

MERIDIAN ROWING CENTRE | QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

The Meridian Rowing Centre is an area of land adjacent to Lake Ruataniwha with a specific purpose to provide for the sport of Rowing.

During August 2021, South Island Rowing Inc. (SIR) reached out to the rowing community and beyond with a questionnaire. The **purpose** of this was to gain a better understanding of what our community most values about the Meridian Rowing Centre at Lake Ruataniwha. These responses helped to inform the planning for our current facility and allow SIR to capture ideas and opinions which will direct aspirations for future development.

Please read on for a summary of the survey findings.

METHODOLOGY

The results: how did we obtain them?

The questionnaire was compiled using Google forms, distributed online in August 2021 via a news post on the SIR website which delivers to our Life and Associate members, member Associations, and representatives for Clubs and Schools which participate in rowing in the South Island. The news post was kindly circulated by RowingNZ and our member Associations to their memberships. An article was also included in the "Twizel Update" publication to provide Twizel locals an opportunity to share their perspectives.

The questionnaire was completed by 228 respondents from across New Zealand. Despite the low number of respondents (relative to the number of people involved regularly at our Regattas), there was a good mix of representation from across the Southern regions.

The quality of responses was high and only one duplicate response was received and therefore excluded. SIR Board members were pleased to have responses which represent all parts of our rowing community.

The following graphs and summaries have been extrapolated from the raw survey data. Open ended questions were categorised by theme and will not be directly quoted.

Comments which did not answer the question or were considered irrelevant to the purpose of the questionnaire have been collated and presented to Board members but will not be included in this summary package.

OUR PEOPLE

Rowing involves many people, in many different roles. The largest group of questionnaire respondents represent Masters Athletes (20%) (Fig 1). When combined with Club and School athletes, 50% of the responses represent Athletes. Those who selected 'Other' were most commonly spectators or general lake users.

We asked: In which of the following groups do you belong?

