

2026-2027 Business Plan.



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Executive Summary

VISION:

The Ashburton Event Centre – A Hub for Community Performing Arts providing education and opportunity.

Goals & Objectives:

1. AEC is valued and actively supported by the District.

- We understand our community and strive to meet their live performance needs.

- Our community know what facilities and services AEC has to offer as a performance, conference and meeting venue.

2. We operate with professionalism to drive the Event Centre forward.

- We foster mutually beneficial relationships with our key stakeholders.
- We ensure the facility evolves to meet future needs.
- Our staff continue to be pivotal to our success.

3. We host outstanding entertainment for the community.

- Local community groups utilise AEC.
- We are recognised as a top-class venue by touring promoters.
- We continually seek to enhance the service we provide.

4. AEC is renowned as a great venue for meetings and conferences

- Our local business community think of us first for meetings and events.
- We work with local stakeholders to attract conferences.

Introduction

The Ashburton Event Centre opened its doors on the 8th May 2008. It is a true success story not only for the instigators of the project, but also for the Ashburton community, who have proved numerous times that if you truly want something and can demonstrate its benefits, you can succeed.

Born out of the necessity to have a performing arts venue in town, a small group of proactive, community-minded individuals and the Ashburton Operatic Society began what was to be a ten-year project to plan for and implement the construction of what is now a world-class venue that has received applause from those who have been fortunate enough to perform or host an event here.

Numerous times it sat on a knife edge between success and failure, but with steadfast determination and the tremendous support of the community, major donors and the business sectors of Mid Canterbury, we now have a venue that has been praised by such international stars as Dame Malvina Major, Simon O-Neil and Gerry Marsden (Gerry and the Pacemakers), The Ten Tenors and Kevin Bloody Wilson.

It is from their endorsements and word of mouth that we can now boast an occupancy rate that would be the envy of many regional venues throughout New Zealand.

This is truly a community venue built by the community for the community.

Operated by the Ashburton Performing Arts Theatre Trust, the Event Centre was established to serve the community's performing arts sector by providing modern, up-to-date facilities capable of hosting audiences, suitable for the size of the district, and within the construction budget restraints. The Event Centre was designed as a multi-purpose venue capable of hosting conferences, meetings, and trade shows, as well as staging shows and related performing arts. It incorporates the latest in sound, lighting, and audio-visual equipment and has complete in-house catering services.

Situated just an hour's drive South of Christchurch International Airport, it is ideal for the conference market, where delegates wish to be away from the distractions of the leading centres in an idyllic rural setting. Situated within the township of Ashburton, it is a short distance to the CBD and has accommodation providers within a short walk.

Foyer Areas

Upon entering via the main entrance, you will immediately notice the large foyer areas. Complete with bar and catering facilities, these areas are suitable for entertaining clients or maybe having preshow drinks with friends and family before attending one of the many performances.

The acoustics are well-suited to smaller music ensembles, whether vocal or instrumental, with room for up to 100 people.

O'Reilly Auditorium

The 500-seat O'Reilly Auditorium has a twelve-metre-wide proscenium arch and a nine-metre-deep stage, with the ability to add another three metres by raising the Stage Thrust to stage level.

The stage thrust can also be lowered to form an orchestra pit suitable for 15 members. It has a 48-line fly tower and a full selection of stage drapes and lighting bars. A comprehensive range of Sound, lighting, data projectors, and technical equipment is available on site, along with technical assistance to operate. Seating options include removing rows A to F, giving you a flat floor suitable for tables and chairs or a variety of other events. The proximity and exceptional sightlines make this an ideal venue for intimate performances, rock concerts or conferences. Backstage has four well-appointed dressing rooms, a Green room with kitchen facilities, two showers and four toilets. Laundry facilities are also available in the loading dock area.

Bradford Room

Suitable for medium-sized functions, the Bradford Room has been designed for business meetings, annual general meetings, seminars, and promotional meetings. Located on the first floor with stair and lift access, the Bradford Room is situated in a quiet area of the building. It can be accessed through the main foyers, which lead in from the car park or a separate outside entry door. Its décor, seating and sound system are of a very high standard, and it has air conditioning for your comfort. Sound and lighting equipment, data projectors, lectern, microphones and whiteboards are all available on site. A bar is available and operated by the venue's staff. Toilet facilities are available on this level.

Green Room

The Green Room is the ideal place for a brainstorming session or a small board meeting. Its sprung floor lends itself well towards a dance studio or rehearsal space. Complete with its own Kitchen facilities, seating and tables, it is a low-cost solution to finding a quiet location with no disturbances.

Venue Access

A drive-through car parking area is situated immediately behind the Event Centre. A loading dock door provides access to the stage level from the car park and is at a suitable height for most trucks.

Other Amenities

The Event Centre has a large inventory of lighting and sound equipment available for hire, along with experienced technicians to assist with setup. A personnel lift is available for focusing lights and other equipment. Wireless internet is available throughout the building and can be arranged for multiple users.

The Ashburton Event Centre in Our District



Key Stakeholders-

- 1. Performing Arts Groups**
- 2. Education Providers**
- 3. Cinema**
- 4. Business, Conference**
- 5. Community Wedding, Funeral**

Performing Arts are essential to the well-being of any community. It develops a means for people to express themselves musically, dramatically and instrumentally. It allows the community to engage in social interaction and creates opportunities for discussion at many different levels.

Mid-Canterbury has a robust performing arts sector that offers opportunities for those interested to acquire skills in their chosen area. It provides a solid platform for the development of an individual's confidence and performance skills, while also providing the necessary support and mechanisms for them to progress through the various areas and levels of performance, leading to tertiary-level education and eventually a career within the industry.

