



# Omarama Gazette

November 2020



## Are we ready for anything?

In the aftermath of the Ohau fire authorities are urging all communities to follow Lake Ohau Village's lead and have a plan in place in case of a large-scale emergency. Waitaki deputy principal rural fire officer Mike Harrison told a meeting of landowners in Omarama on Tuesday Lake Ohau Village was possibly unique in New Zealand in that it had a plan in place which was reviewed and practiced regularly.

It was a plan initially drawn up by Waitaki District Council's rural fire and civil defence management Steve Couper and Chris Raine in conjunction with the community some-time prior to 2014 when Mr Raine left the role.

At the time he left Civil Defence community response plans were in place for Kurow and Waitaki Bridge.

In the six years since three further plans have been drawn up and distributed to the communities concerned with the Otematata and Waihemo Community Response Plan distributed in November last year.

Waitaki mayor Gary Kircher said the council fully supported the development of emergency response plans "for all of our communities".

"Not just fire plans, but plans for other disasters such as floods, earthquakes, tsunami, and so on."

"Currently the Otago Civil Defence and Emergency Management group is working on more of these broader plans for our communities, and we encourage Fire and Emergency New Zealand to work with our 'at-risk' communities to develop fire plans where they don't exist already."

Mr Kircher said he believed Omarama had good facilities and the resources to cope with a range of emergencies.

In the case of Lake Ohau, residents were evacuated to Twizel because it had the capacity to assist.

# *Are we ready for anything? continued*

"Should a disaster occur in Omarama, Twizel might be a destination, but equally Otematata and places further east might be the best options.

"Overall, we have a good civil defence presence across the district and can cope with moderate emergencies, but we have very deliberately combined our Waitaki civil defence with the rest of Otago so that we are able to better share resources and overall capability.

"In a large incident, we are able to bring in resources from across Otago, and if an emergency declaration was made, we would have access to resources across New Zealand."

Waitaki Emergency Management officer Ewan Graham told the Omarama Gazette its response plan for Omarama had just been printed its distribution was imminent. It would also be uploaded to the website shortly.

Specifically, the community hall has been designated as the evacuation centre. Emergency Management Otago had been working to make that and Omarama's LandSar building "generation capable" so in an emergency there would be a reliable source of power, Mr Graham said.

While there was always a reason to get more resources most small communities were well-resourced for the size they were, he said.

There were various options if town-wide evacuation was necessary and that would depend on the event – "be it weather, earthquake, fire," he said.

There could be an incident when the community is completely isolated "then it comes back to the individual to have those household plans in place".

Mr Graham said direct 'welfare' costs incurred after an event like the Ohau fire could be recovered in government funding from the National Emergency Management Agency otherwise the costs would fall on the respective territorial authority.

Last year, Fenz Omarama and Omarama Search and Rescue led by Omarama Police put together a small working group (the Omarama Emergency Response Group) to plan for any large-scale disaster and better prepare to care for a lot of displaced victims, loosely based on a scenario of a rupture of the alpine fault, Constable Nayland (Bean) Smith said. It focussed on setting out the roles of each agency and wanted funding to ensure it could plug in a generator to provide power to the hall, as mentioned by Mr Graham.

The group intends to hold a multi-agency exercise in the town to test the plan.

Mackenzie District Mayor Graham Smith said if the Lake Ohau Village evacuees had been sent to Omarama as was the initial plan, "my view is Omarama would have coped."

"[But] we were happy to assist. We had the doctors, the pharmacy was able to open, we were able to accommodate people, it was easier to action.

"Our welfare group was well-practiced from the Pukaki Fire, it was a pleasure to assist.

"Mackenzie and Waitaki work very well together. We have a very good relationship. We have a lot in common."

He said he was mindful many, particularly visitors, often wrongly assumed Omarama was part of the Mackenzie Country.

Mr Smith said one outcome from the Ohau Fire was he had spoken to former Conservation Minister Eugenie Sage about concerns over vegetation on closed-up

Department of Conservation land.

Prior to the election she had called on the chief executives of the five agencies which operate in the Mackenzie - Doc, the Mackenzie and Waitaki councils, Environment Canterbury and the National Transport Agency - to sit down with Fenz and draw up a fire risk strategy, he said.

Mr Smith's hope was new conservation minister Kiri Allan would continue support for this.

A link to the Waitaki Community Response Plans is here

<https://www.otagocdem.govt.nz/districts/waitaki>

For further advice about how to prepare for an emergency go to:

[www.getready.govt.nz/prepared/](http://www.getready.govt.nz/prepared/)

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## Thank you

*Thank you from Lake Ohau Village*

*Lake Ohau Village residents and ratepayers thank the local communities of the Mackenzie and Waitaki for their support following the recent fire. The assistance of staff and volunteers in Fire and Emergency New Zealand (FENZ), the Waitaki Emergency Operations Centre (EOC), Urban Search and Rescue (USAR), Department of Conservation, Coastguard NZ and the Civil Defence Welfare Centre working with Waitaki and Mackenzie District councils is much appreciated as well as the many offers of help from individuals.*

Lake Ohau Village residents and ratepayers who do not receive email newsletters from the Residents and Ratepayers Association are welcome to join and will be given free membership for a year.

Please email [lakeohauvillage@gmail.com](mailto:lakeohauvillage@gmail.com) .

Jill Stone, Secretary

Lake Ohau Alpine Village Resident and Ratepayers' Association



# Planning for improved communication

A meeting held in Omarama on Tuesday in the wake of the Ohau fire has come up with several ways to improve communication between rural landowners in more isolated country and fire fighters in the event of another such scenario unfolding.

About 20 Omarama landowners met with Fire and Emergency New Zealand representatives and Omarama police to discuss ways to better coordinate a response.

The meeting was prompted by discussions after the Ohau fire when, in the face of the blaze, farmers faced the task of moving stock and protecting their properties before emergency services could be alerted to the localised risks and get to the scene to help.

The outcome of the meeting is farmers and FENZ will work together to establish a data base of Omarama's rural properties and residences along with other relevant information about farm boundaries and water sources to better help emergency services get to and fight fires.

As well, in the event of an emergency, any neighbouring landowners who are not needed to provide immediate assistance will volunteer to liaise with FENZ communications and any command unit to pass on local knowledge and improve the flow of information.

As well, there is a possibility the digital farm location and boundary maps held by the rescue helicopter services could be shared with FENZ if individuals agreed to waive privacy considerations.

The Waitaki District was well-resourced when it came to rural fire fighting capability, Waitaki deputy principal rural fire officer Mike Harrison said.

However, on the night of October 4 two major fires at Ohau and Livingstone broke out within 10 minutes of each other. It was unprecedented, Mike said.

All resources were "thrown at Ohau [the Ohau village]".

"It did take a bit of time to get help to you guys." – those farming south-west of the village. It really did stretch even the command structure," Mike said.

Realistically, given the district, there were always going to be fires that FENZ was not going to be able to get to quickly.

This was the same discussion had with Livingstone landowners at its meeting, Mike said. "You'll have to manage things yourselves until we get there."

The more isolated the location the more important it was to have an emergency plan as part of farm procedure, he said.

FENZ Omarama chief fire officer Greg Harper said fire crews valued local knowledge and they needed to work together.

The worst thing was for people to "shoot off into the sunset" to battle a blaze on their own with no-one knowing where they were.

"If they end up on the fire-ground then they become our priority, not the fire," FENZ Otago Southland community engagement adviser Sally Chesterfield said.

