

Revamped clubrooms for Upper Clutha

Jean Gibson

After a decade of planning, the Upper Clutha Rugby Club officially opened its redeveloped clubrooms at the A&P showgrounds in Wanaka recently.

Designed by AO Architecture from Christchurch, the project was a joint venture between Jennian Homes and Tom Hudson builders of Wanaka.

Club captain and project manager Nathan Simon of Jennian Homes Wanaka, and lead builder Tom Hudson – are both veterans of a hundred games each played for the Upper Clutha “Rams”.

Nathan says the club’s membership of more than 300 amateur players included around 230 junior rugby players, a premier team as well as a womens’ team.

Popularity of the game, parental support and a burgeoning population contributed to the strengthening membership and the club had outgrown its original clubrooms which were built in 1980.

The rebuild had doubled the size but retained the integrity of the original clubrooms, says Simon.

It included construction of two new changing rooms, equipment storage rooms, new toilets and shower blocks, meeting room, and a 50sqm extension of the main social area.

The facility could now be split into two separate blocks with changing rooms at each end, enabling junior or women’s rugby to be played concurrently with men’s rugby, says Simon.

It also included a commercial kitchen, new entranceway, chiller and bar, and would be available to hire for events such as weddings and conferences in the off-season.

The building is owned by a charitable trust, and any profits generated from hiring out the clubrooms would be gifted back to the community by way of supporting junior rugby, touch rugby and six-a-side cricket.

Some 40 cricket teams, and 32 touch rugby teams will use the club’s facilities this summer, having played off-site for the past two years while the rebuild was under way.

The \$1 million project could not have been achieved without the support of sponsors such as Upper Clutha Transport, and various local builders



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who had provided workers for a week or more, at discounted rates, says Simon.

He estimated some \$200,000 contribution in community goodwill. “It’s a great community around here,” he says. He also acknowledges the annual support from local farmers in the club’s cattle grazing fundraiser.

Grants were obtained through Central Lakes Trust, Otago Community Trust, Lion Foundation, Wanaka and Alpine Rotary, Wanaka Lions, and Lotteries.



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