



nine month **REPORT**

1st July 2025 - 31st March
2026

Written & prepared by
Carla Bennett - Venue Manager



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The Venue



Cedar Room

capacity 50 pax

The Cedar Room is our smallest room in the venue and is situated upstairs, accessible by stairs only. It can accommodate a maximum capacity of 50 people, depending on the type of event. This space includes a small kitchen attached to the end of the room, which consists of facilities for making tea/coffee and light lunches. (fridge, microwave, cups, plates, etc.)

It houses an 86" smart TV with audio set-up, making online meetings, presentations and training more flexible.

This room hosts a range of activities which include meetings, seminars, workshops and small lunches/dinners. It can also become a green room for larger events being held in the other areas of the facility when required, making it a very versatile multi-function room.



Stadium

capacity 716 pax

The Stadium has a high-quality Tawa Floor with markings for basketball, netball (not quite a full court), volleyball and three (3) badminton courts with purpose-built lighting on designed winches. The surface of this floor is maintained to a very high standard, which consists of a light sand and re-varnish every three (3) years. It has bleacher-style seating on either side of the room, which can accommodate up to three hundred spectators. The seating can also be covered by a mezzanine floor to give the room extra dinner seating when the stadium is transformed into a formal event space. This, along with up-to-date LED stage and moving ceiling lights, plus the fully installed high-tech sound system, provides a versatile space for different types of events from local, regional, and national sporting tournaments to expos, markets, fundraising events, balls, dinners, conferences, cultural festivals, and more.



Concert Chamber

capacity 548 pax 431 seated

The Concert Chamber is the venue's theatre with a purpose-built stage and theatre seating. It consists of 189-tiered fixed theatre-style seating with a large flat wooden floor in front, which can accommodate an additional 242 portable seats, making the total seating availability of the chamber 431.

The stage consists of a fully upgraded high-tech sound system and full LED stage lighting, which also consists of moving lights in the main chamber. Adjacent to the stage are two (2) upgraded dressing rooms with bathroom facilities.

The main chamber also opens into a large main kitchen with a serving window for catering requirements. When the portable seating is not set up, the flat floor can accommodate up to 13 tables for dinner shows or VIP seating. This is a very versatile area to host a range of events. Dance performances, practices, prizegiving awards, fundraisers, school productions, dinner shows/concerts, workshops, presentations and more.



Our Vision

“Feilding Civic Centre is the place for the Manawatū community to connect, to participate and to be entertained.”





Operations Overview

This report represents the first six-month reporting period completed under the new Council Controlled Organisation (CCO) requirements.

Venue Activity and Performance

As outlined in this report under performance targets, the venue remains on track to meet its projected outcomes. Over the last six months, the venue has hosted a total of 245 bookings, generating approximately 26,763 visitors. Of these bookings, 132 were for sporting events, and the remaining 113 were for workshops, meetings, concerts, shows, awards ceremonies, and school events. A detailed breakdown of these figures is provided on page 7.

A wide range of events were held during this period, including fashion shows, school productions, dance competitions, a hypnotist show, performances by the Manawātū Concert Band, country school cluster group events, business awards, prizegivings, church bookings, workshops, blue light discos, sporting events and competitions, dinners, New Zealand Blood Service collections, social basketball, and pickleball.

Community Partnerships

The venue partnered with Feilding Rotary and, with the support of a grant from the Manawātū District Council Events Fund, presented An Evening with Jazz. A free youth-focused event. Jazz Thornton delivered a well-received presentation addressing resilience and overcoming adversity.

Governance

In September, two new trustees were appointed to the Trust. Allan Williams was farewelled in October, completing more than 16 years of service as a trustee. I would like to personally thank Allan for making a significant contribution to the Trust through both hands-on operational support, setting up, packing down, staging and seating, hanging curtains, sweeping floors, front of house to his extensive knowledge on the theatre stage and connections within the theatre community. He was instrumental in arranging and directing many successful events over the years, including the popular Manawatu Star Search Youth Talent Quest, which he led after taking over from founder Pat Snoxell.

