

July – December 2020

ASHBURTON TRUST
event centre

Council Report



Roger Farr

General Manager

12/1/2020



Six Month Report

July – December 2020.

Managers' Report

Dear Mayor and Councillors.

Thank you for the opportunity to present the Ashburton Performing Arts Theatre Trust (APATT) report for the six-month period from the 1st July – 31st December 2020.

Heading into the second half of 2020, there was still an uneasiness being shown by both the promoters and the audience with the possibility of further lockdown periods disrupting the performance and event calendar. This resulted in audience members holding off from buying tickets to performances until closer to the time, which placed greater pressure on the promoter through the uncertainty of house numbers. Given the circumstances, ticket sales while down slightly on where we would normally see them, have been satisfactory for the touring events we have hosted.

Bookings from the touring performance sector are looking reasonably strong again with a good number of New Zealand based performances booking in for 2021. This includes the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra on the 7th March and the Royal NZ ballet 11th March. This will be the first time the NZSO has performed in our venue since 2011, having had the Christchurch Symphony Orchestra previously.

Showtime Australia continues to provide a steady stream of bookings for their tribute performances, utilising New Zealand performers and if the standard of their most recent Tina Turner and ABBA productions was anything to go by, then these will surely be of a similar level and well supported.

Given the uncertainty of the events sector during the reporting period, ATEC has come through the period in a relatively strong position, off the back of bookings that were marginally down on the same period in 2019. Bookings in the Bradford Room were boosted by the extended period of use for Voting in the General Election as well as a number of multiday corporate events.

A very successful RockNpop series of performances was again very well supported realising a profit of \$17,000. Again, I can't thank enough the generosity of the performers who give freely of their time and talents and the audience members who attend in support of ATEC.

With the demise of Ticket Rocket and the resulting fallout for ticket holders to cancelled performances, an agreement has been reached with affected Promoters to address the lost funds for shows still to tour. A combination of ticket transfers to other performances and a payout to the promoter has allowed the promoter to continue with the performance and the ticket holders to receive a better outcome than otherwise was anticipated. Most ticket holders have been very

understanding and accepting of the outcome and our promoters have appreciated the forward-thinking in dealing with a very tricky situation.

A TEC is now fully operational under a new ticketing platform provided by Patron Base of Christchurch. This has involved a mammoth effort retrieving all the records from Ticket Rocket and uploading it into the new system. All revenue from ticket sales is now held in trust by ATEC with no third-party involvement. While this will mean a lot more work for the admin team, the promoters have applauded the policy and feel more assured their money is safe.

The Board and Management are currently re-evaluating earlier plans for the upgrade of our technical infrastructure with an eye towards making applications for funding in the coming year. Evaluation of carpets, paint, seating and heating infrastructure will be carried out and included in a funding application to Lottery Community Facilities.

A planned upgrade of the technical infrastructure was put on hold following lockdown and the funding received from the Lion Foundation returned. Discussions with Labour MP, Jo Luxton before Christmas focused on updating her on ATECs plans going forward and inquiring about available avenues for significant funding. Further work on this will be ongoing in the coming months. A time frame has not been given for the completion of the project at this stage due to the uncertainty of funding in the current climate.

Venue Occupancy (includes pack in and pack out days)

For the period from July 2020 – December 2020

The financial year started with great expectations for a better year, with very good bookings confirmed across all areas. As can be seen below, the numbers for the second half of the year were decimated with cancellations across the year.

There were fourteen cancelled community events, six cancelled conference/meeting events and four cancelled touring events.

Days of Use	Jul-Dec 2019	Jul-Dec 2020
Auditorium	96	36
Bradford	63	72
Green	34	2
Foyer	37	18

O-Reilly Auditorium -

The O Reilly Auditorium suffered badly from cancelled events during the period, reducing its number of days of use to just 36. The annual productions from Big Little Theatre Company and Mid Canterbury Children's Theatre, which would normally be held during this reporting period were cancelled.

Bradford Room – The Bradford Room has bounced back strongly due mainly to its use during the elections. Corporate events were consistent however and good numbers were achieved.

Green Room – Down considerably.

