

Ashburton District Council Report



Roger Farr
General Manager
2.7.2024

6 Month Report Jan-Jun 2024 (Includes EOY Reports).

Dear Councillors.

Thank you for the opportunity to present this report for the period July 2023 – June 2024.

We are pleased to report another successful year for the Ashburton Event Centre, marked by improving performance data and notable revenue growth. This year has seen a rise in both bookings and ticket sales, a testament to the Centre's appeal and the enthusiastic support of our community. The positive trend underscores the effectiveness of our programming and initiatives, highlighting the Centre's crucial role in enhancing Ashburton's cultural landscape. Looking ahead, we are committed to providing exceptional events and experiences for all our patrons and corporate clients. A key focus has been on raising funds for the proposed venue upgrade, ensuring that the Event Centre remains equipped to host events of the highest calibre well into the future.

Why is a performing arts venue beneficial to a community? What does it provide?

1. **Cultural Enrichment:** It provides a space for a diverse range of artistic expressions, from theatre and dance to music and comedy. This enriches the local cultural landscape and exposes residents to various forms of art and creativity.
2. **Community Engagement:** The venue serves as a hub for community gatherings and events, fostering a sense of belonging and civic pride. It can host local performances, school productions, and community events that bring people together.
3. **Educational Opportunities:** Many performing arts venues offer workshops, classes, and educational programs for all ages. These programs can enhance skills, inspire creativity, and provide valuable learning experiences outside the traditional classroom setting.
4. **Economic Impact:** By attracting visitors and hosting events, a performing arts venue can stimulate the local economy. It generates revenue for local businesses, creates jobs, and encourages investment in the area.
5. **Talent Development:** It provides a platform for local artists, performers, technicians and creatives to showcase their work, develop their skills, and gain exposure. This support helps nurture and grow local talent.
6. **Entertainment and Recreation:** The venue offers a variety of entertainment options, providing residents with access to high-quality performances and events. This contributes to a higher quality of life and recreational opportunities within the community.
7. **Cultural Preservation:** Performing arts venues often celebrate and preserve local traditions, stories, and heritage, contributing to the cultural identity and continuity of the community.
8. **Social Impact:** By addressing social issues and themes through performance, the venue can stimulate dialogue and increase awareness on important topics, fostering a more informed and empathetic community.

Overall, a performing arts venue plays a crucial role in enhancing the cultural, economic, and social fabric of a community. The Ashburton Performing Arts Theatre Trust recognises the significance of this and the part it plays in delivering this valuable outcome to the community.

The Ashburton Performing Arts Theatre Trust acknowledges the financial support we receive from the Ashburton District Council. This support enables us to meet the goals identified above.

Venue Occupancy (includes pack-in and pack-out days)

	6 months Jan – Jun 2024	12 months July – June 2024	(Comparison) July - June 2023
O Reilly Auditorium	58	121	129
Bradford Room	56	120	79
Green Room	36	80	161
Woodham Foyer	5	22	10

1. O'Reilly Auditorium:

- There were 58 Hire Days from January to June 2024.
- In the 12 months from July 2023 to June 2024, there were 121 Hired Days in the auditorium.
- In the previous year (July 2022 to June 2023), there were 129 Hired Days. While this represents a decrease, two annual productions shifted from using the O-Reilly Auditorium to the Bradford Room and the Woodham Foyer.
- Notably, a reduction in touring events has had an impact on the Auditorium hire.

Trend: While it is concerning the lack of touring products at this time, I believe it will return once the economy settles. Promoters are still risk-averse but there are signs of improvement with booking enquiries returning for 2024-25.

2. Bradford Room:

- 56 events were held from January to June 2024.
- In the 12 months from July 2023 to June 2024, there were 120 Hired Days in the Bradford Function Room.
- In the previous year (July 2023 to June 2023), there were 79 events.

Trend: The shifting of a multi-day booking from the O-Reilly Auditorium to the Bradford Room and the General Elections where the Bradford Room was used as a Polling Booth, increased its hire days.

3. Green Room:

- 36 events took place from January to June 2024.
- There were 80 events from July 2023 to June 2024. This represents a decrease from the 2022-23 year and comes from a reduction in hire days by a client from 3 days a week to one day a week.
- In the previous year (July 2022 to June 2023), there were 161 events.

Trend: Again this represents a decrease in hire days. This comes from a reduction in Hire days by a regular client who reduced from three days a week to one day a week.

4. Woodham Foyer:

- 5 events were held from January to June 2024.
- There were 22 events from July 2024 to June 2024.
- In the previous year (July 2023 to June 2023), there were 10 events.

Trend: There was an increase in events from the previous year to July 2023 - June 2024.

Summary:

Across the venue, hired days remain strong but with a noticeable shift in the level of technical support and catering required for events. This could point towards a tightening of belts by both the corporate and performance groups.



