

Water restrictions in force

Level 2 water restrictions have been implemented across the Ashburton District, in response to a jump in water consumption and no significant rain in the forecast.

The restrictions mean residents may only water from a hose, sprinkler or irrigation system between 6pm and midnight on assigned days.

Group Manager of Infrastructure Neil McCann said Ashburton's daily water use had been over 20,000 cubic metres nine times in the past four weeks.

"Our resource consent to take water has a daily limit of 25,000 cubic metres, so that has been the driver for the water restrictions introduced this week. We'll review the situation regularly, but there's no substantial rain in the forecast for the next two weeks and we know consumption will keep rising as summer kicks in."

Assigned days are:

Ashburton, Tinwald, Lake Hood, Methven, Rakaia and Hakatere – even numbered properties on even dates, odd number properties on odd dates. Watering from 6pm-midnight.

Hinds – properties east of the railway lines on even dates, properties west of the railway lines on odd dates. Watering from 6pm-midnight.

Mayfield – properties east of Arundel Rakaia



One of the reservoirs at Methven's drinking water treatment plant.

Gorge Road on even dates, properties west of the Arundel Rakaia Gorge Road on odd dates. Watering from 6pm-midnight.

Mount Somers – properties with frontage to Pattons Road on even dates, properties without frontage to Pattons Road on odd dates. Watering from 6pm-midnight.

Chertsey – properties east of Maldon Street on even dates, properties west of Maldon on odd dates. Watering from 6pm-midnight.

Fairton – properties with frontage to

Waymouth Street or Deans Street on even dates, properties without frontage to Waymouth Street or Deans Street on odd dates. Watering from 6pm-midnight.

Mr McCann said managing demand and maintaining levels of service for residents on council water supplies was crucial.

"One of the summer issues we see is when everyone is using water at the same time and pressure levels drop and problems are reported. We're asking residents to use water in smart ways and hopefully there'll be no need to escalate to hand held hosing only."

Four new exhibitions to open

Rokowhiria, the Ashburton Art Gallery and Museum, is hosting a grand opening on Saturday for four new summer exhibitions.

The event starts at 6pm, and is open to the public.

One of the exhibitions is Dearly Beloved: 100 Years of the Wedding Dress, and this is expected to generate lots of interest with 12 gowns on show, and a display about the Bride of the Year competitions that were popular 50 years ago.

Kathy Reilly's solo exhibition Peregrination explores her visit to the sub Antarcics and her work includes prints and detailed etchings of plants and the Royal Southern Albatross.

Duologue is a collaborative exhibition by Ōtepoti Dunedin-based artists Inge and Marc Doesburg. The pair explore landscapes through print, painting and photography.

Members of the Print Council Aotearoa New Zealand show off new technologies in an exhibition that explores print-making in the 21st century.

Rokowhiria is open daily from 10am.

Cr Tony Todd Challenges in 2026 forecast



This week has been another busy one at Council, with the breadth of Council business easily seen in the 109-page agenda of our Activity Briefings.

From policies and bylaws reviews and technology to reduce the risk of cyber attacks, to the volume of solid waste we truck to Kate Valley, the business of Council is wide-ranging.

Some numbers have stuck with me: 9809 potholes filled so far in 2025, nearly a quarter of a million items have been issued in the Ashburton Library, mini golf has had over 1700 free admissions booked online since opening and our contractors have lifted and emptied about 624,000 kerbside bins this year.

It's busy for Council staff, and it's busy for Councillors.

This week, we've heard about more changes for local government, with Minister Bishop announcing reforms to the Resource Management Act.

These are the biggest changes since the RMA was introduced and we will be taking the time needed to consider how that will impact the business of council and the decisions we make around the council table.

There's been a lot of change recently, with the implementation of the Local Water Done Well initiative, the reforms planned for regional councils and the proposed rates capping regime.

Ultimately, we have all been charged with doing the best we can for our fine district.

A piece of work on our agenda in the next few months is the Annual Plan 2026-27, which is essentially what Council will do in the next financial year and how we will pay for it. Expect good debate as we balance needs and wants against what we can afford.

But before we meet the challenges of the new year, it is time to say Merry Christmas and have a restful holiday break!

SHORT AND SWEET

NEW CITIZENS

Mayor Liz McMillan will officially welcome 81 new Kiwis at a citizenship ceremony at the Ashburton Event Centre on 17 December. The new Kiwis come from 15 different countries, and have made new homes in New Zealand.