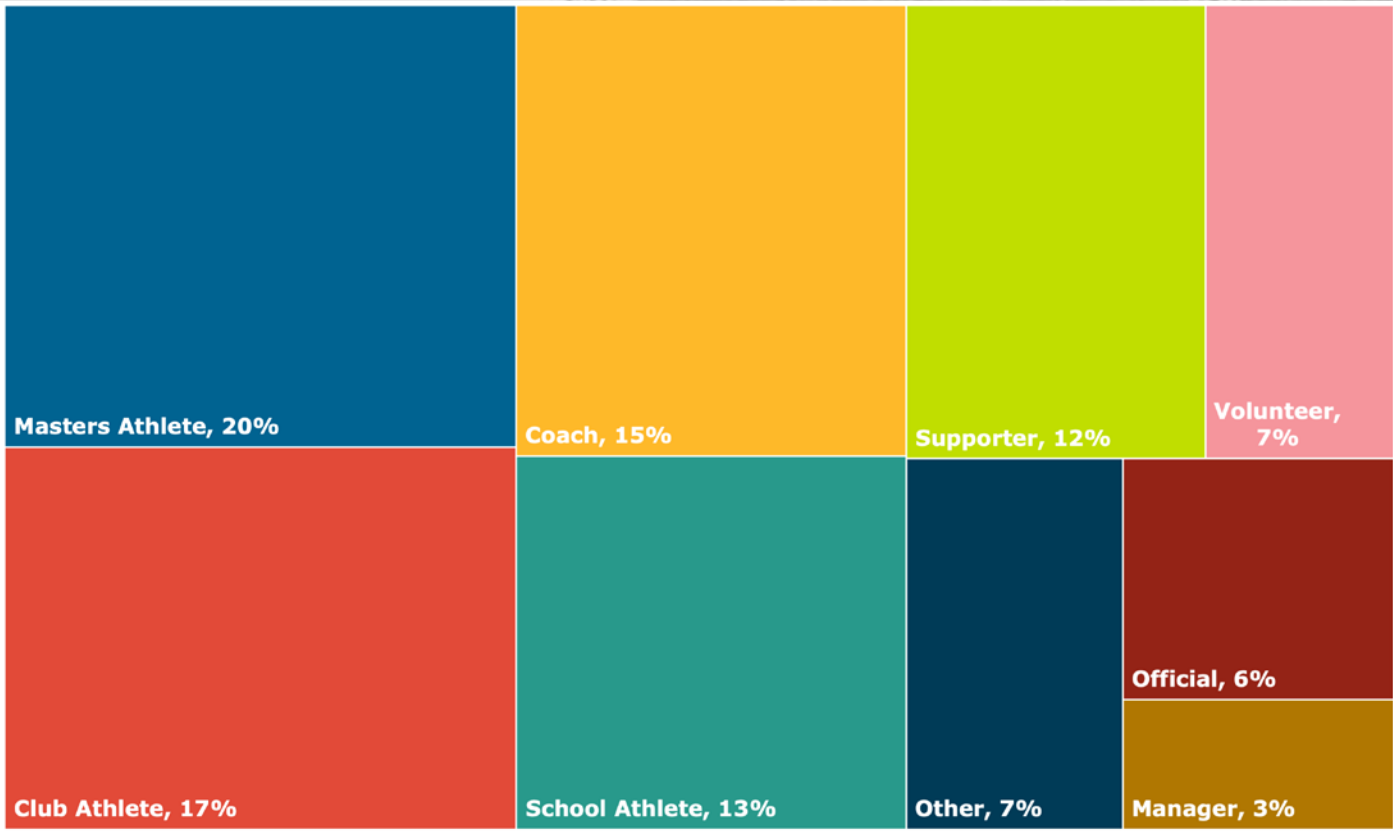
