

## Focus on repairs after floodwaters

Council roading staff and contractors have now covered nearly every road in the Ashburton District affected by surface flooding following the weekend's rain and are attempting to put a cost to repairs.

Roads in the flow path of Dry Creek were the most damaged, with deep scouring along Methven Chertsey Road, which is expected to be open with a single lane by the end of the week.

Other roads expected to be open at the end of the week include Lyndhurst Road, Urrall Road and Line Road (at the Thompsons Track end).

Temporary repairs have allowed sealed roads to reopen, though full repairs will be determined and programmed over the next few weeks and months when weather and conditions allow. Most unsealed roads will likely need a maintenance grade, with isolated scour repairs.

A report on the cost of repairs and work priorities will go to Councillors soon.

Council's stockwater intakes were also impacted and urgent repairs are being carried out. The Brothers and Pudding Hill intakes have been reinstated, though it may take a day or so for water to reach the lower parts of the network.

The Methven Auxilliary was severely damaged and it is hoped that water will be available again from Thursday.



**ABOVE: Methven Chertsey Road suffered major scours and damage.**  
**BELOW: The intersection of Thompsons Track and SH77.**



## Neil Brown - Mayor

### Amber alerts signal new phase of second bridge need

**Our State Highway 1 bridge over the Ashburton River is becoming almost as famous as the Auckland Harbour Bridge – both have now been the subject of amber alerts issued by Waka Kotahi.**

Sunday night's amber alert locally meant our bridge was shut from 7pm until 6am, a precautionary closure because of the level of water and debris in the river and the need to monitor it in daylight.

Flows in the river had peaked and were well under half of that recorded in 2021, when the bridge also had to close after a pier sunk because of debris build up.

So is this now the new benchmark? The new trigger level for disruption, not only at Ashburton level, but for the whole South Island?

We know we need a second bridge and all the plans and business case are in place. The final box to tick is money and

we are optimistic Government will come to the party with a contribution – every amber alert like last weekend's will press home the need.

Every decent fresh in the river will also set our community on edge – will the bridge still be open when they return home from work, or from school? Will they be suddenly separated from family, or miss an important health appointment, or plane trip?

Rest assured we'll be talking with Waka Kotahi about how these amber alerts work and how much notice they will give us before putting one in place. Council was given a heads up on Sunday afternoon that the agency was considering a precautionary closure – within five minutes of that being confirmed, we had the word out on our communications channels.

We've copped some unfair criticism that we were well behind neighbouring councils in advising of the closure, but they jumped the gun on this occasion

before it was even confirmed.

We chose not to create unnecessary alarm and wait until Waka Kotahi had actually made a decision.

Experience has taught us that in a crisis, people need certainty and reliable information. Anything else generates fear, anxiety and worry.

So, four days on, we are assessing damage to our roads. Council staff and contractors are sweeping the district looking at sealed and unsealed roads, cataloguing damage and updating the live closure map as they go. A report about the total damage will end up before Council and it may well be that we can claim some funds for emergency repairs from Waka Kotahi.

We know that roads are a priority for our community and are doing everything we can to improve our network. Bear with us, while we up our level of resilience to these events.



## Mt Somers water plant under way

Work has begun on a new \$4.6 million membrane treatment plant for the Mt Somers water supply, and it should spell the end of boil water notices for the township.

Mt Somers is currently on a boil water notice because the existing plant cannot effectively treat the turbid water caused by last weekend's heavy rain. New membrane filter equipment to be installed will handle the turbid water.

Chief Executive Hamish Riach said the new plant was being built on reserve land at Ashburton Gorge Road and the area had already been fenced off as part of site preparations.

"Mason Engineers has the contract to do the work, and they are the same company we are using to build the new Methven/Methven-Springfield membrane treatment plant."

Ashburton Contracting Limited has been subcontracted to do the civil works, and McIntosh Commercial Construction will do the structural works, including a new building for the membrane equipment and other plant.

The project involves the supply, installation and commissioning of membranes for the new water treatment facility.

"Once completed, the project will deliver an uninterrupted supply of clean water to Mt Somers and will see the end of boil water notices," Mr Riach said.

"Locals will notice our contractors working on the site over the next eight months and we are hoping to connect the water supply in the new year.

"This means that even in heavy rain events, water coming into the plant will be able to be treated to the high standards required and delivered to households."

FINAL DAYS TO REGISTER

IT'S DOGGY  
REGO TIME



Register your four-legged friend before 31 July.

[ashburtondc.govt.nz/dogs](http://ashburtondc.govt.nz/dogs)

# Recycled laptops in hot demand

The Ashburton Public Library has been given 26 refurbished laptops to help clear a backlog of people seeking a secondhand device.

The library joined forces with the national Recycle a Device programme earlier this year to help teach young people how to repair and recycle donated laptops. It then opened applications from eligible people, including students, to give the devices away for free.

Library Manager Jill Watson said the partnership with Recycle a Device had been gaining momentum and the waitlist for devices had grown quickly.

“These 26 laptops given to us by Recycle a Device will help us clear the backlog and mean that we will have rehomed 45 devices to members of our local community who need them.

“This really helps to enable digital equity in our community and we’re so pleased to facilitate this programme.”