WHAT'S ON?

Kids home for the holidays? Looking after grandchildren? If you're in need of some fun holiday ideas that are free and easy, check out our summer activity guide! You can download it from our website, or pop into any Council facility for a hard copy version.

TINWALD HALL

The Tinwald Memorial Hall is not available for bookings from 22 December until 27 February while its timber floors are refurbished. The hall will host the community Christmas lunch, and then the hall committee will begin clearing the floors. The refurbishment work is scheduled to start on 5 January and take up to three weeks. To allow the polyurethane to fully harden, the hall will remain closed until Friday 27 February.

RACE CLOSURE

Council will consider a recommendation from the Stockwater Transition Working Group on 17 December to partially close the Pudding Hill stockwater race network. If Councillors support the recommendation, the race network that is fed from Mt Harding Creek at Scarness Gate and Drayton's Gate would close from September next year. Stockwater for this system is from the Pudding Hill Stream intake and feeds about 220km of race network, with 181 rateable properties.

TINWALD VIADUCT

The Tinwald Viaduct is closed to vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians until 19 December while KiwiRail fixes the impact beams on the overhead bridge. Residents are asked to not to take shortcuts across the tracks and cross at level crossings at Compton Street or Lagmhor Road.

Meter trial on water projects list

A water meter trial in Rakaia will run alongside 14 significant water services projects to be delivered by Council in the 2026-27 financial year.

The projects are outlined in Council's Water Services Delivery Plan and include a new watermain from Wilkins Road to Grahams Road (as part of the new second bridge connecting road), new irrigation at Council's Ocean Farm wastewater facility so it complies with effluent discharge consents, and a long list of drinking water and wastewater pipe renewals.

Group Manager for Infrastructure Neil McCann said the 14 big water projects would be part of Council's Annual Plan for 2026-27 and had a combined cost of around \$27 million.

"Since we compiled the Water Services Delivery Plan a while ago, there've been a couple of changes. We want to bring forward our work on the Montalto rural drinking water scheme, which serves 35 households, and we've had to delay the installation of stormwater pipes on West Street because the design of the stormwater treatment facility has not yet been completed, as the national guidelines for stormwater have not been finalised."

These changes will need to be approved by Councillors, as part of the Annual Plan



process in the coming months.

The results of the 12-month water meter trial in Rakaia will determine how meters will eventually be rolled out in Ashburton.

"Water meters are a big help in managing our water assets, finding and fixing leaks, and understanding local water demand," Mr McCann said.

Under Government's Local Water Done Well programme, Council is establishing an internal business unit to run water

services (drinking water, wastewater and stormwater).

Three water services must meet national rules and standards, and the programme also involves financially ring-fencing the work from other Council work.

Mr McCann said this meant water rates and charges would be used to fund water services, including improvements to pipes and treatment facilities to meet the new rules.

"Water services are a big part of Council's work and essential for our residents. This financial year we've been working through a major upgrade by adding UV equipment to our water treatment plants and we're now in the final stages as we finish up at the Ashburton Domain and Dromore plants.

"For the next 10 years, the focus is on water supply, and we're adding resilience to our network by installing a new pipeline along the second Ashburton bridge, and additional reservoir storage for Methven and Rakaia.

"We're also preparing for future capacity and security of supply by looking at additional sources for Ashburton and Mt Somers, and investigating a solution to the high nitrates in the Tinwald bore, by either deepening it or finding a new bore."

Lake trials prepare for scientific phase

Six shipping containers that have been helping scientists prepare for an algal-control trial in Lake Hood will be removed on 18 December, as the first phase of work comes to an end.

The containers have been sitting in a canal alongside Huntingdon Avenue and will be craned out and stored at the lake's maintenance depot, where they will be jetwashed in readiness for the next phase of the trial.

Group Manager of Infrastructure Neil McCann said the cleaned shipping containers would be put back into the canal on 19 January.

"The preliminary run has taught us a lot about the conditions, testing environment and the site set up, which has helped us plan for the scientific trials to start in February, which will involve a lot more testing and monitoring.

"We'll be trialling the same five algal-control products plus one control container, and also installing sonic equipment in three other spots in the canals to see how they can mitigate the growth of cyanobacteria."

The shipping containers will remain for up to three months as the different products are tested thoroughly over time.