Big Little Theatre Company – Established in 2005, it has developed into a highly reputable training organisation for those aged from seven through to eighteen, developing their Dramatic performing arts skills. Not only does it provide training from some of the best local performing arts teachers, but it also uses the teaching resources available from organisations such as Court Theatre in Christchurch. Annually, they will stage at least two shows, achieving a very high standard of performance from such a young group.

Mid-Canterbury Children's Theatre - The Mid-Canterbury Children's Theatre Inc. has several aims.

- 1) To foster and encourage opportunities for the furtherance of theatre skills and stagecraft amongst children aged seven to seventeen in the Mid Canterbury region.
- 2) To foster and encourage self-confidence and self-esteem amongst children aged seven to seventeen in the Mid Canterbury region by providing opportunities for the children to learn theatre skills and stagecraft.
- 3) To promote and/or hold live theatre productions involving children in the Mid Canterbury region.
- 4) To generally promote good fellowship, friendliness and understanding among all members of the Society and between the Society and the community of Mid Canterbury.

Variety Theatre Ashburton (Ashburton Operatic Society) – Established 1960. VTA provides a stepping stone for those wishing to further develop their performing skills. They annually stage one major show, using professional directors to mount some of the most prominent Broadway and West End musicals, e.g., Joseph, Jesus Christ Superstar, Grease, Mamma Mia, etc., with greater capacity to stage big-budget shows over longer seasons.

They were instrumental in developing the Ashburton Event Centre and remain a key stakeholder.

AEC provides the technical management of all Variety Theatre Ashburton's productions, including stage plans, hanging plots, lighting designs and light plotting.

Mid-Canterbury Summer Singing School – Now in its 22nd year, the Mid-Canterbury Summer Singing School has become a production house for many community performers. Following a desire to raise their productions to an even higher level, producer, director, and well-known singing tutor Jo Castelow decided that, with the Event Centre's expertise, she could improve on what was already a very popular programme with waiting lists for attendance.

Community-Based Dance Studios – Dance Worx and Julie Hawke School of Dance are also regular users of our venue. Julie Hawke holds an annual Christmas Highland Dance performance while Dance Worx performs excerpts from their year of training. The Local Highland Dance organisation holds annual regional dance competitions and, from time to time, hosts the national competitions.

Royal New Zealand Ballet – A close relationship has developed between the RNZB over the last 12 months following their first tour, which was a multiple sell-out success.

Opportunities – To continue to advise and assist local community-based productions to ensure they make the best use of the facilities and can see the actual value in holding their output at the Event Centre.

Looking for opportunities to involve the local performing arts organisations in local productions that serve a need, e.g. school holiday periods, ANZAC, Christmas.

Education Providers

Education – Encouraging local schools to make better use of the venue and its facilities is now beginning to come to fruition.

Ashburton College is now holding its annual School Ball and its end-of-the-year prize-giving at the Event Centre.

Christian School, Wakanui School, St Joseph School and Longbeach School - hold their annual productions at the Event Centre.

Ashburton Intermediate School, Ashburton College, Wakanui, Tinwald and Longbeach Schools -

hold their end-of-year school assembly with us.

Heartland Bank School Music Festival – is an annual fixture on our calendar.

Opportunities - to continue to work closely with the schools and provide assistance to their performing arts coordinators in staging their productions.
Establish a theatre technician training opportunity.

Business, Conference, Meeting



The businesses above are ones we have regular contact with through venue bookings or assisting them in off-site meetings by supplying technical equipment and support.
They use a variety of rooms from large meetings in the O'Reilly Auditorium to day meetings in the Bradford Room. Most will require catering and, on occasion, bar facilities.

Opportunities - The repeat business we are getting from these businesses has been because of the relationship we have developed with them and the services we supply. There is the opportunity to develop this sector of our business further with targeted marketing. There has been very little marketing since opening, aside from creating and sending out a brochure to many local businesses. We currently have a presence on several websites, including the Event Venue Association of New Zealand and Experience Mid Canterbury, as well as our own Social Media platforms.

Community Wedding, Funeral, Fundraising

The multi-purpose ability of the venue has allowed for Weddings, Funerals, Boxing and Martial Arts Events to be held in the O'Reilly Auditorium.

Opportunities – To promote our ability to host celebratory functions.



Current Position.

Nationwide, the Event Venue Association of New Zealand (EVANZ) has reported a difficult time for the industry. This is attributed to the financial downturn, with people's discretionary spending stretched and competition from international touring acts. Within our venue, it has been noted that the quality shows still sell and do not appear to be price-dependent, although it is still essential for ticket prices to represent value for money.

Staff

The AEC is currently fully staffed across all areas of its operation.

Venue Use

Community groups remain the largest users of the venue, accounting for 62% of bookings. Itinerant hires, while reasonable, are returning to pre-COVID levels. Work is being done to look for performance options, working with other South Island venues on possible tour routes. Corporate meetings and conferences are reasonably good but further efforts are being made to increase the number of events we host.

Bar and Catering

Both areas are showing good returns but are dependent on the number and type of events we host.

Off-Site Services (Technical)

Having a Technical Manager allows us to meet better the demands of supplying technical services and equipment to clients using other venues in the district. Ongoing training is needed to increase the services that can be offered. There is a further need for additional equipment to support this arm of the business.