Staffing

Staffing levels remained unchanged during the reporting period. The venue continues to be supported by:

- Part-time Venue Manager, who will reach 10 years of service in January
- Part-time Maintenance Officer, responsible for maintaining the building and supporting event set-ups and pack-downs
- Marketing contractor who continues to strengthen the venue's online presence through social media, website management, database maintenance, outreach, and event promotion.

Additional funding received from the Manawātū District Council in July for an Administration/Event Coordinator enabled the commencement of the recruitment process for this role.

Financial Sustainability

As operational and compliance costs continue to rise, a review of venue pricing has commenced. The Trust is mindful of the need to balance affordability for the community with the requirement to meet increasing costs, ensuring the venue remains accessible while financially sustainable. As per the Trust's vision, *"Feilding Civic Centre is the place for the Manawātū community to connect, to participate and to be entertained."*

Capital Improvements and Accessibility

The Central Energy Trust-funded sound and lighting upgrade has been completed from the grant received in May 2025, resulting in a fully installed LED lighting system and a modern, high-quality sound system.

The Trust also committed to invest in the installation of an Aurasast technology system throughout the Concert Chamber and Stadium to support visitors who are hearing impaired. This system will enable visitors to connect directly via hearing aids, earbuds, or venue-provided headphones, which significantly improves accessibility and inclusiveness for all.

Maintenance and Building Works

I have worked closely with the Manawātū District Council on ongoing venue maintenance throughout this period. Larger-scale works were undertaken by independent contractors, with routine maintenance carried out by the venue's Maintenance Officer.

Key works completed include:

- Replacement of identified doors in the kitchen, basement, and Concert Chamber in line with the building condition report
- Installation of a panic push-bar system on an exit door
- Replacement of selected stair handrails

Significant attention was also given to the main gas heating system, which underwent a major overhaul following winter-related electrical and control issues, including the final piece of replacing the gas burner. It is anticipated that these works will result in improved reliability this winter.

Approval has also been granted for the installation of four (4) large air conditioning units in the Concert Chamber, scheduled for early 2026. These units will provide additional heating when required and, more importantly, cooling during fully occupied events.

The past six months have been positive, with strong booking levels and continued investment in venue upgrades. I look forward to the ongoing development of the venue over the next six months.





Operations Overview

1st January - 31st March 2026

As requested by the Manawātū District Council, the standard six-month reporting period has been extended to include the additional three months from 1st January to 31st March 2026. This report, therefore, reflects a full nine-month period.

Venue Activity and Performance

The operational information outlined below relates to the period from 1st January to 31st March 2026, with performance targets referenced on page 8 and financial reporting on pages 9-14 reflecting the full nine-month period.

The first quarter of 2026 has demonstrated continued growth across the venue, particularly when compared with previous years. During this period, the venue hosted 102 bookings, with an approximate total foot traffic of 3,761 attendees.

By comparison, the same period last year recorded 77 bookings and an approximate foot traffic of 2,988. The increase in activity has been seen by higher utilisation of the Stadium for sports bookings and increased use of the Cedar Room for face-to-face training courses.

Over the total nine-month reporting period, the venue has supported a total of 347 bookings, with the approximate foot traffic reaching 30,524. This represents an increase from the same period last year, which recorded 336 bookings and 26,739 attendees.

Looking ahead, there has been a noticeable rise in enquiries and confirmed bookings. The Stadium is now fully booked on weekday evenings from 5:00pm onwards, and on Tuesdays from 1:00pm during the winter season through to September.

Weekend availability is increasingly limited due to whole complex bookings for large-scale events, including dance competitions, sports tournaments, fashion shows, dinners, and formal balls.

Staffing

On 3rd March, staffing capacity was increased with the appointment of a part-time Administration and Events Coordinator (20 hours per week). This role has enabled improved responsiveness to community needs and has taken the lead on coordinating the Civic Centre Friends Programme, as required under the Feilding Civic Centre Trust Statement of expectations. This new role has also alleviated workload pressures off myself and work associated with the increase in bookings and enquiries. The appointee's experience in event coordination and bar operations further strengthens the capability in planning for future venue developments, including potential bar facilities.