The sonic treatment involves floating devices that use sound waves to break down the cyanobacteria cells.



Mr McCann said the scientists would be on site more regularly during phase two of the work.

"This will be an interesting part of the trial and it's crucial the science team gathers as much information as they can, because their work will help us decide on the best way to manage Lake Hood going forward.

"We will continue to harvest lake weed this summer and circulate as much water as we can through the lake and canals to help control the cyanobacteria levels, but we are up against nature."

Environment Canterbury has begun its summer testing of contact recreation swimming sites and the sample from Lake Hood on 28 November showed 0.03mm³/L biovolume of cyanobacteria - The lake is in a green surveillance mode.

Christmas operations

There are a few temporary changes to operating hours at some Council facilities over the Christmas holiday period.

The kerbside rubbish and recycling collection slides from Thursday to Friday, and Friday to Saturday, as there is no collection on Christmas Day, but there's no change for New Year's.

The customer services counter at Te Whare Whakare, Baring Square East, will close early at 1pm on 24 December and be closed only on the public holidays.

The service desk will be open 10am-4pm for administration inquiries on Monday 29 December, Tuesday 30 December and Wednesday 31 December.

See our website for full service hours over the holiday period.

TRIENNIAL MEETINGS FOR RESERVE & HALL BOARDS

Our hall boards, reserve boards and domain boards are holding their triennial meetings and looking for new members.

- 20 January - **Dorie Reserve Board** - 7pm, Dorie hall
- 27 January - **Highbank Reserve Board** - 7.30pm, Highbank hall
- 24 February - **Ealing Reserve Board** - 7pm, Ealing hall.

ROADING NOTICES

Chalmers Avenue - Closed at the river until 19 December while water mains are installed. No entry to South Street from Chalmers Avenue.

Spaxton Street/Lilley Place - Closed between Alford Street and Patton Street, including Lilley Place, until 19 December while water mains are installed.

Thompsons Track - Closed between Winchmore Lauriston Road and Pole Road, and Braemar Lauriston Road at Thompsons Track intersection until 19 December, and closed again from 12 January to 31 March, so Fulton Hogan can do heavy road maintenance on behalf of Council. Detours in place. Resident access remains.

Forks Road - Closed between Ashburton Staveley Road and Earlys Road 15-17 December while Welsby Contracting installs a pipe under the road.

Oak Grove - No through access to Harrison Street and Walnut Avenue roundabout from 15-19 December while wastewater pipes are installed.

Elizabeth Avenue (Rakaia) - Closed between Burrowes Road and Tancred Street from 8-19 December while water pipes are installed.

Winters Road - Closed between Hamptons Road and Buckleys Road from 13 January to 3 February while Tarbotton Land & Civil install a stock underpass under Winters Road.

Full details of local road closures are on our website, ashburtondc.govt.nz

COUNCIL MEETINGS

Council meetings are held in Hine Paaka, the Council Chamber, unless otherwise stated; agendas are online at ashburtondc.govt.nz

Tuesday 16 December, **Local Government Reform workshop**, 1pm

Tuesday 16 December, **Annual Plan workshop**, 4.30pm

Wednesday 17 December, **Council Meeting** (livestreamed), 1pm

Thursday 18 December, **Arts, Culture and Heritage strategy workshop**, 8.30am

VISITING OUR DISTRICT?

Here's how we roll when it comes to recycling:

- Clean glass bottles in the green crate
- Clean hard plastics 1, 2 and 5 (no lids), and clean cardboard, paper and tins in the yellow bin
- Food waste and all other rubbish in the red bin



Keep up to date with the latest Council news and notices at ashburtondc.govt.nz

COUNCIL OFFICE

2 Baring Square East
Mon, Tue, Wed & Fri 8.30am-5pm
Thursday 9am-5pm

ASHBURTON LIBRARY

2 Baring Square East, Ashburton 7700
Mon & Fri 8.30am-6pm, Tue-Thu 8.30am-8pm
Sat & Sun 10am-4pm

EA NETWORKS CENTRE

20 River Terrace
Mon - Fri 5.45am-9pm (pools 8pm Mon & Tue, 7pm Wed-Fri; gym 8pm). Sat & Sun 7am-7pm (pools 6pm, gym 6pm)

ASHBURTON ART GALLERY & MUSEUM

327 West Street
10am-4pm daily (late night Wed)