Woodham Foyer – Down Considerably

Commercial kitchen – Kai for Kids continued to use our kitchen for the preparation of school lunches.

Event Breakdown (performance/meeting days only)

Community Events – Even with the reduction in the number of events, those classified as community events remain the largest group at 54%. Every effort is made to support community organisations ensuring their event is of a high standard.

Conference/Meetings – Conference and meetings had again shown positive signs of growth in the first half of the financial year. Bookings are beginning to come in once again with a conference being quoted on for next year. This is one area of our business where a bit more certainty can be had around the likelihood of the event going ahead, at certain levels.

National Touring – Covid 19 and the resulting restrictions have been a disaster for the entertainment industry in general. As indicated earlier, all performance events have been heavily affected by the limiting of attendance numbers. Touring performances can't financially afford to perform at anything above Level One.

A TEC Procured – Is where ATEC contracts performances that may not otherwise come to our venue or are through a reputable touring company like Arts on Tour. ATEC continues to support Arts on Tour with its diverse range of



Sister Act.

high-quality performances and their relatively low costs. These performances are used for audience development where we offer our Open Hat payment scheme. Anyone can attend a performance and pay what they believe the performance was worth to them after the performance. We generally host six AOT performances a year.

ATEC Service Level Agreement

Due to the circumstances, we failed to achieve the KPIs of our Service Level Agreement for Community, Touring and ATEC Procured events. Had Covid not happened, I believe given the number of events cancelled or postponed, we would have achieved our targets.

2019	Community Events	Conference Meetings	National Touring	ATEC Procured
Jul - Dec				
Sub Total	84	55	8	5
2020				
Jan - Jun				
Sub Total	17	17	1	0
Total	101	72	9	5
ADC Service Level Agreement	130	55	20	10



Big Little Theatre Company

ATEC Operations

Maintenance

As mentioned earlier, maintenance was our main focus during the restricted periods with an eye on not exceeding our budget restrictions. Cleaning the venue has been a priority with vacuuming and cleaning areas unseen by the public, as well as a thorough clean of the front of house areas. The Building Warrant of Fitness has been received and a scheduled four-yearly maintenance programme on the fire services has been completed. The stage Fly Systems and Advance Truss Motor Winches are currently being checked with recommended maintenance being completed. Pigeons remain a problem with costly ongoing maintenance needed to contain the damage. We are currently investigating the effectiveness of laser lights as a deterrent measure. A number of local businesses are currently using them with positive feedback.

Health and Safety

Health and Safety continue to be a major focus for all staff and contractors using ATEC.

ATEC follows the recommended practises provided by EVANZ in its handling of the Covid Compliance required by the Government. This was a more detailed statement of intent by venues to ensure the safety of those entering our venues across New Zealand.

There were two medical events or injuries recorded in this period. Both events were reviewed with those involved and deemed no further action was needed.



Crazy Cast of RocknPop 2020. Fundraising for ATEC.

Financial. (Jul – Jun 2020)

Please find the audited report attached for the 2019-20 year.

While Covid and the resulting lockdown made it a challenging year, with the Governments wage subsidy and a revised budget forecast for the reporting period, we have ended the year in a relatively good position. However, the next six months will be just as challenging given the uncertainty within the sector.

Funding.

ATEC acknowledges the following organisations and thanks them for their continued support.

Lion Foundation - for their support in providing a grant to off-set our running costs over the next six months.

Ashburton District Council – Operational Grant

Business Partners – Heartland Bank, EA Network and Gary McCormick Transport

Budget 2021-22

(Please see 2021-22 Budget). While difficult to predict in these uncertain times and being so far out, after consideration we have settled on a conservative budget with reductions made in expenditure that have again allowed us no need to seek an increase in our funding from the Ashburton District Council.

An increase in Wage and Salary has been necessary to cover the Minimum Wage increases taking effect from April 2021. A Government Apprenticeship Wage Subsidy is being received for our head technician who is part way through the first of a three-year apprenticeship in Entertainment and Event Technology. The subsidy is a declining amount over a two-year period for the three years of the apprenticeship.

