

Investigating small town shrinkage in the Clutha District of New Zealand and the local response

Mathew Husband

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Abstract

Throughout history population centres, of any size, have always fluctuated in prosperity, population, and production activities. Current international trends, such as globalisation and urbanisation have created megacities with ever-expanding populations and economies. In contrast, the same trends have begun to cause shrinkage in some parts of the world. Some small towns can be particularly vulnerable to international trends which can destabilise their populations and/ or economies. Multiple examples of this are found in New Zealand such as in towns within the southern district of Clutha. Towns in the Clutha District have been impacted by the rural to urban migration trends seen across the world as well as globalisation which creates large-scale manufacturing as opposed to the relatively small manufacturing offered by small towns. Shrinkage can have negative impacts on small towns and their communities which prompts the need for a response to slow, stop or mitigate the issues related to shrinkage.

This research aims to understand the impacts and responses to population loss and economic instability which has taken place in small towns within the Clutha District. The case study towns of Kaitangata and Lawrence were chosen as these towns highlight the varying geographic, social, and economic identities of the Clutha District. The aim of this thesis is to find out how councils, communities, and individuals are affected by economic and demographic change and how they are responding to the impacts of shrinkage. Through developing an understanding of the impacts and possible responses to this issue, this research could help in creating more effective responses that lessen the negative effects of shrinkage in small towns.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract.....	ii
Acknowledgements.....	iii
List of Figures.....	viii
List of Abbreviations.....	ix
1. Introduction.....	1
1.1 Introduction:.....	1
1.2 Research Rationale:.....	2
1.3 Research Context:.....	3
1.4 Research Scope:.....	4
1.5 Research Structure:.....	5
2. Literature Review:.....	6
2.1 Introduction:.....	6
2.2 Globalisation, urbanisation, and other international trends:.....	6
2.3 Shrinkage in the global context:.....	10
2.4 Small towns in a global context:.....	11
2.5 Catalysts for shrinkage in small towns:.....	11
2.6 Small town shrinkage:.....	12
2.7 Global theory on responses to shrinkage:.....	14
2.8 Regrowth strategies as a response to shrinkage:.....	15
2.9 Accepting strategies as a response to shrinkage:.....	16
2.10 The context of responses to shrinkage in a small town:.....	17
2.11 The New Zealand context and theoretical framework of shrinkage in small towns:.....	18
2.11.1 Context:.....	18
2.11.2 The responses to small town shrinkage in New Zealand:.....	20
2.12 Summary:.....	22
3. Methodology.....	24
3.1 Introduction:.....	24
3.2 Research Design:.....	24
3.3 Qualitative and Interpretivist Approach:.....	25
3.4 Ethical Considerations:.....	26
3.5 Positionality:.....	27

3.6 Literature Review:	28
3.7 Observations:	29
3.8 Key Informant Interviews:	31
3.9 Document Analysis:	33
3.10 Data Analysis:	34
3.11 Limitations:	34
3.12 Summary:	36
4. Context:	37
4.1 Introduction:	37
4.2 Clutha District:	37
4.3 Kaitangata:	39
4.3.1 Geography:	39
4.3.2 Demographics:	39
4.3.3 History:	40
4.3.4 Current State:	42
4.4 Lawrence:	43
4.4.1 Geography:	43
4.4.2 Demographics:	44
4.4.3 History:	45
4.4.4 Current State:	47
4.5 Planning and Legislation Context:	49
4.5.1 Resource Management Act (1991):	50
4.5.2 Local Government Act 2002:	50
4.5.3 Clutha District Council’s District Plan:	51
4.5.4 Clutha District Council’s Long Term Plan (2015-2025):	52
4.5.5 Clutha District Council Annual Plan (2017-2018):	55
4.5.6 Clutha District Council Strategy ‘Living and Working in the Clutha District’ (2015):	56
4.6 Summary:	58
5. Kaitangata Results and Discussion:	59
5.1 Introduction:	59
5.2 Results:	59
5.2.1 Key projects:	60
5.2.1.1 Skatepark and BMX track:	60

5.2.1.2 House and Land package:	62
5.2.1.3 Community Hall:	67
5.2.2 Kaitangata Community:	70
5.2.3 Kaitangata Leaders:	73
5.2.4 Kaitangata and the Clutha District Council:	74
5.3 Discussion:	76
5.3.1 The impact of shrinkage on Kaitangata:	76
5.3.2 Skatepark and BMX track:	77
5.3.3 House and Land package:	79
5.3.4 Community Hall:	82
5.4 Summary:	84
6. Lawrence Results and Discussion:	86
6.1 Introduction:	86
6.2 Results:	86
6.2.1 Key projects:	87
6.2.1.1 Tuapeka Aquatic Centre:	87
6.2.1.2 Clutha Gold Cycle Trail Extension:	89
6.2.1.3 150 th anniversary of the discovery of gold celebrations:	94
6.2.1.4 Main street parking upgrades:	95
6.2.1.5 Lawrence Community Wetlands:	96
6.2.2 Lawrence Community:	97
6.2.2.1 Lawrence Area School:	99
6.2.2.2 Tuapeka Community Health Centre:	100
6.2.3 Lawrence Community Leaders:	102
6.2.4 Lawrence and the Clutha District Council:	103
6.3 Discussion:	104
6.3.1 The impact of shrinkage on Lawrence:	104
6.3.2 Tuapeka Aquatic Centre:	105
6.3.3 Clutha Gold Cycle Trail Extension:	108
6.3.4 150 th anniversary of the discovery of gold celebrations:	110
6.3.5 Main street parking upgrades:	111
6.3.6 Lawrence Community Wetlands:	111
6.3.7 Tuapeka Community Health Centre:	112

6.4 Summary:.....	114
7. Conclusion	116
7.1 Introduction:.....	116
7.2 Summary of Key Findings:.....	117
7.2.1 Key Findings from Kaitangata:.....	118
7.2.2 Key Findings from Lawrence:.....	119
7.2.3 Evaluation of Research Questions:	121
7.3 Contribution to the Literature:	123
7.4 Contribution to Kaitangata, Lawrence and the CDC:.....	124
7.5 Recommendations and Future Direction for Kaitangata, Lawrence and the CDC:.....	125
7.5.1 Recommendations:	125
7.5.2 Future Directions:.....	126
7.6 Summary:.....	127
REFERENCE LIST	128
Appendix 1:.....	137
Appendix 2:.....	139
Appendix 3:.....	142
Appendix 4:.....	145

List of Figures

Figure 1: Graph showing the historical estimates and range of future predictions of world population from the United Nations, 'World Populations Prospectus: 2015 Revision'.	7
Figure 2: Graph showing Human Development Index (HDI) figures for different world regions from 1980-2013, produced by the United Nations Development Programme, 2014.	8
Figure 3: Graph showing the changes in rural and urban populations of the world from 1950 and projected to 2050. Created by the United Nation's 'World Urbanization Prospects', 2014 Revision.	8
Figure 4: Photo of the main street of Kaitangata (personal collection)	30
Figure 5: Photo of the main street of Lawrence (personal collection).....	31
Figure 6: Map showing the Clutha District in the red outline and Kaitangata and Lawrence highlighted by the black location symbols.....	38
Figure 7: The old Kaitangata Borough Council Chambers (personal collection).	41
Figure 8: The main street of Lawrence, 2017 (personal collection)	44
Figure 9: Sign for the homes and businesses for sale in Lawrence, there are roughly seven businesses for sale, nine houses and two pieces of vacant land for sale as of 09/08/2017 (personal collection).....	48
Figure 10: Sign on the BMX track in Kaitangata which thanks all of the people and organisations that helped fund and support the building of the track and Skatepark (personal collection).	62
Figure 11: Design concept for houses as part of the house and land package in Kaitangata (Clutha Development, 2016).....	64
Figure 12: Kaitangata war memorial hall as of August 9th, 2017 (personal collection).	68
Figure 13: The Kaitangata Presbyterian Worship Centre as of August 9th, 2017 (personal collection).	68
Figure 14: Proposed design for the Kaitangata Community Centre attached to the Presbyterian Worship Centre as part of the plans sent to the CDC in 2017 (Tohill, 2017d).....	70
Figure 15: Photos showing the Tuapeka Aquatic Centre in Lawrence (personal collection)..	89
Figure 16: The information board for the Clutha Gold Trail at the end of the trail just outside Lawrence.....	90
Figure 17: Sign at the proposed location for the Lawrence Community Wetlands (personal collection).	97

List of Abbreviations

CDC	Clutha District Council
DHB	District Health Board
EDA	Economic Development Agency
HDI	Human Development Index
KCCCT	Kaitangata Community Centre Charitable Trust
KI	Key Informant
LGA	Local Government Act
MBIE	Ministry of Business, Innovation, and Employment
RMA	Resource Management Act

1. Introduction

1.1 Introduction:

Small town shrinkage occurs when a town begins to lose its population and economic drivers due to both internal and external forces that negatively impact the dynamics and functioning of the town (Bowns, 2013). Shrinkage can impact the quality of life for the residents of a small town and affect the ability of its economy to function productively (Reckien & Martinez-Fernandez, 2011). Small town shrinkage can occur due to a multitude of factors with some of the most apparent international trends being rural to urban migration, globalisation, and loss of primary production output (Hinderink & Titus, 2002; Knox & Mayer, 2013). Small towns must respond to the issues caused by shrinkage in order to decrease the negative impacts on the residents and prevent the further decline of the town. Responses can come from the community, its leaders, the local authority or the central government and can take the form of growth, right-sizing or accepting strategies. Successful responses to shrinkage in small towns tend to include collaboration within the community and among other groups, an understanding of the needs of the residents and the cause of shrinkage in the town, and recognition of the realistic opportunities for growth or at minimum, preventing further decline (Bowns, 2013; Carlton-Laney, Edwards & Reid, 1999; Collits, 2000; Daniels, 1989; Knox & Mayer, 2013).

In New Zealand, and many other developed countries, shrinkage is becoming a larger issue for some towns and even small cities due to globalisation, rural to urban migration and many other factors (Bontje & Musterd, 2012; Haase *et al.*, 2014; Hospers, 2013; Luescher & Shetty, 2013; Martinez-Fernandez, Audirac, *et al.*, 2012; Reckien & Martinez-Fernandez, 2011). Small towns can play an important role in the local, regional, national and in some cases international context and, so it is important to understand how small towns function and why some are susceptible to shrinkage. The central government and local authorities who must administer the regions in decline, face difficult decisions in how to respond to the issues of shrinkage in a fair and appropriate manner (Haase *et al.*, 2014; Hospers, 2013; Luescher & Shetty, 2013). The communities in the shrinking towns also play an important role in deciding on the type of response that is undertaken based on their willingness to be proactive when reacting to the issues cause by shrinkage (Barnes & Hayter, 1992; Brumbach, 2007; O'Toole & Burdess,

2004; Sampson, 2005; Wilson, 2014). The reasons for shrinkage, the impacts it has small towns and their responses to shrinkage will be explored in this thesis.

1.2 Research Rationale:

Small towns in the regions of New Zealand were often the pioneering towns of the country due to their agricultural potential, natural resources, or location along travel routes (Gilroy, 2013; McMillan, 2015a, b; McNaughton, 2011; Nel, 2015; Rutledge *et al.*, 2008; Wilson, 1995; Wood, 2017). Over time, some small town's ability to significantly contribute to the local, national and international economy began to diminish due to a loss of resource productivity and output or due to a multitude of other internal and external factors (Gilroy, 2013; McMillan, 2015a, b; McNaughton, 2011; Rutledge *et al.*, 2008; Wilson, 1995; Wood, 2017). Alongside these instigators of shrinkage came a decline of employment opportunities, a loss of key services and a decrease in the quality of life in some small towns (Conradson & Pawson, 1997; Conradson & Pawson, 2009; Neville & Rowe, 2015; Rutledge *et al.*, 2008; Sampson, 2005; Scott & Pawson, 1999; Wilson, 1995; Wood, 2017). Although there are some general instigators, impacts and responses to shrinkage, in most cases, each small town that experiences shrinkage has a unique set of circumstances that caused the shrinkage and depending on the characteristics of the town each will be impacted and respond in different ways (Bowns, 2013; Carlton-Laney, Edwards & Reid, 1999; Collits, 2000; Daniels, 1989; Gilroy, 2013; Hinderink & Titus, 2002; Kenyon & Black, 2001; Knox & Mayer, 2013).

The rationale for this research is to explore why some small towns can be vulnerable to shrinkage, how they can be impacted by shrinkage, what is the response to shrinkage from the community, its leaders, and the local authority of a small town and, how do such responses compare to best-practice characteristics seen in the current literature. Due to the unique nature of each case study of small town shrinkage, a lot can be gained from investigating the characteristics of a small town's impacts from and responses to shrinkage in terms of adding to the contemporary academic literature on the topic and providing information and critiques to small town communities, leaders, and governing bodies. This research will likely add to the growing literature in the New Zealand and the growing international framework on how best to manage rural and regional decline and the impacts that small towns face from shrinkage (Bowns, 2013; Gilroy, 2013; Knox & Mayer, 2013; McMillan, 2015b; Nel, 2015; Rutledge *et al.*, 2008; Vaz *et al.*, 2016; Wood, 2017).

1.3 Research Context:

This research focuses on two small towns in the Clutha District of Otago in the South Island of New Zealand. Kaitangata and Lawrence are two small towns with strong histories dating back to the start of European settlement in New Zealand. During the late 1800s, the two towns developed relatively large populations due to their location and access to resources such as arable agricultural land and minerals. However, throughout the 1900s and into the 21st century, the two towns have faced many impacts from shrinkage as their resources and productivity became depleted and they faced issues with rural to urban migration and the loss of industry and commercial businesses to more economically viable national and international markets. As of 2017, when this research took place, neither town has recorded a population increase in over 50 years, and both Kaitangata and Lawrence are continuing to deal with many issues relating to shrinkage.

However, this research has commenced at a time of change and high rate of response to shrinkage in both Kaitangata and Lawrence. In 2015, the Clutha District Council (CDC), which administers the two case study towns, developed a strategy entitled 'Living and Working in the Clutha District'. This strategy highlighted many of the issues that the district as a whole and these individual towns were facing from shrinkage and was realistic about the challenges that the communities and the Council faced in responding to these issues. The strategy encourages investment into towns struggling with shrinkage to improve the quality of life for the residents and promote realistic growth opportunities for these towns. Alongside this strategy from the CDC, over the last several years, both Kaitangata and Lawrence's communities and leaders have been active in carrying out projects that seek to respond to shrinkage by decreasing the negative impacts it has on the residents of the town and facilitating opportunities for increased economic activity, population in the town and for improving the overall quality of life. Thus, this research seeks to capitalise on this time of change in both of these towns in order to analyse how Kaitangata and Lawrence became impacted by shrinkage, what those impacts have been and how the community and leaders of the two towns and the CDC have responded and then to use current literature to gauge whether the projects carried out by the two towns and the Council have been effective responses to shrinkage.

1.4 Research Scope:

The aim of this research is to examine, through the use of two case study towns, the causes and level of impacts from shrinkage in small towns and how the community and local authority respond to these issues. This research also seeks to ascertain the effectiveness of Lawrence's, Kaitangata's and the CDC's responses to shrinkage through critiquing their actions against best practice approaches found in contemporary literature. The outcomes of this research will add to previous national and international literature on small town shrinkage whilst also providing a unique account of the two case study towns and their struggles with shrinkage. This study will focus on aspects in Kaitangata and Lawrence such as the dynamic of their communities, the role leaders play in the community, the relationship that the towns have to organisations such as the local council and the local economic development agency (EDA), the planning and execution of community projects that seek to respond to shrinkage and many other characteristics.

The aim of this research will be achieved through the collection and analysis of primary and secondary data relating to the shrinkage and responses in Kaitangata and Lawrence as well as contextual information on aspects such shrinkage in New Zealand, global drivers of shrinkage, the contemporary academic literature on small town shrinkage and relevant government legislation and plans. Primary data collection methods will include key informant (KI) interviews and observations, while secondary data analysis will include academic literature, government legislation and plans and media articles. These methods will be employed to attempt to answer five key research questions which are:

1. What are the figures of population loss and economic change in the Clutha District and specifically in the case study towns (Kaitangata and Lawrence)?
2. What has been the impact on individuals, communities, and the Clutha District Council from shrinkage in the population and/ or economy?
3. How have these groups responded to the impacts from shrinkage?
4. Have these methods been successful in terms of reducing the negative impacts of shrinkage on people and the towns within the Clutha District?
5. Do the responses to shrinkage in the Clutha District reinforce or counteract what is seen in contemporary literature?

The scope of this research will largely be limited to the shrinkage and responses that have occurred in Kaitangata and Lawrence and the contextualisation of this topic in academic

literature and real-world frameworks. This research does not aim to provide a large number of recommendations for the Kaitangata and Lawrence communities or the CDC but instead seeks to provide a detailed account of the situations that resulted in these towns being impacted by shrinkage, what those impacts have been and how the community and local authority have responded. Although this research does include an element of critique of the responses carried out by Kaitangata, Lawrence and the CDC, these critiques seek to compare the responses against best practice values found in contemporary literature, but this will not result in a best practice guideline for the towns or the Council. Any recommendations or discussions on future directions generated by this research are not expected to be incorporated into any strategies or responses carried out by Kaitangata, Lawrence or the CDC regarding shrinkage but rather simply provide the researcher's perspective on the future situations for the case study towns.

1.5 Research Structure:

Chapter one of this thesis has introduced the topic, rationale, context, scope, and structure of the research. Chapter two will be a literature review that details the historic and contemporary principles and theories relating to small town shrinkage found in the academic literature. This chapter will explore trends and gaps in the literature on topics such as globalisation, urbanisation, the global perspective on shrinkage, the shrinkage context in New Zealand and theories on responses to shrinkage. Chapter three will detail the methodology used to carry out this research. Chapter three will pay particular regard to the qualitative/ interpretivist approach chosen for this research as well as detailing the reasoning for the data collection methods used in this research. Chapter four will offer a detailed contextualisation of the research including the history, geography, and demographics of Kaitangata and Lawrence. Chapter four will also provide context via detailing and analysing the relevant central and local government legislation and plans that relate to the topic. Chapter five will provide the results of the research carried out in Kaitangata and the discussion and analysis of these findings regarding the literature. Chapter six will then do the same for Lawrence. And finally, chapter seven will conclude the research by discussing its contribution to the academic literature and real-world frameworks as well as highlighting some the possible future directions for responses to shrinkage in the two case study towns.

2. Literature Review:

2.1 Introduction:

The topics of globalisation and urbanisation have been well discussed in the literature, and they outline the trends of the increasing size, density and number of large urban population centres around the world (Yeung, 2002). In contrast, this chapter provides a review of the literature around small town shrinkage and establishes the theoretical framework on which this research will operate. The global theory on urban shrinkage is built upon multiple sources including globalisation, urbanisation, economic decline, deindustrialisation, resilience, and revitalisation (Bontje & Musterd, 2012; Bowns, 2013; Haase *et al.*, 2014; Luescher & Shetty, 2013; Martinez-Fernandez, Audirac, *et al.*, 2012; Reckien & Martinez-Fernandez, 2011; Weaver *et al.*, 2016). Research on times of economic decline has also been prevalent in literature for a long time from the Great Depression to the 2008 Global Financial Crisis, however, under this topic, there is little direct attention paid to urban shrinkage with most of the discussion referencing the economic climate or decrease in living standards (Haase *et al.*, 2014).

This literature review will begin with a broad overview of globalisation and urbanisation and then provide the framework, theory, and global drivers of urban shrinkage. The focus will then shift specifically to small towns and the theory behind how they operate and how urban shrinkage can affect their populations and economies. The theories on the different urban shrinkage response strategies will follow including accepting/ consolidating and regrowth. Case studies will be used to back up the theory and practice referenced in this literature, and they will provide real-world examples of the impacts of, and responses to, urban shrinkage. An in-depth look at urban shrinkage in New Zealand will also be provided in this chapter, including small town shrinkage theory specific to New Zealand and examples of national and local responses to the impacts of shrinkage on small towns in New Zealand.

2.2 Globalisation, urbanisation, and other international trends:

Throughout history population centres, of any size, have always fluctuated in prosperity, population and production activities (Reckien & Martinez-Fernandez, 2011). Global trends over the last 200 years have seen the population go from one billion in the early 19th Century to projections of over nine billion by 2050 (Figure 1) (Van Bavel, 2013). The world economy

saw a similar increase over the same time period thanks to the industrial revolution and subsequent developments (Yeung, 2002). Large improvements in healthcare, transportation, education, technology and standards of living have also occurred since the 1800s which has led to global trends of increased life expectancy, lower infant mortality rates and greater access to opportunities such as education and jobs (Figure 2) (Van Bavel, 2013). Another key trend of the last 200 years is the increase of the rural to urban migration rates seen internationally (Vaz *et al.*, 2016). As of 2007, the world's population has become more urban than rural, and that gap has continued to widen to this day (Figure 3) (Vaz *et al.*, 2016).

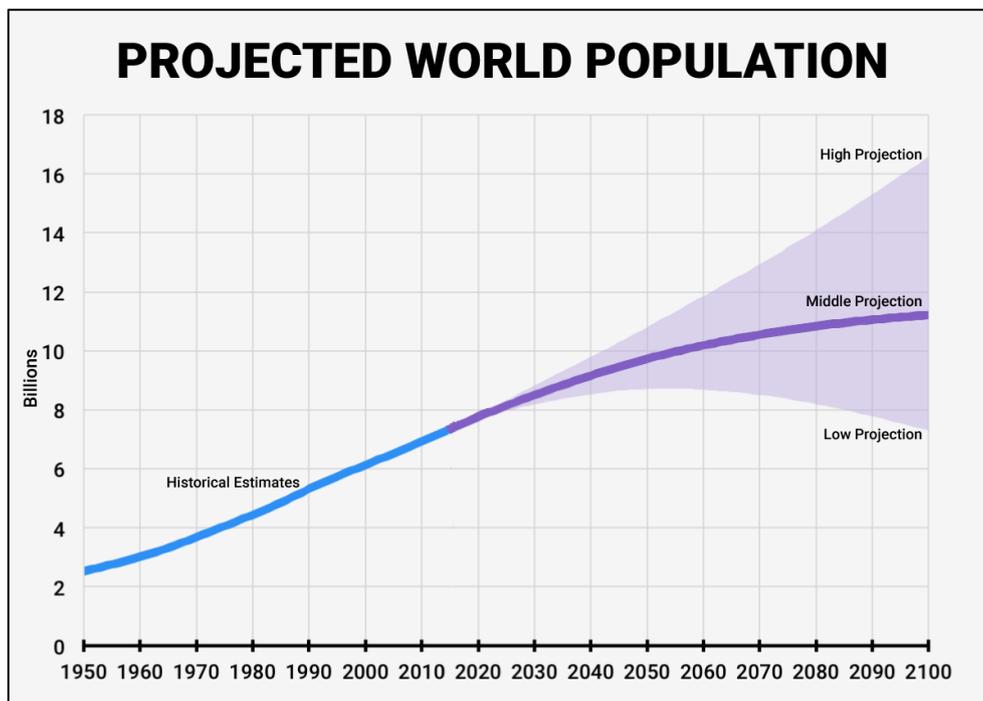


Figure 1: Graph showing the historical estimates and range of future predictions of world population from the United Nations, 'World Populations Prospectus: 2015 Revision'.

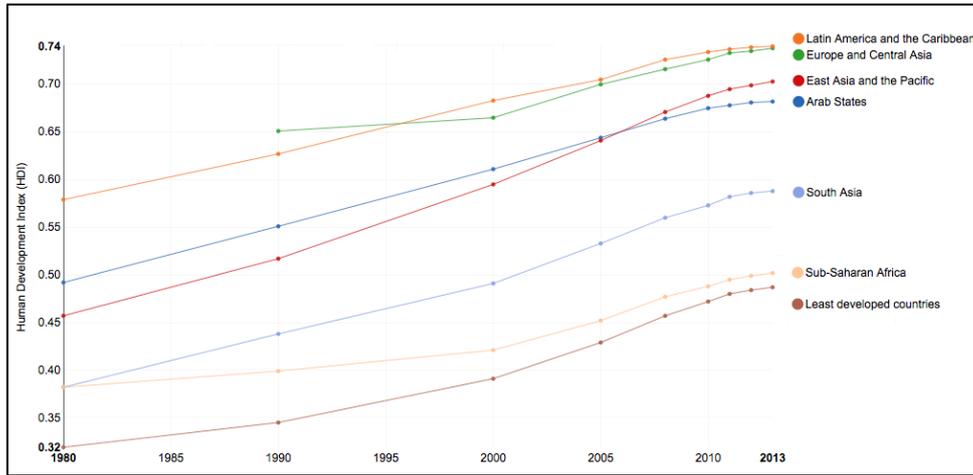


Figure 2: Graph showing Human Development Index (HDI) figures for different world regions from 1980-2013, produced by the United Nations Development Programme, 2014.

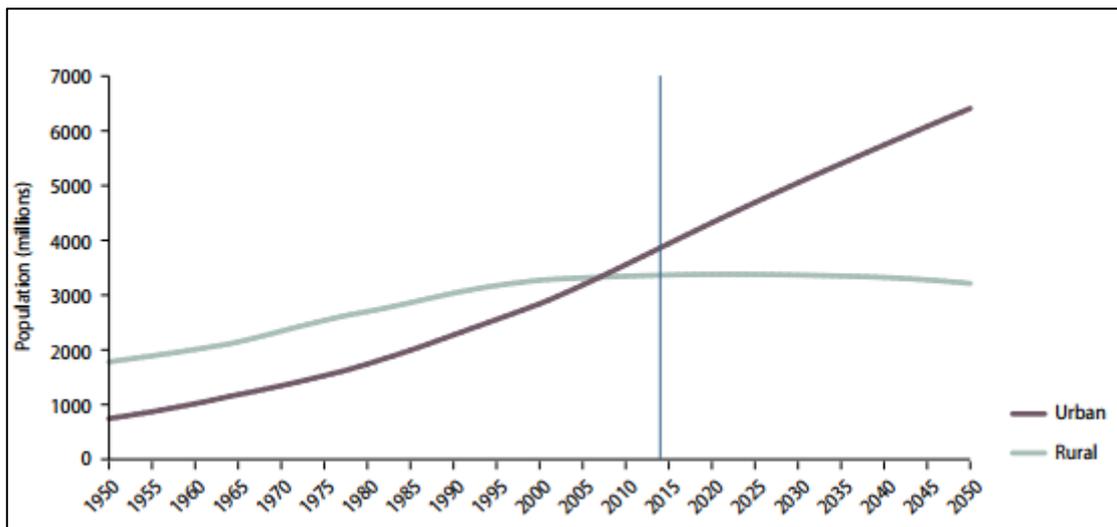


Figure 3: Graph showing the changes in rural and urban populations of the world from 1950 and projected to 2050. Created by the United Nation's 'World Urbanization Prospects', 2014 Revision.

These ongoing trends in the world's economic and demographic structures over the last 200 years will continue into the future, impacting on the issues and situations that the world is going to face. Growing populations from longer life expectancies and lower infant mortality rates have led to a higher demand for goods and services which have put increasing pressure on the world's resources (Van Bavel, 2013). The economy has then found the cheapest option for

mass-producing goods and services which have led the majority of industrial production to move from the Global North to the South, in a process known in the North as deindustrialisation (Shetty & Luescher, 2010). Deindustrialization refers to when an area sees a decline in industrial activity due to a reduction in the capacity to carry on such activities in an economically viable way (Reckien & Martinez-Fernandez, 2011). Figure 2, showing the Human Development Index (HDI) figures of different world regions highlights trends, in areas such as Asia, of increasing human development over the last 30 years (Bowns, 2013; Martinez-Fernandez, Audirac, *et al.*, 2012; Stevens, 2007; Yeung, 2002). With the HDI measurements coming from health statistics, education opportunities and standards of living, it can be a good indication of a country's development status (United Nations Development Programme, 2016). This upward trend in development of certain Global South territories can be attributed to them receiving the benefits of globalisation and deindustrialisation in the Global North due to Global Southern areas being able to produce goods and services more economically than the North (Bowns, 2013; Martinez-Fernandez, Audirac, *et al.*, 2012; Stevens, 2007; Yeung, 2002). While development in new areas of the world does not directly equate to development being reduced in other areas; the global economy operates in a way that seeks the most efficient and economically viable options for obtaining resources which can benefit some regions and be a detriment to others (Yeung, 2002).

The rural to urban migration trends, seen in Figure 3, is also an outcome of these economic and demographic changes over time. The intensification and technological revolution of agriculture throughout the 20th century decreased the labour demand for the industry, which led to more people moving into urban areas to find work (Kneafsey, 2001). Urban centres began to offer large amounts of job opportunities as populations grew throughout the 19th and 20th centuries (Haase *et al.*, 2014). Factories, education centres, the financial sector and large-scale retail outlets were just some examples of employment opportunities that became established in towns and cities as extensive urbanisation occurred in the mid-20th century (Van Bavel, 2013). The rural to urban migration trends can be seen as a smaller scale version of the North to South movement of production as some cities gained population and increased economic development while certain rural areas have seen decline or stagnation in their populations and economies. These growing trends of globalisation, deindustrialisation and urbanisation can bring up the issue of shrinkage in the global context which will be addressed next.

2.3 Shrinkage in the global context:

In contrast to the above processes of expanding cities and globalisation, in some parts of the world, these processes are creating urban shrinkage as opposed to growth. Reckien & Martinez-Fernandez defined urban shrinkage as “urban areas or regions that over the last 40-50 years have experienced population loss, employment decline and/ or protracted economic downturn” (page 1375, 2011). This definition delivers the main drivers of urban shrinkage, namely; urbanisation, globalisation and deindustrialisation (Reckien & Martinez-Fernandez, 2011). These three processes started to become prevalent on a global scale 40-50 years ago, hence why this time range is found in the definition (Reckien & Martinez-Fernandez, 2011). The theory behind urbanisation, globalisation and deindustrialisation have been discussed above, and these processes relate directly to why some urban areas may face impacts from shrinkage.

Shrinkage of population centres is a much less common phenomenon than growth and urbanisation, however, rates of urban shrinkage, especially in first world countries, are increasing (Reckien & Martinez-Fernandez, 2011). During the second half of the twentieth century, shrinkage in urban centres became a more common phenomenon in areas such as North America and Europe (Haase *et al.*, 2014). Many towns and cities in first world countries were established due to a primary production or service output such as manufacturing, having a seaport, or agriculture (Reckien & Martinez-Fernandez, 2011). However, as manufacturing and production became cheaper in regions such as Asia, these towns and cities lost a major part of their economy (Shetty & Luescher, 2010). Urban shrinkage can also be driven by other factors such as the exhaustion of natural resources such as minerals for mining, timber, fish stocks or land arability (Haase *et al.*, 2014; Luescher & Shetty, 2013; Martinez-Fernandez, Audirac, *et al.*, 2012; Pallagst, 2009; Reckien & Martinez-Fernandez, 2011; Weaver *et al.*, 2016). The globalisation processes that have created a strong world economy have had both positive and negative effects on the economies and people in urban areas around the world (Yeung, 2002). Globalisation has allowed the cost of living to decrease while increasing the standard of living for most developed regions of the world through finding the cheapest option of production for goods and services in the global economy (Haase *et al.*, 2014). However, globalisation has also led to deindustrialisation in certain areas due to sources of cheaper production taking away from the capacity of other areas to produce similar goods or services. In cases where a city or region has a singular or very specified area of production, deindustrialisation can severely impact the economy of that area and lead to shrinkage (Luescher & Shetty, 2013).

