

# Connecting Mid Canterbury

## ANNUAL REPORT 2023 - 2024



**Connecting Mid Canterbury Charitable Trust**

Community House, 44 Cass St. Ashburton

[www.connectingmc.org](http://www.connectingmc.org)

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**Chairperson** Donna Favel [board@connectingmc.org](mailto:board@connectingmc.org)

**Coordinator** Kate White [kate@connectingmc.org](mailto:kate@connectingmc.org)



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# ABOUT THE TRUST

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Connecting Mid Canterbury is a registered Charitable Trust (CC55035), formed in July 2017.

## VISION

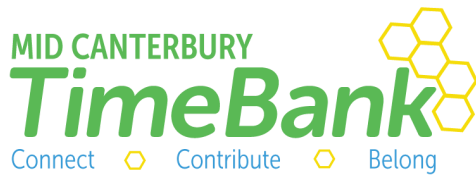
Mid Canterbury is a connected, regenerative, resilient community that cares.

## MISSION

To support the growth of a regenerative, resilient and caring community by connecting people, services and resources in Mid Canterbury.

## INITIATIVES

In order to fulfil its mission the Trust launched two initiatives on October 1st 2017; *Mid Canterbury TimeBank* and the *Learning Exchange*, now known as *Keep Learning Mid Canterbury*.



# TRUSTEES

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As at June 30, 2024

- Donna Favel (Chair)
- Carolyn Cameron
- Maria Jimenez
- Shirin Khosraviani
- Frances Beeston
- Margaret Thorpe



# STRATEGIC PLAN

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To see our vision fulfilled, we need an **effective organisation** that **collaborates** to **enhance lives**.

These are our 3 Strategic Goal Areas.

## 1. Effective Organisation / Rōpū tōnui

- Sustainable funds
- Robust systems
- Inclusive & welcoming culture
- Operational excellence

## 2. Collaboration / Mahi Tahī

- Partnership with wide range of community stakeholders
- Support provided for existing services
- Responsiveness to changing community needs & aspirations
- Research and experience inform our work

## 3. Enhanced Lives/ Hāpai Oranga

- The *5 Ways to Wellbeing* are enjoyed by all Mid Canterbury residents
- Social inclusion: everyone is valued
- Connection: no-one is isolated
- Lifelong learning is embraced

# OUR SUPPORTERS

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# CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

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Connecting Mid Canterbury has notched up its seventh year of operation. While TimeBank is still on a slow and steady rebuild after Covid interruptions and a software change, Keep Learning Mid Canterbury continues to exceed expectations in many ways, such as number of events, level of engagement and opportunities to collaborate with many organisations and people.

At the 2023 AGM, we welcomed new Trustees Carolyn Cameron, Jasaiah Claydon-Wade and Margaret Thorpe – to join returning Trustees, Frances Beeston, Maria Jimenez, Shirin Khosraviani and myself on the Board. Unfortunately, due to a change of circumstance, Jasaiah was unable to participate on the Board. I would like to thank each and every Trustee for the time they've spent over the last 12 months, to advance the governance objectives of the Trust.

I'd like to acknowledge the commitment and dedication of our talented and tireless coordinator Kate White – who is an expert at identifying opportunities and has a proven track record, of delivering events and programmes for the betterment of the community.

In September 2023 we employed Gordon Manley as the Financial Administrator, to undertake financial administration for the trust as well as provide coordinator support. Gordon's work ethic, professionalism and calm demeanour were greatly appreciated by the Trust and with his recent resignation, he will be sorely missed as an employee.

Sincere and heartfelt thanks to the many facilitators of Keep Learning events, to Margaret Thorpe for running the Time Bank café catchups, to everyone who assisted with activities and events, and to all the Timebank members who connected, contributed and helped to create a sense of belonging.

