



# CASE STUDY:

INNOVATIVE WAYS OF IMPROVING THE  
SQUASH EXPERIENCE THROUGH FACILITY  
DEVELOPMENT

**WHANGANUI SQUASH CLUB**



**SQUASH**  
NEW ZEALAND

## OVERVIEW

Picture yourself walking towards a building that hits you with a range of colour, lights, plants and eye-catching images. You move inside the facility and there is more of the same. By the time you reach the squash courts your entire squash experience has been transformed into something totally different. Do you see yourself spending hours here? Can you wait to tell your friends about this wonderful place?

Club environments have huge yet subtle effects on the people in them. The good ones uplift, inspire and motivate. The bad ones reinforce member dissatisfaction. When designing a facility, we can choose to simply provide a place to play or we can create a place that is a regular part of their lives. With a new committee on board, the Whanganui Squash Club have revamped their premises over the past 12 months. This has contributed towards a thriving junior coaching programme and a growing membership of junior players.

### CHALLENGES

#### Interior design and fit out

The majority of squash facilities in New Zealand were developed during the 1960–80's. These were traditionally designed to host middle-age, white, working class men (as seen in the membership statistics). Many now have dated décor that reflects the taste of this period and the interests of who played back then. As a result these places are not appealing to women, children and people from other ethnic groups.

#### Funding

Many clubs struggle to finance the day to day operations, let alone any major facility investment. How can improvements be made to the existing look and feel of a building on limited budget?

### SOLUTIONS

#### Colour and Lighting

When used properly colour can do wonders. It awakens the senses and creates an emotional response. It gets members hyped before a match and excites guests about the possibilities of what lies beyond.

#### Carpet

The floor is an important part of any room. It defines the space and enhances the décor. It enhances peoples' experiences and rewards them for walking through the door in the first place.

#### Visuals

Posters, photos and inspiring quotes add an exciting dimension to your facility by invigorating club spaces. They can change your mood to more positive and keep you motivated. These are freely available to download from the website.

### RESULTS

**\$155k**

Spent on upgrading facilities so far – funding by club, donations and grants.

**New**

Carpet laid throughout the facility.

**New**

Lighting and painting.

## CONCLUSION

In the sports industry we try and sell something that a lot of people don't want to do – physical activity. If we want to stay relevant we must give participants something worth leaving home for. It is for this reason many clubs are spending resources trying to create inspirational environments that attract people back for more. The good news is that squash clubs can renovate and totally transform their facilities with reasonable costs. In interior design circles it is widely accepted that the least expensive, yet most profound way, to achieve an inspiring environment is the creative use of colour, shapes and visuals – whether on the floor or on the walls.

As we all notice it when we walk into a room, having beautiful décor can be all the motivation we need to start and keep playing more squash. Although it will cost in the short-term, the rewards will be for everyone and will eventually return more benefits in the long run. More members will come to your club more often and their experience will be better – leading to greater word-of-mouth advertising and better retention.

**BEFORE**

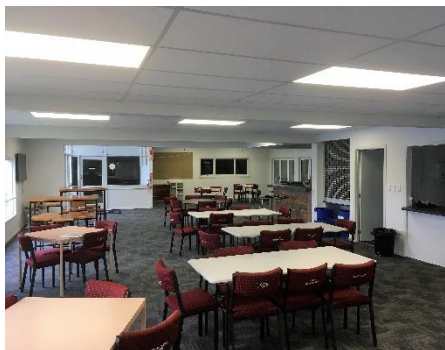
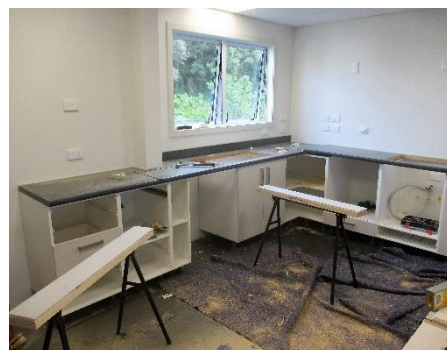


**AFTER**



## SUMMARY OF FACILITY REFURBISHMENT

- ✓ New and repositioned kitchen and bar with new appliances.
- ✓ Installation of new toilets upstairs (previously toilets were only downstairs).
- ✓ Addition of by-fold doors leading out to court five from the lounge.
- ✓ New carpets and lighting, removed old wall panelling and re-jibbed and painted.
- ✓ New ceiling (asbestos discovered in the old ceiling). This was sealed and covered in protective sheeting, bringing it up to the code.
- ✓ New wiring and installation of code-compliant fire protection system throughout the building.
- ✓ New windows from the lounge looking out onto courts one, two and three.
- ✓ New security camera system installed for the bar area.



### STILL TO COME...

- ❑ Addition of folding doors leading out from the lounge onto a new deck overlooking the tennis courts.
- ❑ Renovation of the stairs.
- ❑ Install new furniture in the lounge area.
- ❑ Install heat pumps.
- ❑ Install five television monitors to watch matches on court and to advertise sponsors, promote upcoming events, etc.
- ❑ Upgrade the boiler system, changing rooms, toilets and front entrance way.

Club President Tony Sanson said "the club felt that the old lounge was out dated, a large cavernous space that felt cold and unwelcoming. The lounge of the club is the heart of the club, with most activities revolving around this area. The old lounge layout was no longer functional. If the club wanted to stay current and attract new members we felt we needed to invest and future proof."