

## What's happening at Ōtūwharekai?

Have you ever wondered how the water quality of the Ashburton Lakes/Ōtūwharekai is monitored or what is being done to improve the health of the lakes' ecosystem for our native species?

A pop-up event on Saturday 25 February at Lake Clearwater/Te Puna-a-Taka will give the community a chance to learn about initiatives under way to restore the lakes by the organisations and landowners who are part of the Ōtūwharekai Working Group.

Some of the activity is easy to spot, such as the water quality monitoring stations floating in the lakes, and signs to improve visitor behaviour in the area. But there's also work happening in more remote parts – like stream surveys, farm assessments and mahinga kai cultural health assessments.

The pop-up event will run from 11am until 2pm at the lakefront at Mount Darchiac Drive and is an opportunity for people to ask questions and talk to those directly involved in the projects. It's being jointly hosted by the Ōtūwharekai Working Group and the Ashburton Water Zone Committee, and will include displays, kids' activities and a sausage sizzle.

There will also be information on the lakes' significance to Ngāi Tahu Whānui.

Central South Island Fish & Game is planning a live fish display to show some of the species that live in the lakes, and Environment Canterbury scientists will demonstrate the tools used to measure



water clarity and colour. They'll also share recent data on lake health.

Children can get busy with a bug search and an interactive water run-off model, and play the very popular tuna and drains game.

Ashburton District Council staff will be present at the open day too to answer any questions that people might have.

Other displays will focus on biodiversity, conservation, aquatic pests, council requirements, visitor behaviour in the area, and a whole lot more.

The overall aim is to share information in a relaxed, family-friendly environment – with a free sausage sizzle.

Ashburton District Council is a member

of the Ōtūwharekai Working Group, along with Te Rūnanga o Arowhenua, Te Ngāi Tūāhuriri Rūnanga and Te Taumutu Rūnanga, Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu, Environment Canterbury, farmers in the area, Department of Conservation, Toitū Te Whenua LINZ, Central South Island Fish & Game, the Ministry for the Environment and Ministry for Primary Industries.

The group was set up in 2019, driven by declining water quality and problems with algae at Lake Clearwater.

The lakes are one of the few remaining areas of native biodiversity in Mid Canterbury and its wetland habitats are nationally important and home to more than 30 bird species, and many threatened plants and aquatic species.

## Sending support

We all want to help fellow Kiwis who have been badly affected by Cyclone Gabrielle and financial donations are what is most needed.

The safest way of giving is through official channels, such as mayoral relief funds or trusted organisations like Red Cross.

The Ashburton District Council established an official Mayoral Flood Relief Fund that will help distribute funds.

To donate, make a deposit into the official bank account: **Westpac 03-1592-0521970**. If you'd like your donation to go to a specific town or region, use the reference field to specify where your donations should be directed to.

You can also go to **civildefence.govt.nz** and donate directly to the Mayoral Relief Funds that have now been set up for Auckland, Tairāwhiti, Thames-Coromandel, Hawke's Bay, Taranaki and Taupō.

New Zealand Red Cross has also established a New Zealand Disaster Fund. Visit **redcross.org.nz** to find out more.

## Hamish Riach - Chief Executive

### Having our say on proposed new laws

The vast majority of Council's work is related to providing the wide range of local services that residents need and expect – roads, water reticulation, sewerage and refuse collection, parks, and town planning.

It might sometimes seem that central government makes the rules and Councils all over the country are just responsible for implementing and enforcing them. But, much like our own residents have the ability to make submissions on this Council's plans, we do have formal and informal opportunities to speak to politicians in the Beehive who make the laws.

Council has just made a submission on the Water Services Legislation Bill, that is part of the Three Waters reforms, and we've asked to present it in person to the Select Committee – this helps reinforce the grave concerns expressed in our submission, and ensures the

decision-makers know the local impact of the proposed legislation.

The law of unintended consequences sometimes applies and we must speak up for ourselves, but these bills are often complicated pieces of draft legislation and require careful analysis. They do not make for relaxing reading material, believe me.