We appreciate and are extremely grateful to our funders for their ongoing support. In this financial year we received funding from Ashburton District Council, Braided Rivers Community Trust, Community Organisation Grants Scheme (COGS), Lion Foundation and NZ Lotteries Grant Board. Community Trust Mid & South Canterbury, Advance Ashburton and a Creative Communities grant contributed specifically to the Keep Learning initiative. EA Networks supported us financially through the Energy Wellbeing work.

We are always seeking opportunities to exemplar *Connecting* (Mid Canterbury) by collaborating with people, groups and organisations across the District. We are thankful for each and every opportunity to work with others. I'd like to put the spotlight on just one recent project which has progressed significantly this year; the Ashburton Community Garden. After an initial Keep Learning hui in April unearthed a need, and future hui planted and nurtured the seedling of this project, volunteers were forthcoming, partnerships formed and site secured. Connecting Mid Canterbury is proud to be the fund-holder for the fledgling Ashburton Community Garden until they get established as a registered charitable trust. It's great to see the project grow so quickly, like the lettuces and beans already on site.

As this report comes to an end, so too does my time as Chair – thank you one and all.

Wishing Connecting Mid Canterbury Charitable Trust every success now and always, in all endeavours.

**Donna Favel - Chairperson**





### Aims:

- fill the gap in the district for non-vocational community education opportunities
- enable people to find events so they can 'Keep Learning', one of the 5 Ways to Wellbeing
- help organisations promote their services & the learning opportunities they provide

*How do we achieve this?*

1. **Events:** We organise about 40 talks and workshops each year on a wide variety of topics. Keep Learning events are open to anyone - most are free, some have a small fee.

2. **Website:** [www.keeplearningmc.nz](http://www.keeplearningmc.nz) shows our events as well as learning events run by anyone else in the district. It is a great resource for our community - a central platform to find out what's on.



## KEEP LEARNING MID CANTERBURY

1 July 2023 - 30 June 2024

**51** Keep Learning Events

**751** Keep Learning Attendees



# KEEP LEARNING EVENTS

## International Cooking Classes

*Collaboration with Mid Canterbury Newcomers Network*

- A Taste of Colombia
- A Taste of Poland
- A Taste of South Africa
- A Taste of Nepal
- A Taste of the USA
- A Taste of Romania
- A Taste of Russia
- A Taste of Germany



## Events organised with Hospice Mid Canterbury

- Dealing with Grief
- Cultural Perspectives on Death & Dying
- Death & Paperwork Series:
  - Banking & Insurance
  - Wills & Executors
  - EPAs & Lawyers



## Flax weaving, Jewelry & Printmaking

*Thanks to funding from Creative Communities through ADC we could offer the following workshops around the district:*

- Methven Polymer Clay Jewelry Making
- Rakaia Polymer Clay Jewelry Making
- Staveley Harakeke - Putiputi (flax weaving) x2
- Staveley Printmaking with Nature x2

*Note: The Staveley events happened as part of the February and April Wellbeing days, 2024.*



# KEEP LEARNING EVENTS

## Health, Wellbeing & Food

- Menopause
- Mindful Walk
- Wellbeing Day x 2
- Preserving food
- School lunch ideas



## Te Ao Māori

- Pōwhiri: Explore & Experience
- Te Reo Māori Pronunciation
- Kōrero Māori - immersion class
- Te Reo Mini Course #1 x 2
- Te Reo Mini Course #2 Ko Au



## Financial Wellbeing series with ASB

- Everyday Money Tips
- Get Savvy with Saving
- Borrow Smart & Pay Off Debt



## Upcycling

*with Eco Educate*

- Making Cat Toys for SPCA x2
- Poi Making
- Repurposing Toys
- Pet Beds



## Normalising Depression

*In collaboration with Depression Support Network and Wellbeing Ōpuke.*

- Methven
- Ashburton
- Rakaia



## Nature & Environment

- Weed Wrangling x 2  
*with Staveley Camp & Forest*
- Community Garden Hui x 3  
*with Community & Whānau Wellbeing (Health NZ)*
- Soil Health  
*with Ashburton Soil & Health group*