We anticipate Venue Hire to increase back to pre-covid levels gradually over the next two years. While the borders remain closed, efforts to attract local and national based performance and corporate events will be stepped up.

New to this year's budget is the inclusion of a licensing fee for the Patron Base system and the merchant fees associated with online transactions and eftpos payments. Patron Base Ticket Income refers to the income derived from ticket sales and an insider charge applied to the promoter. While this will see an increase of income from ticketing, there are additional costs as mentioned above and highlighted in the budget.

Bar and Catering are predicted to return to near normal trade patterns as pre-covid.

A review of the Regent Cinema lease agreement for car parking has seen a significant increase bringing it more in line with current valuations.

Staff and Volunteers

Our volunteers continue to provide an essential service assisting in many areas across the venue's operation. I thank them for their loyalty, dependability and support during what has been a difficult time for everyone. A recent recruitment drive has seen eight new volunteers sign up for Front of House duties. A very special thank you to Don and Joy Wilson and Margaret Jackson, who have recently retired from their voluntary roles at ATEC after being with us since the beginning in 2008. I must also acknowledge the service given by Yvonne Harrison as our Front of House co-ordinator. Yvonne has the unenviable job of rostering sufficient ushers and FOH staff for every performance event.

I thank my staff for their continued support during what has been a difficult period.