2.4 Small towns in a global context:

The discussion on globalisation almost always excludes small rural towns as they are often discredited for not playing a big enough part in national or international economies to be considered part of global trends (Bowns, 2013; Hinderink & Titus, 2002). However, it is still important to investigate small towns, how they operate and what impact they have on the global stage. Small towns can be viewed as the embryonic stage of larger towns or cities or, as independent centres that operate outside of larger global or national economies as well as having many other different characterisations (Vaz *et al.*, 2016). Some small towns will develop around single resources such as a mine, others may be founded due to the attributes of their locality, for example being near a river or main travel route and some may develop as a focal point for surrounding properties such as the case of agricultural towns (Carlton-Laney, Edwards & Reid, 1999). Whichever reason there is for their creation, this most often becomes their key characteristic and drives the economy of small towns (Knox & Mayer, 2013). Some of those economies will allow small towns to grow into a larger town or city while other economies may only be able to support a limited or finite population (Knox & Mayer, 2013). Despite their size, small towns can provide very important functions to national or even global economies (Vaz *et al.*, 2016). Small towns around a resource like a mine will allow for workers to live nearby and provide the services that the mine and its people may need, which would allow for a more economically viable process of exploiting the resource (Martinez-Fernandez, Kubo, *et al.*, 2012). Similarly, small towns along land or sea trade routes would allow for ships or trucks to resupply which again would facilitate more efficient economies, and the same would apply to agricultural towns being able to support surrounding farmers (Martinez-Fernandez, Kubo, *et al.*, 2012). These examples show that small towns can provide an important function to larger economies but can also highlight the reverse, that national or global economies can have a large impact on these small towns.

2.5 Catalysts for shrinkage in small towns:

Some small towns may reach a threshold in size and development and will be able to sustain their economy and population indefinitely (Knox & Mayer, 2013). However other towns may operate in cycles of growth and decline over hundreds of years, while others which were in steady rates of growth may be impacted by global, national or localised trends which will push them onto the path to urban shrinkage (Knox & Mayer, 2013). Cities are more robust to changes in the global economy as opposed to small towns as they are more likely to have multiple

industries that allow them to withstand downturns in certain economies (Haase *et al.*, 2014). Small towns, on the other hand, tend to be limited to singular industries so if those industries fail then those towns will begin to face repercussions to their economy and/ or population (Hinderink & Titus, 2002). As discussed above, the impacts of globalisation and urbanisation can be exacerbated on a small town as it represents the opposing side of these forces (Bowns, 2013). Globalisation moves industries towards large-scale manufacturing while urbanisation drives people away from rural settings and into large populated urban centres (Hinderink & Titus, 2002). Although globalisation and urbanisation are the main drivers of small town shrinkage, they do not represent the only catalysts for shrinkage in these areas (Knox & Mayer, 2013). A multitude of localised and contextual forces could create drivers for shrinkage in small towns (Bowns, 2013). For example, a natural disaster could force people out of small town or impact its economy in a way that would create ongoing shrinkage (Hospers, 2013). As stated above, shrinkage can also occur in small towns due to a natural loss of resources such as minerals or food stocks that the town's economy or population relies upon (Bowns, 2013; Carlton-Laney, Edwards & Reid, 1999; Collits, 2000; Daniels, 1989; Knox & Mayer, 2013). Alternatively, shrinkage in small towns can occur from a slowed down or stagnant economy where, over a long time, lower economic opportunities lead to less attraction for people and industries to the town, and this can initiate decline and exponential shrinking (Bowns, 2013). Many catalysts for small town shrinkage can be traced back to globalisation or urbanisation trends, however, there are some other forces that can drive economic decline and/ or population loss in small towns.

2.6 Small town shrinkage:

Urban shrinkage in the context of a small town can take on many forms. A catalyst such as globalisation or a more localised event could cause economic decline or industry collapse but not majorly impact the population of the town, or the reverse could also occur (Markey, Halseth & Manson, 2008). Alternatively, a driver such as rural to urban migration could cause a large number of residents to leave the small town while the economy may remain largely unaltered (Markey, Halseth & Manson, 2008). More often, drivers of urban shrinkage will impact both the economy and the population of a small town and cause steady and exponential decline in both, as the weakened economy causes people to leave the town, and this further weakens the economy which increases the rate of shrinkage over time for the town (Shetty & Luescher, 2010). Shrinkage in small towns can also be characterised by the rate at which it occurs. Some

catalysts for small town shrinkage, such as urbanisation, may only slowly decrease the population of a town over a long period of time as people leave for larger urban centres (Reckien & Martinez-Fernandez, 2011). Small towns can also be impacted by very large and sudden urban shrinkage rates, such as from a natural disaster or factory closure, which may very quickly force a lot of people out of the town and have large impacts on the local economy (Hospers, 2013). Another key characteristic of urban shrinkage that can be found in small towns is the extent of the shrinkage (Reckien & Martinez-Fernandez, 2011). For example, globalisation processes could shut down a specific manufacturer in a small town which could lead to very localised population and economic loss around the area of that business (Luescher & Shetty, 2013). Alternatively, shrinkage in a small town can also be widespread and indiscriminate in who it impacts depending on its source (Luescher & Shetty, 2013). Although the reasons that shrinkage may occur in a small town can be reasonably easy to determine, the actual effect that they will have on the town can be much more difficult to predict (Bowns, 2013). Some small towns are very resilient and may only be slightly impacted by catalysts for shrinkage and be able to bounce back from any economic downturn and/ or population loss (Boschma, 2015; Bowns, 2013; Burayidi, 2013; Davoudi *et al.*, 2012; Wilson, 2014). Resilient small towns that can respond to shrinkage tend to have access to capital to invest in responses, multiple income streams, well-planned community and local authority infrastructure for carrying out responses and, community leaders that are willing to invest time and money into response projects (Barnes & Hayter, 1992; Boschma, 2015; Bowns, 2013; Brumbach, 2007; Burayidi, 2013; Collits, 2000; Hinderink & Titus, 2002; Kenyon & Black, 2001; Wilson, 2014) Other small towns may be very vulnerable to shrinkage as they may be overly reliant on a singular industry which, if negatively impacted, could easily send the town into a downward spiral of urban shrinkage (Reckien & Martinez-Fernandez, 2011). Small towns can also be vulnerable due to their locations, as being too isolated or too close to a more successful town could make them more susceptible to rural to urban migration and affect their ability to retain their population or boost their economy (Bowns, 2013; Carlton-Laney, Edwards & Reid, 1999; Collits, 2000; Daniels, 1989; Hinderink & Titus, 2002; Knox & Mayer, 2013; Reckien & Martinez-Fernandez, 2011)

When small towns shrink there can be numerous negative impacts on the people of the town, the economy of the town, as well as impacts outside of the town (Bowns, 2013). As stated above, catalysts for urban shrinkage can drive people out of small towns as the town decreases in economic opportunities, thus creating an exponential downturn. However, some people will

be unable or unwilling to leave small towns that are shrinking but these people will have to deal with the issues that arise from shrinkage. For example, many of the resources that go into servicing a small town and its people require a certain number of users in order to keep the use of those resources and services economically and practically viable (Hinderink & Titus, 2002). This applies to services such as education, healthcare, infrastructure upkeep and certain national government funding (Hospers & Reverda, 2015). Schools with declining student rolls can struggle to provide employment, resources and eventually remaining open at all. Clinics, hospitals, and specialist healthcare centres require a certain number of patients in order to remain economically viable (Hospers & Reverda, 2015). The upkeep of certain infrastructure in a small shrinking town may struggle to be maintained as the local rates that go towards funding these projects will decrease with the population loss caused by shrinkage (Hospers, 2013). Most national government spending in developed countries is budgeted by allocating certain funds to locations based on their population size, so when a town shrinks in population, it risks a cut to any national government funding it may be receiving (Hospers & Reverda, 2015). These outcomes of shrinkage in small towns coupled with the associated economic decline can severely impact on the opportunities and quality of life of the residents (Bowns, 2013). There is a need for some form of national and local response when a small town begins to be impacted by shrinkage or else the outcomes created from urban shrinkage will start to overwhelm the people of the town and its economy and may have wider regional and national outcomes (Markey, Halseth & Manson, 2008).

2.7 Global theory on responses to shrinkage:

Whilst academic literature on urban shrinkage and its causes and effects, has been around for a relatively long time, literature on effective responses to urban shrinkage, especially for small towns, is a lot less developed (Hospers, 2013; Luescher & Shetty, 2013; Martinez-Fernandez, Kubo, *et al.*, 2012; Shetty & Luescher, 2010). Two of the key response strategies for urban shrinkage that have been highlighted in recent literature are regrowth strategies and accepting strategies (Hospers, 2013; Luescher & Shetty, 2013; Shetty & Luescher, 2010). Regrowth strategies include those that try reverse urban shrinkage and bring back the people and the economy to areas impacted by urban shrinkage (Daniels, 1989). Accepting or smart decline strategies, differ from regrowth in that they accept urban shrinkage and try to reconsolidate and adapt to the new form and function of the town (Hummel, 2015). The differing strategies of responses to shrinkage in small towns can also be categorised as either investments in

promotion and growth of new human and economic capital or else investments in the current human and economic capital in the town in order to retain them in the town and improve the wellbeing and quality of life of the current residents (Bowns, 2013; Carlton-Laney, Edwards & Reid, 1999; Collits, 2000; Daniels, 1989; McMillan, 2015a, b; Wiechmann, 2008; Wiechmann & Pallagst, 2012). The community versus the local authority response to shrinkage is also worth reviewing. This section of the literature review will examine the relevant literature for the theory and practice of responses to urban shrinkage and determine the effectiveness of each strategy.

2.8 Regrowth strategies as a response to shrinkage:

A common response to shrinkage in a small town would be to try and oppose the shrinkage with regrowth strategies aimed at restarting the economy and bringing people back into the town (Hospers, 2013). Regrowth strategies can take on many different forms and are often case specific for a small town that is shrinking (Bowns, 2013). In trying to restart a shrinking economy, a small town may try to invest in a failing industry or promote new developments in the town (Hospers, 2013). However, a common criticism of regrowth strategies is that they fail to recognise that shrinkage is occurring and thus do not address all of the issues related to shrinkage in small towns (Luescher & Shetty, 2013). Regrowth strategies that do not accept that urban shrinkage is occurring will often be misguided in the attempts to counteract the impacts of urban shrinkage and can misuse vital resources for projects that are unlikely to succeed or have a beneficial impact (Bowns, 2013). Europe has multiple examples of failed regrowth attempts (Hospers & Reverda, 2015). Small towns around Lisbon, eastern Germany and Warsaw have invested large amounts of money in rebranding and tax incentives to try and retain or bring back industry into small towns (Hospers, 2013). However, most of these activities have been costly exercises without much reward generated in terms of counteracting urban shrinkage (Hospers, 2013). Some towns in East Germany have managed to increase their population slightly through regrowth strategies, however, these people have mostly come from the rural regions around the towns and thus not contributed greatly to the population of the towns (Hospers, 2013). Regrowth strategies tend only to be effective if the impact from urban shrinkage is marginal or limited for the small town and so can be more easily counteracted from a regrowth style response (Luescher & Shetty, 2013).

2.9 Accepting strategies as a response to shrinkage:

A response to urban shrinkage that has risen to prominence in the literature in the 21st century is the accepting strategy which is linked to smart decline and right-sizing (Hummel, 2015). Right-sizing, as a technique to fight against the negative impacts of urban shrinkage, seeks to accept that shrinkage is occurring and work with it to reconsolidate the people and resources of a town to the new limits set by urban shrinkage (Hospers, 2013; Hummel, 2015). The different titles for the accepting strategy, found in the literature, cover the key characteristic of the strategy which is accepting that shrinkage is occurring and planning against it by consolidating the population and economy of the town and trying to better the wellbeing and quality of life for the current residents (Hospers & Reverda, 2015; Wiechmann & Pallagst, 2012). Accepting strategies are viewed as a more favourable strategy to combat urban shrinkage as opposed to regrowth, because these strategies accept the reality of shrinkage which allows it to respond more comprehensively (Hospers, 2013; Hospers & Reverda, 2015; Wiechmann, 2008; Wiechmann & Pallagst, 2012). Shrinking towns in the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and Germany have begun to accept they are declining and have begun to plan to stabilise their population and economy rather than try to regrow it (Hospers, 2013). One effective accepting strategy includes a focus on keeping people in the town rather than trying to bring new people in (Boschma, 2015; Bowns, 2013; Burayidi, 2013; Knox & Mayer, 2013; McMillan, 2015a, b; Shetty & Luescher, 2010; Wood, 2017). This is achieved by trying to increase the quality of life for people in the town with simple developments that target the benefits of staying in the town (Hospers, 2013). It is important for small towns that are undertaking accepting strategies to use and re-use what they have rather than build more or use more resources, which would not be economically feasible for the town (Hospers & Reverda, 2015). Accepting strategies also tend to involve more community participation as opposed to regrowth strategies as the goals of accepting and responding to shrinkage must align with the values and needs of the current residents (Hospers, 2013). Although accepting strategies to combat urban shrinkage have a lot of positive outcomes, the reason they are not more widely used is that they involve the acceptance of decline of a town which can be difficult for local authorities to do (Hospers & Reverda, 2015). However, decline and urban shrinkage do not have to be viewed as a failure of a town or its local authority but rather as part of a natural cycle or global trend that needs to be confronted (Hummel, 2015).

2.10 The context of responses to shrinkage in a small town:

When a small town confronts the negative impacts that urban shrinkage may be having on it, it needs to consider the context of its situation in order to respond most effectively to the issues (Luescher & Shetty, 2013). A response can come from the local authority but also by the community of the town (Wilson, 2014). Communities are able to do a lot independently of local authorities but they can most importantly express their values and ideals for the town which would allow a more democratic and reasoned response to the urban shrinkage (Markey, Halseth & Manson, 2008). Responses, be it regrowth or right-sizing, can either come from the top-down, ground-up or both (Rogers, 2005). Top-down responses usually take the form of plans or policy created by local or national authorities that try to combat urban shrinkage by regulating people and/ or businesses (Sagan & Grabkowska, 2012). Top-down responses can be effective against urban shrinkage as they can put down strong regulations or allow for physical developments that could stop or slow down shrinkage trends in a small town (Sagan & Grabkowska, 2012). For example, Sagan & Grabkowska found in their 2012 study that the town of Gdańsk in Poland implemented a number of plans to try and deal with the vacant land caused by urban shrinkage in their town. Whilst the plans were successful in limiting the impact that the vacant spaces were having on the town, the plans had little input from the community and the way the plans were carried out caused increased social disintegration and exclusion. This lack of social cohesion is one of the main problems with top-down strategies (Sagan & Grabkowska, 2012). Whilst top-down plans can be useful for their widespread implementation they can often be short-sighted as they do not tend to have meaningful community consultation and are often growth instead of consolidation focussed (Sagan & Grabkowska, 2012).

Bottom-up plans have a similar balance of good and bad qualities when it comes to responding to shrinkage issues in small towns (Shetty & Luescher, 2010). Initiatives coming from the community tend to be more geared towards the real issues caused by shrinkage that are being faced by the residents of a town (Sagan & Grabkowska, 2012). Ground-up responses to shrinkage can allow for social and demographic regeneration during decline which is an area often overlooked by top-down plans (Sagan & Grabkowska, 2012). Shrinkage's impact on community identity and spirit is often disregarded but some ground-up plans target these areas as a form of response in order to improve community wellbeing and quality of life (Barnes & Hayter, 1992; Brumbach, 2007; Carlton-Laney, Edwards & Reid, 1999; McMillan, 2015b; Wilson, 2014). Where some ground-up plans falter is when it comes to funding and governance for projects such as physical developments or large-scale events (Sagan & Grabkowska, 2012).

This is when leadership within the community plays an important role. Outside of local or national governing bodies, the role of individuals or a core group of leaders within a community can be a vital aspect of successful responses to small town shrinkage (Brumbach, 2007; Sorensen & Epps, 1996). Whilst successful bottom-up responses to small town shrinkage are characterised by the collaboration and consultation among the majority of the community, it often comes down to individuals or a core group of people to lead the project through its planning and development stages (Barnes & Hayter, 1992; Brumbach, 2007; O'Toole & Burdess, 2004; Sorensen & Epps, 1996; Wilson, 2014). Community leadership can take on many forms including individuals that create plans to respond to shrinkage on their own or a community board or committee that, within a core group of individuals, plan and carry out the projects to respond to the negative impacts of shrinkage (Brumbach, 2007; Daniels, 1989; Sorensen & Epps, 1996).

The best strategy appears to be a mixture of a top-down and ground-up approach where thorough plans and policies are made through significant community consultation to create both physical and social developments that will limit the impacts of shrinkage on both the local authority and the residents (Sagan & Grabkowska, 2012). Institutions such as community boards, promotion groups and EDA's can play important roles in this mixture of top-down and bottom-up responses to shrinkage (Barnes & Hayter, 1992; Bowns, 2013; Brumbach, 2007; Haase *et al.*, 2014; Sorensen & Epps, 1996). These groups can facilitate interactions between the local authority and the community and act as less formal leadership for planning and advice as opposed to a local authority (Barnes & Hayter, 1992; Bowns, 2013; Brumbach, 2007; Haase *et al.*, 2014; Sorensen & Epps, 1996). Clear and effective communication between local authorities and small town communities is essential for fair and successful responses to shrinkage (Bowns, 2013; Hospers, 2013; Luescher & Shetty, 2013).

2.11 The New Zealand context and theoretical framework of shrinkage in small towns:

2.11.1 Context:

New Zealand and its small towns have been subject to many of the catalysts of shrinkage outlined above including globalisation and urbanisation (Conradson & Pawson, 1997; Conradson & Pawson, 2009; Nel, 2015; Neville & Rowe, 2015; Rutledge *et al.*, 2008; Sampson, 2005; Scott & Pawson, 1999; Wilson, 1995; Wood, 2017). The regions of New

Zealand were also impacted by neoliberal reforms in the 1980s which saw the selling of state-owned assets causing a loss of jobs, affecting mainly primary industries in the regions that relied on these government industries (Nel, 2015). Although there has been recovery since the reforms, a disparity between the regions across the country has remained (Nel, 2015). Globalisation and urbanisation have been taking place on the international, national, and local level for New Zealand for many decades and the small towns within the country have been the most vulnerable to these processes (Conradson & Pawson, 1997; Conradson & Pawson, 2009; Nel, 2015; Rutledge *et al.*, 2008; Wilson, 1995; Wood, 2017). Some of New Zealand's manufacturing industries such as clothing, technology and apparel have moved to larger overseas markets such as Asia where production is cheaper (Stevens, 2007). However, this same process has been happening within New Zealand as industries have moved from regional and rural centres to cities where there are more opportunities for growth through labour and access to resources (Martinez-Fernandez, Audirac, *et al.*, 2012; Pallagst, 2009; Stevens, 2007; Yeung, 2002). Examples of this can be seen in the case study town of Lawrence with the manufacturing company that left the town for Dunedin in 2013 due to the business growing too big for the resources and labour that Lawrence could offer. Similar cases in New Zealand are also found in Tuatapere, the West Coast of the South Island and Tirau who have lost industries due to national-level globalisation (Conradson & Pawson, 1997; Gilroy, 2013; Panelli, Stolte & Bedford, 2003).

Urbanisation has also been a defining factor of small town shrinkage in New Zealand (Conradson & Pawson, 1997; McMillan, 2015a, b; Nel, 2015; Rutledge *et al.*, 2008; Scott & Pawson, 1999; Wood, 2017). Rural to urban migration has been a growing phenomenon in New Zealand, and this process is exacerbated in the South Island of New Zealand due to its small population compared to the North Island (Rutledge *et al.*, 2008; Wood, 2017). As of June 2017, 77% of New Zealand's population live in the North Island which means that the whole of the South Island represents less than one quarter of New Zealand's population which equates to roughly 1.1 million people which is less than the total population of Auckland alone (Statistics New Zealand, 2017). These statistics show that there can be large discrepancies between the success and development of large and small urban centres across the country (Conradson & Pawson, 2009; Nel, 2015; Rutledge *et al.*, 2008; Scott & Pawson, 1999; Wood, 2017). Small towns in New Zealand have been particularly vulnerable to these processes due to the low levels of employment and service opportunities they provide compared to larger

towns and cities around the country (Conradson & Pawson, 1997; McMillan, 2015a, b; Wood, 2017).

2.11.2 The responses to small town shrinkage in New Zealand:

Small towns around New Zealand have employed a multitude of strategies to try and combat shrinkage and its impacts on populations and the economy (Conradson & Pawson, 1997; Conradson & Pawson, 2009; Gilroy, 2013; McMillan, 2015a, b; Nel & Stevenson, 2012; Panelli, Stolte & Bedford, 2003; Rutledge *et al.*, 2008; Wood, 2017). Responses to shrinkage in small towns in New Zealand can be driven by the central government, local authorities or the community or organisations within the town itself (McMillan, 2015a, b; Nel, 2015; Nel & Stevenson, 2012; Rutledge *et al.*, 2008; Wood, 2017). Central government responses can be provided through investment in services, infrastructure and industries within small towns (Wood, 2017). Local authority support in responses to shrinkage can include funding through rate increasing loans as well as planning and development services (McMillan, 2015a, b; Rutledge *et al.*, 2008). Government level responses tend to be bound by national and local budgets and are developed under legislation such as the Resource Management Act (RMA) 1991, the Local Government Act (LGA) 2002 or district/ long term, annual plans and strategies (McMillan, 2015a, b; Rutledge *et al.*, 2008; Wood, 2017). Community-level responses are often driven by community leaders or organisations such as promotions groups or local community boards (McMillan, 2015a, b; Nel & Stevenson, 2012). Community responses in New Zealand tend to be characterised by ‘can do’ and ‘do it yourself’ attitudes that are found in small towns with strong community spirits and relationships (Gilroy, 2013; McMillan, 2015a, b; Panelli, Stolte & Bedford, 2003; Rutledge *et al.*, 2008). Some of the strategies that have been employed by small towns include capitalising on the remaining strengths to become more sustainable, reinventions of their economies and, investment into new or previous strong industries and services (McMillan, 2015a, b; Nel & Stevenson, 2012; Panelli, Stolte & Bedford, 2003).

Some small towns that suffered from rural to urban migration or relied too heavily on a single industry that then collapsed have had to reassess how the demographics and the economy of the town can continue to function (McMillan, 2015a, b; Nel, 2015; Nel & Stevenson, 2012). Some towns in New Zealand such as Riccarton and Fielding have used the threats of shrinkage to review the wider roles they play in economies and populations of nearby towns and cities (Nel & Stevenson, 2012). These towns have taken advantage of their locations to transition

from independent settlements with their own economies and populations into dormitory towns/suburbs for nearby, more successful, towns and cities which has allowed them to reduce and sometimes reverse the effects of shrinkage (Nel & Stevenson, 2012). Some other towns have exploited their ageing populations or attraction from older generations to establish themselves as retirement towns. Greytown and areas in the Coromandel have capitalised on their qualities that attract retirees, and this has allowed these towns to flourish by focussing on this one key demographic (McMillan, 2015a, b; Nel & Stevenson, 2012). Tourism is one of the fastest growing industries in New Zealand and some small towns such as Arrowtown and Wanaka have capitalised on their previously relatively limited tourism economies to develop them into the key industries of the town (Nel & Stevenson, 2012).

Other towns have undergone complete reinventions in order to try and combat shrinkage. Reinvention allows small towns to move away from the characteristics that can or has led to them suffering from shrinkage and develop new economies that may allow them to reduce or reverse the impacts of shrinkage (Panelli, Stolte & Bedford, 2003). Examples of this include Kaikoura that transformed from a largely fishing-based economy to a centre for tourism thanks to whale-watching (Nel & Stevenson, 2012). Similar reinventions towards tourism have occurred in Oamaru, Hokitika and Tirau (Nel & Stevenson, 2012; Panelli, Stolte & Bedford, 2003). Some towns in New Zealand have reinvented themselves to fit more sustainable models such as the 'slow city' of Matakana or transition towns including Thames, Port Chalmers and Motueka (McMillan, 2015a, b; Nel & Stevenson, 2012; Rutledge *et al.*, 2008).

One of the other key responses to shrinkage seen in New Zealand small towns is an investment into the industries of a town that could provide a boost to faltering economies or develop new ones (Nel & Stevenson, 2012; Rutledge *et al.*, 2008). Central government investment can occur through services they provide to small towns such as schooling which can help with employment in small towns and can be a vital resource for isolated communities such as Tapanui (McMillan, 2015a, b; Nel & Stevenson, 2012). The Central government can also place new services in small towns in order to provide a boost to their economy as was seen in the installation of the new prison near Milton (Nel & Stevenson, 2012). Other towns may see investment in order to strengthen or revive key industries in the town. This could be seen in the dairy industries in Edendale and Hokitika which allowed these towns to grow the factories in the town to meet global demands (Nel & Stevenson, 2012). Investment in community wellbeing and quality of life is also an important response to small town shrinkage in New Zealand and these often take the form of community projects that target improvements to

facilities and services used by the community members (McMillan, 2015a, b). Investment into small towns that target growth opportunities and vital services for small towns has been shown to be an effective response strategy to shrinkage in New Zealand (McMillan, 2015a, b; Nel, 2015; Nel & Stevenson, 2012; Rutledge *et al.*, 2008).

2.12 Summary:

This chapter has outlined the contemporary theoretical framework regarding the drivers of shrinkage, its impacts, how different groups can respond and the context of these factors in New Zealand. The context of small towns and the role they play in national and international frameworks were also detailed in this chapter. Globalisation, urbanisation, and deindustrialisation have been identified as some of the key international drivers of shrinkage on both large and small urban centres. These processes have been shown to impact mostly developed towns and cities in the Global North by limiting their industries such as manufacturing through economic trends that source the cheapest production as well as reducing populations due to lack of employment opportunities and rural to urban migration trends. Other instigators of shrinkage unrelated to global trends such as natural disasters and drying up of resources such as minerals to mine were also found in the literature. Responses to shrinkage have been shown to vary both internationally and nationally, however, response strategies can generally be categorised as either growth oriented or accepting/ consolidating oriented. Some growth strategies were found to be successful in strengthening, and re-energising economies and populations while others had more negative consequences and were detrimental to the economy and community wellbeing of towns. Accepting strategies were viewed more favourably than growth strategies due to their realistic perspective of the issues surrounding shrinkage and their ability to better develop alongside community expectations and needs. The literature from New Zealand showed that the country is dealing with issues of a lack of growth and opportunities within some of the small towns that make up its regions. The responses from the central government, local authority and communities also display a range of strategies that are attempting to decrease the negative impacts of shrinkage.

The research for this thesis will fit well within the theoretical framework outlined in this chapter as it will cover the key elements that characterise the internal and external factors that make up small town shrinkage in New Zealand. The literature covered in this chapter will provide a solid basis of theory and real-world examples from which to compare and contrast the findings of this research. However, this research will also add to the current academic literature by focusing on unique case studies of small town shrinkage and analysing the causes, impacts and

responses to shrinkage in these areas which could provide new insights into how these processes operate. This will provide key findings for both international and national theory on small town shrinkage and could go towards helping understand the topic and how to prevent its negative impacts on the economies and populations of small towns.

3. Methodology

3.1 Introduction:

This chapter will outline the methods used in this research. The research design will be laid out first including the key questions of the research and the approaches taken to answer those questions. Due to the complex and distinctly human elements of this research, a qualitative/interpretive approach was chosen which allowed for detailed analysis of the data that was collected. The justification and credibility of this approach will also be addressed in this chapter. Also discussed in this chapter is the reasoning and considerations of the research in regard to the case study and the wider contextual considerations used to define the key research problem. Ethical and positionality considerations relating to this research are then detailed. The precise approaches of data collection including the literature review, observations, key informant interviews, and document analysis will also be outlined. The limitations of the methods employed for this research will be highlighted at the end of this chapter.

3.2 Research Design:

The design of the research carried out for this thesis is based on the key questions asked to discover the impacts and responses to shrinkage in the Clutha District. The specific research questions for this study were:

1. What are the figures of population loss and economic change in the Clutha District and specifically in the case study towns (Kaitangata and Lawrence)?
2. What has been the impact on individuals, communities, and the Clutha District Council from shrinkage in the population and/ or economy?
3. How have these groups responded to the impacts from shrinkage?
4. Have these methods been successful in terms of reducing the negative impacts of shrinkage on people and the towns within the Clutha District?
5. Do the responses to shrinkage in the Clutha District reinforce or counteract what is seen in contemporary literature?

To answer these questions, a range of methods were employed that aimed to use multiple sources in order to find credible and unbiased results. Drawing on diverse sources of

information for this research enabled the findings to be triangulated. Triangulation is a technique of data collection that uses various sources in order to verify accurate information (Marshall & Rossman, 2014). If only one source of information is used to collect data, then it can be difficult to state that that information is true. Producing true and accurate information is a vital part of providing meaningful and distinguished research. In order to avoid biased and unverified information from a single source, multiple sources were used to authenticate information collected throughout the research process. For example, if a key informant brought up information about a response strategy to shrinkage, this information was corroborated through different key informants, document analysis or observations. Once the data was collected and triangulated it was analysed, and key conclusions were drawn.

3.3 Qualitative and Interpretivist Approach:

Qualitative research is one of the two fundamental techniques, alongside quantitative research, for carrying out research. A qualitative approach is taken to research when the topic of study is one with unmeasurable results and complex relationships and ideas (Marshall & Rossman, 2014). Qualitative research does not deal with figures but rather with understandings of intricate and quintessentially human issues. Qualitative research takes place in a real-world, human level environment as opposed to the often simulated or theoretical world of quantitative study (Patton, 2005). The information collected from qualitative research is often made up of people's subjective opinions and actions as well as observations of events which take place in the human environment (Marshall & Rossman, 2014). Qualitative research, therefore, entails active and personal participation by the subjects of the study in order to collect and interpret their views. By the nature of qualitative research, the range of the study must be extensive so as to include the wider context of the issue and all of the individual connections that make up a complicated research topic (Patton, 2005).

This research undertook a qualitative approach, as opposed to a quantitative approach, as it allowed for the study of the issue of shrinkage in small towns from a holistic viewpoint. As it is difficult and more often inappropriate to simply categorise people's opinions and relationships into figures and tables and since this research is specifically focussed on such issues, the qualitative approach was chosen as the most apposite. This is one of the many benefits of the qualitative approach for research such as this. A quantitative approach for this research would likely result in a disassociation with the topic of the issue which is

fundamentally a human one with many real impacts on the people of the case study towns. Maintaining a recognition of the human perspective is an essential part of qualitative research (Flick, 2014). However, this style of investigation can introduce issues such as bias and misinformation if not properly vetted which is why triangulation was also introduced as a method in this research. Other limitations and issues with the qualitative method of research will be addressed at the end of this chapter.

The specific data collection techniques which adhered to the qualitative approach included key informant interviews, observations, and document analysis. These techniques allowed for an understanding of the wider issues impacting on the topic of shrinkage of small towns in the Clutha District as well as the collection of multiple personalised accounts of the impacts and responses to shrinkage in the small towns of Kaitangata and Lawrence. The qualitative approach also informed the data analysis phase of this research by guiding the interpretation process in order to provide for an effective critique of the findings from the two towns. Overall, the qualitative approach was the most appropriate method for this research due to its complex human elements and extensive scope.