## Other

- Teaching Adults - *full day course funded by ACE Aotearoa*
- Powerswitch x 2 *with EA Networks*
- Our Electric Future *with Roger Sutton, EA Networks CEO*
- Art, drinks & nibbles - *with Ashburton Art Gallery*
- Long Term Plan ADC consultation - *with ADC Councillors*

# FEEDBACK 1

**97 %** of attendees at Keep Learning Events reported feeling **Better Off** for having attended.



*'Love the conversation, the recipes and learning about other countries'*

*'Great to connect and eat delicious food, fantastic event, will definitely do the next one.'*



*'This was such a wonderful, comfortable, atmosphere full of connection and hilarity!'*



*'I found the session very supportive & encouraging. As both a personal sufferer of depression in the past & as a support person helping others through the same.'*

*'Good to discover more about the local marae and cultural practices.'*

*'Keep doing what you are doing, VERY inspired'*



*'Classes well paced, informative and excellent resources provided afterwards, appreciate Kate's enthusiasm, knowledge & vast experience.'*



*'Got into studying Māori, love learning. Wish there was more classes like this in Ashburton. Loved everything about the class.'*



*'Fabulous discussion that resonated a lot. Informative, comforting; I've been depressed but you helped.'*

*'Good venue, great company, great well-being exercise'*

*'Felt I'm not alone.'*

*'Amazing afternoon of learning as a community, engaging with lots of laughter and banter.'*

# FEEDBACK 2



*'Very enlightening hearing about other cultures and their death/dying, practices etc.'*

*'Fantastic opportunity to learn in a non threatening environment.'*



*I normally feel stressed out at group events but I'm leaving today feeling relaxed. I will definitely come back.*



*Had so much fun making toys for SPCA cats alongside my nieces and knowing they are also learning to help and give their time to helping others. It was very relaxing too - ngā mihi.*



*'Found this useful as I didn't have anyone else to talk to about this'*



*'Weed wrangling was really fulfilling. We cleared a nice little space and went away feeling like we'd achieved something. A great work out too!'*



*'Restorative, educational and collegial. Really fantastic event. Loved the forest bathing, outdoors Tha chi and learning about the forest and propagation'*



*'Forest bathing was super relaxing, weaving with harakeke was really nice. Activities helped me connect with the other people here and helped me go home for the week feeling refreshed and energised - thank you.'*



# KEEP LEARNING WEBSITE

249

Events Listed

July 1 2023- 30 June 2024

44

Different groups  
listed events



274

New Sign-ups

To receive automated email  
notifications from the site

- ACADS
- ACE Aotearoa
- Advance Ashburton
- ARA
- ASB
- Ashburton Art Gallery & Museum
- Ashburton Event Centre
- Ashburton Library
- Ashburton Society of Arts
- Ashburton Strollers
- Cancer Society
- Dementia Canterbury
- Depression Support Network
- DOC
- ECAN
- Eco Educate
- Elder Care Canterbury
- Hakatere Marae
- Hakatere Multicultural Council
- Hospice Mid Canterbury
- Keep Learning Mid Canterbury
- Lake Hood Pilates
- Lauren Wilding - Nourish
- Living Wage Movement Aotearoa
- Mid Canterbury TimeBank
- Mental Health Education and Resource Centre
- Methven Community Response Team
- Methven Summer School
- Methven Walking Festival
- Mid Canterbury Choir
- Mid Canterbury Newcomers Network
- Presbyterian Support
- Rural Support Trust
- Rushton Marketing
- Safe Communities
- Safer Mid Canterbury
- Seniornet
- Shama Ethnic Women's Trust
- Simplicity NZ
- Staveley Camp
- Te Huka Tai Trust
- Te Whatu Ora - Community & Whānau Wellbeing
- U3A
- Wellbeing Ōpuke



[www.keeplearningmc.nz](http://www.keeplearningmc.nz)

MID CANTERBURY

# TimeBank



Connect



Contribute



Belong

## Aims:

- Make it easy for people put into practice the 5 Ways to Wellbeing;  
*Connect, Give, Take Notice, Be Active & Keep Learning*
- Help people connect, across generations, cultures and backgrounds
- Enable people to contribute their time & skills, to meet the needs of others
- Support organisations to find and reward volunteers

*How do we achieve this?*

1. **Social Events:** We organise community social events each month along with smaller café catch ups twice a month to promote connection. All our events are open to anyone.