"If there is a fire and you've got stock, I definitely understand the need to get the stock to safety but you don't want to risk your life," Constable Nayland (Bean) Smith said. "Operate in pairs and let people know where you are."

"As soon as we're looking for you we're not fighting the fire," Greg said.

"We need to know who you are, where you are and how to contact you," Mike said.

Ribbonwood Station manager Grant Murray said it would be helpful if there was a way FENZ could alert landowners more quickly about a fire in their vicinity.

"You guys were rolling by 3.30am but we didn't get alerted until 4.30am." That call came from a neighbour.

Rachael Murray said it was about five hours from when the fire started before they heard from FENZ and about 12 hours before any assistance arrived.

"People would rather know and be able to do something early," Grant said.

There was "nothing to link us with the fire brigade on the other side",

Ramon Zeestraten, of Glen Eyrie and Ohau Downs, said.

If landowners could contribute to a database of contact details which was also regularly updated it would make it easier to make contact more quickly, Mike said.

FENZ was happy to provide the necessary technical assistance to do this.

"We have to use local people to create networks."

Electronic options for an alert system were not always the answer because phone coverage in remote areas was patchy.

"Hard copies, a map with good info about where buildings are and water sources – it's absolute gold to our people," he said.

Omarama, Otematata and Twizel fire crews plus Omarama, Kurow and Twizel police were earliest on scene at Ohau, Bean said.

"Basically, that was it. People do have to look after themselves until the rest get there."

Quailburn Station owner Michael Doree said landowners had two primary concerns – how to create an effective alert system and, secondly, how to get help with moving stock and containing the fire.

Realistically, at the time of the event, when stress levels were running high, it could be difficult to make decisions, he said.

He asked if it would be possible to have someone in the fire crew call the relevant landowner "as you're rolling".

*-continued over*

*(From left) FENZ community engagement adviser Sally Chesterfield, Constable Nayland Smith, DPRFO Mike Harrison and Omarama fire chief Greg Harper*



# *Planning for improved communication*

"Sometimes we don't know exactly where it [the incident] is," FENZ Omarama senior fire fighter Jack Zorab said.

It was important not to be afraid to call 111 and, also, not to assume the crews had all the relevant information, he said.

"Don't be afraid to call 111 if you see the fire trucks going past."

It was the best way to get information to fire crews and any command unit.

"It helps build a picture for us too," Sally said.

People "should not be shy" about ringing up and getting someone to help," Andrew Sutherland of Benmore Station and Ahuriri Downs said.

At this event there had been confusion over road and place names – Quailburn, Ribbonwood - this was where local knowledge was invaluable, Mike said.

Some at the meeting were from families who had been farming the same piece of land for generations.

"You know the land and you know what the fire is potentially going to do."

"We can go and squirt the water on but local knowledge is invaluable," Greg said.

Ben Dhu's Hamish Smith said, in his opinion, "ungrazed country" contributed to the fire risk.

"We've got to be careful saying it's just ungrazed land. The fire really got going when it got into the Manuka and Kanuka areas [managed by the Waitaki District Council]," Grant said. "We're going to get fires. It's just where we live."

Information from the Pukaki, Livingston and Ohau fires was being collected and analysed by SCION to better understand the causes and nature of the events, Mike said. Under new legislation FENZ also have a role in "reduction" so matters raised were being discussed at a national level and with Government.

"We are talking about it Pukaki, Ohau Livingstone – people are starting to see there is a higher risk out there."

A lot of things could be put in place to protect property and make things easier for fire crews Sally said. Rapid numbers should be visible, and allowance made for easy access by emergency vehicles.

There were tips on the FENZ website about protecting property.

*Landowners meet with Fenz representatives to discuss fire response*



# Heritage Gateway Hotel cautiously optimistic

Omarama's Heritage Gateway Hotel is to reopen its doors later this month amidst cautious optimism.

In August, because of the Covid-19 situation, the Heritage Gateway and Countrytime hotels closed with the loss of 23 jobs. They had been closed since March 27 when alert level 4 restrictions were put in place.

Pre-Covid-19, 75% of the Heritage Gateway Hotel guests were international travellers.

And the reintroduction of alert level 3 restrictions in Auckland in August had a serious impact on domestic tourism numbers.

General manager Megan Talarico said one wing of the Heritage Gateway and the restaurant and bar would open Thursday, November 26.

"We're really pleased to be back."

A "skeleton staff" would be employed to begin with.

"We'll be open for dining daily, 6pm to 8pm, to begin with and open for breakfast."

The Mackenzie Country Hotel, in Twizel, also owned by Otago Hotels Ltd and managed by Megan reopened at Labour Weekend, she said.



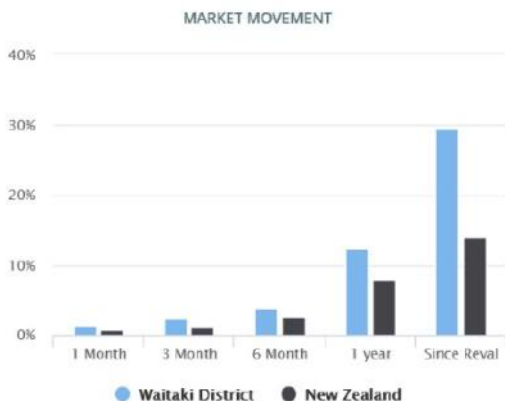
## Omarama legends do it again

Former world champion blade shearer Peter Casserly and best mate champion dog triallist Ginger Anderson drew the crowds when they appeared on stage at the Poverty Bay A&P Spring Show last month.

Or perhaps it was the real star of the show, the world record breaking, Gizzy Shrek. With Ginger's assistance it took Casso about 15 minutes to give Gizzy Shrek her haircut. According to the report in the Gisborne Herald the ewe's fleece length was measured and verified at 58 cm, 3cm longer than the previous Guinness Book of Records mark set in Masterton in 2018 when Suzy the feral sheep discovered near Te Kuiti was shorn.

# Likely rates hike for low/fixed income earners

## Waitaki House Value Market Movement



Waitaki's "first home buyers and retirees" look set to bear the brunt of an increase in rates off the back of a sky-rocketing increase in the capital and land values of "lower value base" homes and lower land value levels.

Last month QV senior consultant and registered valuer Tim Gibson presented its triennial revaluation report to an additional Waitaki District Council meeting. Quotable Value Ltd (QV) is the council's valuation service provider.

The revaluation is undertaken every three years and assessed in line with legislation. It produces a rating valuation "area snapshot" as at September 1.

The community and market set the levels and QV interprets this to form the valuations, Mr Gibson said.

In terms of valuations the Waitaki District "from Oamaru to Omarama" was a varied one, he said. "Residential is the big use in Waitaki district."

However, there was a big rural component in the district with over half land value by sector rural.

Mr Gibson told councillors there had been "very high growth" within the residential sector and a significant increase in values from three years ago with all areas of Waitaki "outstripping" New Zealand's overall increase.

This appeared to be quite common through provincial districts especially for the "lower value level", he said.

The Covid-19 situation did not affect demand apart from immediately post lockdown. "[It has] just continued to grow and grow."

House values had increased 20% to 40% above 2017 capital values with biggest increases in "lower value base houses", he said.

The residential market was driven by relative affordability, limited availability of housing stock, record low interest rates and an increase in domestic tourism.

Lower valued properties performed highest in Palmerston, Kurow and Oamaru.

"Omarama moved up 20% on capital value, Oamaru about 30%, Kurow and Palmerston up around 50%."

