

Proposed Tairāwhiti Indoor Multipurpose Centre: A Smart Investment in Community Wellbeing

Feasibility Social Return on Investment (SROI) summary

February 2026

Overview

Tairāwhiti Gisborne is one of the least resourced regions in Aotearoa New Zealand when it comes to indoor court availability. The proposed Tairāwhiti Indoor Multipurpose Centre aims to change that, with a \$22 million plan to build a modern facility to serve over 37,000 residents.

The centre will feature:

- 3 multi-use indoor courts, with space for a future fourth
- changing rooms, showers, storage, lighting and training areas
- support for sports and activities like basketball, volleyball, pickleball, netball, futsal, kapa haka and indoor cricket.

With the current YMCA facility nearing the end of its service life, and the region already 1.7 courts short, this new venue would meet an urgent and growing need.

Expected to open by August 2029 (pending funding), the project is informed by community data and local demand.

How the social impact was calculated

Sport New Zealand Ihi Aotearoa and Gisborne District Council conducted an SROI forecast, using Sport NZ's Social Value Bank, developed by Simetrica-Jacobs.¹ This tool helps calculate the wellbeing value created through participation in sport and recreation.

This analysis:

- incorporated projections from Gisborne District Council's feasibility study
- followed Social Value International's 8 principles of SROI for transparency and accuracy
- used sensitivity testing to check variability in:
 - estimated usage of the facility
 - individuals playing multiple sports
 - changes in construction and operating costs.



Our findings

- \$13.1 million in estimated total social value
- \$12 million in net social value² after subtracting expenditure
- this equates to \$1,730 per participant
- SROI ratio: \$10.60 in social impact for every \$1 invested.

The analysis shows meaningful benefits for tamariki, whānau and the broader community – delivering healthy, active, connected lives.

Overall impact

Council investment in the proposed Tairāwhiti Indoor Multipurpose Centre is estimated to generate \$12 million in social value for Tairāwhiti Gisborne.

National SROI = \$1 : \$10.60

For every \$1 invested in the Tairāwhiti Indoor Multipurpose Centre, \$10.60 worth of social impacts is generated.

¹ SROI Guidance document and Principles of Social Value – Social Value UK

² Accounts for optimism bias (3.5%) in the reported cost amount.

Where the value comes from

Most of the social value stems from increased access to sport and greater range of preferred physical activities. Should the YMCA facility, which has served the community for more than 60 years, close, this benefit becomes even more significant.

Other outcomes, such as cultural identity and physical health gains, contribute value but are difficult to quantify. These will be better understood after the centre's first year of operation, when robust usage data can be captured.

What it costs

The Year 1 facility cost is \$1.2 million, spread across:

Cost breakdown	
Cost component	Value (NZD)
Capital (construction)	20.6m
Year 1 operating cost (average 10 yrs)	793,706
Total estimated project cost	21.4m
Year 1 investment value used in SROI	1.2m

Stakeholder contributions include:

- local government: operating and feasibility costs
- local/central government + funders: capital contributions.

These costs are distributed over the estimated 50-year lifespan of the facility.

Why it's worth it

Despite the financial investment, the projected return is compelling.

For every \$1 invested, the centre is expected to generate \$10.60 in social value.

From increased participation and improved wellbeing to stronger community ties, this facility will be a powerful lever for positive change.

Calculating impact

We carried out an SROI calculation to understand the potential value delivered by the proposed Tairāwhiti Indoor Multipurpose Centre.

The total social value generated is estimated at \$13.1 million. The net social value is calculated by subtracting financial costs (including capital, operations and other expenditure totalling \$1.2 million) from the total social value, leaving a net social value of \$12 million.

To measure how effective this investment is, the SROI ratio uses the following formula:

SROI = Total Social Value ÷ Total Financial Inputs

This strong return highlights the transformative power of well-designed community facilities, delivering more than just recreation, but real gains in social connection, physical health and local pride.

The high SROI ratio of \$1:\$10.60 shows the unique situation in Tairāwhiti Gisborne. Here, a big unmet demand and the inclusive design of the new facility have combined to create significant social value. This result is much higher than typical benchmarks for similar facilities, both in New Zealand and overseas.

However, it's important to remember that such a high SROI may not be possible in areas where there are already more facilities or different community needs.

To help future projects, building a database of expected SROI ranges by facility type and context will:

- help set realistic targets
- improve understanding of what drives social value in community infrastructure.

Social Return on Investment (SROI): Proposed Tairāwhiti Indoor Multipurpose Centre 2029

SROI outcomes \$13.1 million

Estimated value for measuring the impact of a proposed indoor multipurpose centre in Gisborne, based on empirical evidence.

Getting involved in sport

Played competitive sport	\$4.58m
Participated in group activity	\$1.39m
Reduced barriers to being active due to lack of facilities	\$1.84m

Attitudes to physical activity **\$4.37m**

Increased opportunity to engage in preferred activity

Health

\$0.13m

Improved health

Social

\$0.94m

More able to express cultural identity

SROI inputs \$1.2 million per annum*

The net cost of stakeholders' contributions.

SROI Ratio 1 : 10.60

For every \$1 invested, the centre is projected to return \$10.60 in social benefits.

Local government **\$793,706**

Projected operation of facility (feasibility analysis)

Local government, central government, private sector and funders (mix of income streams for building facility)* **\$412,000**

Estimated construction (feasibility analysis)

*Distributed across the 50-year life span of the facility

Council investment in the proposed Tairāwhiti Indoor Multipurpose Centre is estimated to generate **\$12 million** in social value for Gisborne.