Dragon Anniversary Tour

Event Breakdown (performance/meeting days only)

Community Events – Community Events remain our biggest user of the venue, accounting for 64% of its occupancy with 177 events throughout the year. This is down slightly on 2023 where there were 104 community events.

Performance-related events continue to make up the largest portion of events within the Community Event bookings. Variety Theatre Ashburton, Big Little Theatre Company, and Mid Canterbury Children’s Theatre collectively utilise the venue for approximately 60 days annually. Highland Dance groups, both local and national, along with LDA and Danceworx, also book multiple-day events annually. Many local schools now opt to hold their annual productions in the O-Reilly Auditorium, with the Christian School notably incorporating an educational component. Here, staff and students collaborate with AEC technicians to develop stage and lighting plans and gain hands-on experience in technical operations under supervision. It is gratifying to see the community embracing AEC as an affordable venue option, providing extensive technical support and opportunities for skill development among participants. This approach also fosters a talented pool of operators who contribute to larger community events voluntarily.

Conference/Meetings – Conferences and meetings have remained steady over the twelve months of July 2023 – June 2024. It has been notable the change in the size of the events being held with fewer multi-day conference events with over 150 delegates. Agricultural and Corporate/Business events and training seminars are currently the largest group of users.

National Touring – AEC hosted fifteen National Touring events in the July 2023 – June 2024 period. Again, a varied programme of performances were hosted, ranging from

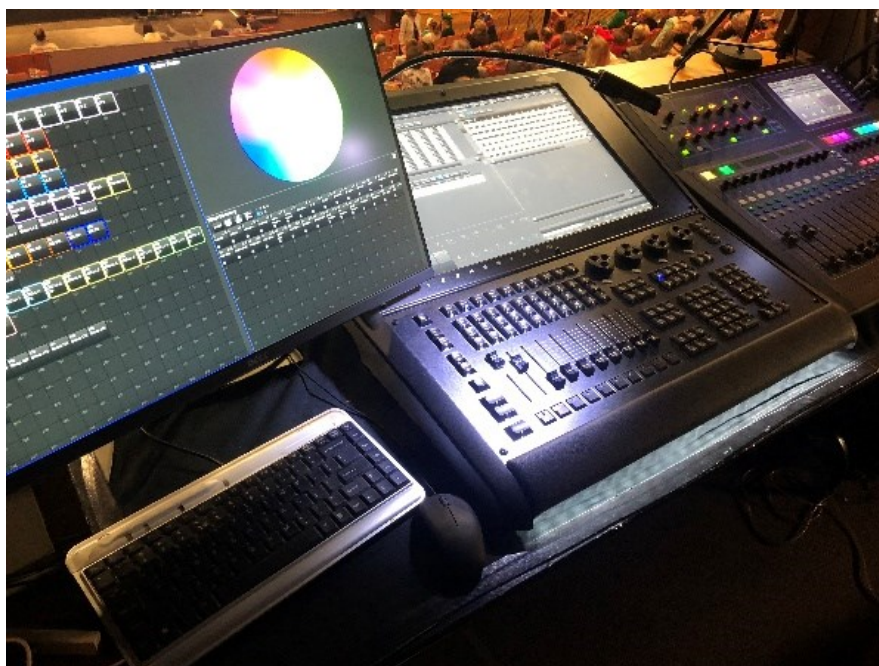
Wonderland Glo-Show	The Warratahs
Simon O'Neil & Friends	RNZB Tutus on Tour
Rock Tenors	Royal NZ Airforce Band on Tour
Celtica	Elton John and Billy Joel Tribute Show
Ladies Night	Dragon 50 th Anniversary Tour
Queen, It's a Kind of Magic	NZ Army Band
Sweet Caroline Tour	Ballroom Blitz
NZ Highway	

AEC Procured – AEC continues to feature performances from Arts on Tour as part of our audience development efforts. These performances aim to attract new audiences to our venue by offering a welcoming atmosphere with smaller audience sizes and a diverse range of high-quality performances across various genres. This approach introduces attendees to our venue who may not have previously visited, fostering a vibrant cultural exchange. Unfortunately, Creative New Zealand has reduced its funding to Arts on Tour which has resulted in a smaller number of touring events available annually.

CAPEX/Technical/Venue Upgrade

Significant efforts have been made to assess operational areas and technical systems in need of either upgrading or replacements at the Ashburton Event Centre. A detailed report has been compiled in collaboration with industry experts, prioritising items based on their life expectancy and current industry trends to ensure our venue remains relevant and capable of meeting current industry benchmarks now and well into the future.

The Trust has identified critical technical infrastructure requiring renewal to safeguard against potential failures that could significantly disrupt our operational efficiency and ability. This includes the the replacement of the current Sound System with an industry-standard Line Array system, and an upgrade to the venue's networking capabilities, Theatrical Lighting and Dimmer systems to accommodate LED lighting in the O-Reilly Auditorium.