Residential dwelling average values put Omarama at \$500,000 capital value and \$220,000 land value, and Oamaru at \$380,000 CV and \$110,000 LV "which was still affordable when looked at a national level". Mr Gibson said.

There had been limited rural sales for all sectors of the rural market and negative growth in the dairy sector. Although the Kurow-Duntroon Irrigation Company expansion had resulted in some increased land and improvement values, overall compliance issues were having a negative impact, he said.

"The influence of mortgage and vendor under financial pressure sales is evident."

Forestry was the big mover in the rural sector at 33.9% change driven by the government planting programme.

Lower tourism numbers because of border restrictions were impacting the commercial accommodation sector.

In discussion, councillor Melanie Tavendale said it appeared the revaluation was "tipping in the direction of the residential sector paying a bigger proportion of rates".

Council chief financial officer Paul Hope said the new valuations would "certainly" impact the general and roading rates.

"Particularly the general rate, we set that on land value.

"There will be quite a potential movement from properties under residential," Mr Hope said.

Waitaki Mayor Gary Kircher said it was important to understand how the valuations impacted on rates.

"When people see the values have gone up say 45%, they don't start paying 45% more rates.

"If you've got an average overall increase in value then the rates won't change much at all. If you've got a lower than average increase you pay less rates. If it's high you may pay slightly more. But the overall pie doesn't change."

"It often does scare people when they see some of these changes and think that their rates are going to go through the roof, but they're not," Mr Kircher said.

Cr Colin Wollstein said, looking at the changes, "if the overall pot doesn't change much, it must tip the balance within the pot as to what is paid by each sector."

"It will be interesting to see the discussion as we work our way through," Cr Wollstein said.

"Where that falls will be looked at," Mr Kircher said.

Mr Hope said there were a "couple of insulating factors" particularly for residential properties.

In most cases fixed charges such as for water and sewerage made up a "significant portion of most residential rates".

"It's really only the rates set across the district where you will see the big change from one to the other."

"You'll see it in the roading rate, the district services and the general rate. They probably [make up] about 30% of most residential rates. That will limit the impact of the revaluation change, he said.

Councillor Kelli Milmine, a real estate agent, said it appeared the residential increase was driven by the lower value-base properties.

"If it's the lower-end properties going to see the largest rates increase, that's going to hugely affect the rates of people who are first home buyers and retirees."

She suggested that needed to be reflected in "how we look at things council-wise".

While QV's role was to go through the exercise of providing the values, how it impacted rates and how rating policy was applied was "purely a council decision", Mr Kircher said.

Mr Hope said staff would carry out some modelling to present to the council to show what it might mean for individual ratepayers once it had the information from QV.

"What it would be good to know would be if say a 45% increase represented a 10% rise in rates, or is it only 3 or 4%," Mr Kircher said.

Once the revaluation is audited by the Office of the Valuer General owners notices will be sent out. People can object to the revaluation and ask for it to be reassessed.

The resulting data is used for rating purposes from July 2021

# Gliding Club off to a flying start

After a somewhat bumpy ride for gliding in Omarama events are lining up on the grid for a successful season of club flying.

Former licence holder Glide Omarama ceased operations in early March because of a licensing dispute with the CAA about the compliance required for its adventure trial flights. Covid-19 restrictions then closed all airfield activities.

The Omarama Gliding Club now has a licence to operate out of Omarama Airfield and will provide most of its gliding activity and gliding support services.

First in the line-up of this season's events is a mountain flying course, formerly known as Jerry's Course, which begins on Monday.

It's designed to give up and coming pilots the background they need for safe flying in the mountains, along with an understanding of the terrain and flying conditions in the Omarama area.

The South Island Regional championships follow and will run for a week from Saturday, November 14. About 20 pilots have registered.

The Youth Glide Development Camp will run from December 10 to December 19 and in January, the club will host the National Gliding Championships, in Omarama.

Omarama Gliding Club chief flying instructor Trevor Mollard said it was a "work in progress" to expand to fill the gap left by Glide Omarama.

It represented a "change in culture" as gliding in Omarama moved from being a mainly commercial concern to become more volunteer-based to keep costs down.

There are close to 80 members of the club, 26 are overseas pilots. The club was in the process of recruiting a 27th.

"It augurs well for the future. When Covid allows, people will be eager to get here," he said.

The club has access to the services of two tow planes and pilots as well as the winch and winch launching services.

Keith Essex, sole director of newly formed Southern Soaring, will operate two tow planes, a Dynamic and a Carbon Cub with Twizel pilot Alex Shadbolt flying the second plane.

The club has a Duo Discus two-seat glider (GUO) and a single discus (GZS) which can be used once students are competent, Trevor said.

A second duo discus (GOD) with only 500 flying hours has been imported from the US and is due to land at the docks in two weeks, Trevor said.



*Omarama Gliding Club chief flying instructor Trevor Mollard and Twizel school pupil Tuulianna Laukkanen (13) return to the airfield after a flying lesson on Sunday.*

# 'Kiwi Keith' returns with planes in tow

Alaskan-born Keith Essex has gone to great lengths to return to Omarama and to return gliders to its skies.

"Kiwi Keith" was in Alaska when fears about the Covid-19 spread began to limit travel and close borders.

Nonetheless, he decided to come back to New Zealand with two tow planes, a Dynamic and a Carbon Cub, complete the quarantine programme and set up a new towing operation, Southern Soaring Ltd.

"I've been in aviation my whole life."

From the mid-80s, Keith owned a fixed wing and helicopter operation in Alaska.

He began living in New Zealand about six years ago and gained residency.

He sold the helicopter business two years ago.

"I still work there, but at a lower level, to give me more time to help on the airfield here."

The new tow planes were the way of the future.

"They're more modern, more fuel efficient, they drink a 1/3 less fuel and are extremely quiet."

They have been built to meet stringent overseas noise abatement requirements.

"Since we're starting from scratch, we're being conscious about the way we do things," Keith said.

Keith's planes have been employed since mid-October.

"We're expecting [the activity at the airfield] will be similar to that of years past with the exception of the overseas tourists."

However, he was expecting more domestic travellers to visit.

"Kiwis are movers."

"A lot of North Islanders are planning to come here who haven't been here in years."

*Alaskan-born Keith Essex has gone to great lengths to return to Omarama and to return gliders to its skies. Photo: supplied*



# Rebuilding Omarama gliding from the base up

Changes in the gliding scene at Omarama coupled with the Covid-19 situation brought long-time flying instructor Gavin (Griz) Wrigley to a realisation.

"It was the realisation we had to start developing a more resilient local base.

"This is one thing I can do, and I enjoy doing it."

In July, Griz began offering Twizel school pupils a chance to take their first glider flight and if keen to continue receiving instruction.

And in August the Omarama Airfield Company granted him a licence to operate microlight training services.

The idea came out of lockdown...commercial gliding had "fallen apart".

He had been a gliding instructor for Glide Omarama since 2004 and normally would have gone elsewhere in the offseason

"I was stuck here. At first it was unwise to leave, then impossible."

His main lockdown project was the refurbishment and major overhaul of a Rans S6 side-by-side two-seater microlight, registration VIN, and "it's pink". It was duly christened Vin Ordinaire.

Since then Griz has had several students including gliding instructors who were taking the opportunity to broaden their skills "during the lull".

It was not a commercial operation but operated under Civil Aviation Authority's part 149 which was recreational aviation.

