

Link focus on recovery and thinking differently

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Recovery is the new lens for community development scheme LINK Upper Clutha.

Facilitator Kathy Dedo said during the early period of Covid-19 pandemic lockdown the group focused on welfare response but was now thinking about “what does recovery look like in the Upper Clutha?”.

“There is so much uncertainty still about what actually is happening or what is going to happen.”

There was economic strength in the region, but some of that might be “masked” by the Covid-19 wage subsidy.

“So everyone is still in that waiting period and expecting things to change.”

The effect on small to medium businesses may not be fully realised as yet, Ms Dedo said.

There was a chance to revisit and reset the kind of community “we want to be”.

Grassroots support and connection had been building over the past few years and it



Engaged and resilient . . . LINK Upper Clutha facilitator Kathy Dedo says the strong local community will help the region grow past the recent challenges.

PHOTO: SIMON HENDERSON

came to the fore during the early stage of the pandemic, she said.

“Wanaka and Upper Clutha in particular is known as a really engaged and resilient community and that really shone through during Covid.”

“That ‘recovery filter’ does make you think about things differently.”

“And that is everyone from central government to local government to businesses to community.”

The question that her organisation was looking to answer was, ‘what did they need to do to support community groups?’.

An increasing area of focus was youth engagement, she said.

Link had developed a relationship over the past few years with Mt Aspiring College teaching a civics and citizenship course, within their life skills classes.

Through that there were opportunities to help young people find their voice and get them involved in what was happening in the community.

Managing community and business connections during this period could be seen as another layer of complexity but it could also be seen as an opportunity.

The aim was to keep that momentum going as the region continued to cope in the months ahead.

Ms Dedo said she used to speak about a “post-covid” world but a more accurate description was a “with covid” world.

“There is no business-as-usual any more,” she said.