Projected Upgrade Costs and Funding

Projected Upgrade Costs	Updated 15.7.2024				Mid-Sth Cant Trust	Lion Foundation Grant	Regional Cultural Heritage Fund	Ashburton District Council	Lotto	Project Cost
ITEM	Procurement Date	Estimated Cost	Actual Cost	APATT	Grant	Grant	No Longer Available	Grant	Grant	TOTALS
					Contestable	Contestable			Contestable	
Projected Income						1 x \$25,000 2024 Received		\$40,000 annually		
Priority One 2024	2024	\$ 538,884.42		\$ 100,000.00	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 25,000.00	Closed	\$ 40,000.00	\$ 366,774.00	\$ 556,774.00
Audio										
Network Capabilities										
Priority Two 2025	2025	\$ 202,482.00		\$ 62,482.00	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 50,000.00		\$ 40,000.00		\$ 202,482.00
Refurbishment										
Paint, Carpets, Soft Furnishing										
Priority Three 2026	2026	\$ 226,000.00		\$ 106,000.00	\$ 40,000.00	\$ 40,000.00		\$ 40,000.00		\$ 226,000.00
Lighting and Audio Visual										
TOTAL		\$ 967,366.42	\$ -	\$ 268,482.00	\$ 115,000.00	\$ 115,000.00	\$ -	\$ 120,000.00	\$ 366,774.00	\$ 985,256.00



Nepalese Community Celebration April 2024

Funding Applications

An application to the Lottery Community Facilities Fund has been made requesting funding for those items listed in the Priority One Upgrade. (see below for an explanation)

Lotto Grant Application

Ashburton Performing Arts Theatre Trust : Funding our Future			
1.8.2024 - 30.6.2025			
<i>This date should be for the next 12 months or your financial year</i>			
INCOME			
Funding request details			Budgeted amount
<i>Add request details here</i>			<i>Amount requested</i>
Grant towards Sound System and Networking Upgrade			366,774.42
OTHER INCOME			
<i>List all expected and confirmed project income</i>			<i>Budgeted amount</i>
Ashburton Performing Arts Theatre Trust Fund Raising Account			100,000.00
Ashburton District Council (Capital Reserve Commitment)			40,000.00
Lion Foundation (Grant Received)			25,000.00
Community Trust Mid South Canterbury (Grant Received)			25,000.00
TOTAL INCOME			190,000.00
EXPENDITURE			
	Item Price	Quantity	Budgeted amount
<i>List all expected and confirmed project expenses</i>			
Quote Audio 2001006			\$ 347,535.47
Quote Audio 2001058			\$ 42,105.98
Quote Networking 20011008-3538884.42			\$ 167,132.97
TOTAL EXPENDITURE			\$ 556,774.42
Operational Surplus/Deficit			-366774.42



Line Array Speaker System (Priority One)

Rational behind each of the Priority Upgrades –

Priority 1 – Essential to the operation of the venue at a level that assures that the itinerant hire and local performing arts groups benefit from a recognised standard of sound reproduction.

Audio:

Liner-Array PA System

- The current PA (sound system) when installed in 2008 was second hand meaning it could be as much as twenty years old.
- A failure in any part of the PA system would leave the venue with inadequate capabilities to operate at its current level.
- Sound systems have improved immensely over the life of the current system where Liner-Array systems are now an industry standard and are being installed in most modern venues.
- There is an expectation that AEC should meet the current industry standards for sound production.
- Sound production is a critical component in any event where sound reinforcement is required and normally the first criticism received when it is not of standard.

Mixing Console Allen and Heath SQ7

- In the time that AEC has been operating, the productions being produced by various community organisations and touring groups, have become more complex with a larger cast and live musicians requiring a mixing console capable of handling a larger number of microphones and auxiliary inputs.
- The current mixing console is now 11 years old and susceptible to failure.

Radio Microphones Sennheiser

- Microphones are subjected to a lot of wear and tear over their life.
- Critical to achieving quality sound enhancement.

Summary

The proposed audio package will ensure the AEC will have an audio system equal to recently built, similar-sized venues and capable of achieving a high level of quality and performance for many years to come. The Adamson Liner-Array system is recognised as being of excellent quality and has been installed in the Piano in Christchurch and a performing arts venue in Tauranga, both of similar size and capacity to the AEC.

Priority 2 – Essential to the aesthetics of the venue at a level that assures the audience of a functional, comfortable well-maintained venue that encourages them to meet at a social level to be entertained or a corporate level for education and networking.

Refurbishment:

Paint and Décor. Interior & Exterior

- A refresh of the interior paint is required to keep the public areas and workspaces relevant to modern décor trends.
- Public areas are subjected to high traffic flows and the installation of trade display booths etc. causing superficial wear and tear.

Furnishing and Wall Covering

- Sound-absorbing fabric wall covering located in the Bradford Room, Variety Foyer and Woodham Foyer has faded and needs replacing.
- Carpets across the venue have worn or become faded due to exposure to the sun and high foot traffic.