Marketing

Over the past nine months, a stronger emphasis has been placed on marketing, particularly through social media channels. Promotion has focused not only on the venue itself but also on supporting clients to promote their events. The resulting increase in enquiries and confirmed bookings, I believe, reflects the effectiveness of this approach.

Maintenance and Building Works

The quieter period during January and February was utilised to complete essential maintenance works, which required the temporary closure of some areas. The stage in the Concert Chamber was stripped back and repainted, and two internal exit doors from the Chamber have also been replaced.

Following prior approval from the Manawatu District Council, four large air conditioning units have been installed in the Concert Chamber. This upgrade will significantly improve comfort levels for patrons during both winter and summer events. Consideration now needs to be given to the installation of similar systems within the Stadium.

The replacement of the kitchen and high Concert Chamber windows facing Stafford Street is currently underway. These are being manufactured and are scheduled for installation over the coming months.

As part of our routine Health and Safety inspections, it was identified that there was a need to upgrade two ageing power boards within the small stadium kitchen. Approval has been granted by the Council for this work, including the installation of a new water heater under the sink. This upgrade is expected to be completed within the next month and will include the removal of the existing two power boards and installation of one modern unit.

Governance

February saw another long-standing Trustee, Tony Chapman, step away from the board. Tony was part of the first board that set up the Feilding Civic Centre Trust back on the 1st July 2004. Nearly 22 years of service to the venue and the community. I would also like to personally thank Tony for all the volunteer time he has put in over the years, both in his business expertise, but also being a hand on part of the venue team, collecting tickets at events, front of house staffing, and even making toasted sandwiches in the kitchen.

Conclusion

As outlined in the Statement of Intent, booking numbers are projected to exceed the 500 target by 30th June. The venue continues to provide a flexible and valuable space for the community, supporting a wide range of events. My staffing team remain committed to further developing and enhancing the venue's offerings.

I would like to extend an invitation to elected members for a guided tour of the venue to experience the venue beyond its public-facing spaces. While many of you will be familiar with the main event spaces, there are additional operational aspects that contribute and play a critical role in the venue's overall success.

Carla Bennett
Venue Manager

Evan Tull
On behalf of the FCCTrust



Booking Figures

July 2025 - March 2026



Monthly foot traffic

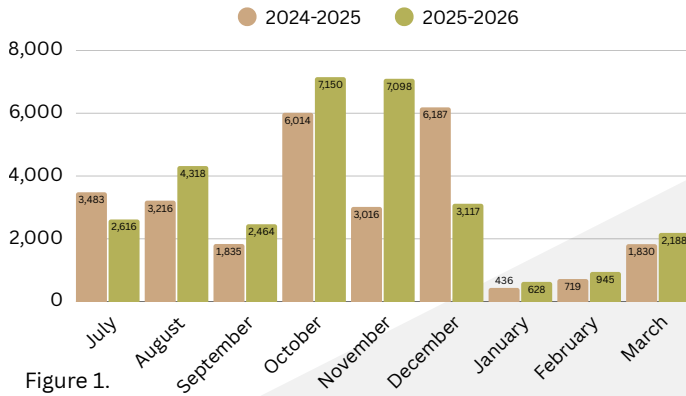


Figure 1.

Monthly Bookings

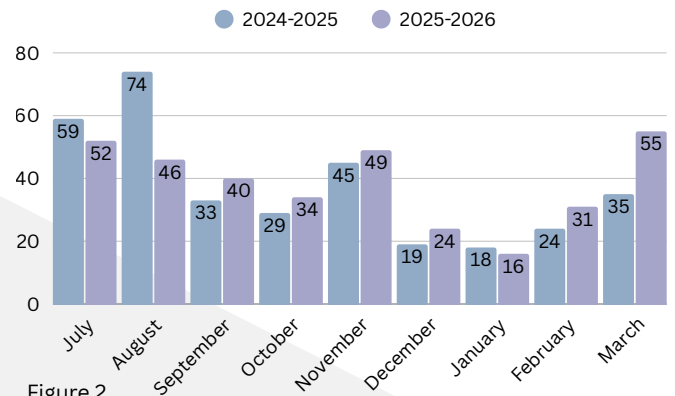


Figure 2.