The library’s Digital Access Co-ordinator Sarah Jones has been trained by Recycle a Device to run sessions at Ashburton College, teaching students some fundamental technology skills about what is inside a laptop and how it works.



Ashburton Public Library's Digital Access Co-ordinator Sarah Jones is delighted to pass on 26 recycled devices.

“The students at Ashburton College have been doing a fantastic job and more laptops will be ready soon,” Miss Watson said.

“We look forward to distributing more devices to people in need through this partnership.”

If you are under 25 years of age and need

a device to complete your studies, or are over 25 and have a community services card and need a device for work or study, please contact the library to be added to the waitlist.

Those on the current waitlist will be contacted by the library to arrange a pick up time for their device.

## Green light for domain bike skills park

Council has approved the development of a bike skills park on the Ashburton Domain and will partner with service clubs to make the project happen.

Councillors would like to see the final design before it is created, but agreed this week that it could be developed near the existing bike and scooter track near the children’s playground.

Democracy and Engagement Group Manager Toni Durham said the idea for the bike skills park had been fleshed out by 11 parties, including rotary and lions clubs, and Council’s Open Spaces team.

“Bike skills parks are becoming increasingly popular as play and recreation assets throughout the country, and bike parks in our neighbouring districts are well used.

“We’re trying to create a space for young and/or new riders to learn the basics of road rules in a safe environment. This is particularly pertinent for a predominately flat town where cycling presents a real opportunity for growth.”

Mrs Durham said the service clubs were enthusiastic and motivated to get on with the project, which would have minimal cost for council.

“Now that the development has been approved, we can get on and create some concept designs. Council’s contribution is the land and maintenance once it is completed, and the service clubs have a plan for the rest.”

The Ashburton Domain was the preferred site because of its central location, nearby carparking and proximity to other facilities, like public toilets.

It is proposed that the track could blend into the environment sympathetically and use the natural shade from existing trees in a space that will not compromise the event lawn, where travelling carnivals and other shows set up.

## Boarding soon: Join our business awards launch

Mid Canterbury businesses, big and small, are being invited to join the Business of the Year Awards journey ... starting with the official launch on Thursday 3 August.

The launch will be held at the Ashburton Event Centre, starting at 6pm and everyone interested is invited.

The evening will include some inspirational words from those involved in the inaugural 2022 awards and sponsors connected with the 2024 edition. ANZ is back as naming sponsor.

The evening will be a chance to learn more about the award categories and entry process, and enjoy some networking, drinks and nibbles.

The award categories have been



expanded for 2024, and include primary industries, technology and innovation, environmental sustainability, export, customer experience, and workplace culture.

There are other awards for excellence in emerging new business, community impact, emerging business leader, business leadership, manufacturing, retail and hospitality, and tourism.

## SH1 Tinwald road works

Waka Kotahi is planning to close sections of Agnes Street and Lagmhor Road near SH1 from 31 July to 18 August as part of its traffic light installation project at Tinwald.

The three-week closures will be in place day and night: Lagmhor Road rail crossing from SH1 to Melcombe Street will be closed, and Agnes Street from SH1 to McMurdo Street will also be closed.

Traffic travelling north and south on SH1 will not be affected, though a 30km/h speed restriction will apply through the area. Detours will be in place.

Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency is working with Ashburton District Council, iwi and KiwiRail to improve the SH1/ Lagmhor Road/Agnes Street intersection and adjacent streets.

## 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 a community event – The Methven White Out Festival

The closure is as follows:

- Mount Hutt Station Road SH77 - between Holmes Road and Racecourse Avenue

Period of closure:

- From 2pm to 11.59 pm on Saturday 26 August 2023.

This proposed closure is made under the Local Government Act 1974 – Schedule 10 (11 (e)) and will be considered at the next Council Meeting on 9 August 2023.

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 28 July 2023.

NEIL McCANN  
Group Manager Infrastructure Services

## WORKS NOTICES

**Chalmers Avenue** – current to 20 August. The southbound lane of Chalmers Avenue, from Wellington Street to Nelson Street, will be closed while a watermain is replaced. Detours are in place.

**Mackie Street (Methven)** – on 23 July. Mackie Street, from Barkers Road to Methven Chertsey Road, will be closed on 23 July while contractors replace a watermain. Resident access available, detour for other traffic in place.

**Lagmhor Road/SH1 Tinwald/Agnes Street** – Waka Kotahi is installing traffic lights at this intersection so expect traffic management and delays over the coming months.

## COUNCIL MEETINGS

**Ashburton District Road Safety Co-ordinating Committee**, Tuesday 1 August, 9.30am

**Council Activity Briefings**, Wednesday 2 August, 9.30am

**Audit & Risk Committee**, Wednesday 2 August, 1pm (live-streamed)

**Local Alcohol Policy hearings**, Thursday 3 August, 9am (live-streamed)

**Dog Control Hearing**, Friday 4 August, 9.30am

**Biodiversity Advisory Group**, Monday 7 August, 1pm

**Council Meeting**, Wednesday 9 August, 1pm (live-streamed)

**Council Meeting**, Wednesday 23 August, 1pm (live-streamed)

## METHVEN PLAYGROUNDS

Upgrades to Methven playgrounds are almost complete, and they will re-open to the public as soon as the softfall is delivered. Equipment will remain fenced off until it arrives; the recent wet weather may cause delays.

### 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