

## Water flowing at Lake Hood

Council is undertaking more physical work at Lake Hood to improve water circulation and water quality.

A pipe is being installed at the southern end of the water ski lane to allow water to flush through the bunded area.

Group Manager of Infrastructure and Open Spaces Neil McCann said an open channel had already been dug at the end of the ski lane to allow water to flow through.

“We’ll turn that open channel into a culvert by placing a large concrete pipe in it and then landscape over it so anglers can still have access to that point, and we can still maintain the grounds.

“We are also investigating plans for the construction of a second outlet at the lake, and that work will be the subject of discussions during the coming Annual Plan process, but it’s all part of the long-term management goal to improve water circulation in the lake.”

Environment Canterbury continues to monitor the lake weekly to assess water quality that could trigger Health New Zealand to issue a health warning to avoid contact recreation in the lake.

Cyanobacteria was detected in the lake and canals in the previous two summers and Council has been working with specialist consultants on options for



improving water quality.

Mr McCann said water coming into the lake from the Ashburton River was currently being split to improve water circulation in the lake.

“Improving circulation is critical and we’ve been monitoring flows in the canals and main lake and we know that makes a difference. These are quick fixes but we’re also working on a long-term management plan to keep the lake an attractive asset for the district, as it was designed.”

He said Council, in conjunction with Health New Zealand, would advise the public if there was any change in the water quality at the lake.

“Algal blooms can form very quickly, especially when the water warms up, and can be harmful if ingested by people and dogs, or other animals. People should use their commonsense and apply caution if they are having recreation contact with the lake water, like swimming, water-skiing or kayaking.”

### Mayor Neil Brown

## Taking a leap: Making Ashburton great always

I’ve been sitting on a tractor this week because it’s harvest time on the farm and it’s provided some time to think about what’s ahead for our district, our country and even the world.

Councillors have this week received their budget packs for the 2025-26 year and will be absorbing a vast amount of information ahead of the budget workshops next Wednesday and Thursday.

The workshops are being held in the Council Chamber, at Te Whare Whakatere, and will be open to members of the public who want to observe. If you’re thinking about standing in the Local Body Elections later this year, then these workshops are a great opportunity to see how Council ticks at budget time.

The Long Term Plan forecast a rate rise of 10.1 per cent and we’ll be doing everything in our power to keep at, or ideally under, that figure. Some things are out of our control, like the rising

cost of insurance and that issue alone could spark a serious discussion about the assets that Council insures and how much risk we could take on in order to reduce costs.

We will go through the budgets prepared by Council staff and look at where there are differences between what was forecast for Year 2 of the Long Term Plan and work now being proposed. It is our job to ask why.

As has been the theme for several years now, we are intent on maintaining and improving core work and the Annual Plan will be another no-frills affair – a 10.1 per cent rise is still high, but we need to acknowledge what is driving the rising cost of simply doing business.

National’s reshuffle should be good for the country, especially the promotion of our Rangitata MP James Meager as Minister for the South Island. Mayors around the South Island have been concerned in recent times that we have lost representation in the Beehive and have less Government money spent in our districts.

I’ve congratulated James on his new and important position and look forward to continuing our good relationship. We also look forward to building on the friendships we have with the new Minister of Local Government Simon Watts and the new Transport Minister Chris Bishop.

A legacy of the former Transport Minister Simeon Brown is approval for a second Ashburton bridge and over the holiday break I’ve been contacted by people around the South Island happy to hear that the bridge is going ahead. Council has agreed to fund the cost of the roads connecting to the new bridge and we expect more detail later this year – that will be a conversation ahead of the Annual Plan 2026-27.

Driving up and down the paddocks, I’ve also been listening to the inauguration of Donald Trump as 47th president of the United States. He’s made his intentions very clear about how he plans to make America great again and we are all watching with great interest.



## SHORT AND SWEET

### FIX IT FAIR

The Ashburton Library and Keep Learning Mid Canterbury are teaming up to offer Ashburton’s first Fix It Fair on **Saturday 1 February**. Pop along to the library between 10am and 1pm and you’ll find volunteers from local community groups able to fix your items or help you make a plan for where to get the item fixed.

### SCAVENGER HUNT

In the lead-up to Waitangi Day, the Ashburton Art Gallery and Museum will be holding a Te Reo scavenger hunt. Discover the wonders of Te Reo Maori with a fun and educational rapu hamu (scavenger hunt). Learn and explore new words as you search for items. During the hunt, you’ll also learn about Te Tiriti o Waitangi. The scavenger hunt is free and will run from 26 January to 9 February, 10am-4pm.

### RAILWAY STORIES

Local train buff Michael Ross is the guest speaker at a talk about the Great Southern Railway at the Ashburton Art Gallery and Museum on Wednesday 29 January, at 5.30pm. He’ll talk about the history of the railway, the men who worked on it and the final trains seen round the district. The event features a tour of an exhibition about the railway.



### INFLATABLE FUN

Our inflatables will be at the Hinds community pool this weekend, so come on down and join the fun. There is no charge for the inflatables, however normal pool admission charges apply. **Hinds Pool** - Saturday 25 and Sunday 26 January (12.30-3.30pm). **Rakaia Pool** - Wednesday 29 January (midday-5pm), Saturday 1 and Sunday 2 February (12.30-3.30pm).

# District's online profile refreshed

Ashburton's profile on Wikipedia is about to receive a refresh, thanks to a project involving Council and Wikipedian-at-large Dr Mike Dickison.