Monthly foot traffic 2023 - 2025

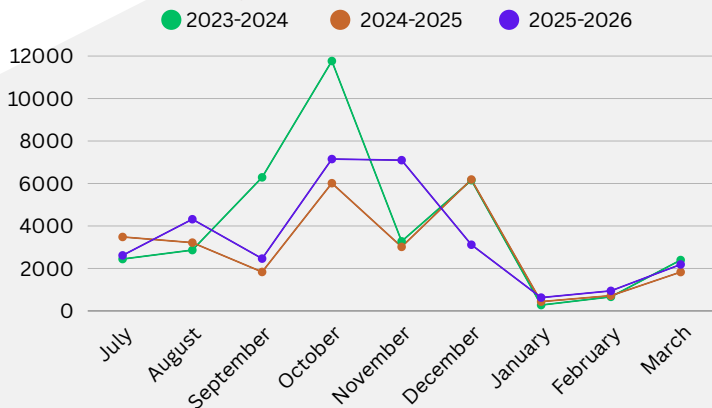


Figure 3.

Figures 1 and 2 show that over the last nine months, the venue has seen approximately 30,524 people through the doors with 347 bookings. Last year, during the same period, we had 26,739 people and 336 bookings. These figures all relate to the type of events being held and the economic environment within the community. Figure 3 shows the trend for the same period from 2023 to 2025. Note that the peak in October 2023 was due to the general elections. Most months generally follow the same pattern each year. The drop in September relates to the end of the winter sports in the stadium, and before the rise in the end-of-year events begin.

Booking splits

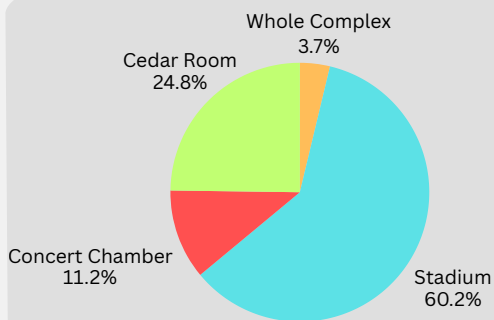


Figure 4.

Figure 4 shows the total daily booking splits between all the different spaces of the venue over the last nine months. As we see the Stadium continues to be the most used area in the venue which is not only used for sports but other community and school events. The Cedar room usage is increasing.

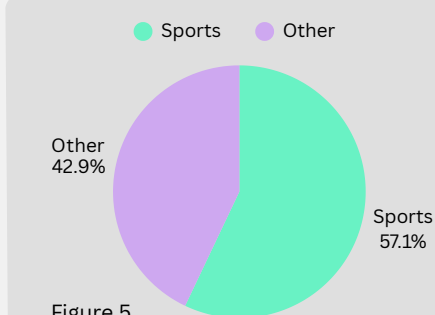


Figure 5.

Figure 5 shows the types of bookings. Out of 347 bookings during this period 57.1% (198) were Sports, and 42.9% (149) were "other". Others relate to shows, meetings, productions, fundraising events, community events, workshops, etc. These groups are similar compared to the same period last year, where 53% were sports, and 47% were "other".

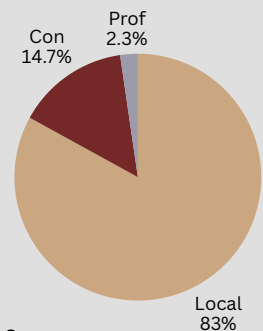


Figure 6.

Figure 6 shows that over this period, 97.7% of bookings have been under our local or concession rate, where an average discount of 40% has been applied to their venue hire, with 2.3% professional. **Local rate** applies to the Manawatu District community, not-for-profit organisations and clubs. **Concession rate** since 1st January this rate is no longer available.

Performance Targets

Goal one.

Work to attract, promote, and hold events and activities to encourage utilization in the Civic Centre.