Summary

Décor is essential to creating a welcoming vibe in our venue, where our audience or corporate delegates can relax in comfort. Our promoters recognise our venue as being one that provides attractive surroundings and support for their audience members and the Corporate Event organiser recognises as venue as having a professional level of service and capability.

Priority 3 – A need to continue the development of our technical capabilities and provide sustainability through eco-friendly LED Lighting practises.

Theatre Lighting

- Upgrade current lighting fixtures to LED reducing our energy consumption and maintenance.
- Upgrade our current lighting fixtures to intelligent lighting capable of performing more than one task and limiting energy consumption.
- Upgrade the theatre lighting rig to meet modern-day practises that benefit local and itinerant hirers.

Audio Visual

- Upgrade the current Audio Visual projector to an LED projector.

Summary

AEC believes it has a responsibility to limit its eco-footprint by using sustainable methods of operation. To provide up-to-date equipment that meets best practice standards and offers the ability for staff to become educated in the use of modern-day equipment and practises.

Repairs and Maintenance

Ongoing general maintenance has been carried out.

WOF 12A has now been completed and submitted to Fire Fighting Pacific for lodging with the ADC.

Service Level Agreement

A new service level agreement has been signed off with the ADC. This will cover a three-year term.

2024-25: \$337,800

2025-26: \$346,245

2026-27: \$353,863

SLA 2023-24

Service Level Agreement	Community Events	Conference Meetings	National Touring	AEC Procured
Jul – Dec 2023	106	52	8	6
Jan – Jun 2024	71	27	7	0
Total	177	79	15	6
ADC Service Level Agreement	130	55	20	10

SLA 2024-25

Service Level Agreement	Community Events	Conference Meetings	National Touring	AEC Procured
Jul – Dec 2024				
Jan – Jun 2025				
Total				
ADC Service Level Agreement	130	55	16	10



Les Miserable May 2024

Capital Reserve Fund

The Ashburton Performing Arts Theatre Trust thanks the Ashburton District Council for their continued support in the provision of the Capital Reserve Fund. This funding will go a long way towards ensuring the Ashburton Event Centre continues to be seen as an outstanding facility for the community to enjoy socially and for local, national, and international artists to perform in.

5 July 2024

Ashburton Performing Arts Theatre Trust
c/- Ashburton Event Centre
211 a Wills Street
Ashburton 7700

To whom it may concern

Ashburton Performing Arts Theatre Trust – Capital Reserve Fund

On behalf of the Ashburton District Council, I am pleased to confirm that through the Long-Term Plan 2024-34 process \$40,000 per annum has been allocated to the Ashburton Event Centre capital reserve.

The intention with this reserve is that it will build year on year and the Ashburton Event Centre will apply to the Council for this funding as needed.

Please note, that the Council is required to indicate its planned funding requirements for a 10-year period in its Long-Term Plan. Despite the funding appearing in the Council's Long Term Plan 2024-34, the Council is not committed to providing this level of Funding after June 2027 and any changes will be addressed through the 2027/37 Long Term Plan.

Yours faithfully

Toni Durham

Group Manager: Democracy & Engagement



Les Miserable May 2024

Financial Report July 23 – June 2024 ***(Audited Accounts due 30th November 2024)***

Revenue across the reporting period continued to improve off the back of strong returns from the following revenue streams –

- Variable Income (services provided, technical support, equipment hire)
- Bar and Catering
- Event Revenue (ticketing)

Auditorium hire was down 10% against budget. This can be attributed to fewer touring events over the reporting period.

Highlights Income

Ticket Sales

Event Revenue - derived from Ticket sales through the box office and online sales.

Box office sales were up 10% on 2022-2023 figures to 18212 tickets sold to 61 ticketed events. The total value of tickets sold in the 2023-24 period was \$825,000 up 16% on the 2022-23 period.

Revenue achieved against budget 2023-24

Event Revenue is up 38%

Bar Income is up 43%

Catering is up 9%

Bradford Room Hire is up 18%

Variable Charges are up 22%

Highlights Expenses when compared against 2022-23 Figures

Insurance is up 23% (currently waiting on an updated building valuation)

Wage and Salary up 10% (staff increase 1 x Tech Manager)

Repairs and Maintenance up 28% (a number of age-related repairs are becoming necessary including bathroom tap-ware, flooring surfaces, lighting, air-con, and refrigeration compressors)

Electricity is up 5%.

Overall, it has been a very satisfactory year with Income up 8% and expenses down 2.6% when compared to the budget. Good progress has been made in raising funds for the Priority One venue upgrade thanks to our fund-raising performances, public donors and our supporting Funding Partners, The Lion Foundation and the Community Trust Mid-South Canterbury. An application has now been made to Lotto NZ for - \$366,744.00 with the outcome known in December. Other fund-raising performances are currently in the planning stages with further news on these once details have been confirmed.