*Twizel school pupils gather for a lesson from Omarama Gliding Club instructors*



Griz's CV reads like that of an action series adventurer. Hailing from Yorkshire, he has crewed all over the world with BOAC, skied in Colorado and circumnavigated the globe in a 10m sloop. He owned and raced his own gliders, regularly soared the world-famous Morning Glory wave over the Gulf of Carpentaria and is New Zealand's national sports class gliding champion. Plus, he can quote Percy Bysshe Shelley, plays ukulele, mandolin and has just bought himself an electric guitar. In 2001, he was instrumental in setting up possibly the only mandatory flying course "embedded within a school" at the Essington School, in Darwin. "It was unique in this way" and it ran for 19 years. It had an advantage being an independent private school. Because it was competing for pupils it had a publicity and marketing budget. Gliding was an attractive course to offer and the marketing budget went to subsidising the relatively high costs of gliding compared with other outdoor education activities. The principal there had been looking for something to challenge year nine boys. But the course "didn't just stick to boys or year 9". There were logistical and financial issues but we made it work." The aim of instructing young people is to have them "go away hopefully stunned with things". They can connect learning to real-life. Take physics – they can see where the theory comes from and how its applied, Griz said.

*Omarama Gliding Club deputy chief flying instructor Gavin (Griz) Wigley readies Twizel School pupil Jack McLellan (13) for a flight.*



# Town water supply upgrade begins

Waitaki District Council contractors are now on-site at the Omarama water treatment plant preparing for the water supply to be upgraded over the coming year.

The upgrade will ensure the supply meets the New Zealand Drinking Water Standards.

A drilling crew will start the process by re-developing and pump testing bores at the treatment plant site. These bores were originally drilled in 2015 in anticipation of the upgrade.

Water from the bores will replace the current source water, which is taken directly from the Omarama Stream. The bore water will be easier to treat and provide a more reliable supply for the town.

Next steps over the coming months will include installing bore pumps and enclosures, and constructing a new treatment system and building.

The upgrade is one of the projects Council has selected to be funded through the Government's Three Waters Reform Programme's Tranche One grant, resulting in considerable cost savings for the community.

The council expect the work to be completed by December next year, 3 Waters acting senior policy planner Andrea Kydd-Law said.

"There should not be any supply disruptions resulting from the work, as the current supply will continue to operate until the new one is commissioned."

There will be regular updates posted to the council's Facebook page and through the Omarama Gazette. As well, the Ahuriri Community Board will be kept informed of progress, she said.

*Photo: Some preparatory work for the Omarama water supply upgrade was undertaken in 2015-2016*



# Shift change at Omarama Vets

There's a new face behind the desk at Omarama Vets.

Emma Jordan, of Omarama, has taken up the position of clinic manager.

Katie McLeod, of Kurow, who has worked for the Veterinary Centre for the past two years and took up the position of clinic manager in Omarama, in February, will go on maternity leave at the end of this month.

Katie said she will miss working in Omarama.

"We have the best clients. I'm a little biased but I have worked in three clinics."

With the Covid-19 situation it had been a "weird year" and a "strange time" to be introduced to the community, she said.

Veterinary services were deemed essential and so the clinic was open throughout lockdown.

Katie said the job had been varied with many highlights.

She especially valued her experiences assisting with surgeries.

Although it was a rural clinic because it was based in town she got to deal with "something of everything".

"I don't just have to sit behind a desk."

The broad role was something Emma said she was also looking forward to – "hands-on animal health".

She moved here from Roxburgh and her job as barista with her partner when he took up a job as shepherd at Omarama Station.

Emma said she had always had an interest in animals and farming, and this "fell right into place".

She hopes to begin distance learning and studying for a veterinary nurse qualification next year.

**This week Omarama Vets has resumed normal hours  
8.30am to 5pm Monday to Friday.**



*Omarama Vets clinic manager Katie McLeod (left) will take maternity leave from the end of this month when Emma Jordan will take up the position.*

# AHURIRI CATCHMENT COMMUNITY GROUP

PRESENTS WESTPAC AMBASSADOR

## SIR JOHN KIRWAN ON WELLBEING & RESILIENCE



To secure your free seat please email:

Fleur@mckenzieca.co.nz

A world class winger, JK's contribution to rugby, both as a player and a coach, has been immense. JK is one of the highest try scorers in international rugby union history and still holds a couple of NZ rugby records. The other side of the story is while he was scoring tries and becoming a rugby legend, he was also battling depression.

JK's personal journey with depression has led him to be actively involved in mental health awareness campaigns in New Zealand. For his incredible commitment and work in this space JK was appointed as an Officer of the New Zealand Order of Merit for services to mental health in the 2007 Queen's Birthday Honours. And in the 2012 Queen's Birthday and Diamond Jubilee Honours, JK was appointed a Knight Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit, for services to mental health and rugby.

SPONSORED BY:



Come along to one or both! RSVP essential.

**DATE:** 11th November 2020

**LOCATION:** Buscot Station

**AGENDA:** 4:30 PM Sir John Kirwan talk

**-The Woolshed Tour-**

6:00 PM Fundraising BBQ & Bar

7:00 PM Show starts

Book tickets for The Woolshed Tour here:

<https://www.eventfinda.co.nz/2020/the-woolshed-tour-lifes-a-bitch-mel-parsons/omarama>



# Celebrity speaker to feature at group launch

The newly formed Ahuriri Catchment Community Group will be officially launched next Wednesday at a combined event at Buscot Station featuring former All Black and well-known advocate for mental health Sir John Kirwan.

The free event – sponsored by Westpac and Beef + Lamb New Zealand will be followed by a fundraising barbeque for Friends of Omarama School.

At a ticketed event at 7pm, Life's a Bitch and Mel Parsons will entertain as part of their Woolshed Tour. The tour carries the message of the Rural Support Trust Organisers hope people will come along to hear Sir JK speak and also to learn more about the group and what it hopes to achieve.

The group, which has become an incorporated society, evolved from the situation last year when Environment Canterbury raised concerns about the water quality of Lake Benmore and suggested a local catchment group be formed to help tackle the issue.

At a meeting of farmers to discuss matters a steering group was formed led by independent facilitator Stevie Young, of Seed Force.

It decided to follow the lead of other regions and involve the whole community in the drive to protect the catchment.

It aims to help people learn about the local environment and its biodiversity, to come up with a long term plan to preserve water quality, landscape values and flora and fauna, and to get to grips with policy and regulatory changes, as well as to be a channel for funding.

Steering group member Nicola McKerchar, of The Glens, said the group had the potential to “develop considerable influence” over certain aspects of the local environment and how it would be “preserved, managed and developed for everyone’s benefit in the future”.

Other members of the group are: Lisa Anderson, Dave Ellis, Lindsay and Bev Purvis, Trent Spittle, Annabelle Subtil, Terry Walsh and Gavin Wills.

An inaugural meeting to elect officers will be at 7pm Wednesday, December 2 at the Pink Glider Café

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## INAUGURAL MEETING

for the election of officers for the  
Ahuriri Catchment Community Group

**7pm Wednesday, December 2, 2020  
at the Pink Glider Café, Omarama**

All welcome

Contact: Stevie Young 027 700 3857  
Email: [committee@ahuriricatchment.com](mailto:committee@ahuriricatchment.com)

# Melbourne Cup Omarama, 2020

2020, THE YEAR COVID CAME TO THE MELBOURNE CUP PARTY

Yep, even Omarama - check the pics!

And the awards go to...