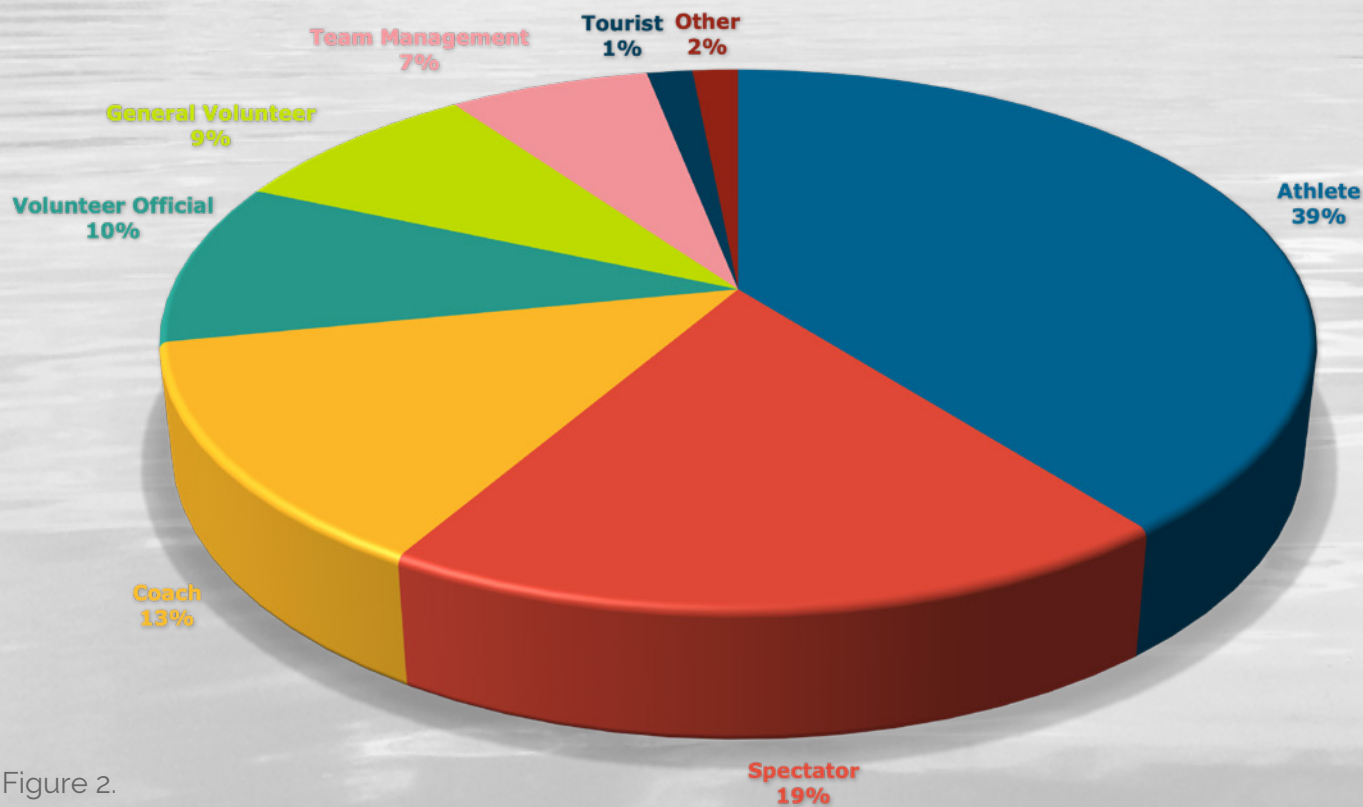