Heartland Bank School Music Festival 2024

Staff and Volunteers

Staff and Volunteers continue to function well as a team providing exceptional service to our clients and patrons. I take this opportunity to thank my team for their incredible support and the expertise they provide for our events.

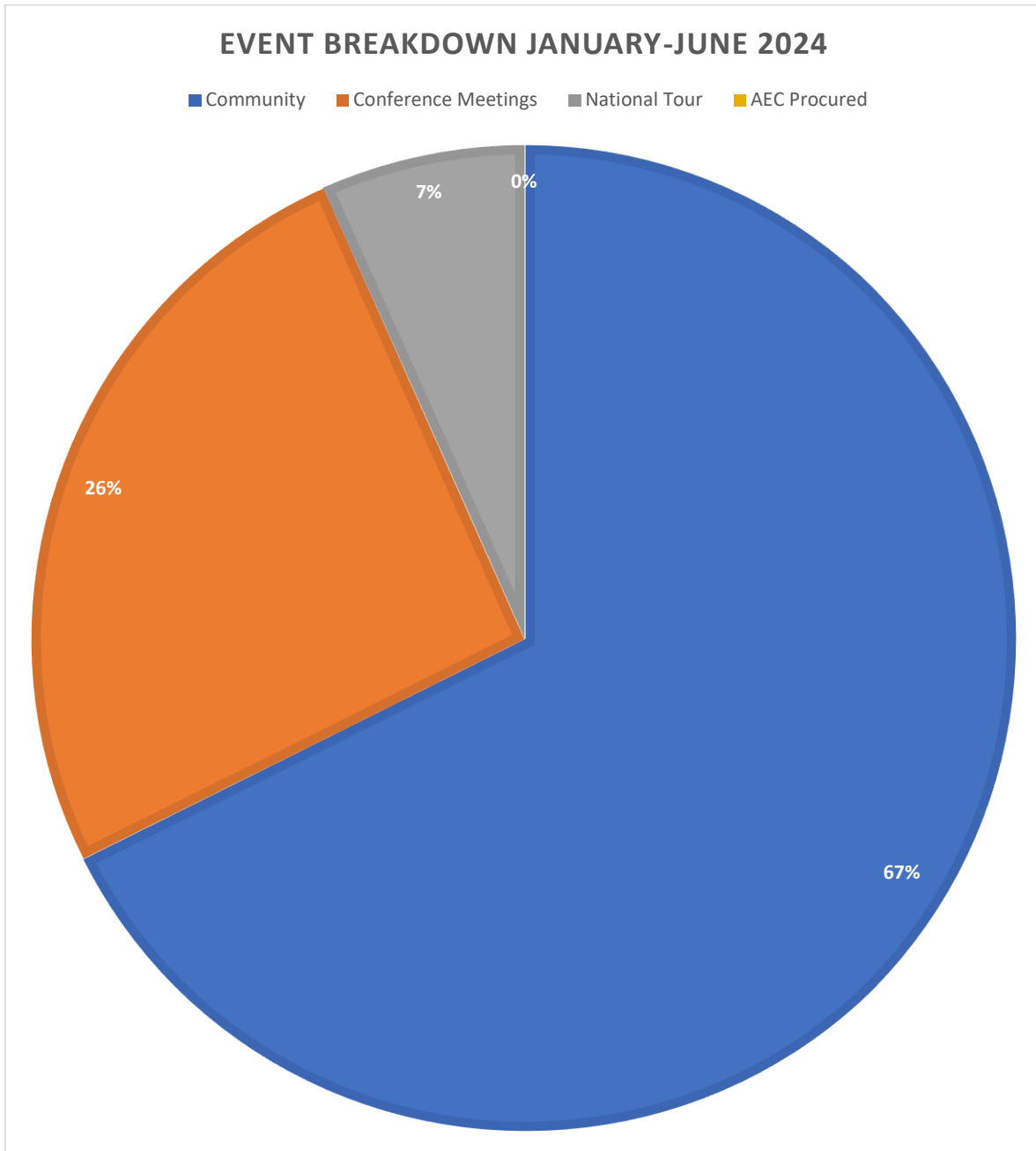
Technician Micah Innes has begun an apprenticeship in Theatre Technology and our technical manager Sean Mortimer will complete a course making him eligible to become a Qualified Assessor for those completing their apprenticeships, not just at our venue, but also at other venues in the Canterbury Region.

Our incredible team of 38 volunteers provided 1998 hours of service as ushers and stage technicians in the last financial year. The Ashburton Performing Arts Theatre Trust recognises the value of the service they provide and thanks them for their continued support.