Best dressed lady Glen Rutherford

Best dressed man (Mr Covid) Greg Harper

Best dressed couple Neville and Michele Kitchen

Thank you Boots & Jandals Hotel Omarama for sparkling up our year!





# The Noticeboard



To have your community notice included here email: [omaramagazette@gmail.com](mailto:omaramagazette@gmail.com)

**Congratulations to Zane, Steph and Liam on the birth of Brooklyn.**

**Kurow Medical Centre Omarama Clinic** at the Omarama Community Centre, is open Tuesdays, 8.30am to 1pm and 2pm to 5pm. To make appointments for all clinics, order repeat scripts or make enquiries please contact Kurow Medical Centre 03 436 0760 (Monday to Thursdays). [www.kurowmedicalcentre.org.nz](http://www.kurowmedicalcentre.org.nz)

**St Thomas' Omarama Church Community:** Services and communion are held on a regular basis, usually monthly at

10.30am on the Friday of the second weekend of the month at the home of a parishioner. Contact: Kay Verheul 03 438 9538.

**The Omarama Community Library** is open 9am to 10am Wednesdays and Saturdays, Library hours can change. Contact Yvonne: 027 476 7473.

**The Omarama Golf Club** Saturdays, cards in 12.30pm, tee-off 1pm. Club Captain Adrian Tuffley, 027 347 8276. [www.omaramagolfclub.co.nz](http://www.omaramagolfclub.co.nz)

**Omarama Playgroup** meets at 9.30am each Wednesday during the primary school term at the Omarama Community Centre.

For more information phone president Andrea Aubrey, 03 438 9863; vice president Ruby Milestone, 03 438 9401, secretary Carla Hunter, 03 976 0504

**The Upper Waitaki Young Farmers Club** meets at 7.30pm on the first Monday of each month at the 'Top Pub' - the Blue and Gold pub, in Kurow. All welcome. Join the Facebook group.

**Bridge Club** - The Omarama Bridge Club meets on a regular basis and would welcome new members. If you are interested please phone Sylvia Anderson 438 9784 or Ann Patterson 438 9493.

**The Omarama Model Aircraft Club** meets on Saturdays from 9.00 am to 12.00 noon at its flying ground at the Omarama airfield. All welcome - Contact Don Selbie on 027 435 5516.

**FENZ Omarama Volunteer Fire Brigade** meets 7pm each Wednesday and has its meeting at 7:30pm on the third Wednesday of the month. New members welcome.

**Plunket Line:** 0800 933 922

**Omarama Plunket Committee:** Petrina Paton 027 345 6192

**Car Seat Rentals:** Christine, phone: 03 435 0557 or 027 208 0362

**Breastfeeding Works:** Claire Hargest-Slade 03 684 3625, 021 493 863 [clairhs@me.com](mailto:clairhs@me.com)

**In case of emergency:** to prevent any confusion about the location of Lake Ohau Alpine Village in an emergency, the following points should be noted:  
When phoning 111, advise that Lake Ohau is in South Island and the nearest cross road is State Highway 8 and Lake Ohau Road. Also mention that Lake Ohau Alpine Village is on the shore of Lake Ohau, and is 20 mins (40 km) from both Twizel and Omarama. This will assist the operator to find the required information to enter location in the system and allowing the call to progress to the next screen in the system.

**To read more, enjoy more photos and watch our place 'come to life' check out our Facebook page and website.  
[www.facebook.com/omaramagazette/omaramagazette.nz](http://www.facebook.com/omaramagazette/omaramagazette.nz)**

**To receive email alerts between monthly editions of the Omarama Gazette sign up to our 'Local List'. Email [omaramagazette@gmail.com](mailto:omaramagazette@gmail.com) and put 'Local List' in the subject line.**

**Thank you to all who share your stories and contribute in other way to the Gazette. We all really appreciate what you do.**

**The December issue of the  
Omarama Gazette  
is Wednesday, December 2, 2020.**

**Please submit copy  
by November 27.**

**Advertising pays for  
production and distribution.**

**To find out about publication and close-off dates,  
and how much it costs to place your advertisement,  
please phone 021 294 8002, 03 438 9766 or  
email [omaramagazette@gmail.com](mailto:omaramagazette@gmail.com)**

# The Community Reports

## FENZ Omarama Volunteer Fire Brigade



*Hi everyone,*

November is here already Guy Fawkes is upon us. So if you are going to let off any fire works please make sure there are adults about and please put the sprinkler on the area before you set any off, and do the same when you have finished.

We would recommend no fire works as the best and safest option.

Labour weekend was a tragedy on our roads nationally. Luckily none around Omarama but

please make sure you drive to the conditions and don't use your cell phone while driving. - *Keep yourselves safe. Chief Fire Officer Greg Harper*

**FENZ Omarama Volunteer Fire Brigade meets 7pm each Wednesday and has its meeting at 7:30pm on the third Wednesday of the month**

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## Omarama Community Library



**The Omarama Community Library**  
**is open 9am to 10am,**  
**Wednesdays and Saturdays**  
**at the**  
**Omarama Community**  
**Centre.**

**Contact: Yvonne Jones 027 476 7473.**

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# St Thomas's Church Community

The Kurow Presbyterian Parish invites the Kurow and wider community  
to the ordination and induction of

**Lee Kearon**

**7pm, Thursday, November 19, 2020**

This service will be at St. Stephen's Presbyterian Church,  
10 Bowen Street, Kurow.

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Maintenance work has begun on the St Thomas' church building.  
Planned work includes repainting all woodwork.  
As well, the bell tower which has been damaged by rot will be repaired.

## **Contacts:**

**St Thomas' Church Community**

**Chairperson: Jan Thomas**

**Committee secretary (Presbyterian) : Lee Kearon, phone: 021 250 1060  
or email: [lee.kearon@gmail.com](mailto:lee.kearon@gmail.com)**

**Treasurer: Kay Verheul**

**Anglican representative: Ven Dr Michael Godfrey, phone 022 342 9977  
or email [educator@calledsouth.org.nz](mailto:educator@calledsouth.org.nz)**

## **STORAGE SPACE WANTED**

To help minimise outgoings from church funds the committee is seeking  
an alternative low cost or free storage arrangement  
for the church furniture.

**If you are able to help please contact: secretary Lee Kearon  
phone: 021 250 1060 or email: [lee.kearon@gmail.com](mailto:lee.kearon@gmail.com) rg.nz**



# Justices of the Peace

The JP service is free of charge  
To make your visit quick and easy:  
\* Check a JP can complete your

documentation  
\* Do not sign anything beforehand  
\* Do take photo identification  
\* take the original as well as the copy to



**Malcolm McMillan**  
**Lake Ohau Village**  
**03 438 9798 027 4389798**



**Vicky Munro**  
**Otematata**  
**03 438 7855 021 438745**



**Georgie Robertson**  
**Omarama**  
**03 438 9554 027 4861525**



**Alona Shaw**  
**Omarama**  
**027 773 4214**

# The Otematata Chronicle

is published on the third Wednesday of each month.

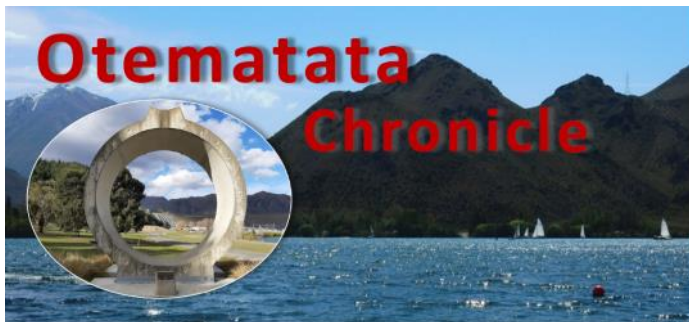
**The next issue is Wednesday, November 18, 2020**

**The close-off for this is Friday, November 13, 2020**

The Chronicle is emailed to subscribers.