Another submission we have made recently to Government is on the Sale and Supply of Alcohol (Community Participation) Amendment Bill. This bill aims to improve communities' ability to influence alcohol regulation in their area by making changes to the alcohol licensing process.

We have a District Licensing Committee for the Ashburton District that considers, grants or renews applications for alcohol licences and managers' certificates, and Council has drawn on that local experience to write its submission. In the 2021-22 year, the committee received and processed

352 licensing applications, so it has a constant workload.

The sale and supply of alcohol is serious business and our licensing committee ensures applicants know they must act responsibly.

Council supports community participation in the process, but it has to be balanced against the likely increase in hearings, resourcing and costs for Council. Our residents will have their chance to have their say on this topic when our Local Alcohol Policy is reviewed later this year.

Something that Council and central government have no control over is the weather, and we continue to watch and provide what support we can from afar as NEMA and local authorities all over the North Island try to clean up and respond to the extraordinary damage wrought by Cyclone Gabrielle.

Flooding is New Zealand's number one hazard in terms of frequency, losses and declared Civil Defence



emergencies, so it pays to find out if your home or business is at risk from flooding and make an emergency plan if needed.

That said, no-one could have been prepared for what unfolded in the Hawke's Bay and other parts of the North Island and our thoughts and best wishes are with the people there.

If you would like to help, a financial donation is the best way. You can donate via our own Council's Mayoral Flood Relief Fund or go to **civildefence.govt.nz** and donate directly to the Mayoral Relief Funds that have now been set up for Auckland, Tairāwhiti, Thames-Coromandel, Hawke's Bay, Taranaki and Taupō.



# ACL captured by Three Waters reforms

Ashburton District Council has asked to appear before Government's Finance and Expenditure Select Committee to present Council's feedback on the draft Water Services Legislation Bill that is part of Three Waters reforms.

The Council will be represented by Mayor Neil Brown and Chief Executive Hamish Riach.

Council remains strongly opposed to the overall Three Waters reform, and has made a number of points of concern in its submission.

Of particular note in the submission are the concerns about the reform intending to strip Council-owned company Ashburton Contracting Limited (ACL) of assets and resources associated with the delivery of Council's water and wastewater services through reticulation and plant maintenance and operations. These assets and resources are intended to be taken over by the new Water Services Entity covering the bulk of the South Island.

ACL also tenders for work in the private sector and contributes an average \$600,000 dividend to Council a year - this income is used to offset general rates. As a commercially driven, arm's length



company that wins its work in the tender box, just like private sector providers, Council is deeply concerned ACL is being unfairly treated compared to private contracting companies.

Mayor Brown said that if ACL were to lose the water and wastewater contract, the likely reduction in profit and reduced dividend would roll through and directly impact ratepayers. There is also the question of loss in value of the company to the Council as 100% shareholder on behalf of the community.

He said ACL was a sponsor of community events and provided work to local people.

"We were alarmed that the transfer provisions in the bill apply to council-

controlled organisations like ACL. We think the provisions were designed to capture big city operations like Watercare in Auckland, but they also capture us and ACL.

"We have asked to speak in person to the select committee when we present our submission, and providing an alternative solution to the issue."

Mayor Brown said Council supported the technical points made in submissions by the Canterbury Mayoral Forum, Taituarā and Local Government New Zealand, but wanted to give its own feedback based on specific impacts to our district.

"We remain in strong opposition to the reforms as they are currently proposed, and we'd like to see the process paused for up to five years to let the new regulator Taumata Arowai settle in, and then see how readily councils are meeting their obligations and responsibilities."

If, after five years, it was still necessary to reform then a regional approach with greater local input and local decision-making was preferred, he said.

Submissions on the bill have now closed. The Select Committee will gather information and prepare a report on the bill for the house, including recommendations, by 25 May.

## New watermain going in at Allens Road

Work to install a new water main on Allens Road, between Middle Road and Harrison Street, is planned to begin on Wednesday 1 March.

The work is being broken down into segments, to minimise disruption to residents and businesses over the course of the project, which is expected to take seven weeks. The intersection of Allens Road and Middle Road will be closed in the initial week of work.