Within the qualitative approach, an interpretivist viewpoint will also be a part of this research. Interpretivism is the research approach that uses the research's interpretation of the data as the method of recording and analysing that data (Doolin & McLeod, 2005). The interpretivist approach works within the qualitative method of research as this method deals with people's individual responses and opinions to phenomena in the human world which implicitly cannot be defined by quantitative methods (Goldkuhl, 2012). Interpretivist methods of research are often characterised by unstructured interviews and observations as these techniques openly bring forward individual's opinions on topics and interpretations of events or locations. Interpretivism allows for the display of complex and unique human ideas and experiences that are associated with a topic such as small town shrinkage.

3.4 Ethical Considerations:

For this research, there were certain ethical considerations that needed to be addressed before data collection could be carried out. Ethical issues are aspects of the research process which could pose moral or professional dilemmas for people involved in the research. The research topic of this study had few ethical considerations due to it being relatively uncontroversial however there were still some deliberations that needed to be understood before undertaking

primary data collection such as key informant interviews and observations. Ethical approval for the research was secured before interviews commenced.

The key ethical considerations for this research were the need to ensure the anonymity of the key informants and the professionalism of the interviewer. To maintain the anonymity of the key informants interviewed as part of this research, no names are placed in this document, and instead, general titles or descriptions of the person's involvement in the town are given to distinguish that person's opinions or quotes. Recordings of interviews were deleted upon the completion of transcription, and only the researcher and supervisor had access to the recordings before that time. As for maintaining professionalism throughout the research process, key informants were kept well informed of the focus of this research and the types of questions that they would be asked (Appendix 1). As part of the first contact with each key informant, an information sheet (Appendix 2) was attached so that the key informants were well aware of the scope and context of the research. Before taking part in a recorded interview, key informants were asked to sign a consent form (Appendix 2) stating that they were willing to take part in an interview and that they could withdraw from the interview at any time with no detriment to themselves. Before the interview started, key informants were reassured that their anonymity would be protected and were asked if they were comfortable to be recorded. All of these considerations were submitted to the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee for approval before data collection commenced (Appendix 3).

3.5 Positionality:

When conducting research, it is important to understand the position of the researcher in regard to their characteristics and the connection to the subject matter (Smith & Bowers-Brown, 2010). A research topic may be chosen due to the researcher having a specific interest in it which can also come with predetermined opinions and biases on that topic (Smith & Bowers-Brown, 2010). Consequently, there is the chance that the information gained during the research process could be presented in a way that only fits into the researcher's views on the topic. To avoid bias entering into this research, the researcher maintained an impartial position during data collection to ensure that there was no predetermined outcome embedded in the research process.

To make the intentions of the topic of this research clear, the researcher is completing this thesis as part of the Master of Planning course at the University of Otago. The researcher has

cultivated an interest in urban development, shrinkage, and small towns throughout their time at University and approached their supervisor with the topic. The researcher's supervisor was the one who suggested the Clutha District for a case study, and from this area, the towns of Kaitangata and Lawrence were chosen. The researcher has no previous connection to any of these areas apart from driving through them on occasion. The researcher entered into the study with an open mind and no prejudices about the Clutha District or the towns within it. The researcher positioned themselves in this research as an outside observer and recorder of information and events which have occurred in Kaitangata and Lawrence, who will then use those observations and information to inform the analysis and critique of this thesis.

3.6 Literature Review:

Literature reviews provide an up to date understanding of the current knowledge, gaps in information and strategies of previous studies (Marshall & Rossman, 2014). This makes literature reviews a key aspect of the foundation of an effective piece of research into a topic. A literature review can provide the reasoning for the research to take place by showing where further study could carry on from where other studies left off or fill in a gap from a lack of research (Smith & Bowers-Brown, 2010). The literature review feeds into multiple parts of this research including informing the research questions, the methods used to conduct the research, and, the techniques of analysing the results.

The qualitative approach which characterises this research also influenced the literature review of this study. A qualitative approach means that the literature review wasn't necessarily informed by previous studies on the same topic with similar research threads as is often the case with quantitative literature reviews (Flick, 2014). Instead, the literature review for this research used contemporary research to inform the general scope, context, themes, and style of this research. Although there was literature on small town shrinkage in both a global and national context, there was none specifically for the Clutha District and the towns of Kaitangata and Lawrence which means that the literature could only go so far in informing this research.

In this current study, the literature review that was carried out allowed for the research problem to be identified alongside its context and scope. The literature review identified the key themes of; global drivers of shrinkage, the role of small towns in the global context, small town impacts from shrinkage, responses to shrinkage and the New Zealand context of shrinkage. These themes were drawn out from the research questions, arguments found in the literature and the

qualitative/ interpretive approach of this research. The literature review themes also went on to inform the structure of the key informant questions and other methods of data collection for this research.

3.7 Observations:

Observations can play many different roles in the research process. They can act as an introduction to a location in order to understand the processes involved at a location before researching those processes further (Denzin, 1973). Observations can also serve as a way of triangulating information gained from another source by viewing that process in the real world to see if it has the characteristics that were described by the source (Marshall & Rossman, 2014). Spontaneous or previously unrecorded phenomena can also be observed which may not have originally been contemplated in the research (Marshall & Rossman, 2014). The researcher is an outside element to the processes they are observing and thus retains an interpretive viewpoint in their research. Observations should not take the part of the only source of data collection, but it is a very effective complementary tool to other forms of data collection such as key informant interviews and document analysis (Flick, 2014).

For this research, observations occurred in both towns on multiple different days and in different formats. The first lot of observations occurred in February of 2017 when both towns were observed thoroughly for the first time. Before this time, the researcher had never been to Kaitangata and had only on occasion travelled through Lawrence without taking much notice of the town. This first look at the towns was a way of not just getting first impressions but also being able to interpret how a visitor such as a tourist or potential homebuyer may also view the town upon their first viewing. Observation recordings of this first visit consisted of taking very simple notes of first impressions including the general feel of the town, notes on the housing stock quality and remarks on the number of people seen around the town.

Observations of both towns continued throughout the year as the researcher went to Kaitangata and Lawrence to carry out key informant interviews. In total, at least three observation exercises were carried out in each town. Later observation techniques included taking photographs (Figure 4 and Figure 5), notes on the amount of business occurring in the town, viewings of projects set up to respond to shrinkage and key town landmark observations. As the year progressed, the researcher was also able to use observations as a triangulation tool for information collected from key informants and document analyses. Other techniques, such as

a goals achievement matrix which can complement observations, were not used as part of this research as these often take on a more quantitative quality which was not part of the approach of this research. Observations proved to be an effective counterpart to the rest of the methods used in the research and aided in forming a full picture of both case study towns.



Figure 4: Photo of the main street of Kaitangata (personal collection)



Figure 5: Photo of the main street of Lawrence (personal collection)

3.8 Key Informant Interviews:

Key informant interviews are a chance to interview people who are experts or directly involved in the topic of a piece of research (Flick, 2014). Interviews give the opportunity to gain knowledge on the ground level and everyday processes that make up a topic of research which is often simply summarised or glossed over by higher level documents or recounts (Marshall & Rossman, 2014). It is important for the interviewer to be able to get all of the necessary information from a range of key informants, representing the spectrum of local viewpoints, in a relaxed and professional manner (Flick, 2014). An effective strategy for successful interviews is to have a semi-structured format (Marshall & Rossman, 2014). A semi-structured interview allows for an open conversation that is guided by the key research questions but can also lead to new topics that may not have otherwise been brought up from a more stringently formatted interview (Patton, 2005). Even amongst participants with similar involvement in a topic, semi-structured interview questions are more likely to bring up different information due to the open format of the questioning (Smith & Bowers-Brown, 2010). Semi-structured interviews also allow people to provide unique insight into areas which they have the most information on, which can create efficient and effective use of time during the interview. It is still important to

maintain some structure to the interviews to make sure that all relevant research questions are answered from each informant. Key informant interviews will often form the backbone of qualitative/ interpretive research methods as they are the simplest way of understanding the true human perspective on an issue from the people directly involved (Goldkuhl, 2012).

Key informant interviews formed an integral part of this research. The small size of the communities, relative conciseness of the research questions and composition of the communities made key informant interviews the most appropriate key data collection method for this study. The small size of the communities also meant it was more efficient to interview key expert members of the towns as opposed to other techniques such as public surveys. The topic of shrinkage in small towns generally encompasses economic and population issues which allowed for a range of questions that could be tailored towards certain key informants, for example, local business owners or community board members. The individuals that made up the key informants of this research were all important role players either in the district as a whole or in the individual case study towns of this research and targeting these people for interviews resulted in the clearest and most well-informed knowledge being gathered.

The key themes of the questions for the key informants included; recent changes to the economy or population of the towns, the current state of education and healthcare facilities in the town, drivers of change, responses to shrinkage, development in the district, potential areas or ideas for growth and, the future prospects of both towns. Although not every key informant could give in-depth answers to all of these topics, each offered their own expertise and knowledge on specific parts of this study. Themes and specific questions were also adapted throughout the research process as the interviews took place over several months, so the knowledge and context of research issues were changed where needed between interviews. Information gained from individual key informant interviews was triangulated through other interviewees, document analysis and observations.

As discussed earlier, the interviews took on a semi-structured approach and were audio recorded for later transcription. Interview times ranged from 15 to 90 minutes and were all conducted in person with times and locations established via e-mail or telephone. Alongside the researcher and the key informant, the supervisor of this research and another lecturer also attended some interviews, both of whom had interests in the area of research. Apart from the interview with Clutha Development, which included two informants, all other interviews were with only one key informant each.

Key informants were recruited through initial contacts with the Clutha District Council and Clutha Development. These initial contacts came about through previous research by the supervisor of this research, and they established a very concise background to the district as a whole and their roles in administrating local government affairs in Kaitangata and Lawrence. The community support and development advisor at the Clutha District Council and the chief executive and district marketing manager at Clutha Development were interviewed first, and from both of these interviews, contacts were gained for key community members in both Kaitangata and Lawrence. In the months following these first interviews, key informants from Kaitangata and Lawrence were contacted and interviewed. These key informants included a member of the Promotions group in Kaitangata, Lawrence community board members, local business owners and the Tuapeka-Lawrence community health centre manager (Appendix 4). Each informant gave very specialised information that could not have been gained from any other source or research method. As stated previously, each interview was recorded and then transcribed verbatim.

3.9 Document Analysis:

An analysis of key documents relating to a research topic will often provide a context and framework for the study (Patton, 2005). Key documents offer a professional or well-researched source of information for a study that is independent of the researcher's input (Flick, 2014). Key documents outside of the research's primary focus will also likely have differing social, political, or cultural constructs that allow them to be a differing viewpoint than that of the researcher (Patton, 2005). These documents still needed to go through the same triangulation process as key informant interviews and observations in order to remove any possible bias or false information from the documents.

For this research, the document analysis could be broken down into two key categories, media and government documents. The media documents included key news articles surrounding the topic of this research. This included media releases about developments in Kaitangata and Lawrence, Clutha District plan changes, shrinkage in New Zealand small towns and trends of urbanisation and globalisation in New Zealand. Although some of the media articles analysed for this research were biased, they did offer different perspectives and opinions to the issues addressed in this research.

Government documents also played a key role in the document analysis method of this study. These documents ranged from national level legislation including the Resource Management Act 1991 and the Local Government Act 2002 to local level plans including the Clutha District Council's District, Annual and Long Terms Plans and their strategies including 'Living and Working in the Clutha District'. The national level documents allowed for an analysis of the responsibilities of the national government and local council to issues such as shrinkage as well as providing the framework for how councils operate. The local level plans and strategies provided a very specific context for understanding the inner workings of the Clutha District Council and the plans they have for the district as a whole, as well as the towns of Kaitangata and Lawrence. The 'Living and Working in the Clutha District' strategy in particular sets the stage for the issues that district is facing from shrinkage.

3.10 Data Analysis:

How the information from the data collection phase of this research was interpreted was fundamental to the process of producing key findings from this research (Marshall & Rossman, 2014). All of the information gained from each data collection strategy was categorised and analysed against the key research questions. The different data points were first used for triangulation to filter out uncredited or biased sources. Observation data was incorporated in the context chapter as well as being used to compare and contrast impacts and responses to shrinkage with other case study towns. Once the key informant interviews had been transcribed, they were coded, which allowed for easier analysis. The codes used to categorise the interviews were based on a range of topics, locations, organisations, and developments and allowed some common threads to be seen between different interviews. The document analysis was then used to back up the key informant interviews and provide further context to some of the statements being made. From these results, themes were developed which fed into the discussion and analysis of the findings of this research.

3.11 Limitations:

Almost all studies come with some limitations into how the research can be carried out and so it is important to recognise these restrictions and incorporate them into the methods and framework of the study (Patton, 2005). For this research, there were several limitations identified that impacted the way the study was carried out. The key limitations of this research

were; the limited time available to carry out the study, the resources available to the researcher, the specificity of the research topic and some of the options of data collection.

Due to the time constraints associated with carrying out a Master of Planning thesis at the University of Otago, there was a limit on the size and detail of the study being carried out. This research started in earnest in mid-February of 2017 and had to be completed by November the first of the same year. With all of the processes that go into writing a thesis, this time frame does put some limitations on the scope of the research. The time restrictions limited the number of towns that could be studied, the detail into which those towns could be studied, the number of key informant interviews that could be carried out and many other processes of the research.

The resources available to the researcher also created some limitations during the research process. This research had to be carried out by one individual which again put restrictions on the scope and detail of the research as well as the number of observations and key informant interviews which could take place. The research was also limited by a budget which meant costly data collection methods such as public surveys would not be viable.

The limitations of time and resources caused the need for case study research to be the main focus of this study. This created a specific research focus which impacts on how effective the findings of this research may be. This study took a detailed look at the Clutha District and the towns of Kaitangata and Lawrence which could be seen as a limitation as there may not be many generally applicable findings on the topic of shrinkage due to the specificity of the research.

The techniques of observations and key informant interviews also come with some limitations. Observations offer the biggest opportunity for the problems of bias and compromised positionality as it is one of the most personalised methods of collecting and producing data (Denzin, 1973). Interviews can also be seen as introducing too many opinions and personal perspectives on an issue which cannot be viewed the same as facts. The information given by a key informant can only be triangulated to a certain extent and in some instances what they say simply has to be taken at face value.

This research was restricted in some of its processes by the limitations associated with the context and framework of the study. However, these limitations were recognised and considered very early on in the research process which allowed for the time, resources, and methods to be used most effectively and efficiently.

3.12 Summary:

This research aimed to understand the impacts of shrinkage on the communities of Kaitangata and Lawrence and how those communities along with the Clutha District Council were responding to those impacts. This chapter has outlined the methods used to achieve this aim. The research design of a qualitative/ interpretivist approach to the research topic was determined to be the most appropriate way of collecting and analysing the results of this study. The qualitative/ interpretivist approach informed the methods of a literature review, observations, key informant interviews, document analysis and data interpretation that made up the foundation of this research. Triangulation, ethical considerations, positionality, and limitations were also addressed in this chapter to provide further context and justification as to how this research was carried out.

4. Context:

4.1 Introduction:

This chapter will outline the geographical, historical and, planning context in which this research was undertaken. The first section of this chapter will briefly explore the geography and history of the Clutha District before going into more detail in the specific case study towns of Kaitangata and Lawrence based on key literature and document analysis, as well as their current social and economic status based on key informant interviews. The final section will provide an overview of the planning and legislation context for this research by carrying out an in-depth document analysis of relevant national and local level legislation and strategies which directly impact on the future and planning of Kaitangata and Lawrence.

4.2 Clutha District:

The Clutha District is the southern-most district of the Otago Region in the South Island of New Zealand (Figure 6). The district lies between the Dunedin City District to the north, the Gore District to the south and the Central Otago District and Southland Region to its west with the Pacific Ocean making up its east coast (CDC, 1998). The geography of the Clutha District is characterised by it being the catchment of the main river that runs through the middle of the District, the Clutha. The landscape of the District is also distinguished by its rough coastline, dense native forests, and arable farmland (CDC, 1998).



Figure 6: Map showing the Clutha District in the red outline and Kaitangata and Lawrence highlighted by the black location symbols.

The Clutha District's economy is defined by its rural industrial roots with farming and manufacturing making up 55% of employment across the district (Statistics New Zealand, 2016). Many of the towns across the district were founded by Europeans in the mid-1800s for their resources, such as gold and coal, which led to prosperity across the District during that time. Unfortunately, many of these resources have long since dried up, which has subsequently caused the economies of many of the towns across the district to be badly affected by a lack of jobs (CDC, 1998). Economic positives for the district include cheap housing and low priced rentals both of which are well below the national average, while median income is marginally higher than the national average (Statistics New Zealand, 2016).

As of June 2016, the Clutha District had a population of 17,450 (Statistics New Zealand, 2016). This puts it as the 46th most populous District out of New Zealand's 67 Districts. The District as a whole has had stagnant to minimal population growth over the last 30 years. The largest town in the District is Balclutha where the district is administered from by the Clutha District Council. The Clutha District has a much larger European demographic (91.1%) as opposed to the national average (74%), this trend is reversed with Māori, Pacific and Asian ethnicities in the Clutha District who represent lower demographics than national averages.

4.3 Kaitangata:

4.3.1 Geography:

The township of Kaitangata can be found on the northern banks of the Matau branch of the Clutha River in the Clutha District (Figure 6). Kaitangata is located 3 kilometres north of the mouth of the Clutha River where it meets the Pacific Ocean on the east coast of the South Island of New Zealand (CDC, 1998; Clutha Development, 2016; Clutha District Council, 2017). The town is 13 kilometres southeast of State Highway 1 and the largest town in the Clutha District, Balclutha and 86 kilometres south of the nearest city, Dunedin. Kaitangata is nestled on a flat stretch of land between the Clutha River and hills to the east. The town itself takes up an area of just over two square kilometres. The streets are laid out in a grid-like pattern with two streets running parallel along a north to south direction and roughly 14 streets running perpendicular to those streets. There are two main entrances to the town; one from the west along Kaitangata Highway that connects to Balclutha and one to the north along Lakeside road which travels past Lake Tuakitoto before connecting on to State Highway 1 between Milton and Balclutha. There is one bridge across the Clutha River on the west side of the town (CDC, 1998; Clutha Development, 2016; Clutha District Council, 2017).

4.3.2 Demographics:

According to the 2013 census, Kaitangata has a population of 762 which is a decrease of 48 people since the 2006 census (Statistics New Zealand, 2016). The median age in Kaitangata is 40.6; this is higher than the national average which is 36.9. The percentage of people over 65 in the town is 14.2% whilst 19.7% of people are under the age of 15. 90.1% of the population of Kaitangata are European, 15.7% are Maori with the next highest ethnicity being Asian at 1.2% (these statistics add up to more than 100% as it covers people who come from two or more different ethnicities) (Statistics New Zealand, 2016).

52.6% of people aged 15 and over in Kaitangata have a formal qualification however only 2.9% of the population has a bachelor's degree or higher qualification. The national average for these statistics is 79.1% and 20% respectively. The unemployment rate in the town was 6.6% as of the 2013 census; this was lower than the national average at the time which was 7.1% but higher than the Clutha District average as a whole whose unemployment rate was 3.5% at the time (Statistics New Zealand, 2016). The occupational description of labourer, is the most common occupation in Kaitangata, accounting for 41.5% of the population which is well above

the national average for this occupational group which is 11%. The second highest employment group for the town are technicians and trades workers. The town itself has 30 business locations recorded with 40 paid employees in total with the majority (15) coming from the local primary school and kindergarten. The median income in Kaitangata is \$29,200 which is \$700 less than the Clutha District as a whole. There are 327 occupied dwellings in the Kaitangata area and 33 unoccupied ones. 76.8 % of occupied households are privately owned by the occupants compared to the national average of 64.8% (Statistics New Zealand, 2016).

4.3.3 History:

Kaitangata had a small recorded Māori history pre-European arrival. The Rapuwai and Waitaha tribes were known to have occupied the area in and around Kaitangata before early European settlers came to the area in the early to mid-1800s (Sutton & Proctor, 2004). However, these tribes were nomadic and usually had to move around the area due to the unpredictable tides and flooding of the Clutha River near Kaitangata and nearby Inch Clutha.

The area was surveyed by European settlers in 1844, and the town became established on the banks of the Clutha as a base for river transport for the upstream goldfields in the Tuapeka region (Sutton & Proctor, 2004). The sheltered flat land close to the mouth of the Clutha River provided an excellent place for steamers and cargo boats to anchor and resupply before travelling up the river or out to sea. Coal was found around the same time and these early days marked the beginning of the boom for Kaitangata (Bamford, 1982). The town supported over one thousand people at one point and was self-sufficient with its own sewerage and water treatment systems. The town had several underground mines that started in the 1870s including the MacFarlane, Martin and Thompson mines (Sutton & Proctor, 2004). Coal mining became the heart of the town with the majority of residents being employed by the mine. The town also established several businesses during this boom including butcheries, bakeries, black smiths, mechanics, a post office, theatre, banking and, various trades (Bamford, 1982; Sutton & Proctor, 2004). Other services the town provided in the late 1800s included schooling, a hospital, fire brigade, police, and accommodation. Another major boost to the town occurred in 1876 when the main railway line between Stirling and Kaitangata was completed (Sutton & Proctor, 2004).

During this time, the town was independently run by the Kaitangata Borough Council (Bamford, 1982; Sutton & Proctor, 2004). This Council oversaw the day to day administration

of the town including the sewage system and water treatment facility. The town had a thriving sport and leisure following in its early days as well with a multitude of clubs and societies that people could join (Bamford, 1982). Kaitangata functioned well with its transport links up and down the river, and the coal mining and the services and businesses it had created. The main transport in and out of the town remained the river for a long time until the road was eventually built between Kaitangata and Balclutha. The unsealed road still meant the travel time was roughly 20 to 30 minutes by car by that was reduced to 5 to 10 minutes when the road was sealed (Sutton & Proctor, 2004).

Kaitangata took a huge blow when the last underground mine was shut down in 1970 (Sutton & Proctor, 2004). This significantly impacted on the remaining employment opportunities in the town as the proximity to the much larger town of Balclutha had reduced the feasibility to establish certain supplies and businesses in the town over recent years. Even back in 1970, the media began to worry about Kaitangata becoming a ghost town due to the mine closure (Sutton & Proctor, 2004). The town did, however, remain largely intact thanks to the industry in the surrounding area employing those who lost their jobs (Sutton & Proctor, 2004). Some retrenched residents were able to stay in the town while working in factories in nearby Balclutha or on farms surrounding Kaitangata. However, over the years, the town's population has been slowly decreasing as people leave the town for better opportunities and there has been little to attract new people to move into the town (Sutton & Proctor, 2004).



Figure 7: The old Kaitangata Borough Council Chambers (personal collection).

In September of 1986, the Kaitangata Borough Council was officially shut down as administrative powers shifted to the Clutha District Council which became an amalgam of the Milton, Balclutha, and Bruce County Councils (Figure 7). During the 1980s and 1990s, Kaitangata continued to have a declining population and economy. Its proximity to Balclutha and its job opportunities was the main reason that the town was able to survive but was also the key element that hampered growth in the town as people and businesses preferred to establish themselves in the more prosperous Balclutha as opposed to Kaitangata (Sutton & Proctor, 2004). Kaitangata's history shows that the wealth and success of a town can quickly decline when it relies mostly on a single source of economic prosperity.

4.3.4 Current State:

By the 2000s, Kaitangata was a town of 790 people with little more than a kindergarten, primary school and small dairy as its key features (Statistics New Zealand, 2016, 2017; Sutton & Proctor, 2004). Kai Point Coal was still running some business out of an open cast mine near the town, there is a small transport business and a campground that also ran in the town, but collectively all employ very few workers and returned little income to the town (KI, 3). The industry surrounding the town has remained relatively prosperous. Companies such as Silver Fern Farms, which employs hundreds of people in the neighbouring Balclutha area, has provided steady meat and freezing work opportunities for a number of years (KI, 1, 2 and 3). Other key employers around Kaitangata include the Fonterra cheese factory in nearby Stirling and timber processing throughout the area (Clutha Development, 2016).

The town had lost all of its health services, and while it retained its volunteer fire service, the majority of its commercial businesses have also gone, and there is no major employer in the town itself (KI, 3). The town has no public transport facilities to Balclutha or anywhere else, apart from school buses that take children to South Otago High School in Balclutha (KI, 3). Kaitangata lost approximately 30 people between the 2001 and 2013 censuses and the issue of an ageing population also became more prominent (KI, 1 and 3). The ageing population is an issue highlighted across the district and throughout most of New Zealand and has had differing impacts and responses all around the country (KI, 1). The proximity of health services in Balclutha means for the most part older people in Kaitangata do have relatively easy access to the health facilities they need (KI, 1 and 3). However, if an elderly person in the town needs to be moved to a rest home or has more specialised health issues then it is unlikely that Balclutha will be able to support them, and many people move to places like Mosgiel or Dunedin in order

to be closer to the healthcare services which can meet their needs. Balclutha has one main hospital and two elder care facilities, however, due to the prominent issue of the ageing population in the district, these facilities have become overburdened (KI, 1).

Community spirit has remained strong in Kaitangata with a core group of families and community members being part of the town for many years as well as people who have grown up in the town but since moved away, still having pride in the town (KI, 3). Sporting clubs and other groups are still an important part of Kaitangata with more than 30 clubs and societies still active in the community (KI, 3). Kaitangata Promotions is a community-based group that formed out of a ratepayers' association a number of years ago, and they have been an integral part of community-led projects in Kaitangata alongside the Clutha District Council (KI, 3). These projects represent key responses to shrinkage in the town and thus will be addressed in detail in the results/discussion chapter. However, in broad terms, these projects have been aimed at beautifying the town and retaining or even bringing more people into the town (KI, 1, 2 and 3). As of 2017, Kaitangata has seen some moderate success from its community projects but still has a stagnant or declining population, however, the future does hold a lot of opportunities for the town.

4.4 Lawrence:

4.4.1 Geography:

Lawrence is situated 34 kilometres along State Highway 8 from its south-eastern starting point just south of Milton. The town is 92 kilometres south-west of the nearest city Dunedin and 19 kilometres north-west of the boundary with the Central Otago District (CDC, 1998; Clutha District Council, 2017). Lawrence is located in the Tuapeka Basin between the towns of Waitahuna and Evan's Flat. The Tuapeka River, a tributary of the Clutha River, flows through the town. The area was classified as part of the historic Tuapeka District, and many place names and landmarks reflect this historic connection (Marks, 1977; Mayhew, 1949). The surrounding landscape is defined by gullies, rocky outcrops, temperate forests as well as areas of flat arable land (CDC, 1998). Two major gullies come together near the town, Gabriel's and Weatherston's and these were the sources of gold that was one of the main reasons that the town was founded (Marks, 1977; Mayhew, 1949). Being situated in a basin, Lawrence is a physically small town, occupying just over two square kilometres. State Highway 8 makes up

the town's one main street with smaller residential streets spreading out from this main street (CDC, 1998). The majority of its businesses are located on this main street (Figure 8).



Figure 8: The main street of Lawrence, 2017 (personal collection)

Thirty-four kilometres separate Lawrence from most of the other major towns in the Clutha District, the majority of which are located along State Highway 1 (CDC, 1998). Lawrence has a strong connection to Central Otago and is often called the gateway to Central Otago as it is the last major town before entering the Central Otago region (CDC, 1998). State Highway 8, on which Lawrence is located, is the main vehicle route between Dunedin and Queenstown and thus the town is situated in a unique location for tourists (CDC, 1998). Cycle trails are a unique feature of Central Otago, and one of the main trails ends just north-west of Lawrence.

4.4.2 Demographics:

As of the 2013 census, Lawrence has a population of 414 people, which is a decrease of roughly 60 people since the 2001 census (Statistics New Zealand, 2016). The town is the fifth most populous in the Clutha District, making up 2.5% of the District's population (Statistics New

Zealand, 2016). The median age is 46.4 which is much higher than the national average of 36.9 (Statistics New Zealand, 2016). Roughly 18% of people in Lawrence are aged over 65; this is compared with 14.2% for Kaitangata, 15.7% for the Clutha District and 14.7% for the national rates (Statistics New Zealand, 2016). Meanwhile, only 16.5% of people are under 15 years old in Lawrence as compared with Kaitangata at 19.7%, Clutha at 20.7% and the national average is 20.4% (Statistics New Zealand, 2016). Europeans make up 90.8% of the population of Lawrence with Maori being 13% and the next highest being Asian at 2.3% (these statistics add up to more than 100% as it covers people who come from two or more different ethnicities). As shown in the Kaitangata demographics section, these figures represent higher than national average numbers for Europeans and lower than the national average for Maori and other ethnicities.

In terms of education, 68.8% of people in Lawrence who are aged 15 and over have a formal qualification with 9.7% holding a bachelor's degree or higher. The unemployment rate in Lawrence was 2.7% in 2013, compared to 6.6% for Kaitangata, 3.5% for Clutha and 7.1% nationally (Statistics New Zealand, 2016). As with Kaitangata, the most common occupation for Lawrence is labourer at roughly 18% of the work force while technicians and trade workers make up around 15% and managers being the next highest at 13.5%. For people aged over 15, the median income was \$24,300 in Lawrence, compared with the Clutha District average income of \$29,900 (Statistics New Zealand, 2016). 40% of people in Lawrence have an annual income of \$20,000 or less, and 15.8% have an income of \$50,000 or more. There were 183 households in Lawrence of which 70.2% are privately owned by the occupants of the house. The median weekly rent rate was \$150 (Statistics New Zealand, 2016). There is 71 businesses located in Lawrence which is a decrease of 21.1% from 2006. There is a total of 330 paid employees in Lawrence with the top industry being agriculture/ forestry with manufacturing and education coming in second and third respectively.

4.4.3 History:

Lawrence, similarly to Kaitangata, had no permanent Maori sites but was instead used by nomadic Maori tribes who travelled between the coast and inland of the South Island (Mayhew, 1949). A large piece of land including, the Tuapeka-Lawrence area, was bought by Europeans from the local Maori in 1848. Surveying of the land in 1858 showed it had the potential for mining and agriculture (Mayhew, 1949). Before gold was discovered the land was mostly used for sheep farming (Forrest, 1961). It wasn't until 1861 that gold was officially discovered in

the nearby Gabriel's Gully and when further gold was found in Weatherston's Gully, the whole of the Tuapeka Basin was acknowledged as a goldfield (Pownall, 1956). Word of the discovery made its way around New Zealand and even to parts of Australia and by July of 1862 the Tuapeka region had a population of 11,472 people which was higher than that of Dunedin at the time (Mayhew, 1949). Along with miners, there was a multitude of other professions that established themselves during this time including grocers, bakers, butchers, and small manufacturers. Small settlements were established throughout the gullies and basins in the early phase of mining activities, but eventually, a more substantial and permanent town was established at the intersection of the Gabriel and Weatherston' gullies (Forrest, 1961). This area, colloquially known as 'The Junction', was the start of Lawrence and quickly became a well-established town with a school, churches, and shops (Gilchrist, 2011). The town became a municipality in 1866 (Mayhew, 1949).

The gold mining boom did not last long for Lawrence, and by 1867 the population had already decreased to 2,800 as new goldfields were founded around the country (Forrest, 1961). As the gold supply began to deplete, the town switched over to agriculture for its main source of industry (Gilchrist, 2011). Crops, sheep, dairy and beef farming were all trialled on the land surrounding Lawrence during the late 1800s with the town itself establishing freezing works, a creamery, a transport service, including a railway and other retail suppliers to service the farming community (Mayhew, 1949). Forestry also became dominant in the early 20th century and the town was relatively stable up until the 1980s, although the population was steadily declining (Mayhew, 1949).

