

WINTON

MEDIA RELEASE

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COMMUNITY TENNIS COURT AT WINTON TENNIS CENTRE

The Wakatipu Basin could be set to gain eight much needed competition grade tennis courts, including one available to the community on a free full-time basis and up to seven available to the public on a part time basis, subject to obtaining resource consent. The Winton Tennis Centre will alleviate the considerable pressure on the existing Queenstown tennis facilities that are also not well distributed relative to population growth. Given the high visitor ratio for the region, the Wakatipu Basin has insufficient courts to meet current usage by residents and visitors. Of the existing 25 courts, only 4 are hardcourts appropriate for high-performance training and competitions, and none are covered. The remainder are community courts, some designed and used as multipurpose courts, limiting availability.

The vision for the Winton Tennis Centre is to provide a much needed indoor/outdoor facility that will be the basis for promoting physical education to all youth in the district, through an introduction to tennis.

The privately funded initiative will be home to the Winton Tennis Academy with a programme that will span from introduction to the sport free of charge, as well as a programme that provides specialist tennis training and tennis education courses for selected students, also free of charge.

Winton Tennis Academy

The Winton Tennis Academy was founded by Winton as the Lakes District Tennis Trust. The Lakes District Tennis Trust is a charitable entity established to promote physical education and other benefits to the community. In doing so the Trust will provide tennis facilities and specialist tennis training and tennis education courses free of charge to disadvantaged or impoverished youth.

The Winton Tennis Academy initially aims to select a group of eight students to participate in the programme. As part of the Academy students will benefit from rigorous training, mentoring and ongoing support throughout their participation in the programme and their studies at Wakatipu High School.

In addition, the Academy hopes to run introduction courses for all primary school children in the district, as already seen with other sports like swimming, skiing and sailing. These activities are not able to be run on the currently available community courts and with no covered courts, scheduling court time is an inhibiting factor, particularly in the restrictive winter months.

Michaela Meehan, Founder and Lakes District Tennis Trustee, said, "The vision for Winton Tennis Academy is founded on the last 15 years of work by former tennis pro Lan Bale. We believe the Winton Tennis Academy, operated through the Winton Tennis Centre, will help create sporting and educational opportunities otherwise out of reach for most of these kids.

Sport is an excellent way for young people to learn about teamwork and the principle of fair play, as well as establish healthy behaviours and lifestyles. All skills these kids can take with them, whatever path they choose in life.

Adding to this, we hope to introduce tennis to all primary school children in the district, something that we are not aware is currently being done in consistent and organized way.

Mrs Meehan confirms the Academy will complement existing tennis clubs and programmes as they collectively work to increase involvement in the sport and improve local facilities."

Winton Tennis Centre

The proposed Winton Tennis Centre utilizes the Winton owned land at the base of the Bridesdale Farm subdivision near Lake Hayes Estate. The facility will include 8 courts that are all of training and competition standard. There will be 6 courts uncovered and 2 courts covered with lighting when in use. In addition, the facility will have teaching and meeting rooms, indoor viewing areas, kitchenette and additional training and gym areas.

As part of the project, Winton would like to increase community participation in the sport, something that is currently difficult to do with the limited court availability. Therefore, one of the courts will be for the sole use of the community at any time during the open hours, 6am – 10pm. When the Academy is not using the other courts, they will be available to be booked via an online booking system.



Chris Meehan, Winton CEO, said, “This charitable programme will be fully funded by Winton with the aim to create some talented New Zealand sportsmen and women. The Winton Tennis Centre will be an asset to the Wakatipu Basin community as visitor numbers continue to increase and availability of tennis courts diminishes further. Given the other infrastructural challenges the QLDC needs to prioritise, it is unlikely they would be able to fund a purpose-built tennis facility at any point in the foreseeable future.”

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