Description	Measurement or Method of Delivery	Target	Update
Endeavour to maintain occupancy rates.	Confirmed Bookings	Bookings – 480-500 ^[1]	On Track July 2025 to March 2026 has seen 347 bookings. Currently looking at over 500 bookings for the year ending 30th June. With new bookings coming in weekly. Additional information on page 6 for booking breakdowns.
Increase community participation via a targeted marketing promotion.	Design a marketing / information pack, aimed at schools and community groups to utilise the facility as their “home” for lessons, practices, performances, and events.	Within the budget year 2025-2026.	On Track. This is ongoing each year through our social media platforms, mail-outs and community networking. Information is updated regularly.
Regular communication that keeps current customers and new potential customers informed.	Develop the current database with potential new clients to enable direct marketing of events and other opportunities.	2025 – 250 in Database. 2026 – 350 in Database. 2027 – 450 in Database.	Exceeded. Currently, we have 282 groups on our database both locally and NZ wide. 182 are active groups who have held bookings in the past.

[1] Confirmed booking will be affected by the DSA results and future remedial works

Goal two.

Work to encourage participation of the community in performing arts and recreational activity.

Description	Measurement or Method of Delivery	Target	Update
Improved Community based volunteer engagement.	Development and Implementation of “Friends of FCCT” programme for volunteers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2025-2026 - 8 Registered. 2026-2027 - 12 Registered. 2027-2028 - 15 Registered. 	On track. Sub-committee formed and currently working on the programme.
Database of Manawatu Schools and Community Groups.	Continue active engagement with schools and community groups to maximise all year-round centre use.	Six monthly contacts made: 15	Completed. Schools and community groups are regularly contacted.
Promotion and advertising of Arts, Cultural, Exhibitions and Events.	Actively engage with art and cultural groups to maximise all year-round centre use.	Six monthly contacts made: 10	Completed. Regular contact and outreach through our database, along with the venue being part of EVANZ (The Entertainment Venues Association of New Zealand)

Performance Targets

Goal three.

Work to optimally run the Feilding Civic Centre in a financially astute manner.

Description	Measurement or Method of Delivery	Target	Update
Alternative sources of funding & revenue, including sponsorships, third party funding and revenue from other FCCT activities, to help diversify funding sources for the trust. [2]	Actively seek relevant sponsorships and third-party funding and review options for other sources of revenue from FCCT.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2025 / 2026 Additional Income \$25,000. 2026 / 2027 Additional Income \$30,000. 2027 / 2028 Additional Income \$30,000. 	COGS Grant \$5,000 Event Sponsorship \$4,760 Term deposit Investment interest \$1,898
6-monthly financial report and an audited annual report that meets the timelines of MDC and Audit NZ.	Six monthly financial and audited annual reports are completed to meet required timelines.	Required timelines are met. Six monthly and audited annual reports presented to MDC within 3 months of end of relevant period. Draft financial reports for the end of budget year July to June due to MDC by 30th July.	In place and align with MDC reporting requirements.
Agreed FCCT assets are vested to MDC.	Identify FCCT held assets for potential vesting to MDC.	Request provided to MDC by EOM October 2025.	Further work is needed to complete this target.
Trust follows procurement best practice.	Implement Trust procurement plan	September 2025.	Completed. Procurement policy adopted and conflicts of interest policy updated.

[2] This excludes any third-party funding for the remedial works.

Goal four.

Work with Council on developing and delivering a facility investment schedule and 10+ year asset management plan (AMP).

Description	Measurement or Method of Delivery	Target	Update
Annual facility maintenance schedule agreed by due date.	Using MDC's policy, the FCCT Centre manager and MDC's Asset management & Compliance Co-ordinator meet and agree the schedule.	EOM June 2025.	Completed.
10-year facility asset management plan agreed on with Council Officers by due date.	Design, operating impact and investment plan agreed between MDC and FCCT for the following work: 1. Seismic assessment work. 2. Facility remedial work. Concept design and estimated cost for future facility development agreed between MDC & FCCT.	December 2025 [3].	Currently working with MDC on this target. Further work to be completed.

[3] Timeline will be dependent on MDC and MDC consultants' processes.