In the 1980s, Lawrence was impacted by downturns in the forestry and agriculture industries. The town began to lose services like post offices, and banks and the community had to fight hard to keep services such as health, education, police, and petrol stations (KI, 7). The Tuapeka Community Health Company is a community owned and operated group which have run the health centre and retirement home for many years (KI, 6). The area school which services years 1-13 has been a strong part of the community for over 150 years. The retention of such services allowed Lawrence to survive the downturn and remain a key service provider for the surrounding rural farming community. The farming community was and still is the backbone of the town (KI, 7).

The distance from the rest of the towns in the Clutha District has always meant that Lawrence operates relatively autonomously (KI, 1, 2, 5, 7 and 8). The local Tuapeka County Council ran

the town for a number of years before the larger Clutha District Council took over (CDC, 1998). However, even after the CDC took over, key groups such as the Tuapeka Lawrence Community Company and the Lawrence Community Board have continued to play a key role in the running of the town (KI, 5). The Community Company was established in 1991 and is an independent, private, non-governmental enterprise that aims to support and grow the town. The Community Board represents the views and interests of the Lawrence Community at the Clutha District Council. The Board is made up of 7 democratically elected members and these members facilitate communication and administration between the Council and the Lawrence Community (KI, 5).

4.4.4 Current State:

Lawrence is kept alive by its farmers and the visitors and tourists that pass through the town along State Highway 8 (KI, 4, 5, 7, 8 and 9). However, the economic source of the State Highway has also faced downturns in recent times as the roads are quiet during the winter. The expansion and prosperity of the Queenstown airport throughout the late 20th century and into the 21st century have also meant that more people are flying directly to Queenstown as opposed to flying into Dunedin and then travelling across to Queenstown and passing through Lawrence (KI, 9). Events such as the 2011 150th anniversary of the founding of Gold celebrations were able to bring in lots of people to the town and the Clutha District Council aided in renovating the main street of Lawrence for the occasion (KI, 1). In 2013 the Clutha Gold Trail (cycle trail) was officially opened just outside of Lawrence, but, as of 2017, this has seen only a limited benefit for the town as most users of the track do not stay in Lawrence but instead move on quickly before starting or finishing the track.

Lawrence sees quite a high turnover of businesses on the main street (KI, 4). The businesses on the main street tend to be made up of cafes, boutique clothing or furniture stores, convenient stores, and antique shops. Many of these businesses struggle to remain economically feasible especially during the off-season with few visitors passing through the town. This can be seen in the number of businesses that are for sale on the main street (Figure, 9). There are few employment opportunities in the town itself due to the lack of industry and high turnover of businesses. Agriculture around Lawrence is still strong, but forestry has played a lesser role in recent times as most logging and milling companies operate outside of the town (KI, 7). A major merchandise manufacturer was established in the town in 1987 and went on to employ many people in the town (KI, 8). Unfortunately, the business became too big and ran out of

industrial space and opportunities in Lawrence (KI, 8). This led to the business moving to Dunedin in 2013. This was a major loss for the town as the business was the biggest employer in the town and the shift caused some workers to either lose their jobs or move out of the town to follow the company (KI, 8). Four years after the business left the town, Lawrence's economy does appear to have survived but now relies on the cafes, food shops and boutique stores (KI, 4, 5, 7 and 8).



Figure 9: Sign for the homes and businesses for sale in Lawrence, there are roughly seven businesses for sale, nine houses and two pieces of vacant land for sale as of 09/08/2017 (personal collection).

The Lawrence Area School has had a steady student roll over recent years however the age range is unequal as very few students stay at the school for secondary education as many go off to boarding school in places like Dunedin instead (KI, 7). This trend is most likely due to the limited educational choices and extracurricular opportunities the area school can offer to its secondary school students. This trend is also carried on past high school as the town offers

very few youth employment opportunities, so students often go to University or go to live in a bigger town or city in order to find better employment opportunities (KI, 5).

The health centre in Lawrence remains an essential service for the town, however it currently faces some major issues (KI, 6). The community and council involvement in the health centre will be analysed further in the results and discussion section, but as for its current state, it is at risk of being shut down due to a lack of funding from the District Health Board and several other issues (KI, 6). The doctor's office, retirement home and respite beds are a key asset to the community as people would otherwise have to travel the 44 minutes to Balclutha or hour and ten minutes to Dunedin to receive similar healthcare services. In addition, the centre is currently one of the largest employers in the town (KI, 6).

Similar to Kaitangata, the Lawrence community has, in recent years, carried out projects to attract people to live or stay in the town. These will be discussed further in the results and discussion section, and they include a new swimming complex, attempts to extend the cycle trail, the 150th anniversary festival, increasing parking opportunities on the main street and a community wetlands project. Lawrence has been in a steady decline ever since the gold reserves began to dry up, however, the town has been resilient and able to survive due to its adaptability and strong community (KI, 1, 2 and 7). The town will likely face more challenges in the future, but with the support from the community and the Council, Lawrence may be able to tackle those challenges.

4.5 Planning and Legislation Context:

On the topic of shrinkage in small towns in the Clutha District of New Zealand, there is an important planning and legislative context to consider. National legislation provides the framework for how the central and local government can respond to urban development challenges such as shrinkage. Local level plans and legislation, such as those created by the Clutha District Council, use the framework from national level legislation to draft plans and policies that can be implemented across the district to carry out the Council's development plans, initiatives, and rulings (New Zealand Government, 1991). This section will analyse the role that relevant national legislation, such as the Resource Management Act and Local Government Act, plays in governing shrinkage issues and then look at Clutha District Council documents, such as the district plan, to see the specific response to shrinkage from the local authority.

4.5.1 Resource Management Act (1991):

The Resource Management Act 1991 is New Zealand's main piece of legislation which outlines how the country manages its natural and physical resources in the environment (Palmer, 2011). The RMA establishes rules and guidelines for how the central and local government should administer their powers to sustainably manage the environment (Palmer, 2011). This Act has little to no direct implications for issues such as economic downturns, population loss or other impacts of shrinkage, however, it does set up some of the overarching responsibilities of local authorities to plan and manage the environment within their jurisdiction. Section 31 of the RMA outlines the role of local authorities:

section 31

- (1) *Every territorial authority shall have the following functions for the purpose of giving effect to this Act in its district (a) the establishment, implementation, and review of objectives, policies, and methods to achieve integrated management of the effects of the use, development or protections of land and associated natural and physical resources (b) the control of any actual or potential effects of the use, development, or protection of land... (RMA, 1991, s31).*

Of some other relevance to this study is parts of section 7 of the RMA which states that territorial authorities:

shall have particular regard to

(c) the maintenance and enhancement of amenity values

(f) the maintenance and enhancement of the quality of the environment... (RMA, 1991, s7)

4.5.2 Local Government Act 2002:

The Local Government Act is more specific when it comes to laying out the purpose, powers, and accountability of local authorities, as opposed to the RMA (Rutledge *et al.*, 2008). The purpose of the Act states that it:

provides for democratic and effective local government that recognises the diversity of New Zealand communities; and, to that end, this Act—

(a) states the purpose of local government; and
(b) provides a framework and powers for local authorities to decide which activities they undertake and the manner in which they will undertake them; and
(c) promotes the accountability of local authorities to their communities; and
(d) provides for local authorities to play a broad role in meeting the current and future needs of their communities for good-quality local infrastructure, local public services, and performance of regulatory functions (LGA, 2002).

Under the LGA, the purpose of local government is to:

(a) to enable democratic local decision-making and action by, and on behalf of, communities; and
(b) to meet the current and future needs of communities for good-quality local infrastructure, local public services, and performance of regulatory functions in a way that is most cost-effective for households and businesses... (LGA, 2002).

The LGA puts accountability of community well-being on local authorities which tie in their responsibilities to combat the impacts of shrinkage to the best of their ability (Rutledge *et al.*, 2008). The LGA promotes this accountability by local authorities by enforcing strategic planning and decision-making for the future of the towns and populations that make up their communities (New Zealand Government, 2002). The District, Long Term, and Annual Plans are documents that local authorities must create in order to present their strategies and provisions for the district.

4.5.3 Clutha District Council's District Plan:

A District Plan is a local authority's highest level planning document and sets out the context and provisions for other plans and strategies (Palmer, 2011). The CDC's District Plan became operative in June of 1998, and the Council has carried out multiple plan changes since that time in order to adapt to new issues or legislation changes (Clutha District Council, 2017). The Clutha District Council's District Plan lays out the statutory background of the plan, the resources of the district, a section addresses subjects relating to the RMA, resource areas of the district as well as general definitions, maps and schedules (CDC, 1998). The statutory background section lays out the new rules implemented under the RMA in 1991 as well as the

planning process, monitoring and reviewing of the district plan. The next section, the resources of the district, is of extreme relevance to this study as it outlines information on the land, the people, the urban environment, and all of the other resources that the Clutha District has to offer (CDC, 1998). The land section details major land use across the district including the vast array of farming, agriculture, and horticulture industries. The next chapter, titled ‘people’, highlights the demographics of the people that made up the district at the time the plan was released as well as the economic statistics of the time. This section, when compared to current day statistics shows that the district has faced a continuous downturn in population and the economy dating back to 1981 when the district had a population of 20,700 people compared to the 16,890 it has today. The next chapter in the district plan details the urban environment and this section provides a brief description of the towns that make up the district. Even in 1998, Kaitangata and Lawrence have a very similar description as to what would be stated today. The description of Kaitangata is:

“The town serves primarily as a residential satellite to Balclutha and plays only a minor role in the servicing of surrounding rural areas and activities. The major economic activity at Kaitangata is centred on the working in the Kai Point open cast coal mine.” (pp.34, CDC, 1998).

The description of Lawrence is:

“The town of Lawrence (pop 507) is situated on State Highway 8 and serves the day-to-day needs of the surrounding farming community and the travelling public. It provides the usual service industries and public amenities associated with a rural town. Lawrence has a colourful history dating back to 1861 when Gabriel Read found gold in the area and much of that history is still evident today.” (pp.34, CDC, 1998).

These descriptions read very similar to how Kaitangata and Lawrence are viewed today which shows the lack of progress in these towns in the nearly 20 years since the district plan was released. The Clutha District Council District Plan is an important document as it provides a detailed context to the district as a whole and the role of the Council under national legislation.

4.5.4 Clutha District Council’s Long Term Plan (2015-2025):

Councils are required to produce long term plans every three years under the Local Government Act 2002 (CDC, 2015). The plan sets out the CDC’s goals, projects and funding over a ten-year period and explains how the Council aims to contribute to community well-being in that

time. The CDC's long term plan involved consultation with the public who submitted their feedback on the key issues of the plan (CDC, 2015). One of the key plans that the Council put forward for their long term plan was trying to future proof the district. The Council is aware and realistic of the issues of a declining or stagnant population as well as the issue of an ageing population. To counteract these issues, the Council, under its long term plan, is aiming to grow its rating base, i.e. attract more people into the district, increase employment through supporting businesses and supporting community initiatives. While growth targeting can be an effective strategy to tackle shrinkage, as stated in the literature review chapter of this research, the strategy must be carefully planned so as not to waste vital resources and cause further decline. To combat this issue the CDC in their long term plan state that:

“Council recognises that promoting growth must be done in a sustainable way. This plan and its budgets have been developed on the basis that Council supports initiatives to growth, subject generally to any initiative being at worst rates neutral. When specific rates funding is required for any initiative or action that is not rates neutral, Council will take a business case approach to assessing it and make any budgets changes through the annual planning process.” (pp. 57, CDC, 2015).

This point on community initiatives is of direct relevance to this research as the long term plan states that the Council will:

“support and facilitate community initiatives such as cycle trails, wetlands and community facilities” (pp. 13, CDC, 2015).

The cycle trail and wetlands development are community projects in Lawrence and community facilities could include the skate park and BMX track and proposed community centre in Kaitangata. Other major issues addressed in the long term plan are roading, rates and water systems which do not directly relate to this topic but do show some of the changing administration of the district due to the issues it is facing. Of note, are some of the more minor projects outlined in the plan. This includes the funding going towards a Kaitangata community hall and the Kaitangata pool becoming community operated. The long term plan states for the Kaitangata Hall that:

“Council confirmed the commitment to funding \$100,000 towards a community owned and operated facility. The amount of \$85,000 has also been budgeted for the demolition of the existing hall building.” (pp. 19, CDC, 2015).

As for the Kaitangata pool, the long term plan outlines:

“Low use of the Kaitangata pool means it is unsustainable as a Council-owned and operated facility. The option that it should become community owned and operated if it is to continue to operate was confirmed. The facility reopening from 2015/16 onwards will be determined by the Kaitangata community and its representatives.” (pp. 19, CDC, 2015).

Both of these projects show the commitment that the Clutha District Council has to its communities and that they are willing to invest in these smaller towns despite their decreasing population and economies.

The final chapter of the long term plan provides summaries for each community in the district (CDC, 2015). This chapter states that each town in the district will receive a personalised strategy that will follow on from those laid out in the long term plan. These town strategies involve community consultation on key issues that each town is facing and how the community and the Council can come together to face those issues. The Balclutha plan has been completed and the next towns to receive their strategies include Milton, Waihola and Kaitangata (CDC, 2015). The current profile of Kaitangata laid out in the long term plan outlines how the district-wide strategies will affect the town, including the recreation strategy and community housing review. Projects highlighted for the town include sewerage and water treatment plant upgrades, public toilet redevelopment and the previously stated decisions on the community hall and swimming pool. The profile for Lawrence outlines that the town will be affected by the district-wide strategies of facilitating community plans, the community housing review and the review of community centres. Key projects for Lawrence over the course of the long term plan include public toilet renewals, investigating options for the former Lawrence pool site and assessing the earthquake strength of major buildings in the town. The facilitation of community plans is relevant to this research as the long term plan states:

“An action in the Living and Working strategy is to work with local communities to help them develop a vision, with a set of actions (or community plan) to help work towards that vision. A community plan is also a tool for informing national

and local organisations, like Council, about aspirations and priorities for local communities. Council will look to facilitate a community plan for Lawrence.”
(pp. 271, CDC, 2015).

The Living and Working strategy will be addressed later in this chapter, but this strategy alongside the Council’s willingness to work with local communities to develop a plan for the future shows that the CDC is being proactive in its approach to deal with the issues of shrinkage and involve the community in its responses to the issue. The Clutha District Council’s Long Term Plan provides a forecast of plans and aims for the next ten years and shows that the district is taking a realistic and pragmatic approach to the issues it is facing.

4.5.5 Clutha District Council Annual Plan (2017-2018):

Annual plans are another requirement under the LGA 2002, and they act as a more detailed version of a long term plan for one year instead of ten (CDC, 2017). The annual plan provides an update on how plans developed under the long term plan are progressing and sets out the same rates, finance and project overviews for the year. There is less to discuss in the annual plan of relevance to this research as the majority of the plans and aims of the district are also addressed under the long term plan. However, some plans of note are:

- \$30,000 was granted to the Clutha Gold Trail Charitable Trust Extension Group in order to develop a business case for extending the cycle trail from Lawrence through to Milton and Waihola with a further \$10,000 going to the local EDA, Clutha Development, for their continued support on guidance on this project.
- The water treatment upgrades in Kaitangata have been delayed and will now be completed over two financial year periods.
- The grant of \$100,000 for the Kaitangata community hall will be paid back via a \$0.60 increase in rates over 25 years starting in 2017. The project is still running on course, and plans have been submitted for the plans of the new building (CDC, 2017).

4.5.6 Clutha District Council Strategy ‘Living and Working in the Clutha District’ (2015):

‘Living and Working in the Clutha District’ was a document created by the CDC and Clutha Development, the local EDA, in conjunction with the long term plan (CDC & Clutha Development, 2015). The document goes into more detail on the challenges that the district is facing from shrinkage including the decreasing population, ageing population, and unstable economy. The strategy shows that the Council and EDA are very aware of the issues they are facing, stating: “The district has been experiencing decline and significant future growth is unlikely” (pp. 2, CDC & Clutha Development, 2015). The document highlights the cause of problems the District is facing, and these connect back to the drivers of shrinkage highlighted in the literature review chapter of this thesis, including global competition and rural to urban migration. The Council and Clutha Development are keen to include all of these issues into their future plans in order to try and decrease the negative impact they are having on the people and the economy of the District. This document aims to: “help direct a coordinated, integrated set of actions and projects to work towards our goal to promote the Clutha District as a great place where people want to live, work and invest” (pp.3, CDC & Clutha Development, 2015). The Council and Clutha Development and the local EDA plan to achieve this aim by targeting the areas of:

- Employment
- Demographics/ people
- Aesthetics/ environment
- Recreation/ events
- Community/ lifestyle/ culture
- Healthcare
- Education.

Under the ‘Living and Working’ document, each of these areas are discussed in terms of the significance of the issues the district is currently facing and how it may be possible to plan for these issues. As with the Long Term Plan, this document aims for targeted growth as a response

to shrinkage but recognises that this growth must be sustainable and not come at a substantial cost to the Council and by proxy the people of the District (CDC & Clutha Development, 2015).

For employment, the key strategies include attracting people to the district to fill vacancies, address skill and labour shortages and plan for future skill needs as well as investigating employment and career opportunities that would encourage people to stay in the District. These strategies aim to provide a boost to the district economy as well as trying to retain youth in the district which is another issue the district has been facing recently (CDC & Clutha Development, 2015).

Demographic/ people strategies comprise of investigating solutions to the projected ageing population and plan for the infrastructure required to support an ageing population. These approaches are also aimed at retaining and attracting people to the District as well as developing facilities such as retirement villages, rest homes and community housing (CDC & Clutha Development, 2015).

Aesthetics and environmental responses include creating attractive town entranceways and centres and developing Clutha as a destination for tourists. Tourism is a growing industry in the District and it could provide a much-needed boost to the economy if managed correctly (CDC & Clutha Development, 2015).

Recreation/ event strategies include creating recreation and leisure plans to help direct future investment and grow community leadership skills and opportunities. These plans aim to create larger recreation opportunities across the district (CDC & Clutha Development, 2015).

Community/ lifestyle/ culture responses comprise of developing a unique identity for the district and its communities, being adaptable to changing lifestyles and recognising the essential role of volunteers and community groups. Research shows that having a strong and resilient community is very effective when responding to the issues relating to shrinkage (CDC & Clutha Development, 2015).

The only current plan for healthcare is to try and attract health professionals to live and work in the district, especially in some of the more rural areas such as Lawrence. Many of the other healthcare challenges facing the district fall into the ageing population issue (CDC & Clutha Development, 2015).

Education is the final, but just as important, area that the strategy touches on. The responses outlined include promoting educational opportunities for all levels and abilities, ensuring young people are prepared for work upon leaving high school and supporting ongoing upskilling and work-based training in the District. These responses are fundamental to retaining young people in the district by making sure they have a high-quality education and multiple job opportunities (CDC & Clutha Development, 2015).

The 'Living and Working in the Clutha District' document is probably the most relevant document for this research, and it was one of the reasons that the Clutha District was chosen for this study. The strategy shows that the Clutha District Council is realistic about the multitude of issues they are facing from shrinkage, with such realism being uncommon as many declining local governments are in denial of their situations as international and national literature suggests (Luescher & Shetty, 2013; McMillan, 2015a, b; Rutledge *et al.*, 2008). Accepting population decline and economic instability is an important first step to appropriately responding to shrinkage (Bowns, 2013). The Council's and EDA's pragmatic response to shrinkage including working with communities, planning for ageing populations and developing projects to retain people in the district is unique in the field of shrinkage responses in New Zealand which makes the Clutha District a very important case study for this research (Nel, 2015; Nel & Stevenson, 2012; Rutledge *et al.*, 2008; Scott & Pawson, 1999; Wood, 2017).

4.6 Summary:

This chapter has detailed the specific context under which this research has taken place. The information on the history, geography, demographics, and current situations of the case study towns will provide a clear framework for the findings and analysis detailed in upcoming chapters. The policy analysis, also outlined in this chapter, has given the context for how shrinkage can be managed in New Zealand and the Clutha District by the central government and local authority respectively. Legislation and planning documents play an important role in how shrinkage is managed and responses are carried out in New Zealand, and so the policy analyses has given guidance to the analysis and critique of these frameworks in later chapters.

5. Kaitangata Results and Discussion:

5.1 Introduction:

Kaitangata proved to be a unique and interesting case study of small town shrinkage. The initial observations appeared to show a relatively rundown town with very little attraction or economy. Analysis of documents such as local council plans and media releases showed a continuous decline in population and prosperity for the town following the closing of the coal mines in the 1970s. It appeared that the town was being heavily impacted by shrinkage which was being driven by the issues such as rural to urban migration and a lack of employment opportunities (Sutton & Proctor, 2004). However, upon talking to key informants and taking a closer look at the developments that Kaitangata has undertaken, it became clear that there has been a response to the impacts of shrinkage and the town has a unique dynamic with its community, leaders, and council when it comes to developing those responses. This chapter will outline the results of key informant interviews, document analysis and observations carried out as part of this research in Kaitangata and then discuss these findings in an analytical and critical framework. The results section will analyse the relevant key informant interviews conducted for Kaitangata and identify the key opinions and ideas that were brought forward from those discussions. This section will also review the projects that have been undertaken in Kaitangata that have tried to combat shrinkage as well as analysing the role and actions of key people and organisations involved in those projects in order to find out about the dynamics of responses to shrinkage and their effectiveness. The discussion sections will analyse these responses against examples that were found in the contemporary literature on shrinkage responses. This critique will analyse the effectiveness of the responses to shrinkage in Kaitangata to see if negative trends and impacts on people have been reduced, reversed, unchanged, or worsened.

5.2 Results:

As outlined in the context chapter, Kaitangata has been dealing with issues from shrinkage since the closure of its coal mines in the 1970s. Since that time the town has seen a declining population and an almost non-existent economy. However, over the last several years, an active response to these issues has been taking place in Kaitangata, mainly thanks to the CDC,

Kaitangata Promotions and community leaders and collaboration between these groups. These responses have taken steps to reduce negative impacts on the remaining population of Kaitangata by increasing their wellbeing and quality of life as well as trying to return some human capital to the town to grow its population and economy. This results section will use the information gained from key informants, document analysis and observations to detail the projects that have taken place in response to shrinkage and then describe the roles of the community, its leaders, and the CDC in these projects.

5.2.1 Key projects:

Although Kaitangata has been in steady decline since the 1970s, in recent years, the community, individuals, Promotions group and council have strived to try and decrease the negative impacts of shrinkage in the town (KI, 1, 2 and 3). These key individuals and groups have been targeting projects that can realistically be completed and will provide a benefit to the town by either attracting more people to live there or keep people in the town by creating quality community facilities for them to use and appreciate (KI 1). These projects have included the skatepark and BMX track, the house and land package, and a new community hall for Kaitangata. This section will detail the results from key informant interviews, document analysis and observations of these projects in Kaitangata.

5.2.1.1 Skatepark and BMX track:

The skatepark and BMX track project in Kaitangata had a drawn-out planning and fundraising phase and involved many different people and organisations, but was the brainchild of one Kaitangata community member (Tohill, 2016a). Key informant three, who runs the Kaitangata Promotions group, stated that the community member “who was very invested in skating and cycling and kids having access to those things came to us with the idea”. The BMX track had been previously established in 2008, but significant upgrades were planned as part of the development (Tohill, 2016b). The Promotions group, which has limited funds from the community, council, and investors, bought two quarter-acre sections in the middle of town and fundraising began in 2014 (KI, 3). The Kaitangata Skate Park Development Group was also established and was chaired by the original community member who proposed the idea (Tohill, 2016a). The initial amount sought was \$100,000, and this was relatively quickly raised with \$40,000 coming from the Clutha District Council, and many other groups, including the Otago

Community Trust, businesses in the Kaitangata and Clutha area and individuals in the community also contributed large amounts of money (Figure 10). The \$40,000 grant given by the CDC was half paid for by a carryover from the previous year's annual plan, and the other half was a three-year loan repaid by a rates increase that would cost Kaitangata residents between \$9-12 per annum (CDC, 2014). Eventually, only \$85,000 was needed as the builder and workers completed the extra \$15,000 worth of work, free of charge (Tohill, 2016a). The mayor of the Clutha District even put in six days of hard labour to finish off the skatepark (KI 3). The skatepark was officially opened on the 16th of October 2016 with most of the town turning up for the ceremony (Tohill, 2016b). The project won the Trustpower Clutha District Community supreme award in 2016 and went on to represent the district at the national awards in 2017 (Tohill, 2017e). The project and the lead community member also made an appearance on the news show 'Seven Sharp' in 2016 which praised the community spirit and strong leadership involved in the project (1 news, 2016). The BMX track was already widely used by people across the district and South Otago and the usage of the track has increased since the development was completed (CDC, 2014; Tohill, 2016b). The skatepark idea also inspired people in Lawrence as an idea for what to do with their old swimming pool, which was a development that was still underway at that stage and will be addressed in a later section (Tohill, 2016c). Key informant one described the skatepark and BMX project as:

“...one of the new pride and joys of the town that they love showing off to everyone, they are very proud of what they achieved with that project.”



Figure 10: Sign on the BMX track in Kaitangata which thanks all of the people and organisations that helped fund and support the building of the track and Skatepark (personal collection).

5.2.1.2 House and Land package:

Similar to the skatepark project, the house and land package in Kaitangata was envisioned and driven by one main community member. A local farmer became a member of Kaitangata Promotions and approached the Council and several other groups with the idea of creating a very affordable house and land package in the town to try and entice people to come and live in Kaitangata (KI, 2). The farmer purchased some land in the eastern hills of Kaitangata and together with the Promotions group, Clutha District Council, Clutha Development and professionals including lawyers, realtors and bankers, a package worth \$230,000 for each of the 10 pieces of land and a three-bedroom house was developed (White, 2017a). A lot of planning went into the package that was created in order to try and make the process of buying the land and building the house as simple as possible (Clutha Development, 2016). The prospectus that was created by Clutha Development provided a full costing of the houses which would be built by the local building company; Big River Homes (Figure 11) (Clutha Development, 2016). Included in these prices were the costs of services to the house, certain

interior decorations, average rates for the Council, cost of heating and optional extras that could be added which came to a rough total of \$185,000 for the house (Clutha Development, 2016). The local Bank of New Zealand branch was also brought on board which offered financial aid to those wishing to purchase a house and land package including discounted interest rates and help with legal and valuation costs (Clutha Development, 2016). Once the Clutha District Council was onboard with the idea of the house and land packages, they offered the reimbursement of Council fees such as building consents and service connections, up to \$5,000 for each applicant over a three-year period (Clutha Development, 2016). If fees did total over \$5,000, then the Council also offered a targeted rates scheme meaning the applicant could pay off the money above \$5,000 through their rates over a number of years (Clutha Development, 2016). Local lawyers offered their services throughout the purchasing process and waived certain fees associated with compiling reports and consultation (Clutha Development, 2016). Clutha based realtors offered competitive professional service fees to aid in the selling of the house and land packages (Clutha Development, 2016). These groups came onboard after being approached by Clutha Development to help develop the house and land package scheme (KI, 2). Also included in the prospectus was information on education opportunities in the area, sports and recreation clubs, community groups, recent community projects, and the multitude of employment opportunities around Kaitangata (Clutha Development, 2016). Clutha Development specifically worked to align applicants of the house and land package scheme with jobs within the district (KI, 2). The prospectus included information on nearby Silver Fern Farms and the cheese factory in Sterling who had employment opportunities for successful applicants (Clutha Development, 2016). All of this planning involved a lot of community members and businesses donating large amounts of time to the cause of producing a high quality and feasible house and land package (KI, 3).



Figure 11: Design concept for houses as part of the house and land package in Kaitangata (Clutha Development, 2016).

No one could have expected the media storm that occurred once the house and land package was released (KI, 1, 2 and 3). First, the local media covered the proposal; then this was picked up by national news agencies and eventually international news outlets from Europe, the United States and Australia all began to write about the small South Otago town that was offering a cheap house and land package (White, 2017a). The Clutha Development offices and the mayor received over 5,000 offers or enquiries within the first few days of the package being reported in the likes of the Guardian newspaper in the United Kingdom and several other major publications around the world (White, 2017a). Unfortunately, along with the global spreading of news about the house and land package came false reports of what exactly was being offered (Walters, 2017). International news outlets began to report that the town was going to pay people upwards of \$200,000 just to get involved in the house and land package (Walters, 2017). It is unclear where these reports originated, but it was possible that people confused the asking price of the house and land packages for a perception that the Council was going to pay people to move into the town (David, 2016). These false reports led to the massive international response to the house and land package and caused the CDC to eventually release a statement saying:

“Unfortunately, there have been some incorrect stories in overseas media that we are paying people to move here. This is not true. We certainly were not expecting this story to go global and never intended to market it overseas, so

while the international attention has been very exciting and really positive for us, we're now overwhelmed with enquiries from around the world.” (Clutha District Council, 2017).

Multiple theories exist as to why the house and land package caused such a stir both nationally and internationally (David, 2016; Telfer, 2016; Walters, 2017; White, 2016e, 2017a). Some believe that the ‘housing crisis’ that was happening in Auckland and many other parts of the country and the world, played a key role in making the house and land package look so appealing to so many (David, 2016; Telfer, 2016). In 2016, the average house price in Auckland passed \$1 million (Telfer, 2016). Special Housing Areas in Auckland have to include a proportion of ‘affordable’ houses that cost no more than \$550,000, but this is still over double the cost of the complete house and land package being offered in Kaitangata (Telfer, 2016). In cities throughout New Zealand and the world it was getting increasingly more expensive to own land and property, and so the house and land package appeared to come at the perfect time for people who may be looking for a more affordable place to own a home (Telfer, 2016; Walters, 2017). The quintessential New Zealander’s dream is a house on a quarter acre section but these kinds of properties are becoming increasingly difficult to afford in cities and so it is likely that the affordability of the house and land package in Kaitangata could still fulfil that dream for many New Zealanders (Telfer, 2016). The community leader who instigated the project stated that he never planned the package around the housing crisis in Auckland but recognised that the timing was fortunate for the package to come together (Telfer, 2016). Some of the international interest was likely sparked by the false reporting surrounding the house and land packages, but those who had a genuine interest in the scheme highlighted the same reasons of being enticed by the affordability of the package (KI, 1, 2 and 3). Other people both nationally and internationally emphasised that they were interested in the lifestyle that Kaitangata offered as many grew up in similar small towns and wished to do the same with their own family (KI, 1, 2 and 3). Whatever the reason, it appears that the house and land package and the town of Kaitangata connected with people all around the world which led to the successful promotion of the scheme.

Clutha Development, who are administrating the house and land package process, had a hard time managing the number of enquiries that were coming in and trying to find and respond to genuine offers (KI, 2 and 3). It was important that people outside of New Zealand who were interested in the house and land package had the right to buy houses and move to the country (Clutha District Council, 2017). After the massive interest in the package, Clutha Development

came up with rules that hoped to decrease any negative impact on Kaitangata (KI, 2 and 3). One rule was that a house must be built on the land within two years of purchase, to ensure that land banking would not occur (Clutha District Council, 2017). Other rules included applicants making their intentions for the land clear, including whether they were going to rent the property or live in it themselves as well as providing financial details and personal information in order to make sure that speculators wouldn't buy the land and that Kaitangata would receive the most benefit by having the best applicants move into the town (White, 2016e). Although there were a few negatives from the huge publicity of the house and land packages, namely the false news reports and inundation of offers, overall the media coverage helped the scheme as it allowed the project to reach a wider audience and ended with a wide group of people who genuinely wanted to move to the town to take up the offer (KI, 1, 2 and 3).

