

## New platform frames river, stars

Artwork by students from Ashburton College has been used to create three special star signs at a Matariki viewing platform at the Rakaia Gorge.

The viewing platform and nearby new public toilets were built by Council, with some help through a grant from Government's Tourism Infrastructure Fund. The environmentally-friendly toilets have been open for business at the gorge since just before Christmas and the viewing platform was officially blessed and opened this week.

The platform looks downstream to the Rakaia River, affording view across the plains and to the Southern Alps. The signs help people find the Matariki star cluster in the night sky, with one of the panels providing its own special star light.

Mayor Neil Brown said the new toilets were already being well used and the dryvault system ensured waste was retained and removed, which was important in keeping waste away from the river.

"The viewing platform is a real credit to all those who worked on it. It has access for those who are less able or are in wheelchairs and the interpretive signs tell the Matariki story and why it is important to us.

"Tourists and regular visitors will find it a treat to look out over the river or up at the sky."



The area around the toilets has been resealed and there are now more car parking spaces, new picnic tables and plantings.

A star gazing seat allows visitors to lie back and see the sky. New storage has been created for the Rakaia Gorge Society, whose members maintain the grounds.

Mayor Brown said the new facilities and improvements provided a visitor experience worth of the location, which was a popular gateway site to the district on the inland scenic route.

The students' artwork was previously on display at an exhibition at the Ashburton Art Gallery and Museum.

The site was blessed by Tewera King, Ūpoko of Te Rūnanga o Arowhenua.

**ABOVE: Councillors and senior staff admire the view and the new Matariki signage at the Rakaia Gorge viewing platform.**

**BELOW: The signs were designed from artwork created by Ashburton College students.**



## Mayor - Neil Brown Making sure second bridge stays on Govt's radar

**It was good news to see the second bridge over the Ashburton River included in the new Government draft policy statement on transport this week – the fact that it has survived a regime change means everyone can see it is needed.**

As a community, we know that a second bridge will provide an alternative crossing if the current bridge is out and that makes us, and the whole of the South Island, more resilient. We also know that it will ease congestion on SH1 through Tinwald and make it safer for all motorists, pedestrians and cyclists who use the roads.

As a council, we must now make a formal submission on the Government's new policy statement for land transport and we will be supporting its inclusion as a project of significance. We'll be including all the details of the business case that has been with NZ Transport Agency for some time now.

Apart from the obvious connectivity gains, we'll also be pointing out that the Regional Land Transport Committee also rates the second bridge as their number one priority for Canterbury. I encourage you as taxpayers to lend your weight to our words by making your own submission in support of the second bridge.

We clearly see the bridge progressing, with funding the only issue to clarify. That will be no consolation to the thousands of motorists that use the bridge on an hourly basis, but we know that the wheels are definitely in motion.

I'm also endorsing a letter from the Ashburton District Road Safety Co-ordinating Committee to Minister of Transport Simeon Brown asking him to get some action on lowering speed limits on the outskirts of Methven.

The Methven community has been asking for several years now for the speed limit on SH77 outside the new

Ōpuke Thermal Pools & Spa to reduce from 100kph to 60kph.

It is a no brainer for this growing community and made all the more necessary because of the growing popularity of the hot pools as a tourism attraction.

A plan legalising reduced speed limits on some roads was paused by the new Government last year, but the minister has said that communities wanting the lower limits will still get them – our letter might speed that up.

Around the district, Council is also waiting for the interim speed management plan to be ticked off by the Government so we can amend our 30kmh signs outside schools – smaller signs are to be added signalling that the 30kph limit will only apply on school days from 8.30am-9.30am and from 2.30pm-3.30pm.

Commonsense and road safety go hand in hand.



## SHORT AND SWEET

### ROAD CLOSURE

Parts of three roads in the Wakanui area will be closed on Sunday 17 March so the Ashburton Car Club can hold a sealed autocross event. The roads to be closed are Bonningtons Road (from Fitzgerald Road to Seaside Road), Seaside Road (from Bonningtons Road to Fitzgerald Road) and Fitzgerald Road (from Seaside Road to Bonningtons Road). The closures are in effect from 8am until 6pm on 17 March.

### RURAL ROAD SIGNS

Council contractors are continuing to roll out Stop signs at rural intersections. Larger signs and advance warning signs painted on sealed roads are being installed and the goal is for every rural intersection to have larger signage. Mayor Neil Brown said the larger signs were being welcomed by those in the rural community.

### ADOPT A DOG?

Council is currently trying to find new homes for seven dogs in its pound. The seven have all been picked up by animal control officers and their owners have not been able to be found. Details are on Council's Facebook page, for those able to open up their hearts.



# TALK IT UP TUESDAYS

Every Tuesday: 1pm - 2pm  
Ashburton Library  
No booking required.

# Councillors share new chambers

Former elected councillors and former senior council staff had a chance last week to tour the new library and civic building, Te Whare Whakare, a project commissioned in their time.

The group included former Mayor Donna Favel and Brian Lester, who was chief executive from 2001 until 2013.

The 16 former councillors and nine of the current elected members visited Hine Paaka, the council chamber, and the new councillors' lounge, then had a guided tour of the building's ground floor and library, and Level 2, where the majority of council staff work.

The building opened fully to the public on 29 January this year and an official opening is being planned.

Mayor Neil Brown said Prime Minister Chris Luxon had been invited to do the honours but Council was still waiting for a response.

"We're planning a formal event and hope to be in a position to announce details soon. But it's safe to say that Te Whare Whakare has lived up to our expectations so far, and been embraced by the community and staff."

The need for a new library and civic centre was first signalled to the community in 2004 and background scoping work began in 2013. A site was finally decided in 2016 and then during consultation about the form of the building, residents supported a facility that would comfortably cater for future generations.