Summary

The Ashburton Event Centre's financial year from July 2023 to June 2024 demonstrated resilience and adaptability. Despite a sluggish start in the first quarter, the Event Centre experienced substantial growth in bookings, particularly from April to June. Income from various revenue streams, including venue hire, bar and catering, and equipment and

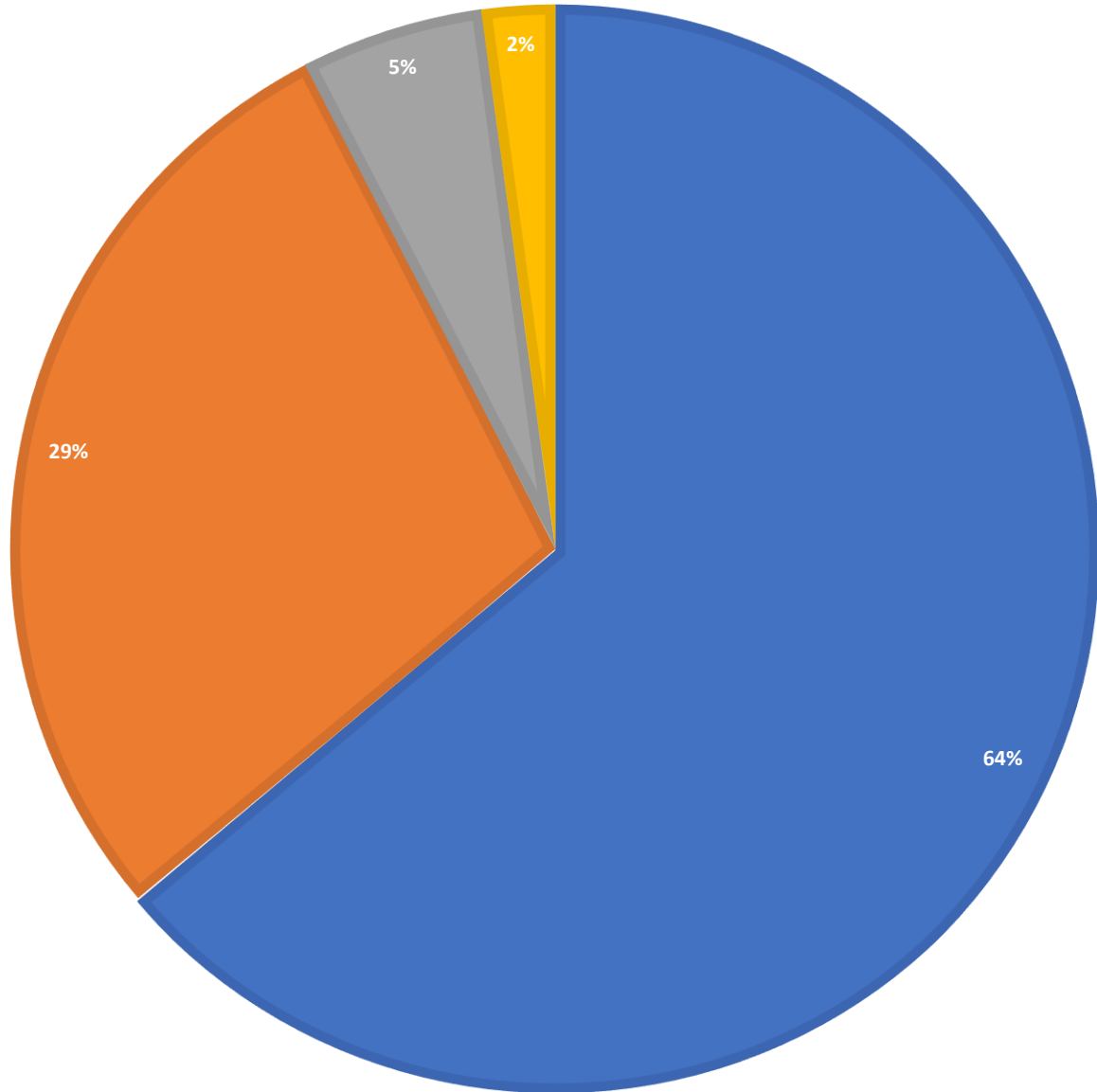
services hire, exceeded expectations. The centre's commitment to the community was evident through the high number of community events catering to a diverse range of activities. While National Touring events have been slower to return, the limited Arts on Tour events and other procured performances proved to be valuable contributors to the centre's success. Overall, the financial performance during this period reflects the centre's ability to overcome challenges and capitalise on opportunities, positioning it for continued success in the future.