Roughly a year after the house and land package was released, all ten sections have been bought and the building process is slowly beginning on many of them (KI, 1, 2 and 3). The Clutha District Council also acquired one of the sections and is going to build a house on it and sell it for no net profit but just the cost of the house and if that is successful they will also do the same thing for another section (KI, 3). The CDC decided to do this to display the process of buying and building a property in Kaitangata and to help some applicants who did not want to build their own homes (KI, 1 and 3). Successful applicants have come from all over the country, and some have been international including Australia and Papua New Guinea (KI, 3). Some of the buyers include ex-residents of Kaitangata who are looking to move back to the town with a family or to reconnect to the town they grew up in (KI, 1 and 3). Other buyers grew up in similar small towns and are looking to recapture that rural lifestyle as opposed to moving into a city (KI, 3). Some buyers represent urban to rural migration as they have no job or cannot afford to live in a city, so they are looking for an easier and cheaper place to live (KI, 3 and 8). Almost all of the buyers are families with at least one child (KI, 2 and 3).

Clutha Development and Kaitangata Promotions continue to get almost daily emails from people still interested in buying the house and land package in Kaitangata (KI, 2 and 3). For this reason, more sections are being sought to buy, and further land sales are likely to occur sometime in the future (KI, 1, 2 and 3). At the moment, Clutha Development, Kaitangata Promotions, and the CDC are interested in getting the current buyers into their houses and into jobs (KI, 1, 2 and 3). Clutha Development has been working with industries around the town including the freezing works, cheese factory, businesses in Balclutha and agriculture in order to pair the incoming residents with jobs (Clutha Development, 2016). Kaitangata Promotions

have also been planning for when new residents arrive in the town by personally greeting each one and giving them a list of key contacts for the community and details of its sports and leisure clubs (KI, 3). Once the majority of the new residents have moved in, a community meeting is also planned so that new families can meet each other and other people in the community (KI, 3). Although the media attention got out of hand, overall the house and land package scheme has been seen as a success for Kaitangata in combatting shrinkage as it is bringing new people into the town and building a stronger community. The house and land package are expected to bring in around 30 people into the community which would see Kaitangata post a population increase for the first time in several decades (KI, 3),

5.2.1.3 Community Hall:

The final major project occurring in Kaitangata is the development of a new community hall. Currently, the town has a war memorial hall (Figure 12) and a Presbyterian worship centre (Figure 13) which are available for community events (KI, 3). Issues were raised about the need for an effective community hub for the town in 2011 when maintenance costs for the war memorial hall, run by the CDC, became too high (Tohill, 2017d; White, 2016d). The war memorial hall was in a state of disrepair at this time as the building was several decades old and the cost of repairing and upkeep of the building cost Kaitangata ratepayers \$31-\$45 every year (Reus, 2011). A town meeting was held in 2011 to decide the fate of the memorial hall, and at the time the options were:

- Keeping the status quo
- The Council would continue to administer the hall, but a committee would be set up in the town to raise funds for upgrades
- The ownership of the building would switch to the community who would manage and maintain the hall with some council support
- Or, the hall would be demolished with just the steps, plaques and gardens being retained (Reus, 2011).



Figure 12: Kaitangata war memorial hall as of August 9th, 2017 (personal collection).



Figure 13: The Kaitangata Presbyterian Worship Centre as of August 9th, 2017 (personal collection).

At the end of the meeting, a version of the second option was chosen as the community would seek to raise funds for the development for a new community centre in the town while the Council continued to fund maintenance of the old hall in the meantime (Tohill, 2017d; White, 2016d). Planning for a new community centre continued as the war memorial hall continued to fall into disrepair (KI, 3). Eventually, in 2015, the Kaitangata Community Centre Charitable Trust (KCCCT) was established and became the focal point of driving the appeal for money for the new centre (Tohill, 2017d). The KCCCT spent the next two years raising money through various channels (KI, 3). These fundraising efforts included the annual Kaitangata car show and run which chooses a specific cause each year to donate money to (KI, 1). The local rugby club, called 'The Crescent Rugby Football Club' also held several fundraising events to collect money for the KCCCT (White, 2016d). By late-2016 the group had raised just over \$90,000 from its own funding events (White, 2016d). In December of 2016, the KCCCT received a large donation of \$120,000 from the Otago Community Trust to go towards the creation of a new community centre (White, 2016d). During this time, the KCCCT had met with the Presbyterian Synod of Otago to discuss attaching the proposed community hall to the side of the Presbyterian worship centre across the road from the war memorial hall (Tohill, 2017d). A lease agreement for the Church and its land was signed by the KCCCT and the two groups worked together to plan for the development of the community centre (White, 2016d). The KCCCT also received funding from the Lottery Grants Board, two charitable trusts and several other businesses and entities (White, 2016d).

In May of 2017, the KCCCT submitted their plans for the community centre to the Council (KI, 1). The Council approved the plans and offered a grant of \$100,000 to go towards the cost of the new community centre (White, 2017b). The grant came with the conditions that the KCCCT would provide a quantity surveyor's report, confirmation of overall funding streams, contingency costs, design plans (Figure 14) and details of the potential use upon completion (Tohill, 2017d). The report created by the surveyor estimated the cost of the extension to the worship centre to be \$704,200 with ancillary items such as wiring, interior and decks coming to around \$105,000 (Tohill, 2017d). This would mean that the KCCCT would have to raise around \$800,000 to complete the project (White, 2017b). As discussed in the planning framework chapter, the CDC allocated money from its 2017 annual plan to the community centre project, and this funding will come from a Kaitangata rates increase over a 25 year period (CDC, 2017). The annual plan also designated a separate \$85,000 to go towards the demolition costs for the old war memorial hall (CDC, 2017). The Council justifies this spending as it goes

with its beliefs of investing in the community and creating the high-quality infrastructure to entice people to move to the district and to retain people who already live there (KI, 1). With their own current funds raised alongside the grants from the Otago Community Trust and the CDC, the KCCCT are well on their way to seeing their dreams for a new community centre coming true (KI, 1).

“The community spirit feels very positive at the moment after the house and land packages, and so the community hall is helping to solidify those positive feelings” (KI, 3).



Figure 14: Proposed design for the Kaitangata Community Centre attached to the Presbyterian Worship Centre as part of the plans sent to the CDC in 2017 (Tohill, 2017d).

5.2.2 Kaitangata Community:

Carrying out responses to shrinkage is futile if the community is not engaged and active in the process (Shetty & Luescher, 2010). The Kaitangata community has been impacted hard over several decades by the forces of shrinkage, and this has resulted in a unique current character and identity for the town and its people (KI 1, 2 and 3). Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, as Kaitangata was significantly impacted by the closure of its mine and had a decreasing population, community morale and pride were very low (KI 1 and 3). People were beginning to be ashamed of living in Kaitangata as the town’s amenity began to decrease in quality (KI, 3). Kaitangata’s close connection to Balclutha, which continued to be successful, exacerbated

the stark contrast between the two towns and the differing quality of life which they had (KI, 3). Key informant three believed that another reason that the town has felt a loss of identity is that “a lot of people bought houses in Kai[tāngata] and put them out for renters because they were cheap, and they were absentee landowners which do nothing for a community at all”. Key informant three went on to state:

“People who live in Christchurch but rent out a house a Kai[tāngata] do not know how it’s being treated and haven’t got any interest in the community at all. We much prefer people that own their own home and live in the district and those are people that will actually be a part of the community. If you’ve got cheap houses, then it can bring up issues of people not really caring about their houses or the community.”

This was some of the thinking behind the conditions and planning of the house and land package scheme (KI, 3). Everybody involved in the planning for the house and land package scheme viewed it as important for any new residents of the town to be invested in the community by moving into Kaitangata for reasons other than renting or selling on the house and/ or land (KI, 2 and 3). Key informant three was realistic about the situation in stating that:

“Obviously, the whole town isn’t in behind [the project planning] as in the sense that some people are doing all of the actions, but others are just responding to those actions, but you need to have that core [group] of people.”

Key informant three summarised that obviously everyone cannot be directly involved in the planning and development of all activities in the community but having that simple sense of pride in your own property is an important first step in having pride and identity in the town as a whole and thus wanting to see it develop and prosper (KI, 3).

Some community spirit was kept alive by the continued operation of clubs and groups in the town (KI, 3). Some of the clubs that make up the community include:

- The BMX Club
- Bowling Club
- Craft Group
- Crescent Rugby Club
- Cricket Club
- Ladies Group

- Farmers Group
- Golf Club
- Rural Women's Club
- Car Show and Run Club
- Library Group
- Presbyterian Church Group
- Over 60s Gentlemen's Club
- Music Group
- Fishing Club
- Neighbourhood Support Group
- Pistol Club
- Exercise Group
- Wild Horse Group

As well as groups that run organisations such as:

- Black Gold Heritage Museum
- Skate Park
- Swimming Pool
- Volunteer Fire Brigade (KI, 3).

For a town of 800, this is quite a large number of sports and leisure groups, and their existence reflects the prosperity the town once had (KI, 1). A lot of these groups work together if one of them needs assistance with something and this has helped retain some community spirit during the time of shrinkage (KI, 3).

Community spirit was also beginning to lift around the same time that the projects outlined above were beginning to improve Kaitangata (KI 1 and 3). Community support was vital for the skatepark and BMX track project as the community helped with working bees and fundraising for the development (KI, 3). The car show and run donated their annual fundraising efforts to the skatepark and BMX project and several more local organisations donated time and money to the development which resulted in the quality of the final product and the awards that the project received (KI, 3). The other projects may not have had as much direct community involvement, but they have resulted in further feelings of unity and pride for the residents of Kaitangata (KI, 2). The house and land package and the international notoriety that went along with it, made the people of Kaitangata realise that there was a reason to value the place that

they lived and that there were things that could be done to help ease the issues caused by shrinkage (KI, 2 and 3). Although the new community facility is still in the development stage, the community feels very excited about the prospect and opportunities that a new community hall will bring to the town (KI, 3). Being involved in the consultation processes carried out by the CDC in 2011 and later on by the KCCCT also empowered the community to get behind the new community centre (KI, 3). Key informant one stated of Kaitangata that “when it could just be bowing its head like some other places are doing and giving up, it is standing up”. This quote represents how far the community with its determination and spirit has come in just the last decade.

5.2.3 Kaitangata Leaders:

As touched on by key informant three in the previous section, it is not the whole community of Kaitangata that is involved in the inception and planning of the projects of the town but instead there is a core group of leaders (both individuals and institutions such as Kaitangata Promotions) who are driving these developments for the town (KI, 1, 2 and 3). Kaitangata appears to have a number of these community leaders who not only develop ideas to promote the town or respond to shrinkage, but they are also willing to see these projects through to completion (KI, 1 and 2). Key informant one, a member of the CDC, stated of Kaitangata that “there are some good, key, down to earth leaders there that have a realistic picture of what can be done.” As already stated in the project descriptions above, many of the recent developments and responses to shrinkage in Kaitangata have been driven by individuals in the community. The skatepark and BMX track project were spearheaded by a local who had the interest and time to develop the plans and fundraising necessary for the project to be carried out. No one before had thought of developing a skatepark or carrying out upgrades on the BMX track in Kaitangata, so it is fair to say that none of it would have been achieved without that community leader coming forward and driving the project (KI, 1, 2 and 3). This is also true for the house and land package scheme as it was one member of the Kaitangata community that instigated the scheme by purchasing the land and driving the project forward (KI, 1, 2 and 3).

Another key leader in the community is the Kaitangata Promotions group which is made up of three core members and have facilitated almost every major development in the town since the group’s inception (KI, 1, 2 and 3). This group meets once a month with the mayor of the Clutha District and Councillor of the Ward as well as with any other interested community member (KI, 3). The Kaitangata Promotions group is a not for profit institution but one which aims to

support and promote groups or individuals who are doing something in the town (KI, 1, 2 and 3). The group helps to organise community meetings, provides submissions to the Council on behalf of other groups and many other tasks that members of the community may not be aware how to do (KI, 3). Kaitangata Promotions is an independent group from the CDC or any other organisation, but the group has a very close relationship with the Council and Clutha Development which allows them access to effective resources and people for the Kaitangata community (KI, 1, 2 and 3). “The Council and community really benefit from having that informal and pragmatic connection that has come about from the Promotions group” (KI, 1). The Kaitangata Promotions group has worked alongside every shrinkage response scheme outlined in this chapter and have shown interest in future projects including building a boardwalk around the wharf on the river and continued development of the house and land packages (KI, 3).

Key informant three stated about community leaders that “Kai[tāngata] and all of its developments would not be happening without those kinds of people” and “there are lots of people keen to help, but it does require a lot of organisation and drive which is where those people come in”. Key informant one backed this up by saying of community leaders that “they are not just resting on their laurels or accepting of their lot, they work really hard at improving their situation”. Kaitangata is in a positive place right now because of the leadership and drive that is given by a core group of people in the community (KI, 1 and 3).

5.2.4 Kaitangata and the Clutha District Council:

Key informant three, a Kaitangata community member stated:

“If we want anything we can take it to Council and I can’t speak highly enough of the support from the Clutha District Council. They are wanting the whole district to be improved, they aren’t just for Balclutha.”

Key informant one, an employee at the CDC, backs up this statement by saying:

“The Council has had a huge involvement in these small towns in recent years as we are looking to invest in bringing people to the district and retaining people in small towns like Kaitangata”.

In each of the key projects outlined above, that have taken place in Kaitangata, the CDC has played an integral role in making the developments a success (KI, 3). The CDC helped directly

with funding for the skatepark and BMX project as well as the future community hall development (Tohill, 2016a, b, 2017d; White, 2016d, 2017b). With the house and land packages, the Council went even further by purchasing a section and building a house which it will sell for zero profit and then repeat if successful (KI, 2 and 3). Key informant three said of this response from the Council:

“It is amazing... I don’t think there are many district councils around the country that would be prepared to actually go out on a limb and take a chance like that. I think that the CDC realise that we lose too many people to university, we lose teenagers, we need to attract people to the district.”

The Council is taking a lot of proactive steps to combat the impacts from shrinkage, and they are not only carrying out their own plans but also coming on board to support projects that are solely driven by the community and its leaders (KI, 1, 2 and 3). The CDC recognises its role in administering plans and developments in towns across the district and that includes when they are growing such as in Balclutha or when they are dealing with shrinkage as in Kaitangata and Lawrence (KI, 1). Shrinkage has been a real issue for these small towns and has become a crisis for the residents in Kaitangata which is why the Council has decided to be proactive in addressing these issues relating to shrinkage (KI, 1, 2 and 3). The individual town plans that are beginning to be rolled out across the district are another example of the CDC trying to be proactive in addressing the issues that are arising in the towns in the District (KI, 2). As seen in the policy analysis chapter, the Councils District, long term, and annual plans are realistic about the situations that towns like Kaitangata are facing and these plans represent the future direction that the Council is taking to respond to shrinkage. Key informant two stated:

“There is an important balance between the Council being proactive to the issues facing these towns, as well as the towns themselves standing up and facing these issues and in Kai[tāngata], there is a strong partnership between the Council and the community”.

It is clear that there is a solid and positive relationship between the Council and the Kaitangata community and this has resulted in some successful responses to shrinkage.

5.3 Discussion:

5.3.1 The impact of shrinkage on Kaitangata:

Kaitangata, as a case study of the impacts and responses to shrinkage, has produced some characteristic but also some unique examples of the phenomenon and a detailed analysis and critique of these impacts and responses will be carried out in this section. The context chapter detailed some of the hardship that Kaitangata has faced over the last several decades as the town was impacted by shrinkage. The figures showed a decreasing population and a declining economy for the town as of the last census in 2013. A characteristic feature of Kaitangata's fall was the loss of the major employer in the town, the coal mines. This is a common instigator of shrinkage in small towns and cities around the world (Markey, Halseth & Manson, 2008). Many of the impacts that Kaitangata felt from the loss of their coal mine are also quite characteristic of other towns that have faced a similar loss of a major employer or economic driver (Reckien & Martinez-Fernandez, 2011). The lack of employment in Kaitangata caused the steady decline in population and quality of the town which created a self-reinforcing cycle of shrinkage for many years in the town. Kaitangata's shrinkage was also characterised by the steady loss of services such as its own local council, shops, and commercial businesses in the town as well as a steady decrease in funding for services provided by the Council through rates such as maintenance costs for the pool and war memorial hall.

Whilst many aspects of Kaitangata's impacts from shrinkage were common for a small town in New Zealand, namely ones that have lost their key industry, there are some aspects of Kaitangata's geography and society that were relatively unique in regard to how shrinkage impacted them. For example, being close to the relatively successful and stable town, Balclutha, allowed Kaitangata to be less impacted than it perhaps otherwise would have been if it was a considerable distance from a major town (McMillan, 2015b). This is seen in Kaitangata's recent identification as being a dormitory town for Balclutha (CDC, 1998). The residents of Kaitangata have relatively easy access to the services available in Balclutha such as health, education, commercial services, and employment, which allows them to stay in Kaitangata without being limited by a lack of access to these services. However, although Balclutha may have helped in keeping the town a viable place to live for residents, it seems to have had a more negative impact on the viability of businesses in Kaitangata. With Balclutha being only a ten-minute drive from Kaitangata and being the more economically viable town, it makes sense that many commercial businesses could not survive in Kaitangata once shrinkage began to occur (McMillan, 2015b). The relationship between Kaitangata and

Balclutha shows that small town shrinkage is often complex with many different factors determining the level of impact from shrinkage and how larger regional centres can benefit (Almstedt *et al.*, 2014; Bowns, 2013; Collits, 2000; Daniels, 1989; Hinderink & Titus, 2002; Knox & Mayer, 2013).

5.3.2 Skatepark and BMX track:

The responses that the community and council have had to the shrinkage in Kaitangata has provided a unique case study of the phenomenon of shrinkage. The skatepark and BMX track project displayed the key role played by Kaitangata's leaders and community as well as the input from the CDC and how these groups came together to develop a high-quality facility for the current people of the town as well as being a promotional tool for Kaitangata. With the project being instigated and led by a single member of the community, the initiative from that individual to the final project is very telling of the dynamic of shrinkage responses in the town (Sagan & Grabkowska, 2012). It appears that the individual that drove the project was not directly focused on combatting shrinkage but rather was just trying to provide children of Kaitangata with a skating and BMX facility. None the less, the project still represents an attempt to decrease the negative impacts of shrinkage. The project indirectly signifies both a counteracting and accepting strategy of tackling shrinkage (McMillan, 2015a). In this way, the project is both a growth strategy and a consolidation/ right-sizing strategy (Hummel, 2015; McMillan, 2015a, b; Sagan & Grabkowska, 2012; Wiechmann, 2008). Although the project used community and council resources in creating the new development, the aim was to create a high-quality facility for the current Kaitangata community which would likely constitute it as more of a consolidation strategy for the town than purely a growth strategy (Hummel, 2015; McMillan, 2015a, b). The town and Council invested money into the skatepark and BMX track project, not only to create growth in population or economy but rather to generally increase the character and quality of the town for the current residents and any flow-on benefits from people outside of Kaitangata would be a bonus (Daniels, 1989; McMillan, 2015a, b).

The skatepark and BMX development could be seen as an investment in the town and a tactic of attracting human capital to Kaitangata (McMillan, 2015a). By creating a community facility that targets the recreational needs of children, the development may create a reason for families with young children to move to the town (McMillan, 2015b). The planning and development put into the project also represents the spirit and strength of the community that went into building it which may also be an enticing characteristic for people looking to move into a town

with that kind of dynamic (Knox & Mayer, 2013; Mattson, 1997; McMillan, 2015a, b; Shortall, 2008).

The project also represents an attempt of maintaining and retaining human capital in Kaitangata (McMillan, 2015a). The leader who came up with the idea of the skatepark and BMX project was looking to provide those facilities and services to the children and families of Kaitangata. These types of facilities may cause people living in the town to have more pride in Kaitangata and could convince those who may be looking to leave the town to stay due to the facilities that are now available to them (Bowns, 2013; Carlton-Laney, Edwards & Reid, 1999; Collits, 2000; McMillan, 2015a, b; Scott & Pawson, 1999). In the case of Kaitangata, this may take the form of families not having to travel to Balclutha to gain access to such facilities which may convince them to stay in the town rather than move to Balclutha to have closer access to such services.

With the majority of the funds raised from charitable sources and only \$40,000 coming from the CDC, with a minor rates increase, it could be said the impacts of the costs were not exorbitant on the community or Council for the skatepark and BMX project (CDC, 2014; CDC & Clutha Development, 2015; Tohill, 2016a). It is important that the skatepark and BMX project was not too expensive, and the design and planning of the development were not elaborate or excessive. Keeping the plans realistic for a shrinking town is vital for a successful project to respond to shrinkage as plans that are too large or complex can quickly run into issues of lack of funding, depletion of limited resources and the possibility of exacerbating shrinkage impacts (Luescher & Shetty, 2013). It is near impossible to determine a monetary benefit of the installation of such a facility for a small town and much of the benefit must instead be inferred by the positive reception from the community and wider sources (Barnes & Hayter, 1992; Boschma, 2015; Bowns, 2013; Carlton-Laney, Edwards & Reid, 1999; Hinderink & Titus, 2002). It is highly unlikely that the skatepark and BMX project played the individual role of bringing human capital into Kaitangata or retaining it in the town but it most likely did help in adding to the overall positive character and quality of life of the town which would have been represented in some monetary and human capital for the town even if only temporarily (Knox & Mayer, 2013; Luescher & Shetty, 2013; Markey, Halseth & Manson, 2008; Martinez-Fernandez, Audirac, *et al.*, 2012; McMillan, 2015a, b). Small town recovery from shrinkage does not always have to take the position of grand schemes or large investments that seek to provide major boosts to the population or economy (Knox & Mayer, 2013; McMillan, 2015b; O'Toole & Burdess, 2004; Wilson, 1995; Wood, 2017). Small developments like the skatepark and BMX project can go a long way to combat the negative impacts of shrinkage in a

meaningful way that incorporates the community and local authority (Gilroy, 2013; Hospers, 2013; McMillan, 2015a, b; Panelli, Stolte & Bedford, 2003). This could be seen in the increased number of users of the BMX track and new users of the skatepark, not all of whom are residents of Kaitangata. These users could provide continued benefit for the town by adding to its economy by visiting the local convenience store or other business in the town or by contributing to the skatepark and BMX track's ongoing maintenance costs or future developments (Knox & Mayer, 2013; McMillan, 2015a, b). Overall, it appears that the skatepark and BMX development was a small but effective strategy against shrinkage impacts in Kaitangata. The Kaitangata community and the CDC are very proud of what they achieved with the skatepark and BMX track development and it increased the spirit and positivity of the community (KI 1 and 3). The skatepark and BMX track project represent one of the first completed strategies against shrinkage for Kaitangata and it may have shown the community and the Council that not all was lost for the town and that small steps could be taken to tackle the negative impacts of shrinkage and the success of this project has been a motivating factor for other projects that have or are going to respond to shrinkage in Kaitangata.

5.3.3 House and Land package:

Compared with the skatepark and BMX track project, the house and land package scheme were a much more deliberate attempt at combatting the negative impacts of shrinkage in Kaitangata. The leader of the project instigated the idea of an affordable house and land package in order to try and increase the human capital in Kaitangata in an attempt to reverse the decreasing population trends that had been prevalent since the 1970s. This plan represents an acceptance that shrinkage is occurring and causing a negative impact in Kaitangata. This acceptance is important as it signifies an understanding of the situation and that responsive plans, and developments can be carried out accordingly if the shrinkage dynamics are respected and incorporated into the project (Hospers, 2013; Hospers & Reverda, 2015; Wiechmann, 2008; Wiechmann & Pallagst, 2012). Investing in ten house and land packages in a small shrinking town involves a lot of risk as even with the cheap property prices in Kaitangata, the cost of purchasing that amount of land is not insignificant for such a small town (Almstedt *et al.*, 2014; Bowns, 2013; Collits, 2000; Hinderink & Titus, 2002; Knox & Mayer, 2013; Wiechmann & Pallagst, 2012). The risk was lessened by having the community leader that instigated the project, purchasing a large portion of the land that was required, with the rest of the money and resources required coming from a mixture of charitable donations, council funding and reduced

rates for services. Although the monetary risk for the CDC was lessened by the input from the community leader, they were still investing a large portion of public money into this project, which, although it was well planned, had no guarantee of being successful.

The project represents the unique role that individuals can play in a response to shrinkage. Many different sources stated that this project was almost solely driven by the community leader in Kaitangata and the house and land package would not have occurred without them, although the support from Kaitangata Promotions, Clutha Development and the CDC was also invaluable in the project. This is quite unique in literature on responses to shrinkage (Barnes & Hayter, 1992; Bowns, 2013; Collits, 2000; Gilroy, 2013; Hinderink & Titus, 2002; Hospers, 2013; Knox & Mayer, 2013; Sorensen & Epps, 1996; Wiechmann & Pallagst, 2012). Often responses to shrinkage come from either a top-down source, such as the local authority, with much planning and input involved, or bottom-up responses from the community itself with consultation and consensus (Sagan & Grabkowska, 2012; Shetty & Luescher, 2010). The fact that the community leader involved in the house and land package not only came up with the idea but followed it through with purchasing land and accumulating sponsors and businesses for the scheme, represents a unique element of this response to shrinkage in Kaitangata (Sagan & Grabkowska, 2012). Another unique aspect of the house and land package project was the variety and amount of support that was garnered for the scheme, especially from the CDC and local businesses once they came on board and made the project a reality (Bowns, 2013; Knox & Mayer, 2013; Wiechmann & Pallagst, 2012). The project ended up being a collaborative process between multiple parties with the shared goal of supporting and promoting Kaitangata (Clutha Development, 2016). Collaboration in a response to shrinkage is not uncommon as successful strategies to combat shrinkage in a small town work best when all necessary parties are on board with the idea and work together to achieve the aim (Almstedt *et al.*, 2014; Barnes & Hayter, 1992; Bowns, 2013; Brumbach, 2007; Carlton-Laney, Edwards & Reid, 1999; Collits, 2000; Daniels, 1989; Gilroy, 2013; Hinderink & Titus, 2002; Knox & Mayer, 2013; McMillan, 2015b; Rogers, 2005; Rutledge *et al.*, 2008; Ryan, 2012). The collaboration that took place as part of the house and land package deal was very effective in reaching the desired outcome as once the CDC, Clutha Development, banks and realtors came on board, all of the processes that go into creating a selling a house and land package became much more simple (Clutha Development, 2016; David, 2016; Walters, 2017; White, 2017a). The house and land package project represents a blending of response strategies as they are stated in the literature (Bowns, 2013; Carlton-Laney, Edwards & Reid, 1999; Hinderink & Titus, 2002; Hollander *et*

al., 2009; Hospers & Reverda, 2015; Ryan, 2012). It does this by accepting the issue of shrinkage in the town whilst still targeting growth and then uses a mixture of a top-down and bottom-up approach to carrying out the project.

The media storm that followed the project also adds to the uniqueness of the response strategy. It could be argued that, without the unexpectedly massive publicity that followed the announcement of the house and land packages, the strategy might not have been as successful as many of the people that ended up purchasing one of the packages only became aware of the situation upon seeing it in the media (KI 1, 2 and 3). Countering strategies that target new housing developments and promotion in shrinking towns tend to be unsuccessful as the town is shrinking for a reason and so just trying to bring more people in by spending money on land and promotion will likely only have limited benefits (Bowns, 2013; Hospers, 2013; Hospers & Reverda, 2015; McMillan, 2015a, b). Kaitangata appeared to represent a classic example of small town shrinkage after the closure of its mines, loss of population and its peripheral location to a more successful town, which means that a response scheme targeted at bringing more people into the town through property development should not have been a viable option for successfully combatting shrinkage (Bontje & Musterd, 2012; Bowns, 2013; Haase *et al.*, 2014; Hospers, 2013; McMillan, 2015a, b; Wiechmann & Pallagst, 2012). With all of this in mind, it appears that the house and land package succeeded even when the literature says that it should not have (Bowns, 2013; Hospers, 2013; Hospers & Reverda, 2015; McMillan, 2015a, b).

Kaitangata should be cautious on how they proceed with this package into the future. The success of the first set of house and land packages does not guarantee the success of future packages as there are many factors at play when it comes to shrinkage in small towns and the purchasing of property (Bowns, 2013; Carlton-Laney, Edwards & Reid, 1999; Collits, 2000; Daniels, 1989; Gilroy, 2013; Hinderink & Titus, 2002; Knox & Mayer, 2013). With the amount of house and land packages sold, the employment opportunities available around the town and with people still showing interest in the scheme, there is no reason not to explore developing future packages, however all groups involved should proceed with caution to ensure that resources and effort are still used efficiently and effectively (Bowns, 2013; Hollander *et al.*, 2009; Hospers, 2013; Luescher & Shetty, 2013; Ryan, 2012; Wiechmann & Pallagst, 2012). However, it cannot be overstated how unlikely the success of the house and land packages was regarding what is seen in the literature on the topic of small town shrinkage responses (Bowns, 2013; McMillan, 2015a, b; Sagan & Grabkowska, 2012). Thanks to the house and land package scheme, over the next couple of years, Kaitangata is likely to record its first major growth in

population in nearly 40 years which is a major achievement for a small town shrinkage response (Hospers, 2013; Hospers & Reverda, 2015; Knox & Mayer, 2013; Luescher & Shetty, 2013; Markey, Halseth & Manson, 2008; Martinez-Fernandez, Audirac, *et al.*, 2012; McMillan, 2015a, b). Over the long term, it is difficult to tell what the full impact of this shrinkage response will be for Kaitangata. The house and land packages could represent a turning point in the towns shrinkage and reintroduce the viability of businesses in the town. Alternatively, the first house and land packages may just have been released at a unique time and so future packages may not sell as well and Kaitangata may continue to suffer from shrinkage going forward. Whilst the future impact may be unclear; it can presently be stated that the house and land packages have had a largely positive impact on Kaitangata, its community and its battle against shrinkage, not just from the increased number of residents but also from the improved self-image of the town stemming from the media attention.

5.3.4 Community Hall:

The community hall project is a work in progress response to shrinkage in Kaitangata and represents the hopeful and determined feelings in the community in their struggle against shrinkage. Similarly, to the house and land package, the community hall project could be viewed as a risky strategy to combat shrinkage as it involves a relatively large amount of upfront capital (\$800,000) in order to be successful (McMillan, 2015a, b). However, most of this capital has been raised through charitable means or donated from organisations outside of the town with only \$185,000 coming from the CDC which will go towards both the demolition of the old hall and a grant to be paid back through rates (KI, 1 and 3). Although most of the funding is not coming from the CDC, \$185,000 still represents a large investment in the Kaitangata community especially when this would be the third major council grant in as many years following the skatepark and BMX project and the house and land package scheme (KI, 1 and 2). These grants have often been supplied through rates increases for the people of Kaitangata, effectively making them loans although other costs such as the fee waivers for the house and land packages and the building of houses under that scheme have come at a direct expense to the Council. Whilst it is positive to see this level of investment in the small town from the Council, it is important to understand when these costs become too burdensome for either the Council or the residents of Kaitangata and whether the benefits or potential profits outweigh the costs (Bowns, 2013; Collits, 2000; McMillan, 2015a, b). In the case of the

community hall, the capital that the Council has put into the project represents one of their single largest investments into a community facility across the whole district (KI 1, 2 and 3).

