

30 April 2025

Annual Plan  
Dunedin City Council  
PO Box 5045  
DUNEDIN 9054

## 9 Year Plan 2025 – 2034 Dunedin City Council Submission

Dear Councillors,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit to Dunedin City Council's (DCC) draft 9 Year Plan 2025 - 2034.

Physical activity is an important aspect of the community, contributing to happier, healthier people and better connected communities. For every \$1 spent on physical activity through play, active recreation, and sport, there is a social return of \$2.12 to the community. Sport Otago fully supports the efforts that the Council goes to in providing access to the open spaces, sports fields, facilities, and the ongoing upkeep and management of these. We understand there is increased financial pressure, but we also believe it is imperative that the costs to access these are kept as low as possible.

### 1. Grants Review / Rent Relief

Sport Otago receives several grants from the DCC, which we are very appreciative of. They go towards helping us empower the people of Dunedin city to be active.

#### **Core Services/Getting Dunedin Active**

Sport Otago currently has two service level agreements in place with the DCC (Core Services and Getting Dunedin Active). These agreements reflect the ongoing partnership between Sport Otago and the DCC, with an emphasis on Sport Otago supporting the DCC Parks and Recreation Strategy 2017-2027, the associated Parks and Open Spaces Action Plan, and the Sport and Recreation Action Plan. These agreements have been in place since 2016-2017 but for the last few years they have rolled over. We would like to ask the Council to consider combining these agreements into one and to work with Sport Otago to review and update the content to ensure that the outcomes identified are fit for purpose for both parties, ensuring that Dunedin remains an 'Active City'.

The funding levels for both agreements have remained the same since 2020-2021, so we also ask the DCC to consider an inflationary adjustment to both figures. The DCC is one of our five Territorial Authorities (TA), all of whom provide funding to

Sport Otago in some shape or form for programmes and services delivered to their respective regions. Our national funding (e.g., from Sport NZ) is prescriptive in how it must be used, so local TA funding is vitally important for us as it allows us to be responsive and flexible, plus align our programmes and services with the needs of our communities.

### **Rates Relief Grant 2025/2026**

This is a very useful grant, supporting Sport Otago to offset our rent at the Sargood Centre, 40 Logan Park Drive. Our Dunedin staff are based at the Sport Otago office, and we have an additional 19 other staff from 12 smaller sporting organisations also operating out of this office. Being able to offer these organisations reduced rent in a shared office space goes a long way in helping offset their operational costs. It also means that there is a supportive network of sporting organisations all operating under the one roof.

### **Skills 2 Swim**

The DCC provides a grant of \$30,000 per annum to support the DCC Skills 2 Swim programme, a collaboration between DCC and Sport Otago to deliver Water Safety New Zealand's national Water Skills for Life programme to Dunedin schools. The grant is re-distributed to schools across Dunedin to subsidise pool entry fees for Year 1-7 students, with a focus on supporting students from less advantaged backgrounds (via school EQI/decile ratings). More than 3,000 Dunedin students participate in the programme each year.

Skills 2 Swim is designed to prioritise crucial water survival skills for children, teaching them skills and knowledge and how to assess risk and make smarter decisions around water. In the years that we have collected participation data it has shown that Dunedin youth have consistently achieved the seven core competencies and maintained our overall high outcomes. Otago is well recognised as offering plentiful swimming and water recreation opportunities in differing environments, including coastal, rivers, offshore, and tidal. The Skills 2 Swim programme is ultimately designed to prevent drowning deaths. There was a single drowning death in Otago in 2024 (our lowest for 10 years), and nationwide drowning deaths for 2024 were the lowest for six years. Sustained efforts in water safety education have contributed to a significant reduction in drowning rates among under-25s, who accounted for just 12% of fatalities (while making up 31% of the population) nationwide in 2024.

## **2. Fees and Charges:**

Whilst we fully appreciate the pressures and demands on Council's finances, we would caution Council in respect to being considerate of proposed fees and charges applied to reserves and recreational facilities.

Sport Otago does not support the proposed sports field fees and charges increasing from 4% to 5% per annum to recover costs from sports field users. This increase is

estimated to give rate payers a saving of \$59,500. This is an insignificant amount to the rate payer but adds a significant additional financial burden to sports field users, such as Touch, Football, and Rugby, amongst many others. This cost gets directly passed on to the participants, who have already seen increased costs added to their sports fees and subs over the last few years. Care needs to be exercised so that increases in fees and charges do not act as a deterrent for those members of our community most in need of physical activity opportunities, denying them accessibility.

### **3. Investment in Play, Active Recreation, and Sport:**

We thank the Council for the work they do providing investment in the upkeep and maintenance of sports facilities and active recreation sites across Dunedin. These facilities are vital to the community in numerous ways, getting whānau active, building resiliency in our people, and building cohesion across the community. We recognise there is a large cost associated with the development, upkeep, and general maintenance of these facilities, however it is extremely important to the health of our community.

Dunedin has an aging stock of sporting infrastructure, and the lack of ongoing development is becoming a serious financial concern. 58% of the facilities surveyed are over 51 years old, with over 90% of these more than 25 years old. There is a need to systematically approach this with guidance from the Coastal Otago Sub-Regional Sport and Recreation Facilities Strategy and the Sporting Facilities Strategy. Although a key aspect of the long-term planning consideration, maintenance still needs to be considered in the nine year period to help keep our facilities to a high standard.

