

Our holiday activities will keep your kids busy

School is almost out, but there are plenty of activities to keep young people busy over the holidays, including the annual Burty challenge involving the library, art gallery and museum, open spaces and EA Networks Centre.

Youngsters are challenged to do two specific tasks at each of the locations, have their challenge card stamped and then go into a draw to win one of three family passes to Ōpuke Thermal Pools.

There are 10 challenges in total, and a full card will earn a free disc golf hire from EA Networks Centre. Challenges relate to specific activities at the facilities over the summer holidays – for example, at the Ashburton Museum youngsters will be asked to complete an activity that is part of a visiting space discovery exhibit.

Other challenges include taking a photo of a family picnic at your favourite park or reserve, finding Swimantha the bear at the EA Networks Centre stadium and playing a board game or arcade game at the Ashburton Public Library.

The annual challenge is a great way to keep youngsters occupied and the activities are free. It starts on Wednesday 14 December and runs until 29 January next year, so there's plenty of time to get through all 10 challenges.

Another annual event is the Santa Hunt, at the museum. Bring your torches if you are coming to the opening night on 21 December, or visit any time until 31 January and find all the sneaky Santas in their hiding spots.

Ashburton Public Library

Christmas Craft Week – 16-23 December. Bring your children to the library for craft activities, movie nights and a very special evening Christmas story time.

Riff Raff Summer Reading Challenge – 14 December to 20 January. Children can pick up their copy of the reading challenge and try to read 20 books over the summer.

Youth Summer Reading Challenge – 9 December to 20 January. Teens can pick up a challenge card, complete them and earn points for a prize draw.



The Art of Gift Wrapping – 15 December and 22 December, from 4pm-5.30pm. Bring along your gifts and wrapping materials and learn a new way to wrap.

School Holiday Outreach to Methven and Dorie – Join us for free Christmas activities, crafts and games at the Mt Hutt Memorial Hall on Friday 16 December (10am-12pm) or at Dorie Hall on Tuesday 20 December (10am-12pm).

Ashburton Art Gallery and Museum

Make a holiday card in the art gallery by composing a scene using objects from Santa's sack – a drop-in activity, available until 13 December.

A special space science exhibition, Tūhura Tuarangi, will visit from 22 December until 29 January. The exhibition showcases amazing space technologies and world-leading research going on in New Zealand. Bring your budding astronaut.

Make your own photo film reel using photos taken by Bobbie Barwell, who ran a photography studio in Ashburton in the 1930-40s. This activity will end on 15 December.

Learn about Tatau, Samoan tattooing, through the photographic art of four Samoan artists who have been capturing the practice over the past 40 years. Exhibition opens 21 December.

See each facility's website or Facebook page for details of holiday events and action as the holidays roll out.



New citizens welcomed by Mayor Brown

Thirty-two new citizens will spend their first Christmas as Kiwis following a citizenship ceremony at the Ashburton Event Centre last night.

The new citizens have moved from all around the globe and affirmed their allegiance to New Zealand with Ashburton Mayor Neil Brown, and in front of proud friends and family.

Mayor Brown said they had chosen to

make New Zealand their home and now country, and his door was always open if they had problems or needed advice.

“The good wishes and support of the community are with you and we look forward to you spending many years in this district.”

The ceremony began with a cultural performance from Ashburton College's kapa haka group, and also included messages of congratulations from

Governor General Dame Cindy Kiro and Internal Affairs Minister Jan Tinetti.

The new citizens came from South Africa, the Philippines, Samoa, Greece, the United Kingdom, the United States, Belgium, Fiji, Scotland, Brazil, Colombia, Switzerland and India.

More than 200 people have received their citizenship in the district over the past two years and last night they also left with a kōwhai seedling, the young tree representing their new life.

Neil Brown - Mayor

Tapping into potential wins for our economy

We are barrelling along to Christmas and there is much to do in a short space of time, so it was a pleasure to share some Christmas cheer with students of Mt Somers Springburn School this week.

The whole school was in town to have a swim at the EA Networks Centre pool and hang a decoration on the Christmas tree there. As has become tradition, I joined them to hang the decoration and hear the Christmas songs they have been practising.

It was a highlight of my day, and reminds me of the untapped potential of young people in our district. Foundations laid at primary school, or even earlier, are built on at secondary school and then our young adults are out in the world looking for jobs or

going on to further education.

While the majority find their way, some end up not in education, employment or training (or NEETs, as they are sometimes called).

It's this group that Council is hoping to help through a partnership between the Mayors Taskforce for Jobs and the Ministry of Social Development. Our Council has been chosen to pilot a Rural Community Resilience Programme to place these young people into work.

The pilot programme will be administered by Council's economic development team and will lean on the office of the Mayor to open doors, so if you are a business that could provide a pathway into any type of employment, then I'd love to hear from you.

I'm told by deputy mayor Liz McMillan

that many other young people made quite an impression at Light up the Night last week when they performed on stage in the lead-up to lighting the town's big Christmas tree on East Street.

The event was the first of three free Christmas events Council has organised for the community and I was disappointed to miss it, but I was representing the district elsewhere at an event to celebrate the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations between China and New Zealand.