The community hall does not represent a growth or counteracting strategy to shrinkage in Kaitangata but rather a strategy that aims to promote social inclusion, providing better quality of life and retain human capital in the current Kaitangata community (Hospers, 2013; Hospers & Reverda, 2015; McMillan, 2015a, b; Wiechmann & Pallagst, 2012; Wood, 2017). The community hall is unlikely to generate any profit or income for the Council or Kaitangata community, besides the construction it is also not likely to create any full-time job opportunities and the community hall is unlikely to be a driving force in increasing the population or the prosperity of the economy in the town (Bowns, 2013; Carlton-Laney, Edwards & Reid, 1999; Daniels, 1989; Hospers, 2013; Hospers & Reverda, 2015; McMillan, 2015a, b). What the community hall will likely provide is a stronger sense of community for the current residents of Kaitangata as it will provide them with a place to hold events and meetings as well as representing a new hub for the town that will go along with their new skatepark and housing developments (KI, 1, 2 and 3). If completed successfully, the community hall will likely give a renewed sense of pride and community spirit to the residents of Kaitangata which may cause them to remain in town as opposed to moving to a town which may not give them that same sense of pride and spirit (McMillan, 2015a, b; Wilson, 2014; Woodhouse, 2006). Thus, the community hall highlights that the community and the CDC understand that combatting shrinkage is not just about investing in growth strategies to bring new people and new jobs into the town but also that investing in the current community can be just as important (Almstedt *et al.*, 2014; Barnes & Hayter, 1992; Gilroy, 2013; McMillan, 2015a; Sampson, 2005).

Once again, the planning and development of the community hall project display the ability of the Kaitangata community to create unique responses to the challenges they are facing from shrinkage. The KCCCT represent the resilience of the community by driving the community hall project from its inception through to development plans and submissions to the Council with no other motivation than providing the town with a new community facility. The collaboration between the KCCCT and groups such as Kaitangata Promotions and the CDC in the community hall development process shows why effective communication and relationships are vital for a successful response to shrinkage (CDC & Clutha Development, 2015; Collits, 2000; McMillan, 2015a, b). The ability of the community to rally around the cause in the form of fundraisers is another telling factor as to what this project means to the people of Kaitangata and how they want to respond to the issues of shrinkage. The community

hall project is another positive step forward in Kaitangata's unique response to the impacts of shrinkage.

5.4 Summary:

The projects highlighted in this chapter show that Kaitangata and the CDC are willing to try a multitude of techniques to combat shrinkage, ranging from growth strategies in the form of the house and land package scheme, increasing the quality of community facilities in the town through the skatepark and BMX track project and promoting social inclusion through the community hall development. Although some of these projects could be viewed as risks for a shrinking town and its local council, in the case of Kaitangata, these projects represent calculated risks (Bowns, 2013; McMillan, 2015a, b; Shetty & Luescher, 2010; Wood, 2017). The shrinkage responses in Kaitangata have been driven by individuals or a core group of leaders who are willing to invest their own money and time into these projects. The CDC or Clutha Development have only become involved at later stages of projects and their contributions have been meaningful but not overstated regarding the funding or resources they have provided. The funding from the CDC has mostly taken the form of grants that are paid back through rates increases and carefully budgeted through their community consulted annual and long term plans (CDC, 2014, 2015, 2017; CDC & Clutha Development, 2015; Clutha District Council, 2017). This means that the CDC has not been exceeding its allocated spending to respond to shrinkage issues in Kaitangata, but instead, it is using the community as a resource to help achieve the projects that the Kaitangata community has itself developed and promoted. This process appears to be working well for the moment and has resulted in noticeable benefits for the Kaitangata community including its population, access to community facilities and overall community spirit.

The community hall project represents the third major response to shrinkage in as many years for Kaitangata and appears to show they have no sign of slowing down in their effort to combat the negative impacts of shrinkage. If the development of the community hall is completed successfully, it will add to the momentum of change that has been occurring in Kaitangata in recent years. With future projects including a possible boardwalk along the riverside and the ongoing development of the house and land package scheme, the Kaitangata community, its leaders and the CDC will be busy with shrinkage responses for the town for many years to come. This momentum of change may not end in Kaitangata completely ending the impacts

from shrinkage but could go a long way in slowing down, stabilising and eventually reversing the processes of shrinkage so that they are more manageable and cause a lot less negative impact on the people of Kaitangata in the future.

6. Lawrence Results and Discussion:

6.1 Introduction:

This chapter will take on a similar structure to the results and discussion chapter on Kaitangata but will focus on the information gathered from document analysis, key informant interviews and, observations pertaining to Lawrence and its impacts from shrinkage and responses to it. Lawrence, as a case study for shrinkage, shares some characteristics with Kaitangata but also has some unique elements that make it a very interesting example of a small town dealing with shrinkage. Some of the key elements that make Lawrence a unique case study of small town shrinkage includes its isolation from other towns in the district, its tourism industry, the presence of proactive and engaged farmers surrounding the town, the community and its leaders, and its array of community services including education, health and commercial industries. As with the previous chapter on Kaitangata, the results section will address the opinions and ideas brought forward by key informants when discussing Lawrence and its relationship to shrinkage. This section will also address information gained from document analysis which comprised of newspaper articles and government documents relating to shrinkage in Lawrence. The Lawrence community, its leaders and the relationship with the CDC will also be addressed in this section. Using these resources, the key response strategies that have taken place in Lawrence will be analysed and critiqued against what was found in the academic literature in the discussion section of this chapter.

6.2 Results:

As discussed in the context chapter, Lawrence has been facing issues from shrinkage dating back to the end of the gold rush in the late 1800s as well as the impacts on forestry during the 1980s. However, the Lawrence community has remained strong during that time thanks to a robust farming community surrounding the town and organisations such as the community board and company. The community and these organisations have been responding to the impacts of shrinkage for the last few decades with support from the CDC and Clutha Development. This section will use the key informant interviews, document analysis and observations carried out in Lawrence to detail some of the recent projects that make up the responses to shrinkage in Lawrence and then highlight the role that the community, its leaders,

institutions, and the CDC have played in these responses. This section will also address some of the key facilities in Lawrence, namely the Area School and Tuapeka community health centre, to highlight their dynamics regarding shrinkage.

6.2.1 Key projects:

Similarly, to Kaitangata, Lawrence has faced the impacts of shrinkage for the last 30 to 40 years (KI, 1, 2 and 7). Negative economic change in the forestry, agriculture, and tourism industries in the town have over time reduced the population and down-sized the economy of Lawrence (KI, 5, 7 and 8). However, the Lawrence community has not been idle during these impacts from shrinkage as there have been multiple response strategies and projects that have tried to reduce the negative impact of shrinkage in the town (KI, 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8 and 9). These responses represent a range of strategies that have targeted both growth and consolidation in Lawrence with varying degrees of success. These projects also highlight the collaboration between groups such as the community board and company, individual leaders in the community, the CDC, and the community as a whole, both inside the town and surrounding it (KI, 1, 2, 5 and 7). These strategies include major projects like the Tuapeka Aquatic Centre and the Clutha Gold Cycle Trail extension, as well as some minor projects such as the 150th gold discovery anniversary celebrations, the parking upgrades to the main street, and the Lawrence community wetlands. In this section, each of these projects will be outlined and then analysed.

6.2.1.1 Tuapeka Aquatic Centre:

The official opening of the Tuapeka Aquatic Centre on Friday the 14th of October 2016 represented the culmination of seven years hard work and over \$2 million of investment (White, 2016f). It is believed that the old community pool was built in 1938 and the costs of maintaining and repairing the pool were growing due to leaks and constant refilling (Taylor, 2010). In 2009, a decision was made to look into building a new swimming facility and a committee was established to carry out the feasibility tests (Taylor, 2010). The new facility would be owned and operated by an incorporated society within the Lawrence community with funding from CDC for operational costs (CDC, 2012). It was also planned that the use of the new facility would be controlled by a pay to use and membership-based approach (White, 2016f).

In 2010, design plans for the project were decided on and the proposed aquatic centre was expected to cost around \$2 million and so a lot of funding would be required to complete the project (KI, 5 and 7). The facility includes a gym and an indoor 25 metre, six-lane lap pool as well as a kiddie pool area, both of which are heated (Taylor, 2010; White, 2016f). A fundraising target was set of over \$600,000 for the Lawrence community as the rest of the funding was coming from other sources (Taylor, 2010). Under the CDC's long term plan in 2012, they pledged to cover up to 55% of the total cost of the project capped at \$1.1 million in the form of a loan which would be paid back through Lawrence/ Tuapeka Community Board rates and the Lawrence Community Services rate which would add approximately \$50 to individual annual rates over 25 years (CDC, 2012). Alongside this pledge from the CDC, the Council would also continue to run the old pool up until the project was completed and then provide an annual grant of approximately \$20,000 to help with operating costs of the new facility (CDC, 2012). The CDC's decision to help fund the project came after consultation with the Lawrence community and the community board, from which they gathered the importance of the town having a pool and the inadequacy of the old pool for the community's needs (CDC, 2012). Alongside the funding from the CDC, the Lawrence Lions club pledged \$40,000 to the project and the Bavarian beer festival that was held in Lawrence in 2010 also donated funds (Taylor, 2010). For the next few years, several more fundraising events were held including golf competitions, rodeo events and school activities (KI, 1, 2 and 8). However, with the median income in the town itself only being \$24,300, the fundraisers were limited in the number of donations they could receive from within Lawrence (KI, 7). But, luckily for Lawrence, the town is surrounded by farmers who have a keen interest in supporting the town, so a unique funding strategy was devised to help reach the necessary funding goal (KI, 6, 7 and 8). A subscription was created where a person would donate \$5,000 to the aquatic centre project which would be paid off over four years (KI, 7). Farmers surrounding Lawrence were the only ones to sign up for the subscription and these funds helped give the final push to reach the fundraising goal (KI, 7). Construction began at the end of 2014 and after some delays, the aquatic centre was completed in February of 2016 with the official opening occurring at the start of the swimming season in October 2016 (White, 2016a, f). Figure 15 shows the Tuapeka Aquatic Centre as it sits near the Lawrence Area School at the south end of town.



Figure 15: Photos showing the Tuapeka Aquatic Centre in Lawrence (personal collection).

Since the opening of the facility, memberships and overall usage have been high although the pool is closed to the public during the winter season (KI, 7). The committee that helped to establish the facility won the Trustpower community award in the sports and leisure category in the Clutha District in 2016 (KI, 5). Swimming clubs and lessons occur at the pool during the summer months and a lot of the community is brought together through school events at the pool and working bees (KI, 4, 5 and 7). After delays in the consent process and construction, the final cost of the facility came to between \$2.3-2.4 million with the additional funds needed coming from the CDC and the community (KI, 7). Key informant seven, a member of the community board and the Tuapeka Aquatic Centre committee, concluded about the project that:

“The overall response from the community and the Council are positive and proud of what we achieved with the pool and I think it shows the strength and character of Lawrence”.

6.2.1.2 Clutha Gold Cycle Trail Extension:

The Clutha Gold Trail was established in October of 2013 and runs from the Lake Roxburgh Dam through to the north-western end of Lawrence (Tohill, 2017b). The trail is 73 kilometres long and focusses on heritage attractions as it passes through areas of early Maori Moa hunting grounds, Chinese gold miner camps and historic European farming and mining sites (Clutha Gold Trail Trust, 2017). The trail, which mostly follows the Clutha Mata-au River and State Highway 8, also passes through gorges, historic railway lines and a 440 metre-long tunnel (Clutha Gold Trail Trust, 2017). Most users tend to start at the Roxburgh Dam as this is located

close to the town of Alexandra which attracts a lot of tourists and is also the starting location of many other cycle trails that run throughout Central Otago (Clutha Gold Trail Trust, 2017). The Clutha Gold Trail was years in the making and involved a lot of volunteers, community groups, trusts, councils and the permission of farmers whose land the trail runs through (Figure 16) (Tohill, 2017a, b, f). The Clutha Gold Trail received a large amount of funding (\$3.8 million) from the central government through their New Zealand Cycle Trail Project Fund (Reus, 2012).



Figure 16: The information board for the Clutha Gold Trail at the end of the trail just outside Lawrence.

Initial support for the Clutha Gold Trail was very high in the Lawrence community as many people and businesses in the town believed it would provide a large economic boost to the town due to the success of other trails such as the Otago Rail Trail (McNaughton, 2011). However, after the trail was completed, Lawrence did not see the flow on benefits they were hoping for from the trail (KI, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8 and 9).

“As it currently stands, the town of Lawrence actually receives very little economic benefit from the Clutha Gold Trail” (KI, 4)

Key informant four, as well as others, felt this way because the track currently ends a few hundred meters before the town and so often the cyclists using the track do not even enter the town or use its facilities (KI, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8 and 9). Key informant nine stated that:

“If people start the track at the Roxburgh Dam then they usually just want to get back home or back to their accommodation in Alexandra, so they will have transport arranged at the end of the trail and they will not even drive through Lawrence. And if they start in Lawrence then they will often just start the trail straightaway and not stay the night in the town or visit our shops. So, at the end of the day, even though the trail is promoted a lot for Lawrence it does not do a lot for us in its current state.”

This sentiment has led the town to push for an extension of the Clutha Gold Trail that would go through the town and onto the settlement of Waihola whilst going through Waitahuna and Milton along the way (Tohill, 2017a, b, c, f). Towns tend to receive the most benefit from cycle trails when they are along the route of the track, at a popular starting point or if they can offer specific services to the users such as accommodation, food, entertainment, activities or bike hire/ maintenance services (McMillan, 2015a, b; Tohill, 2017a, b, c, f). Lawrence is located roughly 65 kilometres down the trail from the town of Roxburgh which is the only other town that offers significant services such as food, accommodation, and bike maintenance (KI, 4). Key informant four stated:

“If the trail were to extend, there would almost be a guaranteed boost to the Lawrence economy as there would be a lot more people that would stop in the town. For people doing the whole track from Roxburgh Dam through to Waihola, Lawrence would be located right in the middle of long stretch of trail between Roxburgh and Milton that has very little services to offer cyclists, so Lawrence would be a good break for them to either stay the night or refuel their food and water supplies. And there would be a lot of flow on effects for other businesses like cafes, the shops on the main street and others that could pop up to service the cyclists.”

The Clutha Gold Trail Extension Group was established in 2015 in order to plan and develop the 63 kilometres extension to the Clutha Gold trail through to Waihola (Jones, 2016). Clutha Development came on board by employing a project manager to engage with landowners and develop the preferred track location (Tohill, 2017a). The preferred route would be made up of

sections of new track, pre-existing gravel roads and boardwalks along certain parts of the track (KI, 4). Consultation with landowners started in 2016 with a letter of intent to affected landowners along the proposed route of the extension (Jones, 2016). Key informant four, a member of the extension group, stated that by December of 2016:

“We now have the vast majority of landowners having formally signed up to this stage of the process and continue to work constructively with the remainder. As has been the experience with all other cycle trails this is a process that takes some time and can only proceed once all stakeholders are comfortable with the outcome.”

The project manager put the cost of the cycle trail extension around \$6.5 million (Tohill, 2017b). The Extension Group submitted a 10-year concept plan to New Zealand Cycle Trails Enhancement and Extension Fund in January of 2017, but no funding has yet been allocated to the project from this fund (KI, 4). In most cases around the country, the central government provides most of the funding for cycle trails as part of a national initiative to promote tourism, physical activity, and to be an economic driver for small towns (Jones, 2016; McMillan, 2015a, b; Tohill, 2017a, b, f). However, when the Clutha Gold Trail Extension Group put their case forward to the Ministry of Business, Innovation, and Employment (MBIE) in February 2017, the ministry indicated that central government funding was unlikely to be available for the project in the next five years (Tohill, 2017a). The group did receive good feedback on their extension project from the ministry in regard to how to plan and develop the cycle trail extension, but the group realised that their project was not a high priority for central government funding due to the location and number of users of the track (Tohill, 2017a, b, c, f). Key informant seven stated of central government funding for cycle trail projects that:

“The last funding round they allocated out \$25 million with \$250 million being applied for most of which went to central Otago because that is where the tourists are, and they are looking at doing up the tracks that are there.”

The feedback from the ministry included splitting the development of the extension into three phases, Lawrence to Waitahuna, Waitahuna to Milton and then Milton to Waihola, which the Extension Group then applied to their future planning (Tohill, 2017b). This development made the Extension Group look for other sources of funding and in May 2017, the group asked the CDC for \$30,000 towards the \$83,000 cost of developing a business case for the cycle trail extension (Tohill, 2017b). The business case would allow for a feasibility study and the

necessary engineering and surveying reports along the preferred route of the extension (Tohill, 2017a, b). Up to this point the extension planning and development had cost \$98,000 with money coming from the community, individuals and Clutha Development (Tohill, 2017a). On the first of June 2017, after consultation and development of the annual plan for 2017/2018 was complete, the CDC announced that they would grant the Clutha Gold Trail Extension Group the \$30,000 towards the business case for the extension of the cycle trail as well as a further \$10,000 per year for the next three years to continue to develop plans for the extension (Tohill, 2017b). The Council stated that although they were happy to pay money towards the business case and fully supported the idea of the cycle trail extension, they were not happy that local councils were having to provide large amounts of money to these kinds of projects and believed that the central government should be investing more into these schemes (Tohill, 2017b).

Key informant four stated that:

“The CDC is not able to provide much more than what they have already promised but there are other options out there for funding like private investment and fundraising and hopefully some central government money will eventually be freed up for us. I think we as a community group and Lawrence itself have done almost everything we could to get this project rolling and have made the extension a credible option for the future, but now we just need that funding to come through from somewhere.”

As of the fourth of October of 2017, which was the time of the last Lawrence/ Tuapeka community board meeting, there are no further updates on the progress of the Clutha Gold Cycle Trail extension (Lawrence/ Tuapeka Community Board, 2017). Work is continuing with the business case, feasibility study and consultation with landowners regarding the cycle trail extension, however, the project is still a long way from its \$6.5 million target to complete the project (Lawrence/ Tuapeka Community Board, 2017). Flooding occurred in Lawrence in July of 2017 which impacted many businesses along the northern side of the main street and also damaged a section of the Clutha Gold Cycle Trail near Lawrence (Lawrence/ Tuapeka Community Board, 2017). The section of the track was still closed as of October 2017, however, a grant is expected to be secured from a national fund to repair the damaged section of the track (Lawrence/ Tuapeka Community Board, 2017).

6.2.1.3 150th anniversary of the discovery of gold celebrations:

In 2011, Lawrence and the surrounding area celebrated the 150th anniversary of the discovery of gold in Gabriel's Gully near Lawrence (KI, 7). A festival was held over four days for the occasion which included many events which celebrated the history and legacy of Lawrence (KI, 7). The events included re-enactments of historical events, live music, guided tours of historical areas, the placement of a time capsule, food stalls, children's activities, traditional games and vintage car shows (McNaughton, 2011). The festival was seen as a cause to celebrate the history of the town and was not motivated by economic incentives (McNaughton, 2011). The event was organised by a community committee which developed the plans and funding for the festival over one year (McNaughton, 2011). The festival faced many issues with funding, including a lack of proposed government funding and Lotteries Commission grants (McNaughton, 2011). The original budget for the festival was around \$100,000 but after only \$5,000 was received from sponsors, plans around the event changed and a lot more reliance was put on volunteers within the community to run events during the festival (McNaughton, 2011). The CDC did provide funding to the event with an initial grant of \$35,000 and then also agreeing to underwrite the event once funding became an issue (McNaughton, 2011). A strong relationship was built between the Council and the community during the planning of the festival as the Council were very keen for the event to be a success and advertised it widely throughout the district and the country (KI, 4, 5 and 7). The organising of the festival was also a catalyst for upgrades and new developments throughout Lawrence in order to rejuvenate the town before the festival began (McNaughton, 2011). One of these developments included an upgrade to the main street of Lawrence which comprised of roading and bridge upgrades, more signage around the Gabriel's Gully entrance, and new car parking and planter boxes (McNaughton, 2011). The street upgrade project was a collaboration between the community board, community company and CDC who provided the majority of the funding through rate increases (McNaughton, 2011). Other developments that came out of the preparation for the festival included the development and upgrades of walking tracks around the town as well as new signs that provided historical information about Lawrence and the surrounding area (McNaughton, 2011).

The festival was largely viewed as a success by the community and the Council (KI, 1, 2, 5, 7, 8 and 9). Thousands of people attended throughout the four-day event, with people coming from throughout the Clutha District and from around the country (McNaughton, 2011). The business throughout the town received a high turnover from the weekend with some saying

their sales quadrupled over the weekend with cafes, accommodation and boutique stores receiving the most benefit from the festival (McNaughton, 2011). The community was also brought closer together by the festival with a strong sense of community spirit coming from the hard work and planning that went into the festival (McNaughton, 2011). Lawrence also benefitted from promotion throughout the festival and its planning with many people in the community believing that the word-of-mouth promotion that spread during and after the festival led to more people wanting to visit or revisit the town (McNaughton, 2011).

6.2.1.4 Main street parking upgrades:

A recent statement from the Lawrence/ Tuapeka Community Board read:

“With a view to increased tourists in the coming years, the Community Board is currently reviewing parking in the town. Council was asked to evaluate options and will report back to the Board in due course. At peak tourist times Ross Place can be very busy and short of parking. We want to encourage people to pull over as they are passing through, which they may not do if they cannot find a park on the main street. Bike parking is also being considered to cope with the ever-increasing number of cyclists visiting the town” (Lawrence/ Tuapeka Community Board, 2017).

This project comes at a time when the CDC is reviewing its by-laws on freedom camping and motorhome use across the district which could see a loosening of the laws to allow people to sleep in campervans and caravans at certain locations in towns across the District (Tohill, 2017c). This project is still in the development stages with early ideas being for new signage along the main street that would put restrictions on parking and inform tourists of parking locations throughout the town and Gabriel’s Gully. The project will also look into reinstating angle parking over parallel parking, and developing parking on streets other than the main street (Lawrence/ Tuapeka Community Board, 2017). The main issue of parking on the main street seems to come from when tourists are driving campervans or towing caravans as these can very quickly fill up the parking options on the main street and prevent further tourists from stopping in the town (KI, 9). Funding would likely be required for this project with the cost of new street markings, signs, and possible road workings (KI, 9). In the early stages of this project it is unclear where this funding would come from, the CDC is aware of the parking project but have made no statement on their position, this will likely come as more

development and planning is put into the project which is currently being done by individual members of both the community board and community company (KI, 5, 7 and 9).

6.2.1.5 Lawrence Community Wetlands:

The final project of note occurring in Lawrence are the plans to develop a wetlands area close to the current end of the Clutha Gold Trail (KI, 8). Planning for this project has been occurring since 2014 when plans were first taken to the community board by a working group interested in developing the Council owned land just outside of the town (MacLean, 2014). A landscape artist created a concept design for the wetlands which can be seen on the sign near the proposed site (Figure 17) (MacLean, 2014). The Bellview Wetlands Reserve is a wetland area that already exists just outside of Lawrence along Gabriel's Gully, however, this facility has limited access as it is on private land and only opened to the public on weekends (MacLean, 2014). The proposed community wetland is planned to be a lot more accessible to the residents of Lawrence and any tourists that come to the town (KI, 8). The 2.5-hectare site is planned to be host to a large number of native plant and water-life species including endangered galaxiid species, freshwater lobsters and oysters, as well as birds, insects and frogs (MacLean, 2014; White, 2016b). The proposal to the Lawrence/ Tuapeka Community Board resulted in their support as long as a feasibility test of the site was carried out to see if it was appropriate and viable to create a wetland on the proposed piece of land (MacLean, 2014; White, 2016b). The feasibility test which was carried out by the University of Otago was looking into how the land would react to having water on it that would be diverted from the nearby Tuapeka River and if there would be any risk of flooding to the nearby state highway 8 (White, 2016b). The results of this feasibility test have not yet been released, but the likely next stage of this project would be community consultation to see what the people of Lawrence would want from the wetlands (KI, 8). The project currently has the backing of Working Waters Trust, which is a conservation group that specialises in freshwater conservation projects throughout the South Island (MacLean, 2014; White, 2016b). The project is also supported by the Clutha Community Trust, the Community Board and Clutha Development (MacLean, 2014; White, 2016b). Key informant eight, who has been one of the drivers of the wetland project, stated:

“Although there is an element in there for tourism, at the end of the day the wetlands will be for the community. They will be the ones who build it and decide what to do with it. I'm sure it would be a great resource for the school,

to get kids learning about waterways and animals. And it would be a little something different that the town gets to show off and hopefully be proud of.”

If the Lawrence Community Wetlands project were to be completed it would likely take a few years as the results of the feasibility test is still yet to be announced and the funding, consultation and planning would need to be developed once the findings have been released (KI, 8).



Figure 17: Sign at the proposed location for the Lawrence Community Wetlands (personal collection).

6.2.2 Lawrence Community:

The Lawrence community has become characterised by its self-driven attitude when it comes to responding to issues of shrinkage in the town (KI, 1, 2, 5, 7, 8 and 9). The projects highlighted in the previous section are examples of the community operating almost independently to achieve goals and projects. Key informant five stated of the Lawrence community that:

“they are incredibly mobile, it is very easy to form a group and get a project done. We have working bees, fundraising events and group meetings going on

all the time, it is hard to keep up sometimes. We are very much in the mindset that if you want something done then you get up and do it.”

Key informant seven repeated this sentiment by saying:

“There is no way we could have achieved half the things we have done in the last ten or so years without the volunteers and sponsors within the community. Everyone is keen to either put an idea out there or put time and effort into other people’s ideas.”

Lawrence’s community spirit has even been acknowledged nationally with a nomination alongside two other towns for the community of the year at the start of 2017 (White, 2017c). Although Lawrence ultimately did not receive the award, the nomination represents a huge achievement for a town of just over 400 people (KI, 2). The community did win an award for the Tuapeka Aquatic Centre which is another element that stands out in the small town for the work and money that went into it as well as the quality of the final product (KI, 7). As epitomised by the Aquatic Centre development, the urban settlement of Lawrence relies on the farming community surrounding the town which adds another interesting dynamic to the town (KI, 7). Key informant seven stated:

“It is the farms that are in the hinterland surrounding the town that drives the community. Because the farmers have a vested interest in the town, they own and have large debts on their farms and they are there for the long haul and they can appreciate an investment in the community.”

Before tourism became a major industry for Lawrence, the town was primarily known as a farming service town with its distance from other towns and the services it offered meaning that farmers in the area were reliant on the town for easy access to supplies and services (KI, 5, 7 and 8). When discussing the subscription-based funding method for the Tuapeka Aquatic Centre and the response from local farmers, key informant seven stated:

“We got nothing out of the town itself because the people that live in the town are completely different, there are a lot of retirees, a few beneficiaries and people that work for lower wages so they could not come up with that sort of money.”

Key informant eight countered this point by saying:

“The town itself does seem to be somewhat limited in its functions due to the average age and income of the residents however the community does seem to be strong in providing support in other ways by donating their time and effort to projects as opposed to money which can be just as helpful.”

Key informant seven was also realistic about the situation with the farmers surrounding Lawrence:

“The farmers are a real asset to the community, but we realise that they are not a never-ending source of funding and they are also picky about what projects they support. We ran a pretty good campaign for the pool and there was a similar campaign for the sports grounds 30 years ago. If a funding drive only happens every 10 or 20 years, then it is not so bad, but if we were to go back this year for something like the cycle trail, then we would not get farmer buy-in. The farmers and their families would get less benefit from the cycle trail extension and it would also probably impact them if it passed through their land, so we are definitely going to have to look for other sources of funding for the cycle trail.”

Both the town and the farmers that surround it are very proud of organisations like the Lawrence Area School, Kindergarten and Tuapeka community health centre as they represent facilities that the town was able to retain despite the impacts of shrinkage over several decades (KI, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8).

6.2.2.1 Lawrence Area School:

The importance of the school to the community has recently been recognised with an announcement in September 2017 from the Ministry of Education stating that the Lawrence Area School would receive \$4 million in order to repair and modernise the current classrooms at the school which have been suffering from a lack of development over 60 years and had begun to leak (Yardley, 2017). The Lawrence Area School has maintained a steady primary school roll for many years and the primary school and Kindergarten are a vital component to the Lawrence community as children would have to travel at least half an hour to have access to similar facilities (KI, 1, 2 and 7). As stated in the context chapter, the secondary school section of the Area School has very low numbers due to most children going to boarding school for secondary school education in order to have greater access to opportunities (KI, 7).

This impacts the community as this portion of the population is often not represented as young people often do not return to the town after completing secondary school due to either going on to further study or due to the lack of employment opportunities in the town (KI, 5). The secondary school suffers from their small roll as it severely limits the opportunities for the secondary school students for things such as sports and specialist subjects (KI, 7). Most key informants believed the school was in a stable condition although if the secondary school roll were to decrease much further, then some problems may arise (KI, 1, 4, 5, 7 and 8).

6.2.2.2 Tuapeka Community Health Centre:

Many key informants were worried about the future of the Tuapeka community health centre as it is facing some challenges to running as a viable business (KI, 1, 2, 5, 6, 7 and 8). The healthcare facility was first brought by the community in the mid-1990s after government cuts meant that the facility was no longer viable for the government to run (KI, 6). The facility was just as important to the community at the time as it is today so after purchasing the facility from the government \$1 million was raised to update the buildings and equipment (KI, 6). At the time, the community purchase of the facility from the state and the establishment of the community health trust was unique in the country and became a model for other communities facing similar cuts (Pearce & Dorling, 2006). The success of the initiative in the 1990s revealed the power of proactive community action and helped to stabilise the situation in the town which was experiencing an economic downturn and a loss of state support (KI, 6). The health centre runs as a business with money coming in from the doctors and surgery through the capitation base, which is the number of people registered to use the health services at the facility, and funding from the District Health Board (DHB) and other sources covers the costs of the rest home and respite beds (KI, 6). The facility has 23 workers including one General Practitioner, registered nurses, district nurses, cooks, administration staff, health centre aids and, maintenance and cleaning staff (KI, 6). The facility also runs a 'meals on wheels' service for the surrounding area and runs the pharmacy in the town as well (KI, 6). It is recommended for a facility of the size of the Tuapeka health centre, for there to be around 1,300-1,400 people registered at the facility however currently the health centre only has 1,033 registered patients (KI, 6). The health centre has tried hard to get more people registered, as this would lead to more money coming in however there are actually few people left within the area who are not registered to the centre the health centre, so it is unlikely to be successful through that channel (KI, 6). However, there are options for

increasing the number of beds in the rest home and respite facilities that could lead to a more feasible business structure (KI, 6). The respite beds are filled over 60% of the year and patients are not charged for using the respite beds (KI, 6). Since funding started to decrease, the facility has recorded four straight years of a deficit in its budgets (KI, 6). The DHB wanted to take all of the funding away from the facility in 2016, but it was eventually negotiated that until the 31st of August 2018 only 9% of funding would be removed (KI, 6). The resident doctor left in 2016, but the facility was lucky to get a replacement so that they did not have to rely on doctors travelling from out of town or shorter opening hours (White, 2016c).