2. **Exchanges:** Timebanking software enables TimeBank members (including local community groups) to post offers and requests, and respond to others' requests and offers, and record time exchanges. Everyone's time and skills are valued equally; one hour of help = one hour time transfer.

On average 11 TimeBank members completed & recorded exchanges each month

## NUMBER OF EXCHANGES

1 July 2023 - 30 June 2024

120

Since Launch  
1 Oct 2017 - 30 June 2024

4,842

## HOURS EXCHANGED

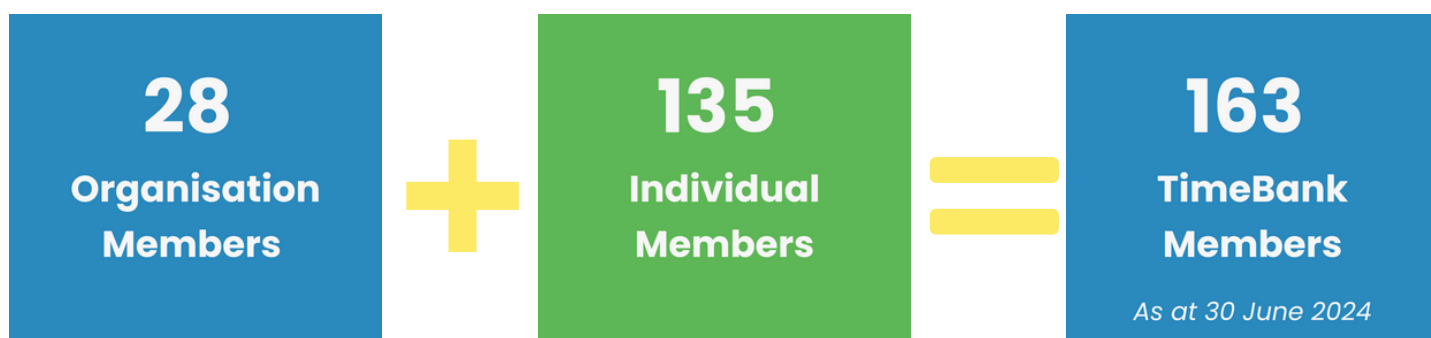
1 July 2023 - 30 June 2024

502

Since Launch  
1 Oct 2017 - 30 June 2024

14,097

# TIMEBANK MEMBERSHIP



## DEMOGRAPHICS

- 17 % members live rurally
- 34 % were born outside of NZ
- 21 % have lived in the district for less than 5 years
- 80 % members are women
- AGE: 15% are 18-39 47% are 40-59 37% are 60+