Marketing

Efforts to reduce advertising expenditure are now showing through. Better targeting of where events are advertised and an increase in advertising charges to promoters have assisted in this. Work has been done on the AEC Website to make the ticket-purchasing experience easier. Online ticket sales continue to increase while the Box Office sales decline. There is still an older sector of the community who prefer to purchase at the box office, and care is needed to continue providing this option for this group, who remain a significant part of the audience.

Competitive advantage

The Event Centre comprises five distinct areas.

- Patronbase Mid Canterbury(Ticket Sales)
- Live Entertainment
- Conference and Meeting.
- External Service and Equipment Hire
- Bar and Catering Service

The Event Centre operates its own Box Office with ticket sales processed through the Patronbase. Ticketing System. This provides us with an online sales platform and a Business Management System that incorporates a Venue Booking System, Database, Marketing Channel, Donation Platform and Resource Management.

It also allows AEC to set its own insider and outsider charges. This is very important for a community-based venue with a large number of community events. It allows them to negotiate fees suitable to the individual.

AEC can also offer ticket sales for other events not held at the AEC. This provides the event organiser with a well-recognised sales platform and access to an online sales platform, with options to market directly to the AEC Database.

Our competitors in the ticketing market consist mainly of Tickettek and, to a lesser extent, ITicket. Tickettek is seen as the ticketing company for many of the major shows in Christchurch and has a close association with many of the Council VBase operations.

ITicket is at the other end of the scale and, locally, deals mainly with smaller operators, offering ticket sales across different events. They are, however, operating successfully locally and remain our main competitor for the local event ticketing business.

Our advantages.

- It is stipulated within our venue contract that all ticketed events held within the Event Centre must sell their tickets through the AEC Patronbase ticketing system.
- Regular shows within the Event Centre result in a greater awareness of the AEC brand. This is helpful when other events are advertised with tickets available on the AEC website.
- Ownership of the database belongs to the Event Centre, allowing us the opportunity to market directly to these clients, events of a similar genre as they may have attended in the past.
- The ability to set fees as determined by ourselves, and the ability to negotiate the fee structure.
- We can design the ticket print locally in conjunction with the client.
- Simple contract structure and the ability to have tickets on sale the same day.
- Website – with marketing options
- Subsidised advertising of the client's event through our marketing contracts and Upcoming Event advertisement in the local paper and on the radio.
- E-newsletter and promotion to our ever-increasing database with Earlybird offers and Group/Member discount offers.
- Promotion through our Social Media platforms.

The AEC database will be an increasingly important part of our future marketing plan. A considerable amount of work is being done to make this information more user-friendly by breaking it down into those clients who have attended particular performance genres. There is little point in marketing a rock band to someone who has attended a Ballet or NZSO concert.

Growth plan

- Continual approaches to promoters to tour through the AEC.
- Working closely with other South Island Venues to attract tours into the South Island.

- Improving the technical ability and ensuring equipment is up-to-date and relevant to the industry (see Venue Upgrade proposal).

As the district grows, so will the audience base. There is a continual number of first-time attendees coming to the theatre and commenting not only on the shows but also on the venue. Word of mouth is also increasingly connecting promoters with new touring products.

Providing quality service and amenities to conference and meeting delegates also yields positive testimonials.

Every business has different expectations from a conference venue. The AEC must be able to meet the modern-day demands of the conference and meeting market, including the ability to live-stream content and offer online connections to presenters from anywhere in the world, along with excellent audiovisual options and technical services from staff capable of delivering the latest technology and operations.

Business Planner

The following planner outlines goals and objectives with time frames for completion.

GOAL 1

Goal 1 – AEC is valued and actively supported by the District

Objective 1 – AEC is valued and actively supported by the District	Responsibility	Time Frame	Completed By
Tasks			
Create an audience survey form to better understand our client's wants and needs.	Administration	1.12.2026	Ongoing
Create a Promoters survey form to better understand our client's wants and needs.	Administration	1.12.2026	Ongoing
Seek Business Support in the development of partnerships and sponsorship	Management	1.12.2026	Ongoing
Seek funding from philanthropists and supporters to assist with the proposed venue upgrade			

Objective 2 – Ensure our community know and understands the facilities and services offered by the Event Centre in the key areas of live performances, conferences and meetings, weddings and funerals.	Responsibility	Time Frame	Completed By
Tasks			
Develop a marketing plan once the community's needs are understood	Marketing	Annually	1.12.2026
Implement and review the marketing plan	Marketing	Annually	1.12.2026
Meeting Room and catering options are developed/ revised to give users choice	Management	Annually	1.12.2026
The fees and charges schedule is reviewed	Management	Annually	1.12.2026
An effort is made to hold events that encourage all residents to feel part of the AEC family. E.g. Cultural, Sporting, Hobby Groups, Conference, Meeting, Training	Management	Annually	1.12.2026

GOAL 2

Goal 2 – A professional approach is taken towards all events hosted by the Event Centre to maintain a very high standard of performance/event. Develop a brand/image people can rely on to be of high quality every time.