Figure 1.

OUR PEOPLE

We asked: Generally, in what capacity is your visit?



When visiting the Meridian Rowing Centre, more than 40% of respondents took on more than one 'role', with some indicating involvement up to five roles. This graph shows all results (327 total responses from 228 individuals).

Figure 2.

OUR PEOPLE

The Meridian Rowing Centre and Lake Ruataniwha are located in the Mackenzie District, within the Canterbury Region. Of the 228 responses received, a clear majority were from Canterbury.

We asked: Which area do you currently live?

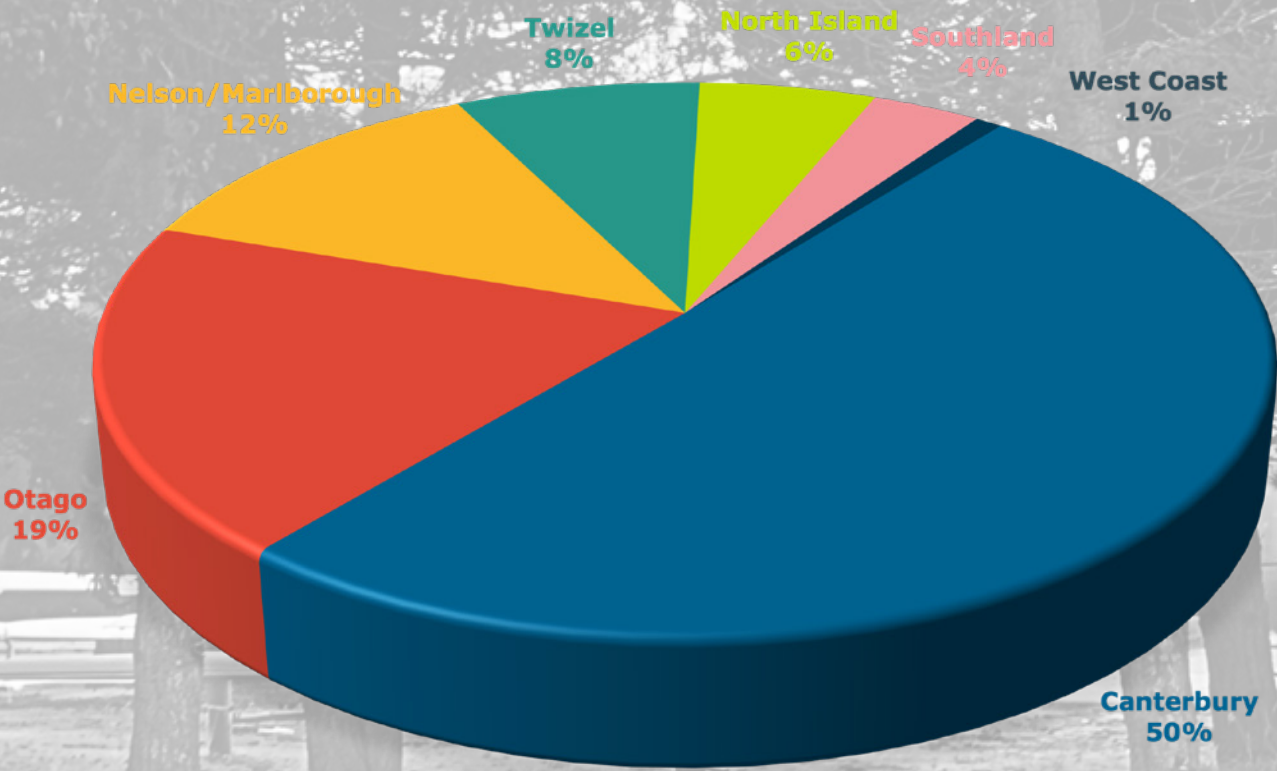


Figure 3.

OUR PEOPLE

The following graph looks at the respondents from each region, and what their reasons for visiting are:

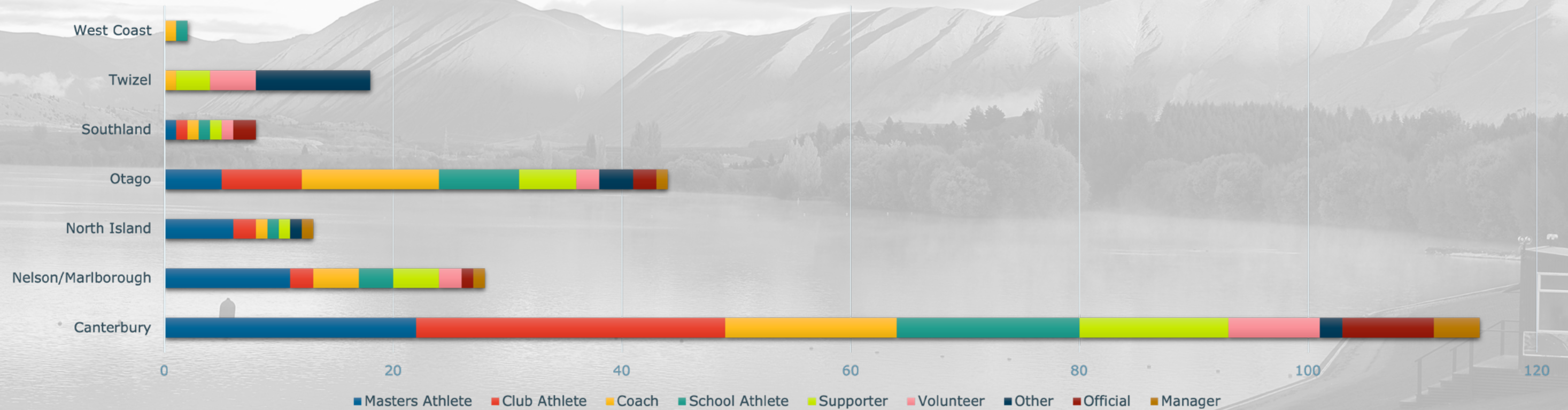


Figure 4.

OUR PEOPLE

We asked: How often do you visit the Meridian Rowing Centre?