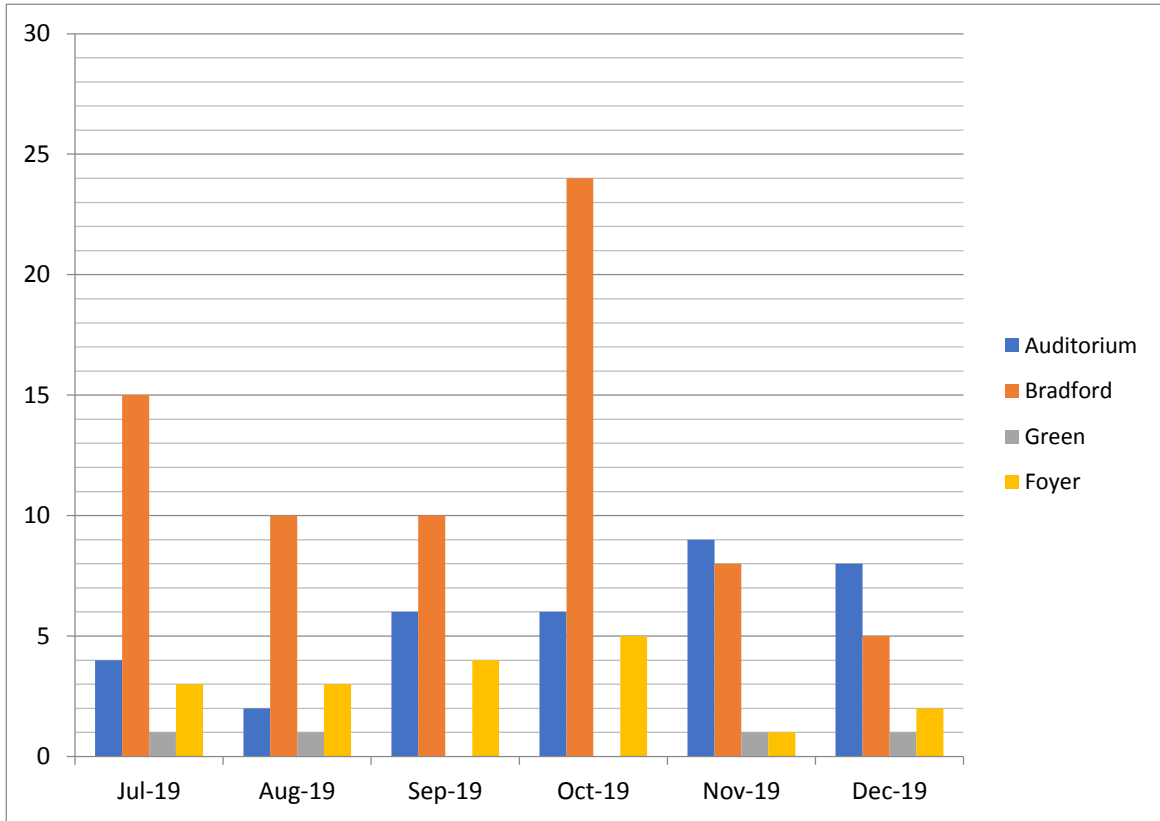
Summary

While there remains uncertainty within the industry, it is great to see the commitment from promoters and industry leaders who are prepared to work with venues to recreate a vibrant entertainment circuit. There is an eagerness from international promoters to begin looking at potential dates for 2022 which may see New Zealand and Australia being seen as a safe option for some very big performers.

Even with the current uncertainty, I believe we must continue to plan for the upgrading of our technical infrastructure and this will be a point of focus over the next year. An evaluation of planned capital expenditure will also be carried out with identified projects included in a funding application to Lottery Community Facilities.

Roger Farr
General Manager

**ATEC Venue Occupancy
July - December 2020
Includes Pack-in/Pack-out Days**

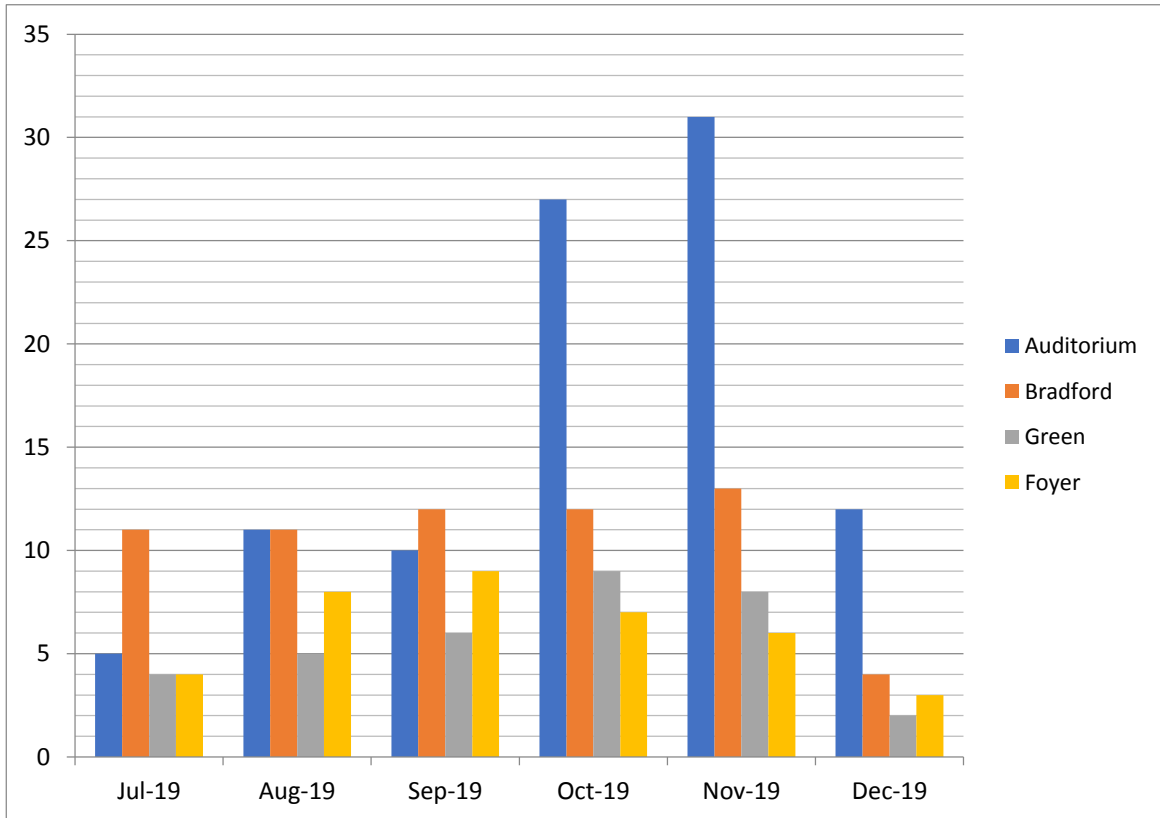


Days of Use

	Auditorium	Bradford	Green	Foyer
Jul-20	4	15	1	3
Aug-20	2	10	1	3
Sep-20	6	10	0	4
Oct-20	6	24	0	5
Nov-20	9	8	1	1
Dec-20	8	5	1	2