Objective 1 - To ensure the venue's facilities and technical infrastructure keep pace with trends and developments within the industry.	Responsibility	Time Frame	Completed By
Tasks			
Plan for and implement upgrades of the Sound, Lighting, Audiovisual, and Networking capabilities to ensure we remain relevant with current event industry practices.	Management	In Progress	31.6.2027
Develop and maintain a Technical Hire department that recognises the needs of the community, and promote to outside users.	Management	Continual	31.6.2026
A CAPEX management plan is developed which ensures future upgrades are budgeted for. <i>How do we address depreciation?</i>	Management	Continual	31.6.2026
Ensure that within our financial ability, technical equipment stays current with developing technology within the industry.	Management	Continual	31.6.2026

Objective 2 - Foster mutually beneficial relationships with key stakeholders.	Responsibility	Time Frame	Completed By
Tasks			
Facilitate a closer working relationship with the many performing arts groups in the district	Management	Continual	31.6.2026
Six-monthly meetings are held with key council staff to develop a mutual understanding of AEC's direction and performance	Management	Continual	31.6.2026

Objective 3 – Our staff continue to be pivotal to our success	Responsibility	Time Frame	Completed By
Tasks			
Professional development opportunities are pursued for staff in their area of expertise	Management	Annually	31.6.2026
Employees feel involved in the operation and decision-making process.	Management	Annually	31.6.2026
Evaluation of staff roles is undertaken periodically	Management	Annually	31.6.2026

GOAL 3

Goal 3 - To assist to the best of our ability in the development of outstanding entertainment for the community

Objective 1 - Local Community groups utilise AEC	Responsibility	Time Frame	Completed By
Tasks			
Community groups are made aware of the AEC grant fund application	Management	Annually	31.6.2026
Working relationships with Business Sponsors are developed to bring high-calibre performers to our venue.	Management	Annually	31.6.2026
Meeting room and catering options are developed to provide choices that suit all budgets.	Management	Annually	31.6.2026
Training support and education is provided in all aspects of the theatre	Management	Annually	31.6.2026

Objective 2 - We are recognised as a top-class venue by touring promoters	Responsibility	Time Frame	Completed By
Tasks			
Client feedback is sought from touring professionals in all sectors of the production, i.e. ticketing, lighting, sound, stage, rigging, management, booking, wardrobe and marketing.	Management	Continual	31.6.2026
Performers are surveyed to ensure their needs are met, i.e. dressing room facilities, shower/bathroom facilities, laundry facilities.	Management	Continual	31.6.2026

Objective 3 - We continually seek to enhance the service we provide	Responsibility	Time Frame	Completed By
Tasks			
Staff feedback is valued and supported in the development of systems and operations.	Management	Continual	31.6.2026
Our Ticketing business is promoted and continues to develop and grow.	Management Administration Marketing	Continual	31.6.2026
We hold annual business plan workshops to identify and evaluate new initiatives for future growth.	Management	Continual	31.6.2026

GOAL 4

Goal 4 – AEC is recognised as Mid Canterbury’s best venue for hosting meetings and conferences.

Objective 1 - Our local business community think of us first for meetings, trade shows, conferences.	Responsibility	Time Frame	Completed By
Tasks			
Objective 1 - Develop, implement and review a marketing plan specific to the conference and meeting market at a local and national level, targeting events of max 250 pax	Management	Continual	31.6.2026

Objective 2 - We work with local stakeholders to attract conferences.	Responsibility	Time Frame	Completed By
ATEC works with Experience Mid Canterbury and local organisations to attract regional and national conferences and events.	Management	Continual	31.6.2026

Threats to Achieving Results

The number one threat to the progression of the performing arts in Ashburton at the moment is the economic downturn.

Nationwide, statistics currently show a downturn in audience numbers and tour-ready product.

With a reduction in people's discretionary spending, ticket sales for several performances have fallen short of targets. However, quality shows with ticket prices in the upper \$75.00 - \$85.00 range continue to sell well, with recent shows in these ranges selling above 90%.

There is, however, a notable number of comments from some sectors of the community regarding the cost of some shows.

The annual grant from the Ashburton District Council must continue to maintain an adequate level of service. Any reduction in this grant can only be offset by a decrease in staff levels and/or an increase in venue and service hire costs. A reduction in staff levels will ultimately lead to reduced services and our ability to implement initiatives.

Successful funding applications to other organisations are needed to implement the proposed upgrading of facilities and educational programmes, and to increase our capabilities in the technical areas of sound, lighting, and audio-visual equipment.

There is also a delicate balance needed in programming the number of performances per month/year and at particular times during the year. While the community support and the number of events hosted by this sector are excellent, they could interfere with the date options touring promoters need.

Core values

- To establish an audience following that recognises and has trust in the quality of the performances, and increases the number of people who engage in the performing arts at all levels.
- To provide services that not only meet but exceed both conference organisers' and promoters' expectations, for the level of service in a regional venue.
- Provide a clean, fully operational venue to touring groups with experienced technicians available to assist in all areas of performance.
- Promote touring shows through established marketing channels and assist promoters by advising of marketing opportunities.

- Assist conference organisers in all areas of their event and assist in advising on accommodation and outside activities in conjunction with the Ashburton District Council.

The ethos of our staff and organisation is to provide exceptional services and opportunities for the community to engage with the performing arts at a community level, as well as to provide a venue for the performance of national and international acts at affordable prices. We have a **whatever-it-takes attitude** toward the requirements of hirers and will assist them in all areas to ensure the best possible result.

Credibility and risk reduction

By ensuring the quality of events held at the Event Centre is of the highest standard and ticket prices reflect the level of the performance, we will begin to build a positive brand image that gives our clients confidence that what they are investing in is value for money.

A close working relationship with promoters enables us to offer advice on appropriate ticket prices for the proposed production. By doing so, we can reduce the risk of disappointment for our audience due to substandard performances or overpriced ticketing.

We aim to be a credible regional venue that can provide the most up-to-date facilities for the entertainment industry and the conference and meeting market.