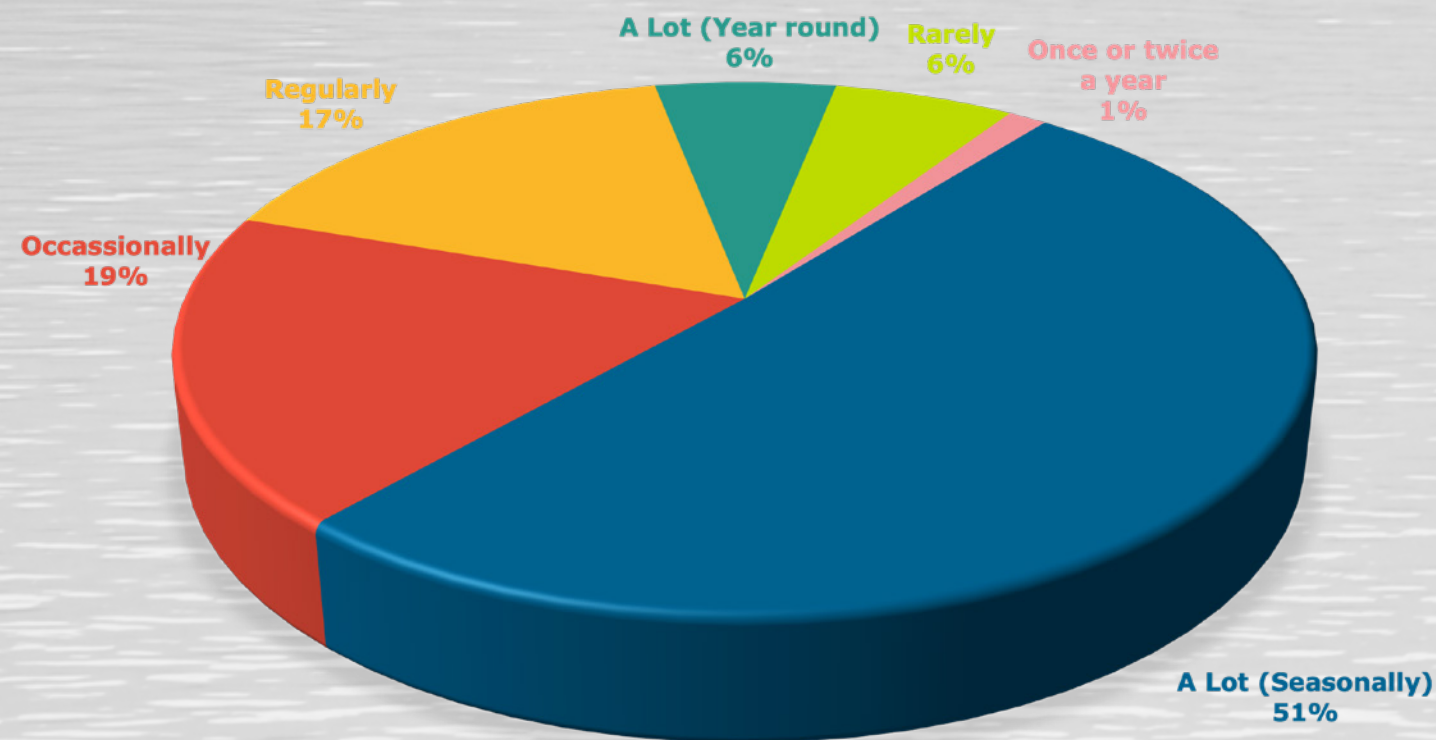


Figure 5.

The regatta season has an obvious affect on the frequency of respondents visits to the Meridian Rowing Centre. This means that for short periods of time - particularly through the summer - the facility is very heavily used. For much longer periods of time there are generally fewer users who enjoy the space on a regular basis.

YOUR **VALUES**

We asked: What are your favourite things about the Meridian Rowing Centre or the experiences you have there?

- » **Scenery, unique location/setting, beauty of the water/lake, peacefulness**
- » **Friendly and relaxed atmosphere**
- » **The people**
- » **Great race viewing, spectator embankments and podium lawn**
- » **Freedom of access, space for everyone**
- » **Being able to follow racing from the 1000m to the finish**
- » **Friendly volunteers**
- » **A straight, well set up, 2000m course**
- » **Being part of the sport and seeing people enjoying themselves**
- » **Variety of facilities**

This summarises the majority of responses. Some respondents did not answer this question (31).

THE ISSUES

We asked: What are your LEAST favourite things about the Meridian Rowing Centre or the experiences you have there?

- » **Dodgy boat racks, lack of boat racks & poor ground condition in boat park**
- » **Clash between cycle and pedestrian routes**
- » **Water being spoiled by 'pleasure crafts'**
- » **Campervans blocking views of racing**
- » **Lack of toilets/low quality of toilets**
- » **Dangerous boat launch area (slippery, steep, concrete damages boats)**
- » **Finding accommodation at a reasonable cost**
- » **Lack of shelter/undercover facilities**
- » **The 'no dogs' rule**
- » **Poor communication, hard to hear commentators, lack of wifi access**
- » **Lack of facilities and access for disabled**
- » **Lack of food outlets and coffee vendors**
- » **Outdated and unmaintained buildings**
- » **Rough car parking areas**

This summarises the majority of responses. Some respondents did not answer this question (44).