A report was commissioned in 2016 by a research group in Wellington that looked into the feasibility of continuing the Tuapeka community health centre and the report that was generated had four possible options for the facility. The first option was to shut the facility down at a cost of around \$20,000 (KI, 6). The second option was to split up the medical centre and rest home facility as these services may operate better independently (KI, 6). The third option was to invest money into expanding the facility to allow for more beds and hopefully a more feasible business (KI, 6). And the final option was to keep the status quo, which was viewed by both the research group and the healthcare facility as the worst option (KI, 6). Option three is the one that is being investigated the most at the moment with plans to increase the rest home bed numbers to around fourteen by adding on a new wing to the facility for a cost of around \$2 million (KI, 6). As long as the people that end up in the beds, meet the DHB requirements for being in the facility, then the DHB will provide funding for those people to be there. Key informant six, a manager at the health centre, stated:

“There is no guarantee that these beds would always be full but over the last several years we have never had to advertise for when a bed becomes available and there is a growing interest in rest home care, especially with the ageing population in the town.”

A survey was undertaken by the Tuapeka community health board in 2015 and, of the residents in Lawrence, those over 65 had a keen interest in keeping both the health centre and rest home open as many wished to retire in Lawrence and wanted access to the services that they provided (KI, 6). The community has begun to fundraise for the expansion of the health centre to allow for more beds (KI, 6). The car, lions and golf clubs have had fundraising events and around \$70,000 have been raised so far (KI, 6). Key informant six stated that:

“Its good that there has been a show of support by the community, but we have to make sure that if we go ahead with the expansion of the health centre, that it is feasible because otherwise, we could ask the community and others for \$2 million and then the next year we have to shut down anyway because the business cannot function. So, it is all about doing it for the right reasons and not just because we feel really passionate about it which I know a lot of people do.”

The fundraising effort for the Aquatic Centre may also have hurt the chances of developing the health centre as it may be difficult to go back to the community to ask for another \$2 million so soon after doing it for the Aquatic Centre development (KI, 6, 7 and 8).

6.2.3 Lawrence Community Leaders:

Although there are some individuals that play important roles in leading the Lawrence community, the town seems to be led by committee as opposed to individuals (KI, 1, 2, 5, 7 and 8). The Lawrence/ Tuapeka Community Board and the Community Company are the driving force behind the projects and responses to shrinkage in the community (KI, 1, 5, 7, 8 and 9). The community board allows for a democratic and consultative approach to the leadership of the community and its developments (KI, 1, 5, 7 and 9). Members of the community board are elected into the role by the community and the community board offers an effective interface between the community and the CDC with monthly meetings that are either held with members of the CDC or are reported back to the CDC (KI, 1, 5 and 7). Lawrence is unique for a small town to have its own community board, but it is necessary for the town as it is far removed from the rest of the district (KI, 1, 2, 5, and 7). Key informant seven, a member of the community board, stated:

“We are often in a position where we can bring issues forward to the community. But we do not drive it ourselves. If the community will not get behind an idea, then we are wasting our time as a board and the same applies to the Council. So, we help to organise committees that look after developments and we help with the interactions with the Council and with things such as fundraising and community connections.”

The community company also plays an important role in the town as it runs the information centre in Lawrence and carries out a lot of fundraising drives for projects around the town

(KI, 7 and 9). Some projects like the Lawrence Community Wetlands and the Clutha Gold Trail extension have come from individuals and groups outside of these two organisations however it seems that the community board and company are always a vital aspect of successful projects in the town (KI, 8). Many projects in Lawrence including the Tuapeka Aquatic Centre development and the 150th anniversary festival have established their own committees to oversee the development with the community board providing a conduit to the Council for advice and support and the community company aiding in funding efforts (KI, 2, 5, 7 and 9).

6.2.4 Lawrence and the Clutha District Council:

The CDC is viewed very positively in the town as they have helped with funding and planning for many projects in Lawrence and through the community board they are able to have close connections to the community and their needs (KI, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9). Key informant five stated:

“The community board has been able to be around for so long because the Council supports it and sees it as necessary for an effective relationship with Lawrence as we are so far away from other towns in the District, especially Balclutha.”

The CDC’s role in the street upgrades before the 150th anniversary festival and the Tuapeka Aquatic Centre were greatly appreciated by members of the community (KI, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9). However, the community has shown some animosity towards the prospect of any further rates increases from council funding (KI, 6). Almost all of the funding from the CDC has come in the form of rates increases for the community which can have a heavy impact on a town with a low average income (KI, 6 and 7). Key informant seven stated:

“The Council and the community has invested a lot in this town in recent years and we all want to see it be successful, but we must continue to be realistic and plan our developments appropriately in order to reach our goals without going bankrupt.”

6.3 Discussion:

6.3.1 The impact of shrinkage on Lawrence:

The context chapter highlighted that Lawrence has faced issues with shrinkage dating back to its days as a gold mining town. The decrease in population from 11,500 in 1862 to 414 in 2013 is dramatic but the fact that it occurred over 151 years shows the continuous challenges that Lawrence has had to face throughout its history. The loss of population has paralleled the continued downturn in Lawrence's economy with the gold mines drying up, forestry and farming facing varying levels of profitability over the decades and tourism being a somewhat unreliable industry for the town. This gradual shrinkage can be common for urban centres that have varying industries but, for whatever reason, cannot sustain them for long periods of time (Bontje & Musterd, 2012; Haase *et al.*, 2014; Hospers, 2013; Luescher & Shetty, 2013; Martinez-Fernandez, Audirac, *et al.*, 2012; Reckien & Martinez-Fernandez, 2011).

Lawrence's location and size are the most likely factors that have caused both the decline and lack of growth in the town (Bell & Jayne, 2006; Bowns, 2013; Carlton-Laney, Edwards & Reid, 1999; Collits, 2000; Daniels, 1989; Hinderink & Titus, 2002; Knox & Mayer, 2013; Vaz *et al.*, 2016). The location and size of Lawrence means it is an asset for the surrounding community and farmers but the location of the town is also a liability for creating growth (Collits, 2000). Businesses in the town reach a growth limit due to the limit on the number of people that have access to that business and the resources that the business has access to whilst being in a relatively remote location (Carlton-Laney, Edwards & Reid, 1999; Collits, 2000; Daniels, 1989). This can be seen in the high turnover of businesses such as cafes and boutique stores on the main street and the manufacturing business which left the town in 2013 due to growing too big for the town and needing better access to resources to continue to grow. The limiting factors of location and size also impact employment opportunities as these are restricted by what businesses can feasibly run in the town (Collits, 2000; Conradson & Pawson, 1997; Gilroy, 2013; Hinderink & Titus, 2002; Knox & Mayer, 2013). This can be seen in the lack of opportunities for youth employment in Lawrence resulting in the majority of this portion of the population leaving the town.

Despite losing a large proportion of its population and having an unstable economy for many years, it is surprising what the town has managed to hold on to in terms of business, services, and facilities. The school, some main street buildings and churches which are still in use have been around for over 100 years and the town has also retained a petrol station, two food stores, several cafes and restaurants, supply stores and services such as mechanics,

accommodation, an ATM, a health centre, and a kindergarten. The continued survival of the town likely comes down to a number of factors including its isolation from other towns, the state highway, its economy and its community (Brumbach, 2007; Carlton-Laney, Edwards & Reid, 1999; Collits, 2000; Conradson & Pawson, 1997; Daniels, 1989; Gilroy, 2013; Hinderink & Titus, 2002; Knox & Mayer, 2013; O'Toole & Burdess, 2004). The isolation from other towns means that farmers, businesses, tourists, and residents have little option but to use the services that Lawrence has to offer. Although this may not allow for growth, a steady customer or user base does allow for a somewhat stable economy (Carlton-Laney, Edwards & Reid, 1999; Collits, 2000; Gilroy, 2013; Knox & Mayer, 2013). For Lawrence, this does not just apply to businesses but also organisations such as the area school, the kindergarten, and the aquatic centre. With a semi-stable economy, a population can sustain itself in a small town although they may remain vulnerable to small shifts in the economy (Carlton-Laney, Edwards & Reid, 1999; Collits, 2000; Daniels, 1989; Knox & Mayer, 2013). This can be seen in Lawrence with the impact of the manufacturing business that left the town in 2013. Although it was a major employer in the town and provided an economic driver in the town, the town was able to survive the business leaving due to the established economy in Lawrence. The highway that runs through Lawrence has also been a lifeline for the town as it can always be relied upon for a supply of tourists and customers. The community that can grow from a stable population and economy in a small and isolated town can be a strong one as it can be very self-motivated and self-sustaining (Bowns, 2013; Brumbach, 2007; Carlton-Laney, Edwards & Reid, 1999; Collits, 2000; Knox & Mayer, 2013; O'Toole & Burdess, 2004). Lawrence represents many characteristics of a strong community through the variety of projects it has planned and has been able to achieve in recent years and the leadership and support that comes from the community board and company and the farmers that surround the township.

6.3.2 Tuapeka Aquatic Centre:

A \$2.4 million pool could be viewed as a very inappropriate investment for a town of just over 400 people that has faced issues with shrinkage (Almstedt *et al.*, 2014; Barnes & Hayter, 1992; McMillan, 2015a, b; Pallagst, 2009). A \$2.4 million pool would likely be a big investment for any town and council let alone one that has been dealing with shrinkage (Carlton-Laney, Edwards & Reid, 1999; Collits, 2000; Daniels, 1989; Hinderink & Titus, 2002; Knox & Mayer, 2013). However, the unique approach that went into funding the

aquatic centre allowed it to have less of an impact on the Lawrence community and the CDC. By using a multitude of funding streams and the unique subscription-based donations to the project, the community was able to reach their funding goals relatively quickly and with no debt apart from what will be paid back to the Council in rates. Fundraising has been a common theme in the responses to shrinkage seen in Lawrence, Kaitangata and many other small towns as full funding from the central or local government rarely occurs for projects that are instigated by the community (Bowns, 2013; Brumbach, 2007; Collits, 2000; Daniels, 1989; Gilroy, 2013; Knox & Mayer, 2013; Mattson, 1997; O'Toole & Burdess, 2004; Rogers, 2005; Vaz *et al.*, 2016; Woodhouse, 2006). Outside of government contributions, fundraising in small towns tends to take the form of events where people and or business donate their services in order for the proceeds of the event to go towards the fundraising effort (Carlton-Laney, Edwards & Reid, 1999). Fundraising can also occur in more direct ways where people in the town are asked to donate to the cause (Bowns, 2013; Collits, 2000). What was unique about the fundraising effort for the aquatic centre was the plan to target specific members of the community, in this case farmers, who could afford to donate the large amounts of money that were required for the project and approach them with a specific plan for how much they would pay and how they could pay off their donation. The organising committee for the Tuapeka Aquatic Centre understood that they needed a lot of donations to complete the project as planned, however, they also realised that getting large donations would be difficult for a town with a median income of \$24,300 (KI, 7). However, what the committee also realised was that the town of Lawrence was surrounded by farmers who cared a lot about the town as it was their main source for services and access to facilities such as the swimming pool (KI, 7). The farmers also have a higher income than the townspeople and also access to flexible mortgages that would allow them to collectively donate a relatively large amount to the aquatic centre project (KI, 7). The fundraising subscription method was a success for the project as a relatively large number of farmers signed up which allowed for the right amount of funding to be achieved for the aquatic centre development to get underway (KI, 7). Fundraising is a necessary strategy for shrinking small towns to employ when trying to undertake a community response to shrinkage however it is often a difficult challenge to overcome as the situations these towns face due to shrinkage often prevents them from being able to spend a lot of money (Bowns, 2013; Brumbach, 2007; Carlton-Laney, Edwards & Reid, 1999; Collits, 2000; Daniels, 1989; Knox & Mayer, 2013; Vaz *et al.*, 2016). However, in the case of the Tuapeka Aquatic Centre, the leaders of the project were able to utilise the characteristics of the demography of Lawrence to carry out fundraising effectively

to achieve the funding goals of the project. However, the committee behind the aquatic centre project would not have been successful if the community were not fully invested in the project. The farmers that donated relatively large amounts of money to the project were likely driven by wanting to see Lawrence succeed by receiving a high quality aquatic facility that could benefit the whole community (Bowns, 2013; Brumbach, 2007; Carlton-Laney, Edwards & Reid, 1999; Collits, 2000; Daniels, 1989; Hinderink & Titus, 2002; Knox & Mayer, 2013; O'Toole & Burdess, 2004; Woodhouse, 2006).

Although the impact of the cost of the Tuapeka Aquatic Centre project was mitigated through the well-planned funding scheme, it could still be argued that the project was inappropriate for a small shrinking town as the money raised for the development could have gone to a project that may have more directly benefitted those who were suffering from the impacts of shrinkage or sought to reverse decline in Lawrence. The Tuapeka community health centre is an example of a facility that has been heavily impacted by shrinkage and will likely require a large amount of funding to continue to operate as an important facility for the surrounding community. Although a community pool can provide a lot to a town's community and economy and the old Lawrence pool was in need of redevelopment, there can be strong points made against spending a relatively large amount of money on such a project when Lawrence is suffering from the impacts of shrinkage (McMillan, 2015a, b; Shetty & Luescher, 2010; Wiechmann & Pallagst, 2012; Wilson, 2014). If the town was able to employ the subscription funding method for every community project that came along, then there may not be an argument about the appropriateness of what funding went towards, but it is clear that the farmers are not a never-ending supply of funding and they, along with any other donors must believe in the project and that it is going to benefit them and the community. Perhaps in the future more community consultation could be undertaken to try and decide on the level of funding that should go towards certain projects and when to employ the subscription funding method in order to achieve the most effective funding for each project (Maier, 2001; Markey, Halseth & Manson, 2008; McMillan, 2015a, b; Rutledge *et al.*, 2008; Shortall, 2008).

The Tuapeka Aquatic Centre project appears to be an investment in the community as opposed to growth as the facility is unlikely to bring new people into the town or generate large amounts of income (Bowns, 2013; Carlton-Laney, Edwards & Reid, 1999; Hospers, 2013; Hospers & Reverda, 2015; McMillan, 2015a, b). The aquatic centre has already provided a lot to the spirit and relationships of the Lawrence community as it allows the community to come together and enjoy spending time at the facility (KI, 1, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9).

The planning and execution of the Tuapeka Aquatic Centre development highlight the leadership, community spirit and cooperation within Lawrence and with organisations such as the CDC. Despite some issues around the appropriateness of the project, the facility will likely be an asset for the community for many years to come and showcase what the community, its leaders and the CDC can achieve in response to shrinkage.

6.3.3 Clutha Gold Cycle Trail Extension:

The Clutha Gold Cycle Trail extension has a lot of potential to benefit Lawrence by bringing in more tourists and business for the town than the existing trail currently provides (Jones, 2016; Kenyon & Black, 2001; McMillan, 2015a, b; McNaughton, 2011; Ritchie, 1998; Ritchie & Hall, 1999). However, the process of establishing a cycle trail is a long and difficult one, especially when funding has been a major issue for the extension project (Jones, 2016; Reus, 2012; Tohill, 2017a, b, c, f). The establishment of the current stretch of the Clutha Gold Trail took several years and required the central government to fund almost 70% (\$3.8 million) of the cost of the project (Jones, 2016; Reus, 2012). However, for the extension, it appears that the project will not have access to as much central government funding as appeals for funding from the central government have been unsuccessful in securing the amount required to start the extension project. Apart from the funding, the project does seem to be progressing well with interest and financial support coming from the Tuapeka/ Lawrence Community Board, the CDC, Clutha Development and the Lawrence community and businesses. Planning the development of the trail and consulting with affected landowners has been a critical aspect of the project so far and it appears that if funding were to become available, then the extension work would be able to begin relatively soon after.

The Otago rail trail and other cycle and walking trails around New Zealand have been shown to be beneficial for small towns on or near these tracks as they provide opportunities for tourists to go to these areas and spend money (McMillan, 2015a, b; McNaughton, 2011; Ritchie, 1998; Ritchie & Hall, 1999). Cycle trails and similar tourism activities have been the focus of central government investment in small rural towns in New Zealand and other countries around the world to develop regional economies (Ritchie, 1998; Ritchie & Hall, 1999). Cycle trails offer a sustainable and small-scale version of tourism for small towns and, depending on the pre-existing infrastructure, can be relatively cheap compared to other tourism ventures (Ritchie, 1998; Ritchie & Hall, 1999). A report published by Tourism New

Zealand in 2013 showed that cycle tourism's popularity is increasing for tourists visiting New Zealand and that these tourists spend more time and money on average during their trips than non-cycling tourists (Tourism New Zealand, 2013). The report also showed that cycle tourists enjoy visiting the South Island with the Canterbury, Central Otago and the West Coast regions making up large proportions of destinations for cycle tourists (Tourism New Zealand, 2013). These figures give credibility to the benefits that can be provided by cycle trails and why extending the Clutha Gold Trail could provide a substantial economic boost to Lawrence.

The Clutha Gold Trail extension could represent a significant response to the impacts of shrinkage in Lawrence (Carlton-Laney, Edwards & Reid, 1999; Collits, 2000; Daniels, 1989; Hinderink & Titus, 2002; Kenyon & Black, 2001; Knox & Mayer, 2013; McMillan, 2015a, b; Ritchie, 1998; Ritchie & Hall, 1999). The community has realised that a cycle trail can provide a flow of tourists into the town who have reason to spend money in the form of accommodation or supplies however the current trail is not laid out in a way that can provide these benefits to the town thus making an extension necessary for Lawrence to use the cycle trail as an opportunity for growth and response to shrinkage. Although there is a lot of initial investment needed to extend the cycle trail, the statistics show that there is a lower risk of the project failing due to cycle tourism being a strong industry in New Zealand (McMillan, 2015a, b; McNaughton, 2011; Ritchie, 1998; Ritchie & Hall, 1999; Tourism New Zealand, 2013). However, it appears that the Clutha Gold Trail extension plan has not come at a favourable time for receiving funding. The CDC supports the idea but is not willing to invest a lot of money into the project due to them believing that the central government should be providing the funding. The central government, through the MBIE, has stated that the project is not of high priority for funding due to more used tracks applying for grants. The Lawrence community and businesses are unlikely to be able to afford the cost of the extension due to low incomes. Further, the farmers surrounding the town may show less support for the project as the extension has less personal benefit for them and the trail may also negatively affect some of them by going through their properties. In addition, they have relatively recently invested a lot into the community via the aquatic centre and, so they may be unwilling or unable to donate more money for a few years. These reasons show why the successful completion of the Clutha Gold Trail extension will be so difficult despite the reality that this project has one of the most well-reasoned arguments for its benefits for Lawrence as a response to the impacts of shrinkage. Possibly the best option going forward, which is being

implemented by the Clutha Gold Trail Extension Group, is to develop the extension as a business for profit in order to entice investment. It is unclear what impact this might have on the use of the trail in the future, but most cycle trails around New Zealand come with some cost for use so the impact may be marginal (Ritchie, 1998; Ritchie & Hall, 1999; Tourism New Zealand, 2013). The Clutha Gold Trail extension is a unique opportunity for Lawrence's economy and community and if the project is successful, it could go a long way to growing the town and reducing the impacts it has faced from shrinkage.

6.3.4 150th anniversary of the discovery of gold celebrations:

One-off events are often not very effective in responding to shrinkage as the reasons for shrinkage in small towns are systemic and complicated and thus cannot be resolved from a single event (Bowns, 2013). However, over the short term, depending on the success of the event, there can be some benefits gained from events that seek to bring communities together and/ or provide a boost to the economy (Bowns, 2013; McMillan, 2015a, b; McNaughton, 2011; Rutledge *et al.*, 2008). In the case of the 150th anniversary festival in Lawrence, the main aim was not to promote economic growth but simply to celebrate the heritage and history of Lawrence and the surrounding area and the resulting benefits for the local businesses and community spirit were added bonuses to the successful event. Large one-off events can come with a lot of supplementary activities and benefits in the lead up to the event as well as ones that occur after the event (Barnes & Hayter, 1992; Bowns, 2013; Luescher & Shetty, 2013; Rutledge *et al.*, 2008). The festival in Lawrence ended up as not just one response to shrinkage but had flow-on effects that benefitted the town and eased the impacts of shrinkage. The main street and walking track upgrades that were carried out by the community and the CDC allowed for a beautification of the town in the lead up to the festival, but the impacts of this development have continued for Lawrence long past the festival. The benefits for businesses during the festival allowed for a short-term boost to the economy that would have helped many in the community. The effect of word-of-mouth reviews of the festival and the town would likely have caused some people to visit or revisit Lawrence after the event which would have allowed the extension of the benefits from the festival. The benefits that a shrinking small town community can receive from an event such as the festival are also meaningful and the boost to community spirit and relationships can help with the planning of future projects (Barnes & Hayter, 1992; Brumbach, 2007; Mattson, 1997; O'Toole & Burdess, 2004; Sampson, 2005; Wilson, 2014). Although one-off events

may not be the answer to resolving all of the issues a small town may face from shrinkage, they can provide short-term economic boosts and have longer-term impacts on the community and development of the town.

6.3.5 Main street parking upgrades:

The plans for parking upgrades on the main street show the Lawrence community's ability and willingness to adapt to changes in order to provide for a response to shrinkage. Parking upgrades along the main street will allow for the increasing use of campervans and caravans to be accommodated by the town and allow Lawrence to take full advantage of the opportunity of tourism and visitors to the town. Lawrence has already been struggling with a lack of vehicle traffic due to the airports in the major cities either side of the town (Queenstown and Dunedin), and so it makes sense that they should try to get as many people passing through the town in vehicles to stop and parking upgrades will allow this. The main highway through the town has been an important aspect of the continued survival of Lawrence's economy and community and for the highway to remain influential in Lawrence it must be developed and adapted in order to receive the most effective use of it (Conradson & Pawson, 1997; Daniels, 1989; Hinderink & Titus, 2002; Panelli, Stolte & Bedford, 2003). This project highlights the forward-thinking nature of the Lawrence community and its leaders as they are aware of issues that they are facing and may face in the future and they are willing to plan and act before these issues are exacerbated. This is an important characteristic for a shrinking town and its leaders to have as it allows for better planning, resilience and adaptability around the issues caused by shrinkage which can lessen the impacts of shrinkage on the economy and community of the town (Almstedt *et al.*, 2014; Barnes & Hayter, 1992; Bowns, 2013; Brumbach, 2007; Carlton-Laney, Edwards & Reid, 1999; Hinderink & Titus, 2002; Kenyon & Black, 2001; Markey, Halseth & Manson, 2008).

6.3.6 Lawrence Community Wetlands:

The Lawrence community wetlands project represents another planned investment in the Lawrence community by providing them with a unique facility that seeks to build community spirit and relationships. Alongside the Tuapeka Aquatic Centre, the community wetlands highlight the willingness of the Lawrence community and its leaders to invest in itself as a response to shrinkage as opposed to just focusing on growth strategies. Self-investment as a

response to shrinkage can be just as effective as growth strategies when it comes to reducing the negative impacts of shrinkage (Barnes & Hayter, 1992; Bowns, 2013; Haase *et al.*, 2014; Hospers, 2013; Luescher & Shetty, 2013). Investing in the community constitutes an accepting or consolidating strategy as the overall result is not to attract new human or economic capital but rather maintain and retain these elements in the current community for a better quality of life for the residents (Barnes & Hayter, 1992; Bowns, 2013; Hospers & Reverda, 2015; Luescher & Shetty, 2013; Martinez-Fernandez, Kubo, *et al.*, 2012; McMillan, 2015a, b). The wetlands will provide an educational opportunity for children and the school in Lawrence as well as offering a recreational area for the whole community and visitors to the town. The community will benefit as the wetlands will promote interactions within the community and provide another feature in the town's environment that the community can be proud of. The planning that has gone into the Lawrence community wetlands including bringing onboard groups like Working Wetlands Trust and landscape architects and the thorough feasibility test that was carried out by the University of Otago, shows that the Lawrence community and its leaders are careful in their considerations for projects and try to do as much as possible to make sure that projects and responses to shrinkage are feasible and effective. The planned consultation with the community, who are expected to play a vital part in planning and building the wetlands, is another positive characteristic of this project and the dynamic of the Lawrence community. If the Lawrence community wetlands were to be successfully completed, it would likely add a unique feature to the Lawrence landscape and provide an effective response to shrinkage through the strengthening of the Lawrence community.

6.3.7 Tuapeka Community Health Centre:

The Tuapeka Community Health centre plays a vital role in the Lawrence community, not just in providing health services to the residents of the town but also in representing the strength of the community to retain the facility despite a large number of negative issues it has faced from shrinkage for many years. Facilities and services such as healthcare, education and banking can be very important for small towns as they provide a level of structure to a community which is important for a well-functioning economy and society in the town (Bowns, 2013; Carlton-Laney, Edwards & Reid, 1999; Collits, 2000; Daniels, 1989; Gilroy, 2013; Hinderink & Titus, 2002; Kenyon & Black, 2001; Knox & Mayer, 2013; Vaz *et al.*, 2016). For this reason, it is important that Lawrence should continue to try and support the

facility through its current funding issues, as losing the facility could have a number of negative impacts on the community. If the facility were to close, it is likely that the 23 employees at the health centre would have to leave the town in order to find new employment. If these employees also have family members, then this constitutes a large portion of the population of Lawrence that would be leaving, and this would have flow-on effects with the businesses in the town losing customers and organisations like the school losing members as well. Although Lawrence did survive relatively intact from the loss of the manufacturing company in 2013, which did employ more people than the health centre, the majority of these workers were able to stay in Lawrence whilst remaining employed which may be less likely for more specialised healthcare work (KI, 6). Residents of Lawrence or the surrounding area who are dependent on the healthcare facility for health services may also have to leave the area if the facility were to close in order to be closer to health services. With the ageing population in Lawrence, this too could represent a large proportion of the population who can no longer feasibly live in Lawrence due to their health needs not being met. For all of these reasons, a large effort needs to be made to try and retain the health centre in Lawrence.

Unfortunately, the issues that the Tuapeka Community Health Centre is facing have come at a time when large-scale fundraising in Lawrence may be difficult. The recent community funding that went into the Tuapeka Aquatic Centre and the Council rates increases that also accompanied this project and the main street upgrades preceding the 150th anniversary festival has put a large cost burden on the Lawrence community, many of whom earn below the national average income. Funding from the CDC that doesn't involve a rates increase is also unlikely to support the health centre. The DHB, which currently provides the majority of the funding for the facility, has indicated that their funding may not be guaranteed past August 2018. This, accompanied with the estimated cost of \$2 million for the necessary redevelopment of the health centre, means it is going to be a difficult process for a solution to be found to retain the health centre. Although the health centre is a very worthy cause to receive funding from the community, it may be too difficult to ask the townspeople or surrounding farmers to fully fund the work needed to retain the health centre.

Going forward, significant consultation needs to occur between the health centre, the DHB, the CDC, the community board and company and the community itself in order to decide the best option for the health centre. Meaningful consultation between all affected parties is essential to coming to fair and reasonable decisions on responses to shrinkage in small towns

and will be required in this situation with the Tuapeka Community Health Centre (Barnes & Hayter, 1992; Brumbach, 2007; Hospers, 2013; Mattson, 1997; O'Toole & Burdess, 2004; Wilson, 2014). The community needs to be clear about how much they are willing to contribute to the funding of the health centre development either through direct fundraising or through rates increases from a council grant. It needs to be decided whether the subscription-based funding method that was used for the Tuapeka Aquatic Centre should be used for the health centre project and how much will be asked for and over what period of time will payments be received under this method. The committee that runs the health centre and the DHB will need to create a clear plan going forward about how much funding is required and what options are available to keep the facility running. Thankfully, the Lawrence community, its leaders and the CDC have shown on multiple occasions that they are willing to plan and develop strategies that will respond to the issues created by shrinkage and these skills will be needed to create the necessary plans to retain the Tuapeka Community Health Centre in the Lawrence community. It is uncertain what the future of the health centre will be but given the strength of the Lawrence community and the relationships between its leaders and the CDC, hopefully, the town will try everything it can to retain this important facility.

6.4 Summary:

The responses to shrinkage that have occurred or have been planned in Lawrence over the last decade highlight the unique qualities of the town. Lawrence's unique location in the district has given rise to a community that is largely self-reliant on responding to shrinkage issues although it does have a very strong relationship with the CDC and Clutha Development. The Lawrence/ Tuapeka Community Board and Company represent strong leadership in the Lawrence community and have been involved to some degree in every response the town has had to shrinkage. Despite the small population and isolation of Lawrence, the town has managed to retain organisations and services such as the school, the health centre and several businesses on the main street that has allowed it to maintain a reasonably stable economy with a reliant customer base including the farmers that surround the town. The strength of Lawrence's economy and community were tested with the loss of a major manufacturing company in 2013, however, the town managed to survive relatively intact from this loss.

Lawrence invests a lot into its community with the majority of its responses to shrinkage taking the form of projects that provide a good quality of life for the residents of the town including the Tuapeka Aquatic Centre, the Lawrence Community Wetlands, and the 150th anniversary festival. All of these projects were largely planned, funded, and carried out by the Lawrence community with the help of volunteers and local fundraising. Lawrence has also been targeting areas of growth around the town including the Clutha Gold Trail extension and the parking upgrades on the main street. Both of these projects are trying to capitalise on the opportunity that tourism provides the town by more effectively getting tourists to pass through the town and stop to use the town's businesses and services.

Three out of the five projects highlighted in this section are still in the development stage which shows the future potential that Lawrence has to reduce the negative impacts of shrinkage. Lawrence's fight to retain its health centre will also be a significant event in the near future for the town. Lawrence is likely to continue to suffer employment issues, especially around youth unless a major boost to the economy comes from a project such as the Clutha Gold Trail extension being successfully completed. Lawrence is also unlikely to see a significant increase in its population unless it receives a boost to the economy as there are few current reasons why a person would move to the town unless they were retiring or had a specific employment opportunity in the town. The systemic issues caused by shrinkage in Lawrence are unlikely to change unless the town receives a major boost to its economy, however, if the community, its leaders, and the CDC continue to work together effectively on projects that seek to increase the quality of life and grow the town's tourism opportunities and economy then Lawrence will have a good chance of decreasing the negative impacts caused by shrinkage.

7. Conclusion

7.1 Introduction:

Small town shrinkage is a growing phenomenon in developed countries and a growing amount of academic literature is focusing on the causes, impacts and responses to small town shrinkage (Bontje & Musterd, 2012; Bowns, 2013; Carlton-Laney, Edwards & Reid, 1999; Collits, 2000; Daniels, 1989; Haase *et al.*, 2014; Hinderink & Titus, 2002; Hospers, 2013; Kenyon & Black, 2001; Knox & Mayer, 2013; Weaver *et al.*, 2016; Wiechmann & Pallagst, 2012). International trends such as globalisation, urbanisation and deindustrialisation are seen to be driving the impacts that some small towns are facing from shrinkage (Bell & Jayne, 2006; Friedrichs, 1993; Haase *et al.*, 2014; Hinderink & Titus, 2002; Luescher & Shetty, 2013; Martinez-Fernandez, Audirac, *et al.*, 2012; Pallagst, 2009; Weaver *et al.*, 2016; Yeung, 2002). However, each small town that suffers from shrinkage also has a set of unique internal and external factors that are impacting its economy and population (Friedrichs, 1993; Haase *et al.*, 2014; Hinderink & Titus, 2002; Luescher & Shetty, 2013). These factors normally relate to the history of the town, its geography, and the dynamic both within the town itself and with nearby towns or cities (Friedrichs, 1993; Haase *et al.*, 2014; Hinderink & Titus, 2002; Luescher & Shetty, 2013). The aim of this research was to examine, through the use of two case study towns, the causes and level of impacts from shrinkage in small towns and how the community and local authority respond to these issues. This research has used the guiding principles derived from the contemporary academic literature on small town shrinkage to construct a study to achieve this aim.