4. Team and Management Structure

Key Staff

Manager (40 hrs)

Responsibilities

- Oversee and maintain an effective and motivated team of Three full-time and one part-time staff, 5 casual, and 25 volunteers
- Maintain close relationships with all clients.
- Provide advice and assistance to community groups wishing to hold events.
- Provide leadership and offer advice to staff in all areas of operation.
- Maintain an adequate budget and operate within these boundaries, including all financial functions.
- Provide timely feedback and reports to the Council, Management Board and Performing Arts Trust.
- Provide quotes on venue and service hire.
- Provide Stage, Sound and Lighting design options and recommendations.

Administration (40hrs)

Responsibilities

The administrator is responsible for the efficient running of Box Office Sales, incorporating the Patronbase ticketing system and all its requirements. They will assist with preparing promoter contracts and settlement reports, end-of-month creditors/debtors accounts, PAYE, sorting daily mail, banking both AEC and Ticketing income, responding to booking enquiries, and all other duties as requested by AEC management, including assisting with function room setup and cleaning.

Technical Manager (40 hrs)

Responsibilities

The Technical Manager is responsible for fully managing and ensuring the efficient running of the AEC's 'back of house' for clients that hire the facility for events and services. They must also ensure they are 'coordinated with' and work as a 'team player' across all AEC functions to support the AEC's well-being and productivity as a whole. The position requires the appointee to be available 24/7, particularly during conferences and events of all types, or, by agreement with the venue manager, or to have made alternative arrangements. The Technical Manager will have skills in all aspects of the theatre industry, including Sound, Lighting, Audio-visual and stage operations, and be capable of administrative tasks, including providing quotes and health and safety reports.

Venue Technician (Junior)

The Junior Venue Technician is responsible for assisting in the efficient running of the Back of House operations, including all aspects of the venue's technical abilities. A key support person to the Technical Manager, they will work as a team member to provide efficient, knowledgeable service to the venue's clients and assistance across all areas of the venue's operations.

Bar/Catering and Marketing Manager (Part-time)

A varied role that requires experience in both on-site liquor sales and event catering for up to 250 people, managing menus for client events and ordering bar stock and catering supplies. Ensuring all statutory requirements for the sale of liquor and the provision of food are met—rostering staff for bar and catering operations and commercial cleaners who work around events.

Managing the marketing of events for the venue, including liaising with promoters to provide marketing options. Working within an annual budget, they will contract with the best marketing platforms to deliver effective marketing solutions for events and venue services.

Bar/Catering Staff (Casual)

To provide effective hospitality services to our clients through bar and catering operations, ensuring all statutory requirements are being evaluated and met.

Volunteers

The AEC continues to benefit from the generosity of over 25 volunteers who assist in a variety of areas from Ushering, Fire Wardens, Staging, Lighting, Sound, FOF activities and Catering, to name but a few.

Staff Training

Ongoing training options are provided that cover, but are not limited to –

Fire Warden

EWP (Elevated Work Platform)

Fly Training

Marketing

Patronbase System operations

Conferences attended – EVANZ & ETNZ

Management systems

A Code of Compliance has been established for both employees and volunteers. This outlines management's expectations of staff and clearly defines each department's roles. It contains a management structure showing the various reporting bodies to which the staff are answerable.

Comprehensive Health and Safety booklets have been developed to ensure all employees, contractors and hirers understand their responsibilities to the safety of those in the venue and themselves, as well as reporting procedures should an accident occur.

These booklets are also available to venue hirers who must sign to confirm they have read and understood the Venue's Health and Safety requirements.

All staff are involved in weekly meetings where Health and Safety is an agenda item, and in discussions and reporting on upcoming events. Any operational issues are also discussed, with procedures put in place to address them after agreement from those involved.

Due to the small size of the team, everyone needs to be involved in policy discussions, as everyone must have at least a broad understanding of each person's role to cover staff leave.

All computer systems are backed up onto a minimum of one external hard drive, with the ticketing system having two backups as well as power failure protection.

Financial administration is provided through the MYOB accounting system.

2026-2027 Venue Upgrade



Our Vision for the Future: A Venue capable of providing for and supporting all genres of the performing arts and conference market, with modern fit-for-purpose technology:

Our vision remains clear – to ensure our venue remains a state-of-the-art facility that can accommodate even more remarkable performances and conference events, and support artist endeavours through the provision of technology, equipment and facilities relevant to current industry practices.

The revitalisation plan will include:

1. **Acoustic Enhancement:** Upgrading our existing acoustic PA system to the modern Line Array speaker system, complete with a new, larger mixing console.
2. **Networking Upgrade:** Install networking capabilities that enable the provision of audio-visual display across the venue.
3. **Theatrical Lighting Upgrade:** Upgrade the theatrical lighting to the more eco-friendly LED lighting systems now available.
4. **Accessibility:** Improving accessibility features to create a more inclusive environment for all patrons.
5. **Technology:** Integrate cutting-edge technology to enhance the visual and auditory experience for our audience, including the hearing-impaired.
6. **Sustainability:** Implementing eco-friendly initiatives to reduce our carbon footprint, including trade waste and power consumption.
7. **Furnishing, Flooring and Wall Covering Upgrade:** Refresh the decor, ensuring the venue remains an attractive and inviting place for social interaction.

17 Years of Performance: A Legacy of Excellence.

Since opening our doors in 2008, our venue has played host to an astounding array of performances, from world-renowned ballets to spellbinding orchestral concerts, electrifying rock shows and incredible musical theatre performances. We are proud to announce that over the last 17 years, an astonishing 175,000 patrons have enjoyed, supported and witnessed the great talent we have in our district, and from further afield, much of which has blossomed thanks to the facilities and support we have available at the Ashburton Event Centre.