OUR FACILITIES

The following section addresses potential projects at the Meridian Rowing Centre.

Prioritising:

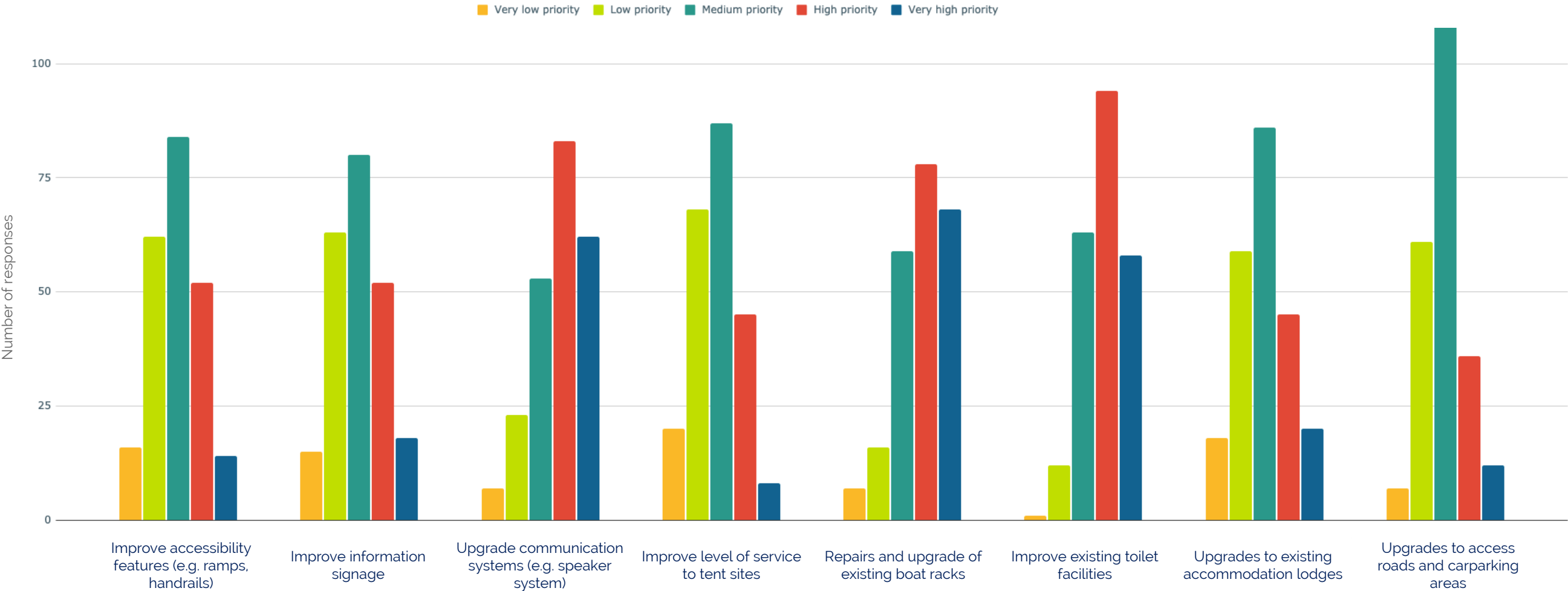
Survey respondents were provided a list of 'projects' at the Meridian Rowing Centre, and asked to prioritise these.

Using a 5 point scale of very low priority (1 point) to very high priority (5 points), participant responses were multiplied and added up to produce a 'score' for each project.

This score has been used to rank the potential projects in terms of importance to the survey respondents.