#### **Edgar Centre**

Sport Otago supports the Edgar Centre's proposal for a new roof. The Edgar Centre is an important and critical asset for the Dunedin community and replacing the roof would future-proof the venue for years to come. The Edgar Centre is a multi-use indoor venue that is relied on heavily for indoor sports across the Dunedin community. It caters for high volume sports such as basketball, volleyball, futsal, and netball, through to tennis, rugby, pickleball and a host of other sporting and recreational activities. The Edgar Centre is also a major contributor to the wellbeing strategy of the city and is a critical component in getting Dunedin people active.

The Edgar Centre was identified in the Coastal Otago Spaces and Places Strategy 2023 as an important indoor venue that was extremely well used, with some sports having to cap their competitions. The strategy also identified the Edgar Centre as a high risk venue due to the limited alternative venues to support the number of activities/competitions currently based at the Edgar Centre. Keeping the building maintained and to an adequate playing standard was one of the key mitigation factors identified to minimise the risk of the Edgar Centre being out of action.

### **Moana Pool Upgrades**

Sport Otago is supportive of the Council's budget set aside for the planned major upgrades to Moana Pool. This is an important community asset that caters for a large cross section of our community, from young tamariki being introduced to swimming, competitive water sports through to the elderly, it is a vital component of Dunedin's sporting infrastructure. It is also aging and needs to have money spent on it to keep it going, as it caters for the bulk of Dunedin City residents for their leisure or competitive swimming requirements. There needs to be long-term consideration for this important community asset as it nears its expected lifespan.

### **Playground Upgrades**

Sport Otago is supportive of the Council's approach to the planned playground upgrades. Play is a crucial component of our tamariki's physical activity development and helps develop strong community bonds as a hub for physical activity. The approach of the three destination playgrounds appears sound, along with upgrades to other existing playgrounds. We support the provision of additional facilities for the whole whānau so that they are encouraged to both visit and spend a reasonable amount of time at the playgrounds. This will include good toilet facilities, space for food trucks, shelter from wind and rain, as well as shade from the sun. The key consideration is consulting with community groups and play experts to ensure that the playgrounds are developed with the kids in mind, not adults creating what they think tamariki and rangatahi want. Sport Otago play experts would be interested in assisting during the planning phase of each of the destination playgrounds.

### **Dunedin Urban Cycleways Tunnels Trail**

Sport Otago is supportive of the investment in opening up the existing tunnels that connect Dunedin to Mosgiel through the Chain Hills and Caversham tunnels. We note that NZTA co-funding is no longer available. We would like to think that the project can be completed earlier than nine years. This would be an incredible asset that benefits Dunedin City through giving very real commuting access for bikers and runners, reducing emissions from cars on the road and supporting DCC's Zero Carbon 2030 approach. It will also help link future developments of the Clutha Gold and Otago Rail trail to start/finish in Dunedin.

### **Kettle Park / South Dunedin**

Sport Otago is supportive of managing the coastline and remediating the landfill that sits under Kettle Park. However, Kettle Park is an important local sporting and recreational venue, with a number of clubs and regional sporting organisations based here. Consideration needs to be given to ensure the sustainability of these organisations is not compromised and that any potential relocation is well planned. It is also important to consider the loss of any green space/sports fields and the potential impact on the wider sporting community. Sport Otago is committed to helping make good decisions in this area to ensure that with Kettle Park remediation being undertaken, provision is made for at least maintaining or enhancing recreation

space that is being displaced. Our staff would be interested in working alongside the relevant working groups.

### **Stadium Major Events Funding**

Event attraction, such as rugby test matches, is important, especially premier sporting events, to utilise Forsyth Barr Stadium. Not only is it important to have the stadium available for major events, but consideration needs to be given to use it as a drawcard for other national/regional tournaments. An example would be a football regional tournament final using the stadium for its final matches. All other sports and recreational facilities in the city should be made available for events. Regional and national sporting tournaments bring in consistent revenue to the city from additional visitor numbers. The likes of the New Zealand Athletics Championships that were held at the Caledonian athletics track in late February brought athletes and their entourage (parents, families, support staff) from across the country to Dunedin. These national events such as the Masters Games, National Hockey Championships and regional events such as school holiday sports tournaments bring much needed visitor funding into the city. They also help utilise our sporting infrastructure outside of regular competition seasons. We see benefit in the current events strategy to bring together the sports sector with Council staff and the wider hospitality sector to plan how we maintain an annual calendar of sporting tournaments across the year. From national tournaments to smaller regional ones, they all support the city economically.

### **Active Transport**

Sport Otago supports investment in roading and infrastructure projects that support the 'activation' of people. Providing the cycleways, walkways, and playgrounds that, by design, lends itself to the community being active, needs to be a key long-term consideration. This will help maintain and enhance Dunedin and the wider Otago region as the most active in New Zealand, increasing the social capital value that active recreation and sport provide to our community.

Thank you for your consideration.

Ngā mihi nui,



James Nation  
Chief Executive  
Sport Otago