	Event Breakdown
Community	71
Conference Meetings	27
National Tour	7
AEC Procured	0

EOY EVENT BREAKDOWN JULY 2023-JUNE 2024

■ Community ■ Conference Meetings ■ National Tour ■ AEC Procured

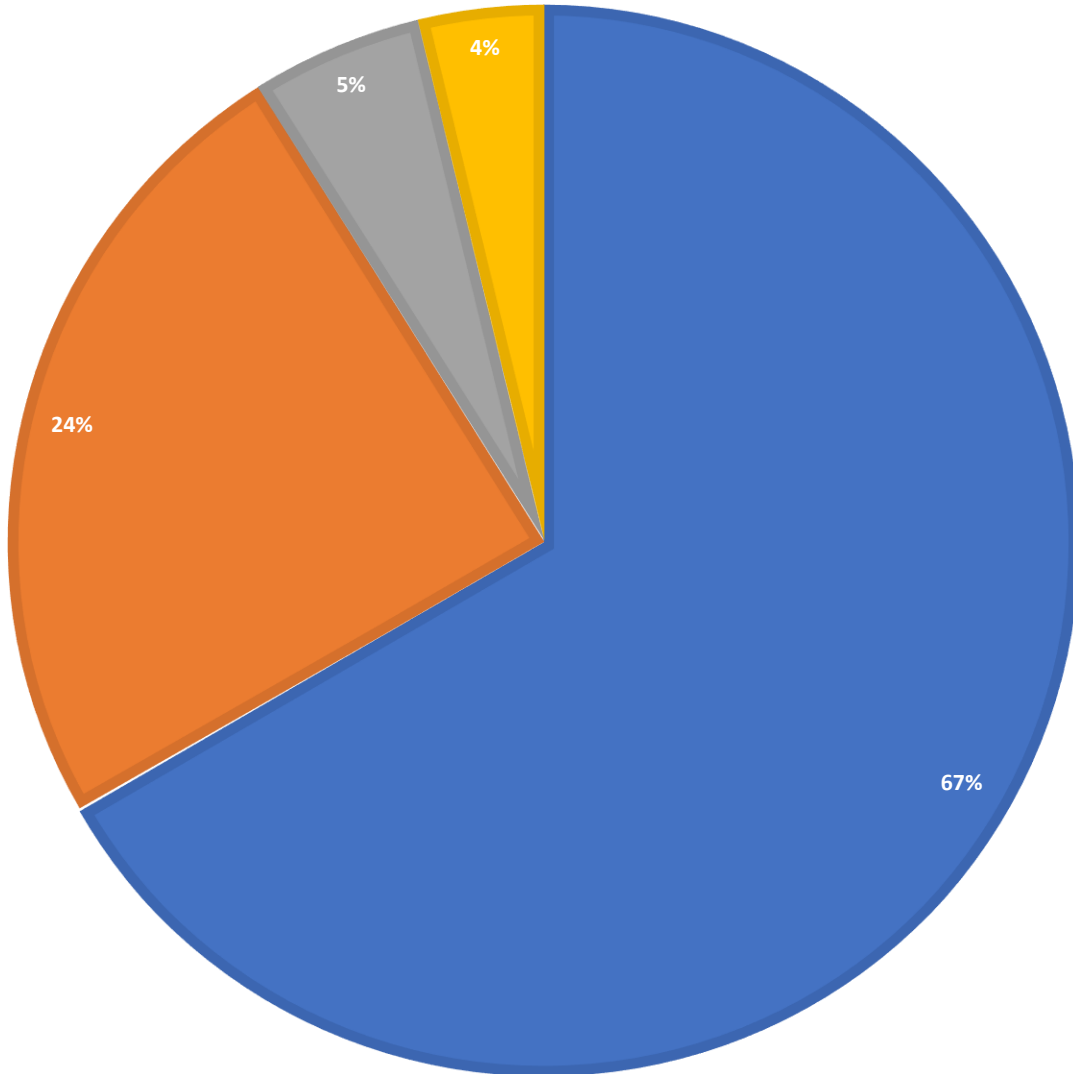


	Event Breakdown 2024
Community	177
Conference Meetings	79
National Tour	15
AEC Procured	6

(By Comparison) EOY 2023

EOY EVENT BREAKDOWN JULY 2022-JUNE 2023

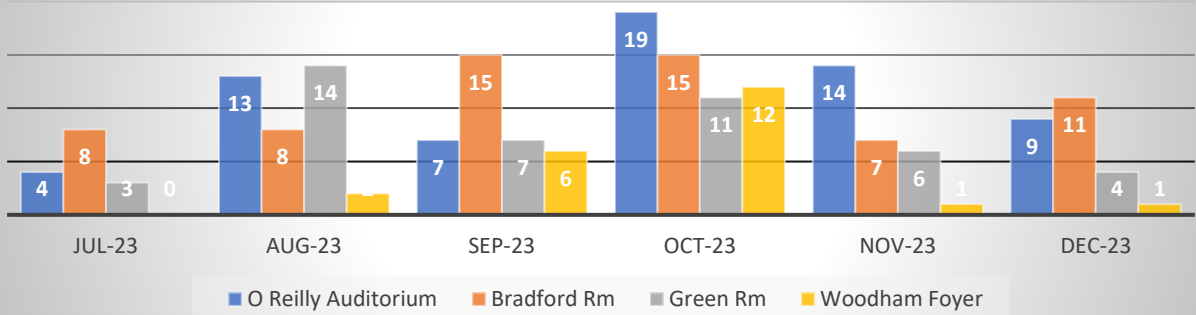
■ Community ■ Conference Meetings ■ National Tour ■ AEC Procured