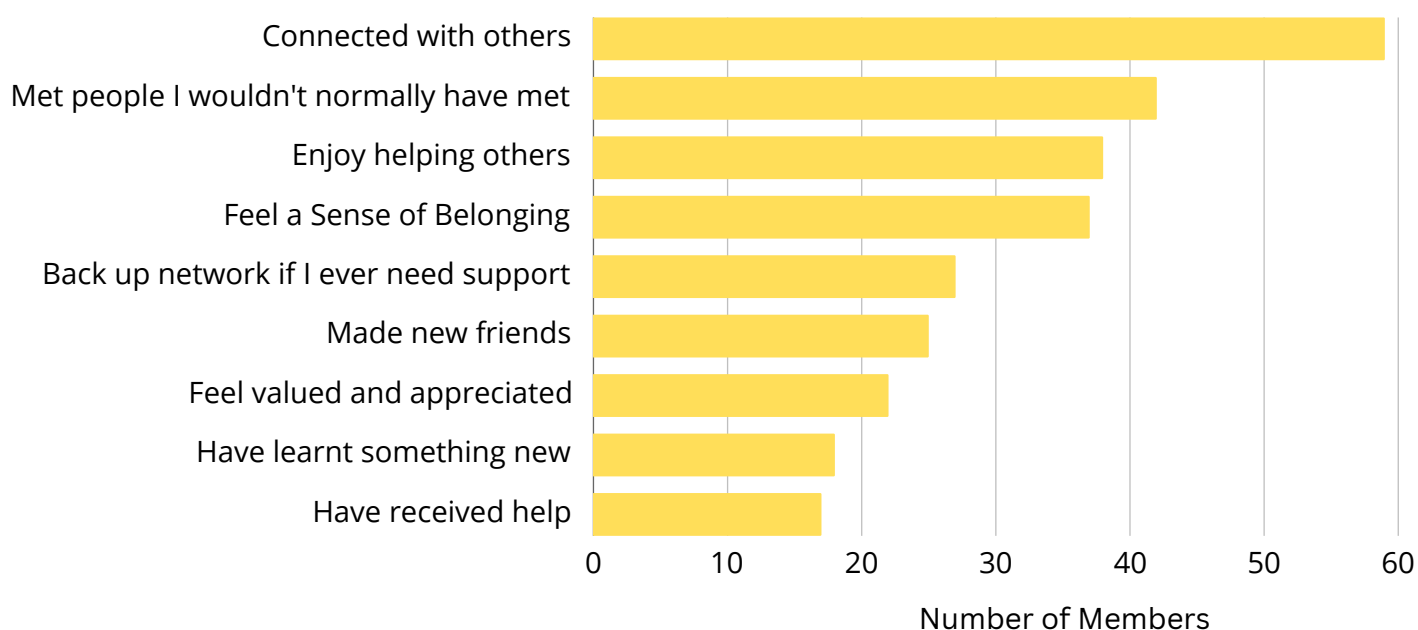


## SURVEY (July 2024)

- 99 individual members completed the annual survey
- **84 % of all respondents said they felt better off because of the TimeBank**
- 51% of respondents said they had been active in the TimeBank in the past year
- **98% of active members said they felt better off because of the TimeBank**



## What contributed to members feeling better off?



# 5 WAYS TO WELLBEING

Promoted by the Mental Health Foundation of New Zealand

TimeBank members identified which of the 5 Ways to Wellbeing they've put into practice through their involvement in the TimeBank & Keep Learning initiatives.

% OF MEMBERS	CONNECT	GIVE	KEEP LEARNING	KEEP ACTIVE	TAKE NOTICE
	64%	41%	39%	29%	27%

## Wellbeing statistics

- 20% of members have physical health issues or a disability
- 12% have mental health issues
- 33% of members say the TimeBank has helped them feel less isolated
- 54% say the TimeBank has contributed positively to their wellbeing



## What does the TimeBank mean to you?

Survey answers:

- *A great way to connect to others and maintain a strong sense of community and fellowship, reduce isolation, meet new friends, give back when able*
- *Being new to Ashburton it's great to have this service*
- *Being part of the time bank has meant I can support others, connect with people I would otherwise not have met. I gain motivation to get out exercising, when staying at home would be easier.*
- *Connection, Friendship, Community*
- *Dog walking several times a week is a win/ win for me as I love dogs and haven't had one myself for 4yrs now. I also get to know the owners and enjoy connecting with them and having meaningful conversations.*
- *Timebank offers me a low-stress way to be with people which makes it easier to go out and be part of the group. I always feel welcome and I love meeting the people that go to events*
- *Knowing you're there means a lot!*

# SOCIAL EVENTS

In the year to June 30 2024, we organised 12 larger social events for the community and 24 cafe catch ups to help people connect with others and develop a sense of belonging to the community.