Much of this value comes from giving people more chances to take part in their chosen physical activities and competitive sports. As the centre becomes operational, it is expected that a clearer picture will emerge – particularly around how many people are positively affected through cultural engagement and improved physical health. These insights will be captured in the evaluation of the centre's first year.

Conclusions

The proposed Tairāwhiti Indoor Multipurpose Centre will fill a well-documented gap in indoor sport and recreation across the Tairāwhiti Gisborne region.

Its projected social value of \$13.1 million – and net return of \$12 million, or \$1,730 per participant – places it well above typical benchmarks for facilities nationally and internationally (based on Sport NZ literature review).

Beyond the numbers, this centre will enable a thriving community by supporting sport, culture, hauora (health) and play.

Additional scenarios explored during the SROI assessment showed consistently positive results, even when adjusted for projected participation rates, overlapping users and shifts in project costs, boosting confidence in the centre's long-term success.



Recommendations

To fully capture the benefits of the centre once open, it is recommended that Gisborne District Council conducts a robust evaluation in the first year of operation (2029/30). That includes integrating measurement and evaluation processes from day one, ensuring real outcomes are recorded, understood and used to improve delivery over time.

While maintaining existing facilities is crucial, this project reflects true community need, worthy of prioritisation.

Advocacy and use

The Council's Liveable Spaces Planning Team used the SROI findings to build a compelling business case, securing an initial \$2.5 million in the current Three-Year Plan.

Funding will also be sought from:

- national funders
- local funders
- other community sources.

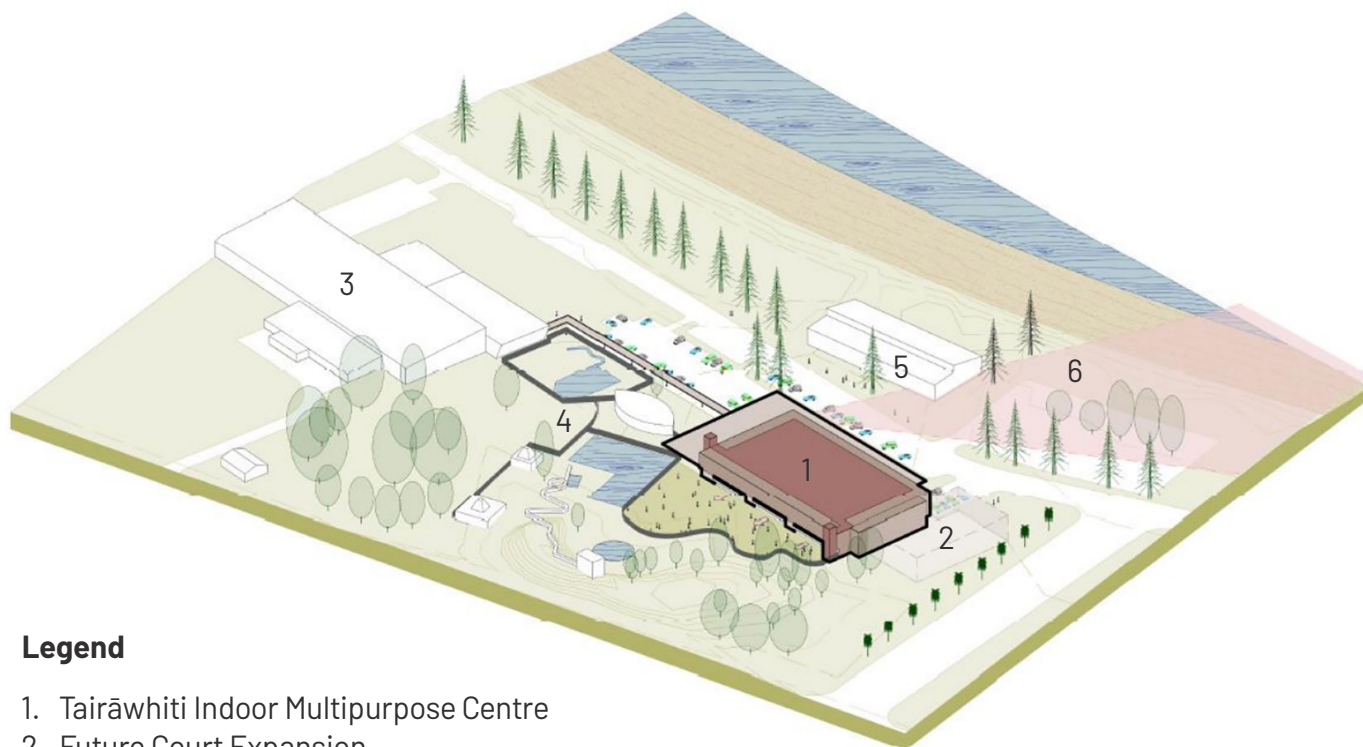
The business case clearly shows that appropriate infrastructure supports wellbeing – backed by a forecast of \$13.1 million in annual social value.

Councillors endorsed all recommendations and highlighted the SROI assessment as crucial in supporting their decision.

Planning is now accelerating, with public consultation on full capital and operational funding proposed for the Long Term Plan in 2027.

This study was undertaken by Sport NZ in partnership Gisborne District Council. Thank you to the council for providing the data and images used in this case study.

**Preferred option:
Proposed Tairāwhiti Indoor Multipurpose Centre**



Legend

1. Tairāwhiti Indoor Multipurpose Centre
2. Future Court Expansion
3. Kiwa Pools
4. Existing Pool Facilities
5. Midway Surf Rescue Community Hub
6. View to Young Nicks Head



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