(Comparison)	Event Breakdown 2023
Community	194
Conference Meetings	71
National Tour	15
AEC Procured	11

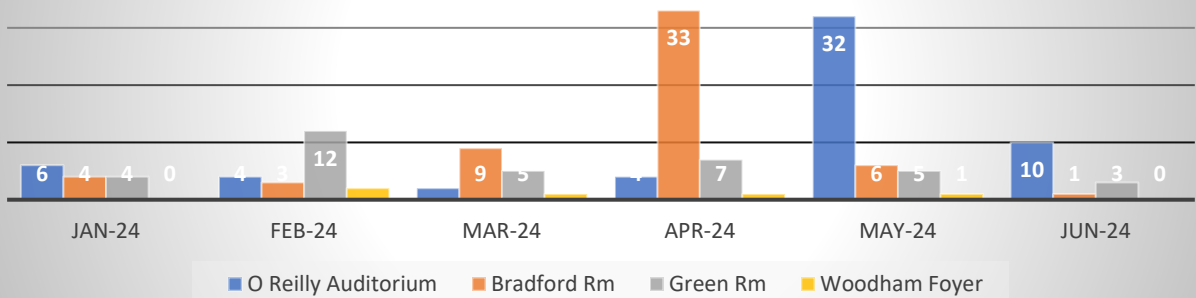
Days of Use (Includes Pack in and Pack out days)

Jul - Dec 2023



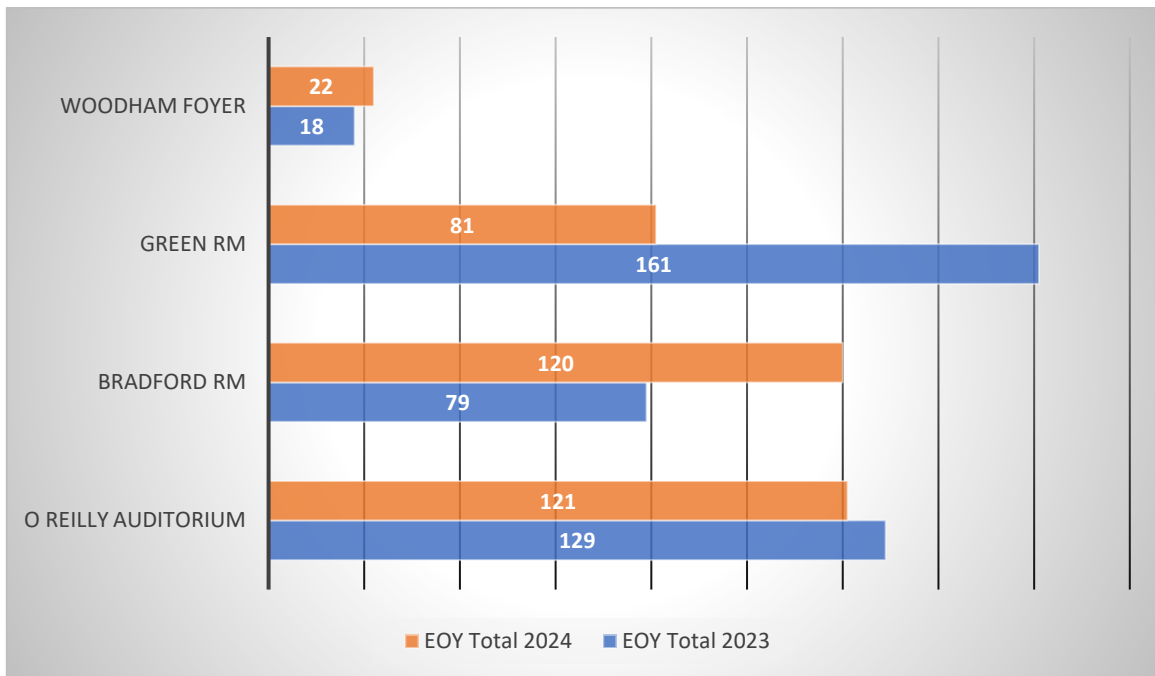
	O Reilly Auditorium	Bradford Rm	Green Rm	Woodham Foyer
Jul-23	4	8	3	0
Aug-23	13	8	14	2
Sep-23	7	15	7	6
Oct-23	19	15	11	12
Nov-23	14	7	6	1
Dec-23	9	11	4	1

Jan - Jun 2024



	O Reilly Auditorium	Bradford Rm	Green Rm	Woodham Foyer
Jan-24	6	4	4	0
Feb-24	4	3	12	2
Mar-24	2	9	5	1
Apr-24	4	33	7	1
May-24	32	6	5	1
Jun-24	10	1	3	0

Room Use Comparison 2023-2024



	O Reilly Auditorium	Bradford Rm	Green Rm	Woodham Foyer
EOY Total 2023	129	79	161	18
EOY Total 2024	121	120	81	22