If you would like to subscribe please:

email [otematatachronicle@gmail.com](mailto:otematatachronicle@gmail.com) or phone 021 294 8002



**When circumstances beyond your control lead to a rural business crisis be it financial, climatic or personal the Rural Support Trust is ready to assist. Services are free and confidential.**

**0800 RURAL HELP (0800 787 254)**



## **Notary Public Services Affidavits and Declarations**

**David Stone, Lake Ohau**

**03 438 9653, 027 490 9118, [david@stone.org.nz](mailto:david@stone.org.nz)**

# Omarama Residents' Association

## From the meetings

There were 12 people present.

### Annual meeting

Chairperson Tony Chapman gave his report for the previous year.

"A big thank you to everyone involved [in the completion of the sports courts] but especially the committee members and a special mention to Ann [Patterson] and Jemma [Gloag]. Also thanks to the sponsors: Meridian Energy, Otago Community Trust and the Waitaki District Council, also to the locals for their time and efforts. It's great to see the kids using it for hockey and they are even coming from Kurow as well, and lots of people playing tennis.

"We have had a few meetings cancelled because of Covid but hopefully that's well past us now.

"We have a lot on in the future with the council's Long Term Plan, footpaths in town in very poor condition, road changes corner of state highway 8 and 83, the Clay Cliffs turnoff and the speed outside the school which were all requested by locals in the township which is good and what we want - ideas for improvement for the area. We lobby the Ahuriri Community Board who take it to the council and we have a good rapport with both, but without the Residents' Association we would be forgotten about, I believe. The Residents' Association is a great team and here to make Omarama a better place for everyone. It would be good to have more people on the committee so we have good numbers at our meetings. Everyone is always welcome. It is an hour a month to discuss things for a better community.

### **The election of office bearers was held.**

Tony Chapman (chairperson) Yvonne Jones (secretary) and Stephen Grundy (treasurer) were confirmed in their positions for another year.

Committee members are as follows: Trevor Mollard, Ross Menzies, Ann Patterson, Hank Verheul, Gary Sutherland, Charlotte Newfield, Jemma Gloag, Lorraine King.

This is subject to final acceptance by those who were absent.

Charlotte Newfield continues as hall curator

Finances are in good order with major expenditure in the previous year being the sports courts. Figures will be confirmed on the release of the McKenzie and Co performance report.

Tony called for a vote of thanks to office bearers for their past year's work.

### **The monthly meeting followed the annual meeting.**

The committee has still not received a signed copy of library contract from Waitaki District Libraries manager Philip van Zijl. Philip has advised however that shelving for the new room has been procured.

Waitaki District Councillor Ross McRobie thanked the Omarama Community for their help

The next meeting is

**Thursday, November 19, 2020.**

An invitation is extended to all

Contacts: Tony Chapman, chairperson, 027 242 8605.

Yvonne Jones, secretary, 027 476 7473.

during the Ohau fires. Ann was called at 4am to open the Hall in case it was needed by evacuees.

The Ahuriri Community Board has advised it has money available for communities. An application will be put together by the committee for hockey goals, and small group of the committee will meet to discuss other options. Applications need to be received by the Board by mid-November

No reply has been received from the New Zealand Transport Agency's Roy Johnston regarding roading and safety issues. Another letter will be sent requesting answers. Ahuriri Community Board chairperson Vicky Munro said Roy was in the district two months ago and met with her but the committee were unaware of this. Board member Ross Menzies said the matter had been put on the "back burner". Yvonne asked it be noted it was an ongoing problem where nothing is done and the committee needs to be assertive to action change.

The Ahuriri Catchment Community Group has been set up. Interested members from the committee would be very welcome to join. The inaugural meeting is to be held November 11, 2020 at Buscot Station and Sir John Kirwan will be speaking at 4.30pm followed by a BBQ and Bar. The first official meeting will be end of November. The group will focus on issues of high nutrients in lakes, water quality, wetlands and plantings etc. Ann has received an approximate price from Accucut roughly \$5,000 to create the memory wall. Hank advised that cost of bricks to replace wall could be \$3,000. A gate can now be procured at around \$500 plus extras.

A question was raised about times the tennis courts were able to be used. They are available anytime, there is no booking system.

Committee member Hank Verheul told the committee he and wife Kay, St Thomas' Church treasurer had discussed the matter of the church boundary with the school Board of Trustees.

Moving the boundary to its correct position would resolve school parking issues.

---

## **THE ASSOCIATION HAS ITS OWN POST OFFICE BOX**

Could all those who want to contact the association by mail, send accounts to be paid, or have correspondence considered at the monthly meetings ensure it is addressed to:

**The Secretary, P O Box 93, Omarama 9448.**

**The association's email address  
is [omarama.committee@gmail.com](mailto:omarama.committee@gmail.com)**

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## **OMARAMA COMMUNITY CENTRE HALL HIRE**

To make a booking for an upcoming event or for more information about hall hire and availability please contact Charlotte Newfield, 027 940 1648, or email [charlotte.omarama@gmail.com](mailto:charlotte.omarama@gmail.com)  
Keys and fobs are collected from Charlotte





# TWIZEL MEDICAL CENTRE

Community Owned, Community Focussed,  
Community Operated

Twizel Medical Centre is your local Ministry of Health funded, enrolling practice. Contracted by SCDHB for General Practice, District Nursing and 24/7 Urgent Care, contracted by St John for PRIME (Primary Emergency Response) Services across the greater MacKenzie area.

**Hours:** Monday to Friday 08:30 - 5:00 pm with extended hours over the summer months

**Urgent and emergency care 24/7**

**Our Team:** NP Gemma, GPs Drs Peter and George, Admin/Receptionists Donna, Jacqui, Annie and Sue, Nurses Paula, Ann, Zoe, Holly and District Nurses Libby and Jess are passionate about our community accessing a high quality service.

**Twizel Medical Centre has charitable status so any surpluses are reinvested to ensure our community has access to sustainable general and urgent care services.**

**15 MacKenzie Drive, Phone: (03) 4350777**



*By Bevan Newlands, Omarama School Principal*

What a fantastic three weeks we have had so far in Term 4. Each of the three classes are powering into their learning and as I visit the classes, at various times during the day, I can see some very focused and creative learning going on. Well done to all the students on being such great learners.

We have a couple of very busy weeks ahead with athletic sports, school camp, CO2 race day and grandparents day. More about these new events later in the newsletter.

Thank you to those parents who attended last Thursday's school assembly. It was great to see a good number of parents coming to school to recognise and celebrate our akonga's learning.

### **Student of the Week Awards**

Jacob Moore - Working hard at spelling and writing.  
 Wilfred Morgan - For better self management throughout the week.  
 Julian Boris Garbe - For awesome effort in reading. Photo below: supplied

### **Student Bake Sale - Term 3 Fundraiser**

Dear Parents and Caregivers

We would like to thank you all for all your donations towards the school. Thanks to you, we have successfully raised \$283 that will go towards friends and families of Omarama School. We would like to thank Friends of the School for all their hard work in raising money for our school.

