

## **9 COMMUNITY FACILITIES**

### **9.1 RESOURCES, ACTIVITIES AND VALUES**

Community facilities provide a community with the resources to undertake activities necessary for its health, education, safety and welfare. They include facilities such as schools, hospitals, medical centres, veterinary clinics, police stations, courthouses, fire stations, public halls, libraries, churches and cemeteries. Generally, community facilities are buildings although, as in the case of a cemetery, the community facility can be a land resource.

Waitaki District has a range of community facilities which are provided by a number of different organisations. For example, schools are provided for by the Crown as well as private organisations such as churches. The Crown also takes responsibility to provide police stations (Oamaru, Hampden, Kurow and Palmerston), fire stations, a courthouse and a probation reporting and periodic detention centre (Oamaru). Health care facilities are provided in both public and private hospitals and private medical centres. The Council provides other facilities such as libraries, public halls, cemeteries and sports complexes. (Recreation and sporting facilities are discussed under Part II Section 3) In addition there are community and voluntary groups who provide community services such as a playcentre or Red Cross.

Most community facilities are established within towns or settlements that are the focus of the District community's activities. Others, such as public halls, which are located within rural areas provide a meeting place and venue for local activities. Due to the small population in some areas local schools sometimes provide the venue for a range of community activities rather than there being a range of facilities.

#### **Legislative Context**

Some of the organisations that provide community facilities have status as requiring authorities under the Resource Management Act and are able to provide for their facility by giving notice of requirement for a designation. Requiring authorities include a Minister of the Crown, or a local authority. Where a community facility is provided by way of a designation, the rules of the Plan will not apply to that activity, however there may be specific conditions relating to the design or use of the facility which will have the effect of rules. Once a site is designated it may not be used for any other activity (including permitted activities within the underlying zone) without the consent of the requiring authority.

### **9.2 ISSUE 1 - Visual and Amenity Effects**

**The construction of community facilities can have an adverse visual impact on the character or the landscape of an area; or can compromise the operation of other activities in an area.**

#### **9.2.1 Explanation**

The visual impact will be related to the size and appearance of the building and the character of the environment within which they are located. For example, a police station or courthouse within a town centre may appear little different from commercial buildings and have a negligible visual effect. However a hospital within a residential area which may be land extensive and multi-storeyed, may contrast significantly with adjoining houses.

Further, the height, bulk, location and style of a building can be incompatible with the surrounding environment if, for example, the building causes shadowing or glare to neighbours. On the other hand, a facility such as a cemetery may have a park-like appearance that enhances local amenity. Other effects generated by community facilities may be related to the activities undertaken within the building. Because a community facility is a focus for activity it may generate significant volumes of traffic with the attendant problems of traffic noise and congestion. The occurrence of traffic impacts may be irregular or regular depending on the type of activity, for example, schools and churches generate traffic at specific times. Traffic safety and efficiency may be compromised by insufficient parking and access to a site or adversely effect the amenity of a quiet residential street. This is of particular concern where an activity results in significant on-street car-parking.

As a gathering place, a community facility also has the potential to generate noise. This is a particular concern where a facility is located within a residential environment and activities are undertaken at night-time.

A community facility can have the positive effect of providing a focus for community activity but it may also have adverse effects such as a loss of privacy for adjoining neighbours or generate feelings of insecurity due to lack of a residential neighbour. Where a facility is used jointly by a range of groups, effects may be localised rather than dispersed to a number of locations.

Some community facilities may compromise other activities because of their sensitive nature. For example a hospital or rest home may be inappropriate in areas which have a reduced amenity.

### **9.2.2 Objective 1**

**The use of community facilities with minimal adverse effects on the environment.**

### **9.2.3 Policies**

- 1 *To minimise adverse environmental effects created by the use of community facilities through the application of performance standards to separate incompatible activities, maintain visual amenities and quality of the environment.*
- 2 *To provide for community facilities as of right in those areas of the District where they will have minimal or no adverse effects on the qualities of those areas.*
- 3 *To define community facilities which are land extensive and/or involve an activity or range of activities which have specific locational needs, that may not be accommodated within the zone, to ensure that the type and scale of development has minimal adverse effects on the environment.*
- 4 *To require community facilities which may have variable or adverse effects within specific localities to obtain Council consent to establish.*

### **9.2.4 Explanation and Reasons**

The objective seeks to ensure that community facilities do not adversely affect the environment and that existing levels of amenity are maintained. The nature of any effect will be related to the type of community facility, its characteristics and location. The policies indicate that the Council will control these effects through performance standard based rules which allow some community facilities to establish as of right in some locations and others

to require consent. Some sensitive community facilities could inhibit or compromise the development of some types of businesses.

## **9.3 ISSUE 2 - Accessibility and Recognition in Plan**

**Separation of community facilities from the communities they serve, as a result of concerns regarding potential adverse environmental effects, can prevent the convenient and accessible provision and operation of facilities which are of benefit to the community.**

### **9.3.1 Explanation**

A community facility must be accessible to the community that it serves. The District Plan must therefore ensure that it has provisions that allow facilities to establish in strategic locations. Accessibility must, however, be balanced against the environmental effects of the facility on the quality of the environment. In some cases the importance of the role of and the need for the community facility, such as a hospital, may override an adverse effect.

Many of the major community facilities such as schools and hospitals are already established and it is important that these valuable resources are recognised in the Plan to provide for their continuing use and development. Some providers of community facilities are able to designate their sites to secure their interests. Other facilities may be provided for and meet all the prescribed standards within a zone. Where a community facility is located within a zone that makes no provision for its activity and the provider has no ability to designate, the facility may be limited by existing use rights or future zone changes. A separate method of recognition is therefore required.

It should also be acknowledged that rather than gaining new community facilities, many are under threat of reduction in service or closure due to a decline in funding. The Plan should therefore address changing use in existing community facilities in the future.

### **9.3.2 Objective 2**

**The establishment and continuing use of community facilities.**

### **9.3.3 Policies**

- 1 *To provide for community facilities in locations where their service will be accessible to the community they serve.*
- 2 *To recognise existing community facilities to ensure their on-going use.*
- 3 *To provide for the multiple use of community facilities.*

### **9.3.4 Explanation and Reasons**

Many community facilities provide an important social service and it is important that the Plan acknowledges the need to provide for these facilities so that the community can in turn provide for its social needs, health and welfare. Many community facilities have specific locational needs that must be fulfilled for them to carry out their function.

Due to the importance of community facilities it is appropriate that they are provided for so that they can continue to operate and develop to meet the needs of the community. The multiple use of a facility will reduce capital investment and the occurrence of environmental effects throughout the District.

## **9.4 IMPLEMENTATION METHODS**

To achieve policies through:

- 1 the use of rules in the District Plan to:
  - a) permit the establishment and joint use of community facilities;
  - b) set performance standards to control the effects of community facilities.
- 2 the use of schedules within specific zones to:
  - a) recognise particular community facilities;
  - b) to provide them with the ability to further develop their resources;
  - c) to provide them with their own performance standards to control the effects of the community facilities.

## **9.5 ENVIRONMENTAL RESULTS ANTICIPATED**

- Minimal adverse effects on the quality of the environment in areas surrounding community facilities.
- Community facilities with variable or adverse effects established on specific sites and subject to specific controls.
- Community facilities accessible to the public.
- The continuing use of existing facilities.
- The potential for a provider of a community service to expand or develop their facility to meet community needs.
- Facilities used for a range of community activities.