PROJECTS | EXISTING FACILITIES

We asked: Below are a list of services and facilities that are provided at the Meridian Rowing Centre. Please indicate how important you think upgrades or improvements are for each of these:



Project ranking:

6

4

3

8

2

1

5

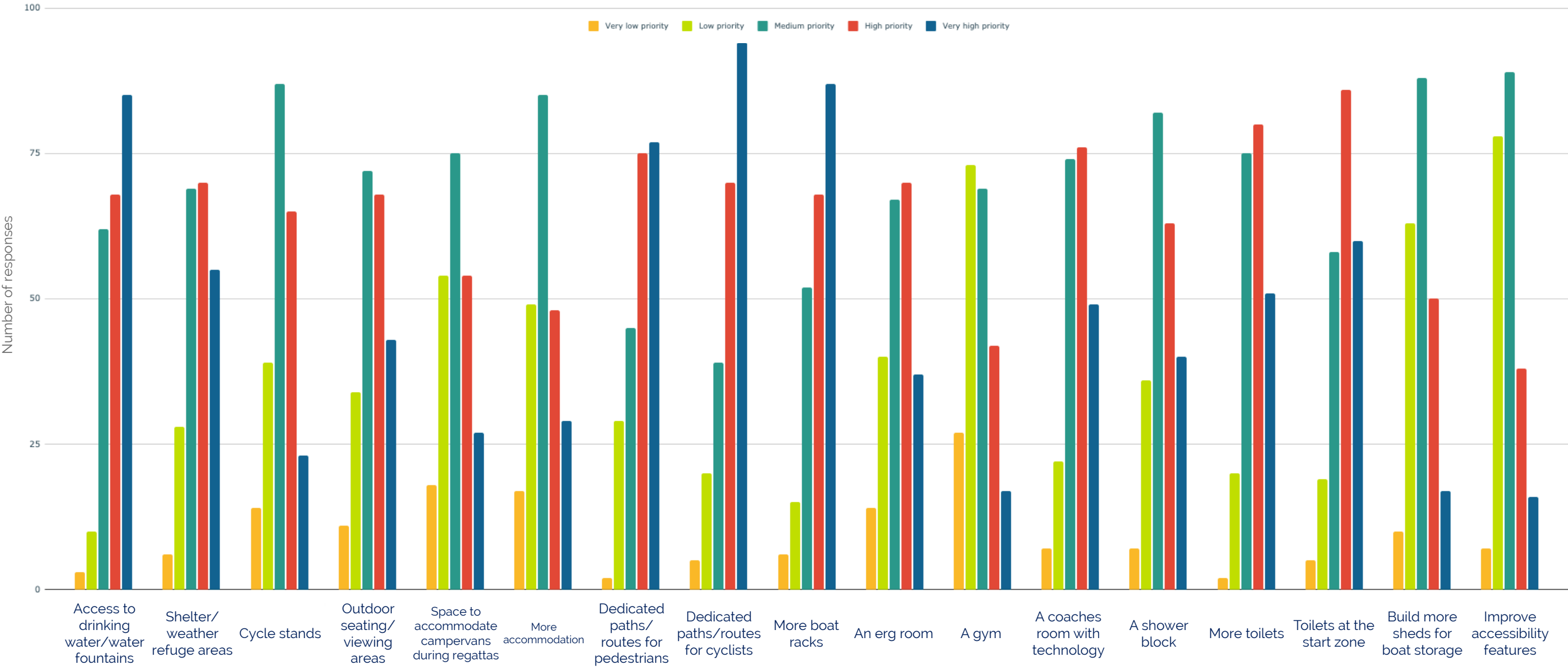
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MERIDIAN ROWING CENTRE | QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

PROJECTS | NEW FACILITIES



We asked: SIR are continually looking at where and how we can make improvements to the Meridian Rowing Centre. All projects require careful consideration, planning and funding to ensure we get a great outcome for the rowing community. With this in mind, below are a list of potential projects, please indicate what level of priority you think these projects have:



Project ranking:

- 2
- 7
- 12
- 9
- 14
- 13
- 4
- 1
- 3
- 11
- 17
- 8
- 10
- 6
- 5
- 15
- 16



PROJECTS

The survey data has been used to rank the lists of all potential projects in terms of importance to the survey respondents.

This gives us a broad view of where our community would most like to see changes around the facility.

Note: Any potential project would require further scoping, investigation and consideration for funding prior to being implemented.

