

## Submission to the Dunedin City Council 9-year plan

April 2025

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed 9-year plan.

Dunedin is a wonderful city full of history, wildlife, with a vibrant intellectual and artistic life. People are friendly and helpful, and I thank the DCC for your continued hard work.

**There are three areas** in the proposal that are of **concern**:

- No funding for building new community housing,
- No mention of increased or even continued support for community development.
- No options for reducing carbon emissions.

**Housing** is the fundamental component for healthy and positively engaged individuals, families and communities. After years of building too few new affordable homes, record emigration and increasing years of an increasing equality gap, we have a growing number of homeless. This is compounded by the increasing number of people reaching retirement age without home ownership or savings. This number will grow.

Much of our housing stock is old, cold and drafty; these are unhealthy homes. Not investing in healthy homes leads to increased illness and hospitalization, poor school attendance and achievement. All more costly in the long run and a waste of human potential.

The rents in Dunedin have increased by 5% in the last year, by far the highest in the country (TV One News 27/04/25). The percentage of household income spent on rent results in purchasing cheaper less healthy food, which again leads to poor health and learning outcomes. Now is not the time for Dunedin City Council to back away from its previous commitment to increasing the housing stock. Not investing in more community housing is a false economy.

**Localism and Social Cohesion** comes from **community development**. In these uncertain times the risk of catastrophic events from weather, international disruption of trade routes, seismic events, global pandemics and others events we cannot anticipate increases daily; fostering social cohesion is vital. DCC has a proud history of promoting community cohesion in such projects as those in North East Valley, Brockville, Caversham. It is these hubs that can provide Civil Defense information and distribution of supplies of food, medicine, and tools when a catastrophe occurs. They provide

predator control traps and information, and a meeting point for numerous groups including cooking classes and shared kai. Supporting the many grass roots community initiatives is good value for money and should get increased support.

When people participate in the wellbeing of our communities we feel a sense of purpose which mitigates against overwhelm, anxiety and depression.

Their continued support through seeding grants and meeting places taps into a vast wealth of volunteer time and goodwill that we could not afford to pay for and are peppered throughout our communities and available around the clock. Not a “nice to have” rather something that contributes to a thriving happy city.

The City Council has made good progress toward reducing traffic in our city through the cycleways, building the bus hub and the short one-way section of George Street. Continuation of such projects to **reduce carbon emissions** is important and demonstrates that a beautiful little city can lead the way; make people not vehicles most important.

Thank you

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