The Allens Road project is part of a \$1.94 million watermain renewal contract awarded to Ashburton Contracting Ltd, and the work involves laying new pipes for drinking water.

Infrastructure and Open Spaces Group Manager Neil McCann said pipeline renewals were part of Council's business-as-usual work to ensure the pipe network delivering drinking water to people's homes and businesses was in top order.



"There are some ageing pipes in the ground and we need to replace them. There will be excavators and large trucks onsite for a few weeks and we are letting residents know about potential impacts by dropping a note in their letterboxes.

"We appreciate that this is more disruption for the people who live along or travel along Allens Road, as other contractors have been laying new wastewater pipes

in the Carters Road area. Both projects are important to keep our networks in excellent shape and delivering services our residents expect."

There will be a speed restriction of 30km/h in the area and temporary traffic control and lane closures. Parking may also be restricted and residents' access to properties may temporarily be affected.

Mr McCann said workers would try to keep any inconvenience to a minimum, including relocating residents' wheelie bins to a safe place on rubbish collection day, and returning them.

"We will also ensure that students going to Allenton School will continue to have access across Allens Road near the school, and that nearby businesses are kept informed."

Signs advising of reduced speed and detours will be in place before the work starts soon.

## Grants deadline nears

Community groups and organisations with a project that needs a financial hand should check to see if it qualifies for a grant from Council, but they need to be quick as applications close on 28 February.

The grants available include those for community development, biodiversity, heritage and local events. A second round of grants will open in March and include funding for regional events, trail maintenance, art projects and travel costs for junior sports teams.

Council has a dedicated webpage with details of the grants available and qualifying criteria, and any organisation or group that has questions or needs assistance with their application should get in touch, or go to [ashburtondc.govt.nz/grants](http://ashburtondc.govt.nz/grants).

click happy  
ashburtondc.govt.nz/library  
Ashburton PUBLIC LIBRARY

## ROAD WORKS NOTICES

**Thompsons Track – current to 31 March.** Thompsons Track between Winchmore Lauriston Road and Line Road is temporarily closed for roading maintenance and reseal works. Detour available.

**Mayfield Valetta Road – current to 6 April.** Mayfield Valetta Road between Tinwald Westerfield Mayfield Road and Anama Valetta Road is temporarily closed during the day for rehabilitation. Resident access remains, detour available.

**Holmes Road – current to 17 March.** Holmes Road between Mt Hutt Station Road and Barkers Road is closed for a full road reconstruction and drainage installation. Detour options available.

**Railway Terrace East (Rakaia) – current to 28 February.** Railway Terrace East from Rolleston Street to Bridge Street SH1 is temporarily closed for work associated with Waka Kotahi's weigh station project.

**Allens Road** - current until 9 April. Allens Road between Carters Road and Turton Street will be closed while the North West Ashburton wastewater system is extended and connected to the town network. Detour available.

**Arundel Rakaia Gorge Road** - current until 10 March. Arundel Rakaia Gorge Road will be closed between Mayfield Klondyke Road and Moorhouse Road to enable roading repairs. Detour is available.

**Dobson Street** - from 28 February until 2 March. Dobson Street between Cass Street and William Street will be temporarily closed while new service connections to the Haven Housing project are installed. Detours are available.

View a map of all current and upcoming road closures in the district by going to our website [ashburtondc.govt.nz](http://ashburtondc.govt.nz)

## UPCOMING MEETINGS

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

**Council Meeting**, Wednesday 1 March, 1pm (live-streamed)

**Youth Council Meeting**, Tuesday 8 March, 4pm

**Methven Community Board Meeting**, Monday 13 March, 10.30am at Mt Hutt Memorial Hall

**Council Meeting**, Wednesday 15 March, 1pm (live-streamed)

**Council Activity Briefing**, Wednesday 22 March, 9.30am

**Audit and Risk Meeting**, Wednesday 22 March, 1.30

**Ashburton Water Zone Committee Meeting**, Tuesday 28 March, 1pm (live-streamed)

## TRIENNIAL MEETINGS

**Mayfield Reserve and Hall Board** - Tuesday 28 March, 7.30pm at the Mayfield hall

### 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 9am - 8pm  
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