- 1. Dedicated paths/routes for cyclists
- 2. Access to drinking water/water fountains
- 3. More boat racks
- 4. Improve existing toilet facilities
- 5. Dedicated paths/routes for pedestrians
- 6. Repairs and upgrade of existing boat racks
- 7. Toilets at the Start Zone
- 8. Upgrade communication systems (e.g. speaker system)
- 9. More toilets
- 10. Shelter/weather refuge areas

- 11. A coaches room which utilises available technology (live streaming of course conditions/races, weather info, comms with officials)
- 12. Outdoor seating/viewing areas
- 13. A shower block
- 14. An erg room
- 15. Cycle stands
- 16. More accommodation
- 17. Space to accommodate campervans during regattas
- 18. Build more sheds for boat storage
- 19. Improve information signage
- 20. Upgrades to existing accommodation lodges (7 bunk rooms, 10 double rooms and 10 single rooms, lecture theatre, lounge and coaches room)
- 21. Improve accessibility features (e.g. ramps, handrails)
- 22. Upgrades to access roads and carparking areas
- 23. Improve level of service to tent sites
- 24. A gym

PRIORITY PROJECTS

PRIORITY PROJECTS for scoping, further investigation and implementation (conditional on feasibility):

Boat park racking

1. Build new racks
2. Immediately repair existing racks where unusable
3. Systematic upgrade/replacement/realignment of existing racks

Toilets

1. Consider location for new toilet block at the western end of the boat park
2. Suggest location and scope for toilets at the start zone for discussion with MDC
3. Consider location for new toilet block near the eastern boundary behind tent sites
4. Scope upgrades to existing toilets

Dedicated paths/routes for pedestrians and cyclists

1. Review overall circulation patterns for all modes of movement
2. Consider spectator embankment layout
3. Construct new cycle route
4. Work with MDC to preserve views for pedestrians and cyclists between the 1500m and 1000m mark

Upgrade communication systems

1. Scope upgrades to existing systems
2. Establish locations of any new infrastructure

Shelter/weather refuge areas

1. Allocate space for tent sites in the boat park
2. Investigate integrating shade/shelter within racking design
3. Consider options and locations for weather refuge which provide protection from wind and rain as a priority, but also sun.

CURRENT PROJECTS

Other projects which are already in progress/ongoing:

Solar investigations

SIR are working with the team at Meridian Energy to investigate opportunities for utilising solar power across the site.

Livestreaming and tech upgrades

New screens, upgrades to wifi and installation of a new pole to support tech upgrades are among a number of changes. These will allow SIR to provide livestreaming through a more modern tech system.

Start trolley automation

A long term project, automated start trolleys will allow crews to be aligned from the start tower and remove the need for boat holders.

Clearing of seeding pines and management of cleared land

With the removal of a significant size area of wilding pines, plans are underway to see these large areas properly prepared, sown with grass and appropriately irrigated in the short term. Ongoing maintenance of wildings will also be required.

Rowshoppe

The shop space will be undergoing a bit of a revamp to better utilise the building and create a more enticing cafe area. Some fresh merchandise will reveal a special new design representing SIR and Lake Ruataniwha

Plantings and beautification

With the support of Meridian Energy, planning is underway to see the staged planting of a number of areas around the complex. This process includes consideration for irrigation.

THANK YOU

Our rowing community is made up of many brilliant, hard working, skilled and thoughtful individuals with years of combined knowledge and experience.

SIR wishes to thank all of those who took time to complete the questionnaire and also offer their skills, expertise, business connections or volunteer hours to help see some of these projects come to fruition in the future.

South Island Rowing are committed to continue building the legacy of this facility, protecting it's history and planning for the future.

A purpose built facility such as this has an imperative to provide for activities involved with rowing. The ability for the site to cater for regatta events first and foremost dictates many outcomes for the physical attributes on site.

As part of the Masterplanning process, a high level site plan will provide current and future board Members of SIR with a vision for how the site can be best utilised, while capturing the needs and enhancing the values of the rowing community.

Any feedback you may have can be sent to: feedback@ruataniwha.co.nz