All our events are open to and promoted to the general public, as we love helping everyone connect, not just current TimeBank members. Events are also an opportunity to promote the TimeBank & Keep Learning Mid Canterbury.



## Events This Year

- Mid Winter Christmas
- Rakaia meet up with Selwyn TimeBank
- End of Year Movie Night
- Wellbeing Weekend x 2
- 6th Birthday Garden Party
- Icecream at Lake Hood
- Games Night x 2
- Methven Walkway
- Easter Family Fun Day
- Amazing Race





# ENERGY WELLBEING

Connecting Mid Canterbury is proud to be collaborating with **EA Networks** on Energy Wellbeing work. Our aim with the 2023 Warm for Winter project was to reach those in the community who most needed energy-saving advice and support, and also help connect them to other relevant community services & supports.

**In-home energy assessments:** Between March and August 2023, 200 families/ individuals received in-home visits by our trained energy assessors, with an average savings per household of \$507 per year.

**Community events:** we spread the word about energy efficiency at community events and talks, explaining how people could have warmer, drier homes and cheaper power bills. We gave out many free products - the same ones people received during the in-home energy assessments.



*Hakitere Marae - Hauora Day, September 16, 2023*



*GreyPower Meeting- October 16, 2023*



*Ethnic Communities Fun Day - October 21, 2023*

**Reducing Energy Hardship:** On April 18, 2024 we held an engagement session for those who work with people who would really benefit from free energy efficiency products and advice. We sought their input into what was needed, how best to provide it and how to reach those most in need in the coming year.



*Reducing Energy Hardship Engagement Session April 2024*

# COORDINATOR'S REPORT

I've had another busy year coordinating the trust's activities and am proud to present this year's report. Let's start with **Keep Learning Mid Canterbury** which in the year to June 30 2024 exceeded all records running 51 events instead of the 40 we aim for. Some of these were actually courses which ran over multiple weeks, so if we count each session we actually offered 59 events.

In total we had 751 people attend our 51 workshops, talks & courses with 97% of people saying they felt better off as a result of attending. This was up from 499 people who attended the 47 events we held the previous year.

The new library Te Kete Tuhinga is proving a popular venue for holding events and we are grateful to Jane Riach and the library for collaborating with us in hosting and promoting events. We had record turnouts there for our Death and Paperwork series exceeding all expectations, filling the Event Space to capacity on four occasions. This series came about after a TimeBank member suggested the topic. It certainly has met a need so we will be offering the series again in the coming year.

Not only do our events offer an opportunity to learn valuable things but also a chance to reduce isolation as attendees often connect with others at events. At our 'A Taste of Poland' cooking class, our host brought along her elderly Polish mother and was delighted to see her smiling and engaging warmly with other attendees - it had been months since she had left the house.



The **Keep Learning Website** had similar high numbers of events listed on the website (249) as last year (254) and again large community support with 44 different groups listing their events (43 last year). This time last year I wrote that we wanted to focus on promoting the website so more people are in the know about all the wonderful things that happen across our district. I am proud to say that 274 new people signed up to email notifications this year (last year we had 129 new sign ups). It's fantastic to see so much utilisation of this website by groups and the public.



This year the **TimeBank** welcomed nine new individuals as members. It's great to see exchanges happening between members for different things, but the numbers being recorded were lower than in previous years. On average 11 different members were involved in exchanges each month (last year it was 19). 120 different exchanges were recorded totalling 502 hours (In 2023: 256 exchanges, total 909 hours).

About half of our members have not tried the new timebanking software or are not confident with it. Mid Canterbury TimeBank has not had enough funding to operate at full capacity, so unfortunately there have not been the hours available to support members who aren't active. Hopefully in the coming year we can help get more members using the new software and support them to engage or re-engage in the TimeBank.

We held many successful **community events** through the year from our regular cafe catch ups, run by volunteer Margaret Thorpe, to bigger events such as the Amazing Race and the Marae Easter Fun Day.