Total	35	72	4	18
Average Per Mth	6	12	1	3

**ATEC Venue Occupancy
July - December 2019
Includes Pack-in/Pack-out Days**



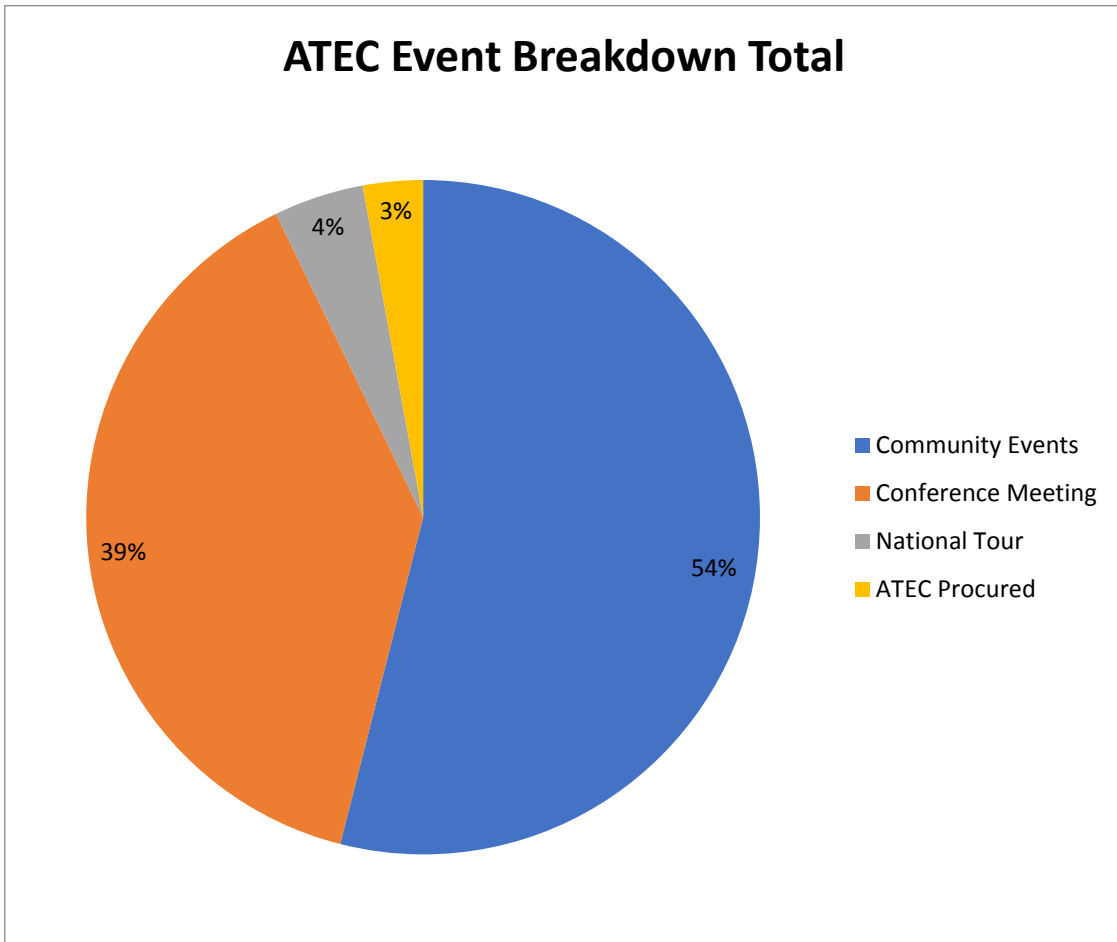
Days of Use

	Auditorium	Bradford	Green	Foyer
Jul-19	5	11	4	4
Aug-19	11	11	5	8
Sep-19	10	12	6	9
Oct-19	27	12	9	7
Nov-19	31	13	8	6
Dec-19	12	4	2	3