We have official friendship relationships with two cities in China - one with Xianyang in Shaanxi and the other with Puyang, in the north-eastern province of Henan. The latter was established in 2000 and delegations from Puyang have visited the Ashburton District four times over the years.

These relationships can help boost business, tourism, trade and more investment in the local economy, and supporting the local economy is front of my mind.

I hope that everyone who lives here will support our local retailers as much as they can in the lead-up to Christmas, and beyond. It has been a difficult couple of years and our business community has been impacted as shopping habits changed – now's the time to buy local and help money stay in our community.

Enjoy your Christmas parties with friends, families or workmates and if you are intending to have a few drinks, then make sure you have a ride home.



Light up the Night: We certainly did!

Despite the chilly weather, the crowds came out in force to celebrate the start of the Christmas season and witness the lighting of Ashburton's giant Christmas Tree last Friday.

A variety of dance and music performances kept attendees at Light up the Night entertained throughout the evening, while the festive lighting display delighted families and provided the perfect photo opportunity once dusk fell.

Santa never goes out of style, and he and his elves were mobbed by children as they jingled their way up and down East Street.

The young ones also enjoyed the kidzones where they able to craft their own Christmas decoration with the help of staff from the Ashburton Art Gallery and Museum.

Organisers were pleased with the turnout after the last couple of years' events were cancelled or downscaled due to Covid precautions. The Samoan church choir and Life Dance Academy warmed up the crowd, which gathered in front of the stage.

Light up the Night was the opening event of the Nights of Lights Christmas festival, sponsored by Hokonui.

An outdoor screening of the original Home Alone will be held on 17 December in the Ashburton Domain for the Family Movie Night. Later in the month, a lineup of local musicians will entertain shoppers in the CBD during the Christmas Busker Days on 23 and 24 December.

Find out more about these upcoming events at nightsolights.co.nz



From the giant tree to special effects lighting and an interactive light board, Ashburton's CBD came alive on Light up the Night. Check our Facebook page for more images of the event, taken by Joanne McCloy Photography.



Switching on the lights for charity

Hokonui's charity auction to sell off the chance to turn on the Christmas tree lights was won by 24 Catering Co, of Ashburton.

Chantelle Quinn owns the food company that made the winning bid and her daughter Bella and her friend Maddie had the honour of throwing the switch. The money will be given to the Phat Bastards mountainbike group, which is undertaking a massive 48-hour fundraising ride in February.

All the money raised will be donated to Mid Canterbury Hospice, Farming Families and Methven Search and Rescue.

Deputy Mayor Liz McMillan officiated at the lighting up ceremony, welcoming the crowd and then handing over the remote control switch. The tree's lights will come on with the street lights every day from now until after the Christmas and New Year period.



RUBBISH AND RECYCLING

CHRISTMAS-NEW YEAR

There is **no change to kerbside rubbish and recycling** collections over the Christmas and New Year holiday period, because they fall on a weekend. Please have your bins out on your usual day by 7.30am; please use your windstrap, no matter the weather.

The **Ashburton Resource Recovery Park** will be closed Sunday 25 December, Monday 26 December, Tuesday 27 December, and Sunday 1 January and Monday 2 January. Usual hours 8am-6pm weekdays, 9am-5pm weekends.

The **Rakaia Resource Recovery Park** will be closed Monday 26 December and Monday 2 January.

The **Methven Green waste facility** will be closed Sunday 25 December and Sunday 1 January.



TRIENNIAL MEETINGS

Tinwald Reserve Board - Monday 12 December, 5.30pm at Ashburton Vintage Car Club

Hinds Reserve Board - Tuesday 13 December, 7pm at Hinds Fire Station

Highbank Reserve Board - Thursday 15 December, 7pm at Highbank Hall

Ealing Hall and Reserve Board - Monday 19 December, 7pm at Ealing Hall

Rakaia Memorial Hall - Wednesday 1 February, 7pm in the hall supper room

RECYCLING TIP: NO LIDS

With the holiday season here, you might have friends and family staying over - please help us keep our recycling ship-shape by remembering hard plastics 1, 2 and 5 for your yellow bin, and no lids of any size.

Lids jam the automated sorting machine; you can recycle lids at your nearest resource recovery park, just not in kerbside recycling.



COUNCIL MEETINGS

Meetings are held in the Council Chambers, 137 Havelock Street, (unless otherwise advised).

Methven Community Board - Monday 12 December, 10.30am at Mt Hutt Memorial Hall

Council Meeting - Wednesday 21 December, 1pm (live-streamed)

COUNCIL OFFICE
5 Baring Square West
Mon, Tue, Wed & Fri 8.30am - 5pm
Thursday 9am - 5pm

ASHBURTON PUBLIC LIBRARY
180 Havelock Street, Ashburton 7700
Mon - Fri 9.00am - 8.00pm
Sat 10am - 1pm | Sun 1pm - 4pm

EA NETWORKS CENTRE
20 River Terrace
Mon - Fri 6am-9pm (pools 7pm, gym 8pm)
Sat & Sun 7am-7pm (pools 5pm, gym 6pm)

ASHBURTON ART GALLERY & ASHBURTON MUSEUM
327 West Street
10am - 4pm daily, late night Wed to 7pm