These events reduce isolation and enable people to connect with each other and with fabulous services in our community. It was fun for our TimeBank members to meet people from another TimeBank when we enjoyed a cuppa and a walk in Rakaia with Selwyn TimeBank members - a first for us.

The **Ashburton Community Garden** is a new initiative which arose out of Keep Learning events in April 2024. Collaborating with Semi Ratu from the Salvation Army and Stephanie Poole from Community & Whānau Wellbeing, we wanted to see if there was community buy-in for a garden, and there was! Connecting Mid Canterbury became the fund-holder for the garden group that emerged, until they establish themselves as a registered charity. It has been a privilege to be involved in the setting up of such a wonderful community asset that, like our trust, is about connecting people from all walks of life and enabling them to put into place the 5 Ways to Wellbeing (*Connect, Keep Learning, Give, Be Active, Take Notice*).



On the **Energy Wellbeing** front, we were grateful to continue our partnership with EA Networks and give energy saving tips and products out at community events as well as conclude our Warm for Winter project, with 200 home assessments achieved. We are excited that plans are in place for more collaboration this coming year, to reduce energy hardship in Mid Canterbury.



In September 2023 Gordon Manley was employed as the trust's financial administrator. It has been wonderful having Gordon's support with all things funding and financial as well as other administrative tasks and event support.

This year we had to move offices twice due to building redevelopments at Community House. The new office is bigger and brighter and just across the hall from where we were previously.

Sometimes people ask me how I fit everything into this part time role. The truth is some months are very busy and I work full time hours but then other months are quiet. My role is funded for an average of 25 hours per week across the year. Most of the hours go to Keep Learning Mid Canterbury (15 p/wk). The other ten hours are for the TimeBank, energy wellbeing work, board reporting, funding, promotions, networking and connecting in the community. It's never quite enough!

After an incredibly busy first four months of 2024, I was fortunate to take some time off overseas which was a wonderful way to recharge and look after my own wellbeing. Now attention turns to the year ahead. We have some exciting events and work planned and I have some new ideas to trial to help people connect.

I extend my **sincere thanks** to our volunteers, funders and collaborative community partners - thank you for enabling us to do all that we do in the community. Ngā mihi maioha!



# FINANCIAL REPORT

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I am pleased to present the Financial Report for the year ended 30 June 2024. We are reporting a surplus for the year of \$5,378 which is slightly higher than the previous year of \$4,088. This is a good result as the Trust needs to build up reserves while still fulfilling funders' expectations to fully spend their grants.

## REVENUE

Grants this year totalled \$59,077 compared to \$57,498 in the previous year. We are very grateful to all our funders. The following grants were received during the year:

- NZ Lotteries Grant Board \$17,000
- Community Organisations Grants Scheme (COGS) \$8,000
- Community Trust Mid & South Canterbury \$8,000
- Ashburton District Council \$5,000
- Braided Rivers Community Trust \$5,000
- The Lion Foundation \$4,153
- Advance Ashburton \$4,000
- Creative Communities Scheme \$1,440

Our revenue was again boosted by the Warm for Winter initiative - a partnership with EA Networks. We are grateful to the volunteers who donated their assessor payments to the trust and thankful to EA Networks for their support. This revenue of \$3,305 contributed to our surplus.

## EXPENDITURE

The total expenses for the year were very consistent with the previous year, totalling \$63,174 compared to the previous year's total of \$62,228. The event expenses were again offset by the event income and expenses well managed.

## ASSETS

The funds in the bank account are for grants received and to be spent during the 2024/25 year. Total funds held on 30 June 2024 in all the Trust's accounts was \$21,205.

## LIABILITIES

Some of the grants listed above were paid later in the financial year and the unspent portions are carried forward into the 2024/25 year, namely:

- NZ Lotteries Grant Board \$6,490
- The Lion Foundation \$858

It has been an honour to be part of the Connecting Mid Canterbury team as the Financial Administrator.

**Gordon Manley** - Financial administrator  
**Connecting Mid Canterbury Charitable Trust (CC55035).**