Total	96	63	34	37
Average Per Mth	10	11	6	6

ATEC Event Breakdown

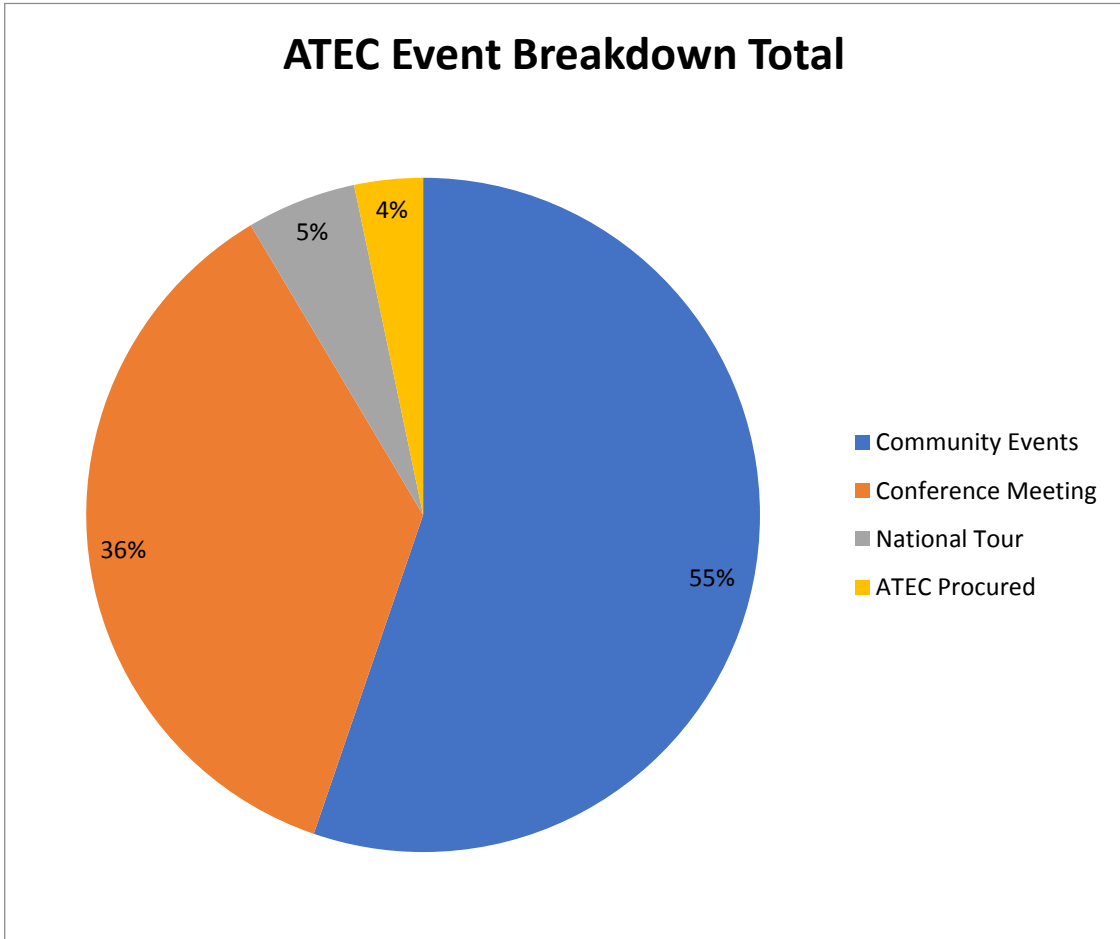
Totals Jul - Dec 2020



	Event Breakdown Jul – Dec 2020
Community Events	75
Conference Meeting	54
National Tour	6
ATEC Procured	4

ATEC Event Breakdown

Totals Jul - Dec 2019



	Event Breakdown Jul – Dec 2019
Community Events	84
Conference Meeting	55
National Tour	8
ATEC Procured	5

Event Forecast Trending