From the beginning, the Ashburton Performing Arts Theatre Trust had a clear vision to establish a Performing Arts Venue that supported not just the many local performing arts organisations in Mid Canterbury, but also a large number of touring artists, a venue that provided them with the most up-to-date facilities, equal to our larger counterparts throughout New Zealand, and to provide an educational opportunity for students to learn the many production elements involved in theatre, from performance, technical sound and lighting to stage construction and stage management. A meeting space that provided the opportunity for the community to meet on a social, intellectual or educational level to enhance their lifestyle. To provide for a culturally diverse community that needs to share and celebrate its cultural diversity through performance and entertainment.

The Need for Renewal: Investing in Our Future.

While we celebrate this milestone, we must also look ahead. The Ashburton Performing Arts Theatre Trust has strived to maintain a high level of functionality, ensuring it remains fit for purpose. But, just like a masterpiece requires periodic restoration and renewal, our much-loved venue needs an upgrade to ensure it continues to inspire future generations of performers and to showcase their performances in comfortable, inviting surroundings. The wear and tear of 17 years of events, changing technology and evolving safety standards, necessitates significant renovations.

Rationale behind each of the Priority Upgrades –

Priority 1 – Essential to the operation of the venue at a level that assures that the itinerant hire and local performing arts groups benefit from an industry recognised standard of sound reproduction.

Audio:

Liner-Array PA System (currently being installed)

- The current PA (sound system), when installed in 2008, was second-hand, meaning it could be as much as twenty years old.
- A failure in any part of the PA system would leave the venue with inadequate capabilities to operate at its current level.
- Sound systems have improved immensely over the life of the current system, where Line-Array systems are now an industry standard and are being installed in most modern venues.
- There is an expectation that AEC should meet the current industry standards for sound reproduction.
- Sound reproduction is a critical component in any event where sound reinforcement is required and is usually the first criticism received when it is not of sufficient standard.

Mixing Console Allen and Heath SQ7 (Completed)

- In the time that AEC has been operating, the productions being produced by various community organisations and touring groups have become more complex with a larger cast and live musicians requiring a mixing console capable of handling a larger number of microphones and auxiliary inputs.
- The current mixing console is now 11 years old and susceptible to failure.

Radio Microphones Sennheiser (Completed)

- Microphones are subjected to a lot of wear and tear over their life.
- Critical to achieving quality sound enhancement.
- Pointless having a quality PA without having the same quality microphone.

Networking (Partially Completed)

- Install the necessary networking systems that will allow better technical communication and functionality throughout the venue.

Summary

The proposed audio package will ensure the AEC has an audio system equal to that of recently built, similar-sized venues and capable of achieving a high level of quality and performance for many years to come. The Adamson Line-Array system is recognised as an industry leader. It has been installed at the Piano in Christchurch and at a performing arts venue in Rotorua, both of similar size and capacity to the AEC.

Priority 2 – Essential to the aesthetics of the venue at a level that assures the audience of a functional, comfortable, well-maintained venue that encourages them to meet at a social level to be entertained, or a corporate level for education and networking.

Refurbishment:

Paint and Décor. Interior & Exterior

- A refresh of the interior paint is required to keep the public areas and workspaces relevant to modern décor trends.
- Public areas are subjected to high traffic flows and the installation of trade display booths, etc., causing superficial wear and tear.

Furnishing and Wall Covering

- Sound-absorbing fabric wall covering located in the Bradford Room, Variety Foyer and Woodham Foyer has faded and needs replacing.
- Carpets across the venue have worn or become faded due to exposure to the sun and high foot traffic.

Summary

Décor is essential to creating a welcoming vibe in our venue, where our audience or corporate delegates can relax in comfort. Our promoters recognise our venue as providing attractive surroundings and support for their audience members, and the Corporate Event organiser recognises our venue as offering a professional level of service and capability.

Priority 3 – A need to continue the development of our technical capabilities and provide sustainability through eco-friendly LED Lighting practices.

Theatre Lighting

- Upgrade current lighting fixtures to LED, reducing our energy consumption and maintenance.
- Upgrade our current lighting fixtures to intelligent lighting capable of performing more than one task and limiting energy consumption.
- Upgrade the theatre lighting rig to meet modern-day practices that benefit local and itinerant hirers.

Audio Visual

- Upgrade the current Audio Visual projector to an LED projector.

Summary

AEC believes it has a responsibility to limit its environmental footprint by using sustainable operating methods. To provide up-to-date equipment that meets best practice standards and offers the ability for staff to become educated in the use of modern-day equipment and practices.