Building started in early 2021, with Naylor Love Canterbury carrying out construction.

Donna Favel was the mayor when Council chose the final site and design in 2016.



She said while there had been calls to "build a barn with the bare minimum", Councillors had robustly debated the issue and agreed to create a civic building that the community could be proud of.

"I am very proud to see the completed building, delivered to the modern, high-quality standard we envisioned and one which will provide Council services for this and future generations."

She said it was exciting to see the building being well used by the community, "as we had predicted and hoped", and it had played a role in revitalising the town's central business area.

"Council staff and visitors to Te Whare Whakare can wander into the CBD and become more frequent consumers of their

services and products, while conversely CBD businesses, staff and clients have easier access to and more frequent visits to the new library and civic centre."

Former CE Brian Lester said there were a lot of discussions about a new civic building during his tenure.

He said various options and alternatives were talked about, including extending the Baring Square West building.

"But the existing building had its inherent problems and we also needed to build an Emergency Operations Centre that that was up to earthquake code and could operate for the community when needed.

"I think this new building, with its technology and space for the community, is first class."

## Heritage advisor shares market gardens journey

To celebrate the Ashburton Museum's exhibition **A New Era: Ng King Bros. Chinese Market Garden Settlement**, join us for a talk on **17 March** with heritage consultant and project manager **Arlene Baird**.

Arlene is a heritage consultant based in Mid Canterbury and has been closely involved in the Allens Road site.

She has over 25 years' experience in the heritage sector, initially in the UK where she specialised in restoration and adaptive reuse of historic buildings, then in New Zealand where she provides heritage planning and consultancy services to individuals, businesses and local authorities.

Over the past year she has also been standing in as Acting Area Manager for the Canterbury West Coast team of Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga.

Arlene has been involved with the Ng King Brothers site in Ashburton since



2014, liaising with Council, Heritage New Zealand and the Ng King descendants, and project managing the stabilisation of the buildings and refurbishment of the site in a way that shares its amazing story.

Join us on **Sunday 17 March** at 2pm for this fascinating talk!

## WORKS NOTICES

**Tinwald viaduct/SH1 Tinwald Corridor Improvements** - Contractors working on this traffic lights project for NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi have been granted an extension for traffic management on the highway and side roads until 30 April. The viaduct is currently closed.

**Seafield Road** - Work is planned for Seafield Road, between Christys Road and Stanley Road, from 12 February to 19 May. Traffic management will be in place and will include detours from 4 March.

**Thompsons Track** - Closed between Braemar and Pole Roads until 15 March for road rehabilitation. Detours in place.

**Elizabeth Street** - Elizabeth Street outside Ashburton Hospital is one-way (traffic running west to east), while contractors install new water and wastewater pipes. Hospital access remains.

**Maronan Road** - Traffic management is in place on Maronan Road while contractors rehabilitate a section between the Hinds River and just north of Swamp Road.

Full closure details on our website [ashburtondc.govt.nz](http://ashburtondc.govt.nz)

## COUNCIL MEETINGS

Meetings are at Hine Paaka (Council Chambers), 2 Baring Square East, unless specified. Meeting agendas are online at [ashburtondc.govt.nz](http://ashburtondc.govt.nz)

- Methven Community Board**, Monday 11 March, 9am, Mt Hutt Memorial Hall
- Council meeting**, Wednesday 20 March, 1pm (live-streamed)
- Ashburton Water Zone Committee**, Tuesday 26 March, 1pm (live-streamed)
- Council Activity Briefings**, Wednesday 27 March, 9.30am
- Audit & Risk Committee**, Wednesday 27 March, 1pm (live-streamed)
- Heritage Mid Canterbury Working Group**, Wednesday 27 March, 3.30pm, Banded Dotterel Room

## PROPOSED ROAD CLOSURE

Ashburton District Council gives public notice of a proposal to temporarily close roads to ordinary vehicle traffic to enable the holding of the **Ashburton Car Club's Street Sprints**.

Roads proposed to be closed:

- Smallbone Drive, from River Terrace to Robinson Street**
- Robinson Street, from Smallbone Drive to McNally Street**
- Watson Street, from Range Street to Robinson Street**
- McNally Street, from Range Street to Robinson Street**

Period of closure: **From 7pm on Friday 26 April 2024 to 8pm on Sunday, 28 April 2024.**

Additional closure: **Range Street will be closed on Saturday 27 April from 6pm to Sunday 28 April 6.30am only.**

This proposed closure is made under the Local Government Act 1974 - Schedule 10 (11 (e)) and will be considered at the Council meeting on **Wednesday 20 March 2024**. Any person objecting to the proposal should lodge a notice of their objection and grounds for their objection in writing by post or email to the Council, 5 Baring Square West, Ashburton by 4pm, **Friday 15 March 2024**.

**NEIL McCANN**  
Group Manager Infrastructure and Open Spaces

## LICENSING HEARING

The Ashburton District Licensing Committee will hold a public hearing on **Monday 18 March 2024** to consider an application by Jason Robert Gannaway for a renewal of a Manager's certificate under the Sale and Supply of Alcohol Act 2012. The hearing will be held in the **Wakanui Room**, at the Ashburton District Council, 2 Baring Square East, Ashburton, at 10am.

The Licensing Committee members will be Commissioner Robin Kilworth, Simon McDonnell and Carl Purcell.

Licensing information can be found on our website [ashburtondc.govt.nz](http://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 6am-9pm (pools 7pm, gym 8pm)  
Sat & Sun 7am-7pm (pools 5pm, gym 6pm)

## ASHBURTON ART GALLERY & MUSEUM

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