- Ebony, Cam and Toby

### **Events in Term Four**

6th November - Assembly 2:15pm  
 10th - 13th November - Camp Columba  
 16th November - Teacher only days  
 30th November - Grandparents Day  
 10th December - End of Term





## **NOTICE OF OMARAMA GOLF CLUB 2020 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING.**

The Annual General Meeting of the Omarama Golf Club will be held as follows:

**DATE:** Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> December 2020

**TIME:** 11.00 a.m.

**VENUE:** Omarama Golf Clubrooms

All members and interested individuals are welcome to attend.

Items of Business for AGM:

Confirmation of AGM Minutes 2019

President report

Financial Balance Sheet

Election of Office Bearers – President, Vice President,

Secretary, Treasurer, Club Captain, Course

Convenor and committee members

Approval of auditor for 2020/2021

General Business

---

# Omarama Golf Club

*By Christine Bowman*

It's been another busy month for the golf club with great turnouts on Club Days, and everyone enjoying their golf.

There have been a couple of exciting events, the first being a shootout, where members opted to qualify on Saturdays leading up to the day. Ten people qualified and one person was eliminated each hole (in the event there was a tie, a putt off decided the loser). Unfortunately, it rained for the event which put paid to the spectator participation and BBQ afterwards.

Winner on the Day was James Moynihan.

The Club Champs were played on the November 17 over 36 holes. It was an early tee-off with a dusting of snow on the surrounding hills.

Johnny Anderson beat Peter Trusler in the senior division and Greg Harper beat Paul Bowman in the intermediate. Congratulations to all players that qualified, as they had to knock out numerous players along the way prior to the final.

We have several visiting clubs coming to play in the next few weeks which is great for our small club.

There have been lots of favourable comments on the course condition by people playing, so a big thanks to all volunteers who have been on mowers etc.

Welcome to Ollie Turner and Angela Mowbray who have joined the club over the last month.

The Omarama Golf Club AGM will be held on Saturday 12th December 2020, 11.00 a.m. at the Clubrooms.

---

## The Waitaki Newcomers Network

Contact: Christine Dorsey  
027 242 8643.

[waitaki@newcomers.co.nz](mailto:waitaki@newcomers.co.nz)

Abacus House,  
102 Thames Street,  
Oamaru  
03 434 7544.

**[www.newcomers.co.nz](http://www.newcomers.co.nz)**

**'The Community Reports' is  
dedicated to news  
from clubs, groups and sports teams.  
Contributions are welcome.  
[omaramagazette@gmail.com](mailto:omaramagazette@gmail.com)**

# Waitaki District Council - news in brief

## Ohau fire recovery information

The Waitaki Emergency Operations Centre is working with partner agencies to assist those affected by fire at Lake Ohau in October 2020. For more information contact Waitaki Emergency Operations welfare staff on 027 213 1508. For updates go to the website.

### **Marianne Korten is Waitaki's community recovery coordinator.**

The role is a new one, established to answer a need brought about by Covid-19. Marianne has a background in not-for-profits and public health. Her role is twofold: funding and data collection. When it comes to funding, she is on the hunt for grants and opportunities for the wider community, especially in view of Covid and its effects. She is charged with seeking out funders, searching for and researching grants relevant to our region and eligibility. The second part of the role is collecting wellbeing data, using aspects of the community that fall under a larger umbrella of the four wellbeings: social, economic, environmental and cultural. The community recovery coordinator role sits within the framework of Safer Waitaki. A full list of the funding opportunities available as of this week can be found on the Safer Waitaki website: [www.saferwaitaki.co.nz/funding](http://www.saferwaitaki.co.nz/funding)

**Lake Ohau Station** has agreed to increase the areas within its boundaries protected as reserve and has paid a donation to the council's biodiversity fund as remedial action for a breach of resource consent. This was as a result of negotiations between the parties after Lake Ohau station staff found themselves on the wrong side of the Waitaki district's regulatory processes earlier this year after clearing indigenous vegetation without a resource consent. The money paid will top up an existing contestable funding pool which environmentally-focused community groups may apply for.

### **Council adopts mayoral relief fund policy**

Following the Ohau fire and the receipt of Government and public donations, the council has adopted a draft Mayoral Relief Fund Policy. Waitaki Mayor Gary Kircher said the policy was not just for the Ohau fire response, but was also designed to be a policy which could be rolled out during future emergency

To donate to the Mayoral Relief Fund: Bank account: 02 0940 0156400 000 Ref: Ohau. To apply for support go to the Waitaki Recovery page of the council website.

### **Visitor Centre set to open**

A Waitaki and Oamaru Visitor Centre incorporating the Waitaki Whitestone Geopark Information Shop with district attractions promotion and resources has opened open in the former Oamaru i-Site in building in lower Thames Street. Tourism Waitaki, the Waitaki District Council and Waitaki Whitestone Geopark Trust will jointly fund the facility until at least March or April next year (COVID-19 dependent).

The Centre will initially be operated by Tourism Waitaki five days a week during school terms (closed Tuesday and Wednesday) between 10am and 4pm. During New Zealand's national holidays it will operate seven days a week.

### **Support and Stimulus Fund projects announced**

At the September meeting of the two Waitaki District Support and Stimulus committees, the Economic Resilience Fund agreed to fund several projects which would support the visitor sector in the district. Most projects are being co-funded by the applicants.

# Ahuriri Community Board news

From the Ahuriri Community Board meeting,  
Monday, October 19, 2020

This was a zoom meeting, not live-streamed, and the meeting video was to be made available on the Waitaki District Council's YouTube channel the Tuesday following. The Omarama Gazette requested an invitation to the meeting which was endorsed by Ahuriri Community Board chairperson Vicky Munro.

However, in an oversight the invitation was not sent. Council chief executive Fergus Power was made aware of these issues and has apologised with a promise to ensure this reporter will be routinely added to board Zoom meetings in the future.

In a second misstep the meeting was not recorded and so will not be available to view online.

Council staff, working with Mrs Munro, collated the unconfirmed minutes of the meeting ahead of the usual timeframe to make sure an account of it was available for publication.

Please enquire if you would like a copy of those minutes.

**The next Ahuriri Community Board meeting  
is 3.15pm Monday, December 14, 2020  
at the Otematata Community Centre**

Minutes and agendas can be found here

<http://www.waitaki.govt.nz/our-council/council-meetings/agendas-and-minutes/Pages/default.aspx>

Phone: 03 433 0300  
Automated options after hours  
E-mail: [service@waitaki.govt.nz](mailto:service@waitaki.govt.nz)

**[www.waitaki.govt.nz](http://www.waitaki.govt.nz)**

# Upper Waitaki Water Zone Committee

## Continuing concern over water quality of lakes and rivers

A decline water quality of lakes and rivers in the Upper Waitaki catchment is a cause for concern for Environment Canterbury and its joint Upper Waitaki Water Zone Committee.

The results of ECan's annual water quality monitoring were presented at its October meeting, in Tekapo, and show that five lakes in the zone have not met the Trophic Level Index (TLI) set in the Canterbury Land and Water Regional Plan - a decrease in water quality compared with last year.

In addition, some of the rivers in the Upper Waitaki are showing signs of degrading in terms of aquatic life and water quality.

In his report ECan principal science advisor Graeme Clarke said overall larger lakes were still in good health, but there was a decrease in water quality in some rivers throughout the zone.

"In general, the large lakes in the Upper Waitaki such as Ōhau, Pūkaki and Tekapo/Takapō are still in very good health with low nutrient levels, but the results from the past year's monitoring have shown a decrease in water quality compared to last year.

