

## Join the volunteer planting crew

Planting volunteers are needed for a special World Biodiversity Day event at Harris Scientific Reserve on Sunday 25 May.

The reserve is a dryland area with indigenous plants, cared for by the Ashburton Community Conservation Trust with the support of Council.

Group Manager of Infrastructure and Open Spaces Neil McCann said the planting event was a great opportunity to contribute to the local environment and support biodiversity efforts.

“The event gets underway at 9am and all the necessary tools will be supplied, as well as morning tea. It’s suitable for families and children too and we’ll teach you all you need to know.”

The Harris Scientific Reserve is at 409 Lovetts Road, which is off Maronan Road. If you are interested in taking part, please email [biodiversity@adc.govt.nz](mailto:biodiversity@adc.govt.nz); people can also walk up on the day.

Mr McCann said Council was keen to grow the number of biodiversity volunteers, who made a positive impact by working together with Council.

“We really value our volunteers, who come together regularly to plant and care for native trees, control pests and weeds, and protect threatened species. We have a few planting opportunities coming up and I hope residents will join forces with us because volunteering is a great way to contribute to the environment and help restore its natural beauty.

“We welcome individuals, groups, organisations, churches and businesses interested in doing their bit.”

Council last year adopted the Ashburton District Biodiversity Strategy, called Our

**Join the Ashburton District's World Biodiversity Day event at Harris Scientific Reserve on 25 May**



**This Harris Scientific Reserve is a special area with indigenous plants, cared for by the community.**

Natural Place, and it is a community-led initiative to preserve biodiversity and contribute to a balanced and sustainable environment for the community.

One of the actions in the strategy was to establish a Community Natural Environment Fund, to support local biodiversity and sustainability projects.

Mr McCann said the fund was a way to connect volunteers who wanted to plant but lacked resources, and those who had resources but couldn’t participate due to busy schedules.

“Companies, individuals and communities can donate money to purchase native trees and planting materials, and in return can promote their businesses using the planting as an example of their sustainability initiatives.

“If you want to join our volunteer pool or donate to the community fund, then please get in touch with us.”

To volunteer, or find out more information, please contact Customer Services on 03-307-7700, or email [biodiversity@adc.govt.nz](mailto:biodiversity@adc.govt.nz).

**MAYOR Neil Brown**

## Rakaia speed review welcomed, so speak up

**People power has encouraged the NZ Transport Agency to conduct a formal review of the speed limit through Rakaia, instead of just reverting it back to 70kmh.**

I was among those who wrote to the agency with concerns after Government said the new 50kmh would revert back automatically on 1 July. Clearly, I was not alone.

A six-week period of formal consultation will begin early April, with a decision by July, and so I encourage you all to watch out for notice about when the consultation starts.

The speed limit review is a legal process, and the community feedback will be considered alongside a technical assessment and cost-benefit disclosure.

NZTA is also planning a speed review for the intersection of SH1 and Weavers Road, to support the safe operation of the northbound Rakaia Commercial Vehicle Safety Centre, so make sure you click the links when they are available and have your say.

There's been good work done by the Rakaia Community Association on this issue already, so keep it up.

At this week's council meeting, we'll be talking about the future of drinking

water, wastewater and stormwater services for the Ashburton District - these three waters reforms are big and complex, and it's important we talk to the community about them. Residents will be receiving a note from me in their letterboxes next month, along with some information about our proposed future service delivery model. I urge you to read it.

Another major piece of work is our Annual Plan, and a workshop on Friday morning should make good progress on setting rates for the next financial year. As always, this is a balancing act between needs and wants, and what our community can afford.



## SHORT AND SWEET

### ARRP STILL OPEN

Smallbone Drive, off River Terrace, will be closed from 7am-2pm on Sunday for a children's triathlon, being held in and around the EA Networks Centre. Robinson Street will also be closed, from Dobson Street West to Watson Street. The Ashburton Resource Recovery Park is still open, and residents can access it from Range Street, via Dobson Street West, behind the Warehouse.

### STOCKWATER

Council is seeking the views of the wider community on the future of the Methven Auxiliary stockwater intake. An online survey is open until 9 April, and there will be a public meeting at the Mt Hutt Memorial Hall on Wednesday 26 March, at 7pm. The survey is at [itsourplace.nz/stockwater-exit/methvenauxiliary](https://itsourplace.nz/stockwater-exit/methvenauxiliary). The next intake under consideration is Bushside.



### TRAVEL, CREATIVE GRANTS AVAILABLE

Looking to bring your creative project to life? Or does your junior sports team qualify for a travel grant? We're here to help by administering local funds on behalf of two national schemes, the Creative Communities Scheme and the Sport NZ Rural Travel Fund. Applications are open, so head to our website to find out more and apply: [ashburtondc.govt.nz/grants](https://ashburtondc.govt.nz/grants)

### SH1 SPEED REVIEW

NZ Transport Agency is undertaking a new speed review for SH1 through Rakaia township. The current speed limit of 50km/h was tagged for reversal to 70km/h recently. The review will include public consultation, which will be open for six weeks from early April. Feedback will be analysed and a decision made before 1 July.

