
- **QLDC My Place engagement** – supported Wanaka session, facilitated a youth session at Mt. Aspiring College
- **QLDC Spatial Plan early engagement** – co-hosted Wanaka public session, contributed to facilitation design, facilitated table conversation, contributed to stakeholder session
- Invited back for a third year of teaching the LINK-developed **Life Skills class, “Citizenship and Community Belonging” at Mt. Aspiring College**. Engaged and positive response from students and teachers.
- Participated in the **Mahi Queenstown Lakes workforce planning group**, with a focus on migrant connection. A public/private collaboration with QLDC economic development and Chambers driving it, this group met several times at the end of 2019 to develop a coordinated approach to growth-related workforce challenges.
- Organised and facilitated a speaking event with **Max Rashbrooke**, well-known journalist, economist, and expert who spoke to a full house (about 200 people in the LWC Armstrong Room) about the importance of effective community engagement, and where the balance of power lies in decision making. This event was co-sponsored by the Wanaka Chamber of Commerce and local business Scope Media, which reduced the cost to both participants and LINK. We also organised two other small group workshops with Max to further support both Council and local business leaders in community engagement.
- **Connection Cafes** – we did not commit to a series of these drop-in networking sessions, but focused effort on a session in November on **community resilience**. Featuring emergency management officer Trevor Andrews and Neighbours Day Aotearoa organisers Cissy Rock and Sam Orchard, this attracted over 50, mostly from neighbourhood associations.
- Actively communicated with and supported community groups and leaders to engage with the **QLDC Annual Plan** process – what’s in the plan, how to submit
- Ongoing discussions with Council about the development of a district-wide community development function, which looks increasingly likely under a community wellbeing framework.
- Continuing to connect across community segments via participating on **ignite Wanaka Chamber of Commerce** Executive Board, always aiming to keep community development and wellbeing in the conversation.
- **Community engagement network** – hosted community communication/engagement professionals connect to share information, events, and plans as we all were in planning mode for 2020

2019 KEY OUTCOMES

- Increased collaboration with Community Networks, proactively and continually developing how we work together for the benefit of community members

- LINK has become embedded as a key community organisation working with and across the entire community. Other entities look to us for direction and input.
- Close association with key stakeholders (eg QLDC, Chamber of Commerce, Lake Wanaka Tourism, Community Networks) has resulted in better understanding of key community issues, and collaborative work to address them.
- Progress for grassroots community groups we have supported to achieve their objectives (through our incubator approach). Our advice and information have helped increased collaboration and efficiency.
- Accessing information from a centralised resource hub means more people have the information they need to build resilience in their community initiatives
- Increased participation in Council planning processes through effective stakeholder identification and outreach
- We have seen young people getting involved in future planning work through LINK connections – contributing to local community board meetings and planning workshops, and Council surveys. Particularly important as it is their future local leaders are planning for.
- Capability and skillbuilding among community group leaders – accessing our central resources in terms of advice as well as larger public speaking events.
- Civil defence preparedness – neighbourhood associations found the Connection Café on being prepared for a natural disaster helpful for building local resilience.

With the shift from a sole funding source to multiple, and due to timing issues, there was a slight lull in LINK activity around the middle of the year as we awaited grant decisions. This also meant not committing to additional staff – we did not employ a Coordinator in 2019 as we had in the past.

Looking Ahead

The need for a continued community development function in the Upper Clutha is clear, as our community continues to grapple with the opportunities and challenges of growth. The big issues of retaining identity and connection, managing infrastructure, affordability, protecting the environment have continued to dominate community conversation.

Our increased partnership with QLDC has meant more certainty leading into 2020, and we are very pleased with the close working relationship that has developed. However multi-year certainty does not exist, and the ACDT will continue pursuing multiple funding streams to support both of its operations.

Shifting into the Wanaka Community Hub has strengthened working relationships among the ACDT team, and I'm grateful every day for colleagues Kate Murray and Nova Knippers who make working there a pleasure! Many thanks to Raewyn Curin who has taken on ACDT leadership with focus and clarity, amidst ever-evolving circumstances. Thanks also to Wayne Hudson, who transitioned from LINK Steering Group member to Trustee and has provided continuity of support. Thanks to all Trustees who give freely of their time to ensure we have a solid organisation which is unique in its leadership in the community sector.