Capital Expenditure

	Item	Description	Estimated Quote	Explanation
PRIORITY 1				
1	Audio	Line-Array PA + Upgrade	\$ 274,369.94	Adamson FOH PA Speaker System
	As Per Quote			
	TES2001066-2			
		Sub Total	\$ 274,369.94	GST Excl
1	Network			
		Network System	\$ 17,853.20	Basic IT Connectivity between room
		Sub Total	\$ 17,853.20	GST Excl
1		Labour	\$ 34,250.00	
		Contingency	\$ 10,000.00	
		Sub Total	\$ 44,250.00	GST Excl
	Priority One Total		\$ 336,473.14	GST Excl
Priority 1a				
	Stage Thrust	Maintenance/Networking Upgrade	\$ 140,000.00	
	Auditorium House Lights	Replace Lighting with LED	\$ 47,028.05	
	Dimmer System	Replace Dimmer System	\$ 5,000.00	
	Master Q System Install	Quote # TES2001008-4	\$ 171,601.44	
PRIORITY 2			\$ 363,629.49	
2	Paint & Decor			
		Paint interior, exterior	\$ 84,482.00	Estimated Quote
		Sub Total	\$ 84,482.00	GST Excl
2	Furnishing			
		Floor covering	\$ 98,000.00	Estimated Quote
		Wall covering	\$ 20,000.00	Estimated Quote
		Sub Total	\$ 118,000.00	GST Excl
	Priority Two Total		\$ 202,482.00	GST Excl
PRIORITY 3				
3	Lighting	12 x Moving Head LED Profile	\$ 150,000.00	Chauvet Maverick Force S or similar
		18 LED Maverick Wash	\$ 140,000.00	Chauvet Professional or similar
	Lighting	8 x Dimmers/Control	\$ 40,000.00	Replacement lighting control dimmer
		Sub Total	\$ 330,000.00	GST Excl
3	Audio Visual	Large Venue Projector	\$ 40,000.00	Estimated Quote
		Sub Total	\$ 40,000.00	GST Excl
	Priority Three Total		\$ 370,000.00	GST Excl
	Project Total		\$ 1,076,473.14	GST Excl

How will it be funded?

Grant Applications to –

- Lion Foundation
- Community Trust Mid-South Canterbury (Completed)
- Regional Cultural Heritage Fund
- Ashburton District Council
- Braided Rivers Community Trust
- Somerset House Community Trust
- Lotto New Zealand

Other Opportunities

It is the Trust's intention to approach community philanthropists and supporters in an effort to raise additional funds.

Outcome from applications to date.

Charitable Organisation Grants		
Dec 2023	Community Trust Mid-South Canterbury	25000
Mar 2024	Lotto NZ Grant	285000
May 2025	Lion Foundation	40000
May 2025	Rotary Club Ashburton	5000
Dec 2025	Community Trust Mid-South Canterbury	75000
	Sub Total	430,000
Community Donors		
Mar 2025	Ashburton Performing Arts Asso	5197.42
May 2025	Rotary Club Ashburton	5000
	Sub Total	10,197.42
Private Donors		
Dec 2025	Individual Donors	7600
Dec 2025	Online Donors	980.66
	Sub Total	8580.66
AEC Fundraising		
Aug 2025	Cabarnet	45000
	Sub Total	45000
		Total 493,778.08

Expenditure To Date		
Sep 2025	Deposit - TES Quote 2001066-2	287,500
	Adamson PA Sound System (Lotto Grant)	
Nov 2025	TES Networking Upgrade (Lion Foundation Grant)	40000
	Total 327,500	

Expenditure Committed		
Due Feb 2026	Balance of TES Quote 2001066-2	47944.11
	Total 47,944.11	