The Clutha District in the Otago Region of the South Island in New Zealand, and specifically the towns of Kaitangata and Lawrence were chosen for this research because they both exemplify some of the issues relating to small town shrinkage as well as offering some unique case studies of the impacts of and responses to shrinkage and the dynamic within small town communities. This research took place at a time when both Kaitangata and Lawrence had been suffering from the impacts of shrinkage for several decades but also when a number of projects instigated in response to shrinkage had been completed or were in development. Kaitangata and Lawrence's populations and economies have been in a downward spiral for a long time but recently, thanks to effective collaboration between community leaders, the CDC, Clutha

Development and local businesses, these two towns have begun to respond to shrinkage and try to decrease the negative impacts it has on the towns and their residents. The focus of this research has been on these community projects that have attempted to respond to shrinkage and the dynamic which exists within these small towns and between the community leaders, the CDC, and other groups.

This chapter will summarise the key findings of this research, discuss this research's contribution to both academic literature and the towns and council that have been the focus of the study. Some recommendations and future directions of responses to shrinkage will also be included in this chapter. This research has explored the complicated settings and frameworks in which small town shrinkage occurs and the case study towns have generated results that highlight the unique facets of communities, leaders, and local authorities in relation to small town shrinkage. The findings and summary of this research seek to validate the rationale of carrying out this study and validate its contribution to the theoretical framework of small town shrinkage and the case study towns.

7.2 Summary of Key Findings:

This research has generated a range of findings that relate to the causes of shrinkage in Kaitangata and Lawrence, how these towns have been impacted by shrinkage and how their communities, leaders and local authority have responded to these issues. Firstly, these findings reflect broader international and national factors that have influenced shrinkage in Kaitangata and Lawrence, and secondly, they show the impacts and responses from individuals, organisations within these two towns and the Council. The investigations into the policy and initiatives of the Council, community organisations and residents of these small shrinking towns has provided insight into the different ways that shrinkage can be perceived and managed. Both Kaitangata and Lawrence have proven to be unique case studies of shrinkage due to the characteristics and dynamics that make up the towns and their communities and more importantly the dynamic nature of the community and council's responses. This section will detail the key findings of the research for each of the case study towns and then provide an overall evaluation of the study and its ability to answer the research questions.

7.2.1 Key Findings from Kaitangata:

Investigating the history of Kaitangata showed how the town was once prosperous thanks to its coal mines, surrounding arable farmland and access to the Clutha River, however, when the coal resources became depleted in the 1970s, it spelt decline for the town as the mines had represented the major employer and economic driver in the town. Since that time, Kaitangata's economy and population have suffered significantly from shrinkage, with very few businesses remaining in the town and people leaving the town in search of better employment opportunities. The location of Kaitangata, close to the prosperous town of Balclutha, allowed for a reduced population to remain in the town in a sustainable manner, but, in doing so, transformed Kaitangata into a satellite town of Balclutha with the inability to provide a significant economy due to the proximity to Balclutha. The town has managed to retain its primary school, church, a convenience store, and its volunteer fire service but there is very little else to represent the once prosperous town.

Over the last few years, Kaitangata has undertaken three major community projects that represent significant responses to shrinkage in the town. The skatepark and BMX track project was completed in 2016 and signified an investment in the community and an attempt to increase the quality of life for the residents of Kaitangata and possibly bring some more visitors to the town. This project also showcased many important characteristics of Kaitangata and the CDC, which helped fund and carryout the project. The skatepark and BMX project was instigated by a leader in the community who developed the plans for the project alongside the Kaitangata Promotions group and then, with the help of the CDC, local businesses and volunteers, the project was able to be successfully completed. Following the completion of the project, the facility has seen high use by both the Kaitangata community and those outside of it and community spirit was also boosted due to this project.

The house and land package scheme represents an incredibly unique response to small town shrinkage and not just because of the international attention that the project garnered. This project was almost singlehandedly carried out by one member of the Kaitangata community who was willing to invest their own time and money into developing a group of house and land packages that tried to increase the population and prosperity of Kaitangata. Local businesses, the CDC and Clutha Development came on board to facilitate the scheme, but the project remained largely driven by the single community leader which makes the project a unique response to small town shrinkage. The development of employment opportunities that complement the house and land packages aided in making this project a well-rounded response

to shrinkage. The international media attention that the project received also added another unique aspect to this response to shrinkage. Although this project represents a substantial growth strategy for a small town, the sustainable way in which the house and land packages were funded and developed means the risk and cost of the project on the community and council were heavily reduced. The success of the house and land package scheme and the possibility of future developments represent a significant response to the negative impacts of shrinkage in Kaitangata and highlights the unique and key role played by the individual who led the development of the project.

The community hall project is an ongoing development for Kaitangata but also represents the collaboration within the community and with other organisations such as the CDC as well as the ongoing development of shrinkage responses within the town. Again, this project represents the community leadership within Kaitangata as well as the increasing community spirit and resilience. The community hall project also signifies another investment into the Kaitangata community and its social wellbeing which shows that the community and the CDC realise that responses to shrinkage to not just involve the promotion of growth but also the action taken to accept shrinkage and invest money in the community to retain residents and increase their quality of life.

The research has shown that Kaitangata is a unique case study of small town shrinkage because although it has gone through the quintessential shrinkage process of losing a major industry leading to a decline in the population and economy, the characteristics and responses seen in Kaitangata as a result of shrinkage have appeared to be inimitable according to contemporary academic literature. The leadership qualities, community resilience and internal and external relationships are defining factors of Kaitangata's community and their response to shrinkage.

7.2.2 Key Findings from Lawrence:

Lawrence's prosperous times date back to the 1860s when gold mining helped to establish and grow the town. The gold rush was short lived however, and the town has never achieved the same level of population or economic prosperity seen during that time. Lawrence was able to survive after the end of the gold rush largely thanks to the surrounding farming community, the then growing forestry industry and its location on a major state highway. However, throughout the 1900s and into the 21st century, Lawrence has faced continuous impacts from shrinkage due to downturns in the agriculture industry, decreases in the number of visitors to

the town and the loss of businesses and industries in and around the town. Lawrence has managed to retain a relatively large number of services and businesses despite its small size, most likely due to its isolation creating the necessity for these facilities for the surrounding community. The community board and company in Lawrence represent important aspects of the town's characteristics, namely its leadership, self-governance, and can-do attitude.

Over the last several years, the Lawrence community and its leaders, with help from the CDC, have carried out projects that represent responses to the negative impacts of shrinkage in the town. The Tuapeka Aquatic Centre was a large investment for a small town but shows the level of significance that the community attaches to such facilities. The fundraising methods used for this project represent a unique strategy of carrying out shrinkage responses. The subscription-based funding approach allowed for the most effective outreach for funding for the project and permitted a budget for the new pool that would otherwise have been unattainable for a small town. Although the Tuapeka Aquatic Centre project resulted in a high-quality facility for the Lawrence community and benefited the community's spirit, the project may also have been slightly inappropriate due to the cost of the facility when the population and economy is continuing to suffer from the impacts of shrinkage. This issue was raised in conjunction with the health centre in the town which arguably plays a more vital role in Lawrence but is facing major funding issues which the town may struggle to resolve due to the large amount recently spent on the Tuapeka Aquatic Centre.

The Clutha Gold Trail extension represents a significant opportunity for growth and response to shrinkage in Lawrence. If this project were to be successful, there would be a high likelihood of more tourists coming into the town and spending money to boost Lawrence's economy. This project represents the community's passion to better its situation against shrinkage by making the most of the opportunities available to them. The investments made in the project by the CDC and the excitement found in the residents of Lawrence highlights that these groups recognise the importance of the Clutha Gold Trail extension for the town. The completion of the project is not guaranteed and most likely could be a long way off due to funding constraints, but the growth opportunities and positive impact against shrinkage will hopefully drive the project to completion.

The other projects that were investigated as part of this research show the variety of responses to shrinkage that the Lawrence community has undertaken or plans to undertake. The 150th anniversary festival was a one-off event for Lawrence but still represents a response to

shrinkage as it helped to boost the economy of the town and brought the community closer together through the planning of the event and the celebration of the town's history. The fact that the festival also served as a catalyst for upgrades and developments throughout Lawrence that have had more long-term impacts is also noteworthy as a response to shrinkage. The main street parking upgrades represent Lawrence's resourcefulness and adaptability in order to make the most of the opportunities available to them. Parking upgrades will likely allow more visitors to stop in Lawrence as well as accommodating the increasing number of caravans and campervans that pass through the town. The Lawrence community wetlands is another unique project that seeks to benefit the residents of the town and invest in their wellbeing and quality of life. The wetlands represent a multifaceted response to shrinkage because although the focus is on educating and servicing the residents of Lawrence, there is also the opportunity for a boost to the tourism industry in the town.

This research has also showcased that Lawrence is a unique case study for small town shrinkage due to the variety of its strategies to combat shrinkage and the dynamics of its community and leaders. The motivation, adaptability and self-reliance of the Lawrence community are its defining characteristics in regard to how they respond to the impacts of shrinkage.

7.2.3 Evaluation of Research Questions:

The first research question was:

What are the figures of population loss and economic change in the Clutha District and specifically in the case study towns (Kaitangata and Lawrence)?

This question was answered in the context chapter which detailed the history and current status of Kaitangata and Lawrence's demographics and economies and showcased that both towns have faced long-term decline in both of these factors. Neither town has posted a significant increase in their populations in over 50 years and both towns have faced heavy losses to their industries and economies due to shrinkage.

The second research question was:

What has been the impact on individuals, communities, and the Clutha District Council from shrinkage in the population and/ or economy?

This question was answered in both the context chapter and the results and discussion chapter. This research has shown that some individuals have lost jobs or have needed to seek better

employment opportunities outside of the case study towns due to shrinkage. Communities have seen downturns in their economies and loss of spirit and identity from shrinkage. The CDC has had the difficult task of governing over shrinking towns whose council responsibilities may be increasing to combat shrinkage whilst at the same time having fewer ratepayers to finance these responses.

The third research question was:

How have these groups responded to the impacts from shrinkage?

This question was answered in the results sections of chapter five and six on Kaitangata and Lawrence respectively. Some individuals had to leave towns as a response to shrinkage, others have taken a passive response to shrinkage whilst some have come forward as leaders in the community to plan and carryout projects to respond to shrinkage. The Kaitangata and Lawrence communities have had some varying and similar responses to shrinkage, but both towns' responses generally fit into one of two categories. One, growth targeted strategies that promote the economy or entice people to move to the towns. Or, two, accepting strategies that invest in the current community and promote social inclusion, wellbeing, and a higher quality of life. The CDC have generally facilitated community projects in both case study towns by helping fund and plan the projects. The plans and strategies that the CDC develop also play a vital role in deciding the future direction of the Council's responses to shrinkage.

The fourth research question was:

Have these methods been successful in terms of reducing the negative impacts of shrinkage on people and towns within the Clutha District?

This question was answered in the results and discussion chapter for Kaitangata and Lawrence. There have been varying levels of success in Kaitangata and Lawrence's responses to shrinkage, but overall each project and strategy has played some part in improving either the population, economy or community quality of life. No single response has seen the end to the negative impacts of shrinkage in either town, but some of the responses have made or could make significant changes to the severity of the negative impacts of shrinkage going forward.

The fifth research question was:

Do the responses to shrinkage in the Clutha District reinforce or counteract what is seen in contemporary literature?

This question was answered in the chapter five and six discussion sections on Kaitangata and Lawrence respectively. The responses to shrinkage investigated as part of this research have represented a wide variety of strategies and projects. The majority of these strategies and projects have included some form of unique element that was not found in any of the academic literature relating to shrinkage responses. One key example of this is the house and land package in Kaitangata. The success of the ten house and land packages in a small shrinking town is very counter-intuitive to what is found in contemporary literature. The one community leader that developed the project and the level of support from the CDC and local businesses were also unique elements of the project that were not found in the theoretical framework.

7.3 Contribution to the Literature:

As discussed throughout this research, the case study towns chosen for this study offered a unique insight into small town shrinkage and this provides an opportunity to contribute to the contemporary literature. This research has the ability to add to previous research on the topic of small town shrinkage, what causes it, what its impacts can be and how to effectively respond to it. This research could also add to context-specific literature on dealing with shrinkage in the regions of New Zealand. This section will detail the possible contributions that this research has for academic literature.

This research has added to the theoretical framework that discusses the cause of shrinkage in small towns. The main event that was the catalyst for shrinkage to occur in both Kaitangata and Lawrence was the loss of their main industries of mineral extraction. This is a relatively common instigator of shrinkage in small towns as many small towns become established around sources of natural resources (Bowns, 2013; Collits, 2000; Daniels, 1989; Friedrichs, 1993; Hinderink & Titus, 2002; Luescher & Shetty, 2013; Vaz *et al.*, 2016). However, some of the other instigators of Kaitangata and Lawrence's shrinkage are more unique and add to the discourse on the factors that cause shrinkage to begin in small towns. For example, the locations of Kaitangata and Lawrence including their geography and proximity to other towns and features played an important role in the instigation of shrinkage and defining its level in the towns over time.

The roles that communities and leaders play in responding to shrinkage is another possible contribution of this research. Both Kaitangata and Lawrence have communities and individuals within those communities with very defined characteristics that make their responses to small

town shrinkage unique. The ability and motivation of individuals within Kaitangata and Lawrence to develop and carryout projects in response to shrinkage has been an essential characteristic of the two towns over recent years. This research documented first-hand accounts of the role that individuals play in responding to the impacts of shrinkage in small towns which makes this an asset for contemporary literature on the topic.

The specific strategies of planning and carrying out responses to shrinkage in small towns that has been detailed in this research also add to the academic literature. Consultation, fundraising and the role played by volunteers have been important aspects of the community projects carried out in response to shrinkage in Kaitangata and Lawrence. The community discussion on the future of a community hall in Kaitangata and the monthly community board meetings in Lawrence highlight the importance of effective consultation when deciding on responses to shrinkage in small towns. The subscription-based method of fundraising used for the Tuapeka Aquatic Centre is another unique strategy that could be added to contemporary literature. The volunteers that have helped in the planning and execution of almost every project investigated as part of this research show how the strength and relationships within small town communities can help in seeing successful responses to shrinkage take place which is another noteworthy point for contemporary literature.

The growing issue of how to deal with declining regions and rural towns in New Zealand has generated a relatively large amount of literature on the topic (Conradson & Pawson, 1997; Conradson & Pawson, 2009; McNaughton, 2011; Nel, 2015; Neville & Rowe, 2015; Rutledge *et al.*, 2008; Sampson, 2005; Scott & Pawson, 1999; Wilson, 1995; Wood, 2017). This research provides contemporary information on the situation in the Clutha District and specifically in Kaitangata and Lawrence as well as adding to the literature on how individuals, communities and local authorities in New Zealand can be impacted and respond to small town shrinkage. The information within this research could provide some guidelines or ideas to small towns and their local authorities on how to possibly respond to the impacts of shrinkage.

7.4 Contribution to Kaitangata, Lawrence and the CDC:

It is hoped that information contained within this thesis will be of some use to the case study towns and their local authority. At the very least, this research could provide a catalogue to Kaitangata and Lawrence, outlining the impacts they have faced from shrinkage throughout their history and how the communities have responded to these issues. However, this research

could also help in the future direction chosen by these towns and how they continue to combat shrinkage, as will be detailed in the next section. This research has detailed some of the mistakes or missed opportunities that have occurred in Kaitangata, Lawrence and the CDC's responses to shrinkage and if these groups reviewed these, then they can avoid making these same mistakes in the future. For example, the missed opportunity of clear consultation between the community, institutions and the CDC when deciding on funding options for projects in response to shrinkage. This research could also provide the opportunity for the two case study towns and the CDC to recognise how far they have come in the last few years thanks to the responses to shrinkage in Kaitangata and Lawrence. Although there is still a lot of work to be done in both towns, the communities and council should be pleased with what they have achieved with limited resources and often against the odds of success. The information gained from this research into how Kaitangata, Lawrence and the CDC have been impacted by shrinkage and how these communities and the Council have responded, should hopefully, provide some benefit to these groups.

7.5 Recommendations and Future Direction for Kaitangata, Lawrence and the CDC:

Whilst Kaitangata, Lawrence and the CDC have made commendable efforts in responding to shrinkage, this research has developed some findings that represent some possible recommendations and future directions for these towns and their local authority. These recommendations are not intended to represent strict policy for the towns or the Council to follow but rather serve as a guideline that has been generated from the critique and analysis of the results of this research.

7.5.1 Recommendations:

Recommendation one: Continued and improved consultation between the CDC and the communities of Kaitangata and Lawrence.

Part of the success of the responses to shrinkage in Kaitangata and Lawrence have stemmed from the open and positive relationship between the CDC and the communities and its leaders. However, maintaining and improving this high-quality communication between all parties involved in responding to shrinkage will be important in the future directions of these towns.

This issue has become apparent through some key informant interviews which highlighted that some people were becoming worried with the increases in rates that the CDC use to help fund community projects in Kaitangata and Lawrence. Whilst the rates funding scheme is effective in reducing the costs of responses on the Council and sharing the cost with those who benefit from the projects, there must be a limit as to how much rates can increase before they become a burden to certain members of the community. To avoid such issues, going forward, more consultation could occur between the Council and communities in Kaitangata and Lawrence in order to make sure that both parties are on the same page about the amount the community is willing to see rates increase in order to see funding go towards a community project.

Recommendation two: Facilitate communication between community project committees in order to plan a fair share of funding and services:

As seen in the funding issues between the Tuapeka Aquatic Centre and the Tuapeka Community Health Centre, difficulties can arise when funding requirements for community projects interfere with each other. Although a high-quality aquatic centre was built thanks to the fundraising efforts of the Lawrence farming community, this facility may have come at the expense of losing the community health centre. The health centre provides a relatively large amount of employment and services for the Lawrence community and losing it would be a massive blow for the community. The effort that will likely soon be required to save the health centre could have been lessened if there had been clear communication between the health centre and the Tuapeka Aquatic Centre committee. Consultation between these two groups and the Lawrence community may have resulted in a more appropriate sharing of community funds and less of an overall cost on the community. This process could be used for future projects in both towns such as between the Clutha Gold Trail extension and Lawrence community wetlands or between the Kaitangata community hall and the proposed boardwalk. The resilience seen in this research from both towns could show that this is a relatively minor issue they may have to overcome. The funding effort made for the Aquatic Centre, instead of being a detriment for future projects may serve to galvanise the Lawrence community that they can carry out projects despite the daunting issue of large funding requirements.

7.5.2 Future Directions:

Over the last several years, Kaitangata, Lawrence and the CDC have been proactive and relatively realistic about the situations the towns are facing from shrinkage and have responded

accordingly to these issues. The towns show no sign of slowing down their responses to shrinkage with future plans in the pipelines in both Kaitangata and Lawrence. Whilst taking on board the recommendations from the above section, Kaitangata and Lawrence could continue with their current future directions and continue to fight against the negative impacts of shrinkage. Kaitangata, Lawrence and the CDC need to remain realistic about the issues the towns are facing and plan their projects and strategies appropriately so as not to waste any community or council resources. These towns are unlikely to be able to fully recover from shrinkage but neither do they appear likely to become ghost towns in the near future.

7.6 Summary:

Kaitangata and Lawrence have offered significant insight into the dynamics of small towns impacted by shrinkage and how they can respond. The communities, leadership and council of these towns have suffered from decline in the population and economy for many years but have remained resilient. The progress taken to combat shrinkage in recent years is testament to the determined character of Kaitangata, Lawrence and the CDC. Consultation, volunteering, leadership, perseverance, community spirit and forward-thinking are just some of the traits found in Kaitangata and Lawrence and exemplifies why they have been able to survive so long and achieve success in responding to shrinkage. In order to continue to combat the impacts of shrinkage, these towns must remain adaptable to changes in the economy and community dynamics and take calculated risks in their development of responses to shrinkage.

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Appendix 1:

Template for the types of questions asked of key informants:

- What is role in the community or council?
- What are some of the key projects you are involved in at the moment?
- What have been the key challenges that the district/ case study town/you/group that you are involved in have faced as result of shrinkage in the Clutha District.
- What sort of changes have you noticed over the past 10 or so years in terms of population, economic status, society, or physical environment throughout the Clutha District.
- What are the current states of the main industries in the case study town? (agriculture and forestry)
- What do you believe to be the key driver/s of growth and shrinkage across the District?
- What has been the response from the CDC ranging from direct responses to singular to issues to the planning for future responses.
- How were the plans for the responses created?
- What has been the community response? Is the community fully aware of the issues?
- Has there been a large disparity on the impacts on people i.e. economic differences
- Any response from Regional Council?
- What sort of impact has central government involvement had such as building the prison or input in agriculture?
- How are you dealing with the ageing population?
- How are trying to keep young people in the district after high school? Youth employment scheme...
- Has there been any planning around employment issues relating to having work for people in the district and a place for new workers coming into the district to live?
- Has there been any contradictions or disparities between the CDC, EDA, and the community in terms of each other's viewpoints or responses to shrinkage?
- Have the responses that have been implemented been successful in terms of reducing the negative impacts of shrinkage?
- What issues have been raised regarding planning around the small towns in the District such as Kaitangata and Lawrence?
- What was the impact of Lawrence losing Tuapeka Gold or Kai having issues with it mine? Banks and stores closing in Lawrence?

- Are their specific plans for these small towns? Are there different strategies for different towns?
- In terms of growth strategies, have you been targeting current established industries such as agriculture or have you been exploring new industries as well?
- Are there any examples of past efforts to rebrand or regrow areas of the District?
- What have been the challenges to implementing effective responses to shrinkage?
- What is planned for future responses to shrinkage?
- Have you got any key documents you think would be useful for my research?
- Who else do you think I should be contacting regarding my topic?

Appendix 2:

Information sheet and consent form for key informants:

[12/04/2017]



Shrinking towns and the response in the Clutha District INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARTICIPANTS

Thank you for showing an interest in this project. Please read this information sheet carefully before deciding whether or not to participate. If you decide to participate, thank you. If you decide not to take part there will be no disadvantage to you and thank you for considering my request.

What is the Aim of the Project?

This project is being undertaken as part of the requirements for Mathew Husband's Masters of Planning course at the University of Otago. The project is a Master's thesis level research paper which will explore the impacts and responses of shrinkage in towns in the Clutha District. Shrinkage refers to either the decline or instability of a town's population and / or economic activity. This research will involve an investigation into the level of shrinkage that has occurred across the District and in the specific case study towns. The aim of the project is find out how councils, communities, and individuals are affected and responding to the impacts of shrinkage and then assess these responses for their effectiveness and against other national and international examples.

What Types of Participants are being sought?

Participants for this project will be people who can offer key insights into shrinking towns in the Clutha District. These will include Clutha District Council (CDC) members who are involved in the impacts and responses of shrinkage across the District. Business owners and community groups and leaders will also be key informants for this study.

Participants will be recruited through pre-established contacts with the CDC from which further essential contacts will be requested such as identifying key informants from the case study towns. The number of participants will likely be around 10 depending on whether individuals are interviewed or if groups and/or questionnaires are also involved in the study.

What will Participants be asked to do? What Data or Information will be collected and what use will be made of it?

Should you agree to take part in this project, you will be asked to take part in a recorded interview where I will ask you questions about your involvement, experience, and insights into shrinkage of small towns in the Clutha District. I will present participants with the reasoning behind my research topic and how their involvement will aid my research. Interviews will likely take an hour or less depending on how much information the participant can share. Interviews will be recorded for later transcriptions and these recordings will be safely stored during the research process and then deleted upon the completion of the written document. Participants will be informed that their anonymity will

be kept throughout the research project including the final written document. Any participants will have access to the final written document if they wish to view it after it has been submitted for examination. Please be aware that you may decide not to take part in the project without any disadvantage to yourself.

This project involves an open-questioning technique. The general line of questioning includes: the impact and responses to shrinking towns. The precise nature of the questions that will be asked, have not been determined in advance, but will depend on the way in which the interview develops. Consequently, although the Department of Geography is aware of the general areas to be explored in the interview, the Committee has not been able to review the precise questions to be used. If the line of questioning does develop in such a way that you feel hesitant or uncomfortable you are reminded of your right to decline to answer any particular question(s).

Can Participants change their mind and withdraw from the project?

You may withdraw from participation in the project at any time and without any disadvantage to yourself.

What if Participants have any Questions?

If you have any questions about our project, either now or in the future, please feel free to contact either:-

Mathew Husband

and

Etienne Nel

Department of Planning

Department of Geography

Phone: 021 182 8029

Phone: 03 479 8548

Email Address: m.husband@hotmail.com

Email Address: Etienne.nel@otago.ac.nz

This study has been approved by the Department stated above. However, if you have any concerns about the ethical conduct of the research you may contact the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee through the Human Ethics Committee Administrator (ph 03 479-8256). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated and you will be informed of the outcome.



Shrinking towns and the response in the Clutha District

CONSENT FORM FOR

PARTICIPANTS

I have read the Information Sheet concerning this project and understand what it is about. All my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I am free to request further information at any stage.

I know that:-

1. My participation in the project is entirely voluntary;
2. I am free to withdraw from the project at any time without any disadvantage;
3. Personal identifying information [*i.e. audio-tapes*] will be destroyed at the conclusion of the project but any raw data on which the results of the project depend will be retained in secure storage for at least five years;

4. *If an open-questioning technique is to be used, include the following statement, otherwise delete this question:*

This project involves an open-questioning technique. The general line of questioning includes the impacts and responses to shrinking towns in the Clutha District. The precise nature of the questions which will be asked have not been determined in advance, but will depend on the way in which the interview develops and that in the event that the line of questioning develops in such a way that I feel hesitant or uncomfortable I may decline to answer any particular question(s) and/or may withdraw from the project without any disadvantage of any kind.

5. The results of the project may be published and will be available in the University of Otago Library (Dunedin, New Zealand) but every attempt will be made to preserve my anonymity.

I agree to take part in this project.

.....
(Signature of participant)

.....
(Date)

.....
(Printed Name)

Appendix 3:

Ethics form for this research:



Form Updated: September 2016

**UNIVERSITY OF OTAGO HUMAN ETHICS COMMITTEE
APPLICATION FORM: CATEGORY B**

(Departmental Approval)

Please ensure you are using the latest application form available from:
<http://www.otago.ac.nz/council/committees/committees/HumanEthicsCommittees.html>

1. University of Otago staff member responsible for project:

Nel, Etienne. Prof.

2. Department/School:

Geography

3. Contact details of staff member responsible (always include your email address):

4C23, Richardson Building
Ph x8548
etienne.nel@otago.ac.nz

4. Title of project: Shrinking towns and the response in the Clutha District.

5. Indicate type of project and names of other investigators and students:

Staff Research	Names	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>
Student Research	Names	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text" value="Mathew Husband"/>
<i>Level of Study (e.g. PhD, Masters, Hons)</i>			<input type="text" value="Masters"/>
External Research/ Collaboration	Names	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>
<i>Institute/Company</i>			<input type="text"/>

6. When will recruitment and data collection commence?

20/03/2017

When will data collection be completed?

31/05/2017

7. **Brief description in lay terms of the aim of the project, and outline of the research questions that will be answered** (approx. 200 words):

This project will focus on the impacts and responses of population loss and economic instability in small towns within the Clutha District. The case study towns will include Kaitangata, Lawrence and Milton as these towns highlight varying geographic, social, and economic identities of the Clutha District. The aim of the project is find out how councils, communities, and individuals are affected and respond to the impacts of shrinkage. The shrinkage of small towns around the world is a growing phenomenon caused by increased urbanisation and so to understand the impacts and possible responses to this issue could help in creating more effective responses that lessen the negative effects of shrinkage in small towns.

Research questions may include:

- What are the figures of population loss and economic status in the Clutha District specifically in the case study towns.
- What has been the impact on individuals, communities, and the Clutha District Council (CDC) from this shrinking.
- How have these groups responded to the impacts from shrinkage?
- What has been the main methods behind these responses, i.e. trying to reverse, slow, stop or accept shrinkage.
- Have these methods been successful in terms of reducing the negative impacts of shrinkage on people within the Clutha District.

8. **Brief description of the method.** Include a description of who the participants are, how the participants will be recruited, and what they will be asked to do and how the data will be used and stored.

The information on the Clutha District and the case study towns, that will be sourced for this research, will mostly come from council documents, a literature review and key informant interviews.

The participants of the key informant interviews will include prominent members of the Clutha District Council who are involved in the strategies tackling shrinkage in the District. This may include the mayor, head planner, community officers as well as members of the Economic Development Agency (EDA). These council key informants will be contacted via email or through pre-established relationships with my supervisor or other council members I will contact.

Key community members and groups will also be contacted for key informant interviews. These may include neighbourhood groups who report to the Council or control a development fund etc. or individuals who have played a key role in responses to shrinkage outside of the CDC. A group format survey may also take with some of the informants either as a group interview or a

questionnaire for members to fill out individually. These contacts will also most likely be reached by email or through contacts of other key informants.

The key informants will be asked a series of questions in an interview format and any group questionnaires will likely have very similar questions but in a different format to make answering easier. The questions will revolve around topics outlined in the research questions in part 7. The informants will be asked questions on their personal and, if appropriate, professional experiences with the shrinkage in the District. They will be asked what, if any, steps them or any organisation they are involved have taken to reduce the negative impacts of shrinkage across the District. What their outlook for the District and the case study towns is.

The interviews will be recorded for later transcription, while the questionnaires will be securely stored for later inclusion in the research data. Interviews and personal information will be deleted upon the completion of the written document which itself will be kept on record for at least five years. Anonymity will be kept throughout the data collection process and in the research document with only job titles or relevant descriptions used to identify any key informant in the text. Direct quotes will be kept to a minimum in the research documents, with more general ideas and examples used from the key informant's interviews.

9. Disclose and discuss any potential problems and how they will be managed: (For example: medical/legal problems, issues with disclosure, conflict of interest, safety of the researcher, etc)

Participants will be reassured that their anonymity will be protected in the research document. No personal details sought from participants will be kept after research is completed nor will it be published in any associated academic publications. Participants will not be pressured into answering questions they do not feel comfortable with, and if at any point a participant feels uncomfortable or is reluctant to continue the interview will be stopped immediately. The focus for selection will be on people with experience that are representative of the key stakeholder groups selected. To protect the safety of the researcher and interviewees, interviews will only take place in appropriate locations.

***Applicant's Signature:**

Name (please print):

Date:

**The signatory should be the staff member detailed at Question 1.*

ACTION TAKEN

Approved by HOD

Approved by Departmental Ethics Committee

Referred to UO Human Ethics Committee

Signature of **Head of Department:

Name of HOD (please print):

Date:

Appendix 4:

List of key informants and their affiliations

Key Informant number:	Affiliation
Key Informant 1	Clutha District Council staff member
Key Informant 2	Clutha Development staff member
Key Informant 3	Kaitangata resident and member of Kaitangata Promotions
Key Informant 4	Lawrence resident and member of the Clutha Gold Trail extension group
Key Informant 5	Lawrence resident and member of the Lawrence/ Tuapeka community board
Key Informant 6	Lawrence resident and staff member of the Tuapeka community health centre
Key Informant 7	Lawrence resident and member of the Lawrence/ Tuapeka community board
Key Informant 8	Lawrence resident and member of the Lawrence community wetlands group
Key Informant 9	Lawrence resident and member of the Lawrence/ Tuapeka community board and community company