# Changes ahead for water services

Safe drinking water is crucial for everyone so when 5500 people in Havelock North became ill in 2016 after drinking contaminated water, council community water supplies all over the country – including Ashburton District – came under the spotlight.

Water reforms started by the Labour Government have been reshaped by the National Government, and the end result is higher national standards for drinking water, and higher standards coming for the treatment of wastewater and stormwater.

What does this mean? Ashburton District Council has to develop a Water Services Delivery Plan by this September – outlining the current state of our water services infrastructure, future investment needs, and how we will fund and operate our drinking water, wastewater and stormwater systems to meet the stringent new regulations.

The Water Services Delivery Plan has to satisfy some specific criteria set out in the Water Services Bill, and other Acts, and also has to be approved by Government.

Maintaining and improving our three waters services to meet the new regulation costs a lot of money – in 2024-25, about 30 per cent of all council expenditure was on three waters activities – these costs are expected to rise in the future.

In the next 10 years, some \$133 million has been allocated to run daily water services and another \$136 million allocated to improve water services infrastructure (like upgrades and pipe renewals).

The average Ashburton township ratepayer currently pays \$706 for drinking water (a targeted rate), \$604 for wastewater (a targeted rate) and \$144 for stormwater (part of an urban amenity rate, based on the capital value of your property).

Council has had several workshops on the model best suited to our district and will



talk to the community about two options – a stand alone business unit within council, and a Water Services Council Controlled Organisations (like Ashburton Contracting Ltd, but for water services).

When Council last surveyed residents about water reform in 2021, 97 per cent of respondents said it was important for the community to be able to have its say on how water services were provided. This is why Council has focused on water service delivery models which retain strong Council control and provide residents with the most ability to have input on how those water services will operate.

This is a big change and Council needs to talk to the community about it and hear its feedback. It's planned that from 27 March, all residents will receive information packs in their letterboxes about what is proposed and inviting feedback.

Council has had two meetings planned to discuss the future of our water services with the community and this is a chance to hear from your elected representatives and ask questions.

ABOVE: Methven's new drinking water treatment plant, which was opened in October 2023.

## PUBLIC MEETINGS:

- [Methven](#)

Tuesday 8 April, 6pm,  
Mt Hutt Memorial Hall  
Theatrette

- [Ashburton](#)

Wednesday 9 April,  
6pm, Te Whare  
Whakarewa Event  
Space

*This meeting will also be livestreamed on our Facebook page and YouTube channel*

## COUNCIL MEETINGS

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

Friday 21 March, **Annual Plan Workshop**, 9.30am

Wednesday 26 March, **Three Waters Committee** (live-streamed), 9.30am

Wednesday 26 March, **Audit & Risk Committee** (live-streamed), 11am,

Wednesday 26 March, **Council Activity Briefings** (live-streamed), 1pm

Tuesday 2 April, **Council Meeting** (live-streamed), 1pm

Monday 14 April, **Methven Community Board**, 9am at Mt Hutt Memorial Hall

Wednesday 16 April, **Council Meeting** (live-streamed), 1pm

## ROAD CLOSURE

Ashburton District Council gives public notice of a temporary road closure to enable the holding of a community event – **EA Networks Centre Kids Triathlon**.

Roads to be closed:

- **Smallbone Drive, at the intersection of SH77/River Terrace**
- **Robinson Street, from Dobson Street West to Watson Street**

Period of closure: **From 6am until 3pm on Sunday, 23 March 2025.**

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

## WORKS NOTICES

**Seafield Road** - Closed between Morris Road and Ashburton Airport, until 12 April for road rehabilitation. Detour available.

**King and Alexander Streets, Chertsey** - Closed until 13 September while a new water treatment plant is built. The road closure will not impact Chertsey School access.

**Walnut Avenue** - Parts of Walnut Avenue near the Ashburton Intermediate School will be closed 24-26 March for tree maintenance.

**Works Road** - The Works Road railway crossing will be closed for maintenance 24-28 March.

**Ealing Montalto Road** - Closed between Trevors Road and Cracroft Maronan Road until 5 April, for maintenance. Detours are available.

**Seaside Road** - Closed between Bonningtons Road and Fitzgerald Road on 30 March, for a car club event.

**Moore Street/West Street/Dobson Street** - There will be disruption in this area until 28 March while a watermain is replaced. The SH1 northbound left hand slip lane onto SH77 is currently closed; night-time stop/go at that intersection from 8pm-6am on 20 and 21 March. Expect congestion and delays.

*Full details of local road closures are 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 5.45am-9pm (pools 8pm Mon & Tue, 7pm Wed-Fri; gym 8pm). Sat & Sun 7am-7pm (pools 6pm, gym 6pm)

### ASHBURTON ART GALLERY & MUSEUM

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