Operational Budget July 2025 – December 2025

Operational Budget			2025-26				
			Budget Report YTD to 30.6.2025 (Actual)	Percentage Increase Decrease	Draft Budget 2025-26	P&L Report YTD to 31/12/2025 (Actuals)	Budget Report YTD to 30.6.2026 (Actuals)
Trading Income			D		B	C	D
Advertising Recovery	Revenue from the sale of marketing packages	\$ 7,407.94	20%	\$ 8,889.53	\$ 12,618.66		
AEC Membership	Memnbership Subs				\$ 478.26		
AEC Procured Shows (Excl Fund Raising)	Revenue from AEC Procured Performances	\$ 2,583.06		\$ 2,583.06	\$ 2,620.87		
Bar Sales	All Bar related income	\$ 48,781.48	20%	\$ 58,537.78	\$ 43,495.06		
Catering Sales	All Catering related Income	\$ 64,984.72	20%	\$ 77,981.66	\$ 43,782.23		
Confectionary Sales	All Confectionary related income	\$ 23,474.20		\$ 23,474.20	\$ 15,446.19		
Electricity Recovery	Revenue from Electricity oncharged	\$ 22,219.84	20%	\$ 26,663.81	\$ 11,880.37		
Event Revenue (Booking Fee, CC , Insider)	Revenue from Booking Fees, CC Charges, Insider Fee	\$ 56,449.11		\$ 56,449.11	\$ 38,632.78		
Hire - Auditorium	Hire - Auditorium	\$ 88,953.98	10%	\$ 97,849.38	\$ 50,423.15		
Hire - Bradford Room	Hire - Bradford Room	\$ 13,664.98	5%	\$ 14,348.23	\$ 8,003.00		
Hire - Green Room	Hire - Green Room	\$ 4,641.73	5%	\$ 4,873.82	\$ 1,200.00		
Hire - Woodham Foyer	Hire - Woodham Foyer	\$ 4,894.17	5%	\$ 5,138.88	\$ 1,939.78		
Regent Cinema Lease	Regent Cinema Car Park Lease	\$ 10,298.66		\$ 10,298.66	\$ 5,199.96		
Outside Hire - Light/Sound/AV	Revenue from tech equipment hired to Outside Events	\$ 1,647.10	25%	\$ 2,058.88	\$ 12,669.72		
Outside Hire - Labour	Revenue from Labour charges to Outside Events	\$ 4,571.00	25%	\$ 5,713.75	\$ 8,827.00		
Variable Charges	Revenue from Tech Equip & Labour hired to In-House Events	\$ 180,160.43	2%	\$ 183,763.64	\$ 106,990.55		
				\$ -			
Other Income				\$ -			
Interest Received	Bank interest Received	\$ 5,323.40		\$ 5,323.40	\$ 3,527.81		
Naming Rights	Naming Rights paid annually	\$ 5,000.00		\$ 5,000.00	\$ 5,000.00		
ADC Grant		\$ 338,090.00		\$ 346,245.00	\$ 173,123.00	\$ 173,123.00	
TOTAL		\$ 883,145.80		\$ 935,192.77	\$ 545,858.39		
Expenses							
ACC Levies	ACC Levies	\$ 1,466.34	4.3%	\$ 1,529.39	\$ 1,835.62		
AEC Promo Shows					\$ 6,846.74		
Bank Charges & Merchant Fees	Bank Charges & Merchant Fees	\$ 1,508.08	2.0%	\$ 1,538.24	\$ 3,420.62		
Bar Purchases	All beverage purchases sold over a bar	\$ 16,290.34	5.0%	\$ 17,104.86	\$ 19,443.01		
Catering Purchases	All catering purchases	\$ 37,749.73	2.5%	\$ 38,693.47	\$ 23,616.41		
Confectionary Purchases	All confectionary purchases	\$ 14,935.40	2.5%	\$ 15,308.79	\$ 7,176.54		
Cleaning & Laundry	Cleaning Product, Bathroom related product, Cleaning Company	\$ 25,165.00	2.5%	\$ 25,794.13	\$ 13,742.29		
Compliance Fees	Building WOF, Compliance Costs, Lifts, Air Con, Fire Monitoring	\$ 17,220.63	2.5%	\$ 17,651.15	\$ 5,007.58		
Computer & Xero Expenses	Computer related apps, Xero Licence	\$ 3,070.34	2.5%	\$ 3,147.10	\$ 2,224.79		
Kiwisaver Employer Contribution	Kiwisaver Employer Contribution	\$ 4,569.58	0.0%	\$ 4,569.58	\$ 5,392.56		
Licences and Registration	Patronbase, Food Lic, Bar Lic, Bar Manager Lic, Online based apps	\$ 1,260.00	2.5%	\$ 1,291.50	\$ 372.31		
Office Expenses	Stationery, Ticketing, Xero, Dynamic Computer Solutions for File Back	\$ 12,900.11	2.5%	\$ 13,222.61	\$ 4,921.91		
Advertising and Promotion	Advertising and Promotion, Mail Chimp, Foyer TVs Rental	\$ 36,751.41	2.5%	\$ 37,670.20	\$ 21,781.69		
Bar and Catering R&M	Bar and Catering R&M	\$ 451.69	300.0%	\$ 1,806.76			
Freight and Courier (Not Tech Related)	Freight and Courier (Not Tech Equipment Related)	\$ 150.00	0.0%	\$ 150.00			
Insurance	All Insurance premiums.	\$ 60,189.69	0.0%	\$ 60,189.69	\$ 29,583.18		
Rates	ADC Rent Lease Rent Reviewed 1.12.2025. Next review 2027	\$ 44,000.00	10.0%	\$ 48,400.00	\$ 18,333.35	\$ 48,400.00	
Rent	ADC Rates	\$ 13,495.00	0.0%	\$ 13,495.00	\$ 10,708.55		
Repairs and Maintenance	Repairs and Maintenance	\$ 41,065.66	2.5%	\$ 42,092.30	\$ 23,296.92		
Electricity Light, Power, Heating	Electricity Light, Power, Heating	\$ 64,633.08	4.0%	\$ 67,218.40	\$ 28,041.46		
Accounting/Audit/ Legal	Accounting/Audit/Legal	\$ 10,794.44	2.5%	\$ 11,064.30	\$ 4,945.00		
Phone and Internet	Phone and Internet, Dynamic Computer Solutions for backup, Sean, POS	\$ 5,289.87	2.5%	\$ 5,422.12	\$ 1,964.75		
Plant and Equipment Hire	Photocopier, EftPos Terminals, POS,	\$ 6,823.78	2.5%	\$ 6,994.37	\$ 8,062.65		
Security & Alarm	All Security Costs, Fire Monitoring, FFP	\$ 2,207.40	2.5%	\$ 2,262.59	\$ 1,317.85		
Staff Expenses	Uniforms, PPS	\$ 3,898.04	2.5%	\$ 3,995.49	\$ 1,765.66		
Staff Training	First Aid, Fire/Usher Training, Conference/Seminar attendance,	\$ 2,103.70	0.0%	\$ 2,103.70	\$ 196.52		
Subscriptions/Membership	EVANZ, ETNZ,	\$ 19,975.35	2.5%	\$ 20,474.73	\$ 10,119.24		
Variable Costs	All costs associated with achieving the Variable Income	\$ 92,647.75	0.0%	\$ 92,647.75	\$ 56,975.10		
Vehicle Expenses/Fuel	Van WOF, Maintenance, Vehicle & Firepump Fuel. Fuel Reimbursement	\$ 589.22	0.0%	\$ 589.22	\$ 1,154.08		
Volunteer Expenses	Uniforms, PPS, all volunteer-related costs	\$ 2,366.26	2.5%	\$ 2,425.42	\$ 740.22		
Wage and Salary - Bar and Catering	Wage and Salary - Bar and Catering	\$ 19,056.00	0.0%	\$ 19,056.00	\$ 15,740.11		
Wage and Salary - Operational	Wage and Salary - Operational	\$ 370,992.00	0.0%	\$ 370,992.00	\$ 168,268.60		
				\$ -			
TOTAL		\$ 933,615.89		\$ 948,900.85	\$ 496,995.31		
		-\$ 50,470.09		-\$ 13,708.08	\$ 48,863.08		