Mike has been engaged to update the Wikipedia pages for various sites and attractions around the district and is organising a photo shoot for Wikipedia around Ashburton on Sunday 23 February to gather information.

He is coming from Christchurch with a team of experienced volunteers to help him research and write stories, and take photos for several Ashburton pages. Local photographers who want to donate photos to Wikipedia are welcome to join in.

The project has been co-ordinated by the Ashburton Art Gallery and Museum on behalf of Council, and director Shirin Khosraviani said the spinoff would benefit the whole district.

"Wikipedia is an online encyclopaedia, and its pages can be updated by anyone. Information on some current pages about Ashburton is a bit out of date and Mike and his volunteers are going to refresh them and post new content.

"That means that anytime someone uses AI or searches for Ashburton, or any articles on the district or our art gallery



and museum, they will see modern and up-to-date content."

Mike will also be giving a free talk about Wikipedia to the community on Sunday 16 March, at 2pm.

The former museum curator and digital librarian has worked on a similar project for Banks Peninsula.

Shirin said Wikipedia was now over 20 years old and had become a crucial part of the world's store of knowledge.

"Mike's talk will explore how Wikipedia works, what happens behind the scenes, and what 250,000 amateur Wikipedians do to keep it alive and accurate.

"We'll also look at the threat posed by AI-generated text, which has rapidly polluted the world's information ecosystem but so far has yet to make inroads into Wikipedia, and why the world's richest man hates an online encyclopaedia so much."

The talk will be at the Ashburton Art Gallery and Museum.

## Climate change policy needs local input

We all want Mid Canterbury to be a place with clean air, clear waterways and protected for future generations and that's why Council is beginning work on the district's first Climate Change & Sustainability Strategy.

Group Manager Democracy and Engagement Toni Durham said the first part of the process was to check in with the community about what they'd like to see included.

"While there can be a range of views around the correct action to take, nearly everyone can agree that we need to look after the people and places we love.

"This is an opportunity to have a conversation about what work is already under way, what Council should focus on, and how we plan as a community for the challenges that climate change will bring."

Feedback and ideas can be submitted online at [itsourplace.nz](https://itsourplace.nz), and the Council will be hosting a community workshop at Te Whare Whakatere on Wednesday 12 February, at 6pm.

Mrs Durham described the workshop as a chance to brainstorm as a community and said everyone was welcome.

"We have a responsibility to work with our residents in preparing sensibly and responsibly for climate change.



"It's important that we hear from people from all sorts of backgrounds, as well as our community and industry stakeholders."

Council staff will use the feedback from the online survey and the workshops to help write the new strategy. There will be a second chance for people to give feedback once the draft strategy is completed and before it is adopted for consultation later this year.

*Have your say or register your interest in the community workshop at [itsourplace.nz](https://itsourplace.nz)*

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### WAITANGI DAY RUBBISH & RECYCLING

There is **no change** to kerbside rubbish and recycling collections on Waitangi Day, Thursday 6 February. If Thursday is your usual collection day, please have your bins out as normal by 7.30am, and please use your windstrap, no matter the weather.

Ashburton Resource Recovery Park will open on Waitangi Day from 8am-6pm.

### COUNCIL MEETINGS

Meetings are at Hine Paaka (Council Chamber), 2 Baring Square East, unless specified.

Meeting agendas are online at [ashburtondc.govt.nz](https://ashburtondc.govt.nz)

Monday 27 January, **Methven Community Board meeting**, 9am, Mt Hutt Memorial Hall

Tuesday 28 January, **Council Activity Briefings**, 10am (live-streamed)

Wednesday 29 January, **Budget Workshop**, 9.30am

Thursday 30 January, **Budget Workshop**, 11am

Monday 3 February, **Biodiversity Advisory Group**, 1pm, Wakanui Room

Wednesday 5 February, **Council Meeting**, 1pm (live-streamed)

Wednesday 12 February, **Three Waters Committee**, 10.30am (live-streamed)

Wednesday 12 February, **Audit & Risk Committee**, 3.30pm (live-streamed)

Wednesday 19 February, **Council Meeting**, 1pm (live-streamed)

Thursday 20 February, **Council Agencies 6-month reports**, 9.30am (live-streamed)

Wednesday 26 February, **Budget Workshop**, 9.30am

### PROPOSED ROAD CLOSURES

Ashburton District Council gives public notice of proposals to temporarily close roads to ordinary vehicle traffic to enable the holding of two community events.

The proposed closures are made under the Local Government Act 1974 – Schedule 10 (11 (e)).

Any person objecting to the proposals should lodge notice of their objection and the grounds for their objection in writing by post or email to the Council, 2 Baring Square East, Ashburton.

#### Ashburton Car Club Gravel Sprint

Road proposed to be closed:

- **Upper Downs Road – From Quarry Road to 518 Upper Downs Road**

Period of closure: From 8am to 6pm on **Saturday, 15 February 2025.**

Objections should be lodged by 4pm **Monday 27 January.**

#### EA Networks Centre Kids Triathlon

Roads proposed to be closed:

- **Smallbone Drive, at the intersection of River Terrace**
- **Robinson Street, from Dobson Street West to Watson Street**

Period of closure: From 7am until 2pm on **Sunday, 23 March 2025.**

Objections should be lodged by 4pm on **Friday, 31 January 2025.**

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

#### 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 closed in January)  
Sat & Sun 7am-7pm (pools closed in January)

#### ASHBURTON ART GALLERY & MUSEUM

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