"The change could be linked to heavy rainfall experienced in December 2019, which can wash nutrients and sediment from land into the waterways.

The Trophic Level Index is used across New Zealand as a measure of the nutrient status of a lake. The TLI measures four water quality indicators, including nitrogen and chlorophyll levels, to give a rating of between 1 and 7 – the lower the number the better the quality. This monitoring is different to swimming and contact recreational water quality – which shows that all sites in the zone are suitable for swimming.

The TLI limits for water quality in the Waitaki lakes were set by the Zone Committee to help it achieve community aims which include providing for a diverse ecosystem of plant and animal life, recreational opportunities and customary use.

The briefing to the Zone Committee also included information on river water quality in the zone, looking at both aquatic ecology – studying the insects living in the water – as well as water quality.

Both sets of results generally showed degrading trends, including the Ahuriri River, Twizel River and Ōtematata River.

"A number of the rivers in the Upper Waitaki are showing signs of degrading in terms of aquatic life and water quality.

"This is disappointing but not surprising, considering the widespread land use change that has occurred," said Mr Clarke said.

ECan southern zone manager Chris Eccleston, said the results reaffirmed the importance of measures being taken to reduce the impact of both farming and aquatic pests on the waterways.

"The implementation of on-farm good management practices across the zone and, longer-term, implementation of policies in the Government's new Essential Freshwater Management framework will address key causes of degradation.

"Over the past five years, we've been working closely with both irrigators and farmers in the area to implement tighter environmental rules."

In the Upper Waitaki area, lakes Alexandrina, Tekapo, Pūkaki, Ōhau, Benmore and Aviemore, are part of the annual high country lake monitoring programme. Kellands Pond is also regularly monitored.

The Upper Waitaki Water Zone Committee is a community-led committee that recommends actions and tactics to deliver the Canterbury Water Management Strategy in their zone. It is made up of community members and rūnanga and council representatives.

**The Upper Waitaki Water Zone Committee holds a delicious hāngī lunch** annually and this year the date has been set for Friday, November 20, with an informal meeting at 11.00am followed by the hāngī.

The event, hosted by Richard and Annabelle Subtil at Omarama Station, is a chance for people of all ages to come enjoy a hāngī and talk with members of the Upper Waitaki Water Zone Committee about the work they have been doing or water management issues on your mind.

The hāngī will be prepared and served by a team of volunteers, including kaitiaki rūnanga for the Upper Waitaki catchment (Te Rūnanga o Arowhenua, Te Rūnanga o Moeraki, and Te Rūnanga o Waihao).

**If you'd like to come to the hāngī – please get in touch  
with Zone Committee facilitator Janine Roux  
027 359 3426 or [janine.roux@ecan.govt.nz](mailto:janine.roux@ecan.govt.nz)  
for catering purposes.**

Minutes and agendas are posted at:  
<https://ecan.govt.nz/your-region/your-environment/water/whats-happening-in-my-water-zone/upper-waitaki-water-zone/>

# [www.ecan.govt.nz](http://www.ecan.govt.nz)

## Upper Waitaki Water Zone Committee

### Getting rid of rowan: the pest plant with a mystical past

The rowan tree was once planted to protect against witches and spirits but in our part of the world it is a threat.

A joint project, which has received \$10,000 of Immediate Steps biodiversity funding (IMS), is now under way to manage the invasive tree before it becomes more established.

Rowan, which is part of the wider rose family, has been taking hold amongst tussock in the Upper Waitaki area. If left unmanaged it can smother and kill native plants making it a real a threat to local biodiversity values.

The rowan control project involves ground crews systematically searching and destroying the invasive species,

particularly where tussock land has been retired from grazing.

Land Information NZ is managing the rowan removal project and is working in partnership with DOC, Te Manahuna Aoraki, landowners and Environment Canterbury.

The project was recommended by the Upper Waitaki Water Zone Committee to receive the IMS funding. If you have a local biodiversity project visit [www.ecan.govt.nz/biodiversity](http://www.ecan.govt.nz/biodiversity) to see what support is available.

*The red berries of the rowan tree (pictured) were once believed to ward off evil.*

# The Directory

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**BigSky**  
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Kay & Hank Verheul  
10 Ahuriri Drive, Omarama, New Zealand

Phone +64 3 438 9538  
Mobile 027 489 5149

Email [kay@bigskybnb.co.nz](mailto:kay@bigskybnb.co.nz)  
[www.bigskybnb.co.nz](http://www.bigskybnb.co.nz)

**Coralie Reid**   
LICENSED SALESPERSON

☎ 021 919 089  
✉ [coralie@oamackenzie.nz](mailto:coralie@oamackenzie.nz)

Twizel, Lake Tekapo, Omarama

[www.coraliereid.nz](http://www.coraliereid.nz)



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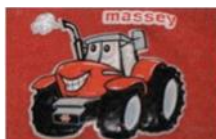


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Your Hosts Kay & Hank Verheul

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# Classifieds

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For more information, contact Lisa on 027 435 3014 or Melissa on 021 045 4929. Entries \$10 for adults/\$5 for under 16 year olds. (payable when you collect item).

## ANNUAL MEETING

### Omarama Collie Dog Club

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at the Pink Glider Café, Omarama  
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# The View from the Chook House



*"And if you pop on one of these wigs,  
you'll believe bird flu 'affects virtually nobody' !"*

---

**The weather that was  
@ 44°29'30.1"S 169°58'20.3"E**

**October 2020**

**Highest temperature: October 25, 24.7C**

**Lowest temperature: October 16 -3.1C**

**Most rainfall: October 26, 18.3mm**

**Total rainfall for October: 49.3mm**

# The Garden Diary - Functional with flowers

There's a little story about when I was a kid.

It was the first time I bought Christmas presents for the family using my own pocket money. Making the list, including aunts and uncles and cousins and Grandma, heading out shopping, ticking them off, wrapping, carefully selecting a place under the tree and then waiting. I don't remember how old I was, but it was exciting and not yet a chore. Come Christmas Day and my grandmother unwrapped hers – a packet of sweet pea seeds. How did you know, they all asked. How had I twigged she was a gardener? How did I know sweet peas were a favourite?

In the bit of garden Dad gave me I grew daffodils. I'd often find her standing looking at them examining them closely. One year said she thought one particular bloom looked like a winner. I didn't find out until much later she used to show daffodils. She used to grow hers in a row along one edge of the vegetable garden.

Sweet peas have always been a favourite of mine too – their scent of spring rain is like nothing else. She had a honeysuckle by her front door. I do too. I have other plants of hers. There is the peony – only a couple of generations down from that original Peony 'Rubra Plena' - which she grew in her Kaitangata garden and which made the journey with her to Dunedin. There are the auriculas – there were three, I have lost one. Dad gave me bits off his. Their painted frilly heads rise from great rosettes of leaves each spring. I have them in pots now and move them to cooler parts once they've ended their show-stopping exhibition at the front door.

Her deep red, velvety rose with the rosiest perfume ever - I made a guess it was 'Birthday Present' – I have now bought from the nursery for the third time. It doesn't like hard frosts. I had a plant taken from the original and luckily took cuttings, unluckily the dog ate them – that dog ate anything, plastic sprinkler heads – anything, everything.

You might imagine she had a great floriferous, bountiful cottage garden – but no, that was not New Zealand in the 60s and 70s. Flowering shrubs were king, set in deep beds set off by bare rich soil, clear-cut edges and neat green lawns. A fully functional vegetable garden was a necessity.

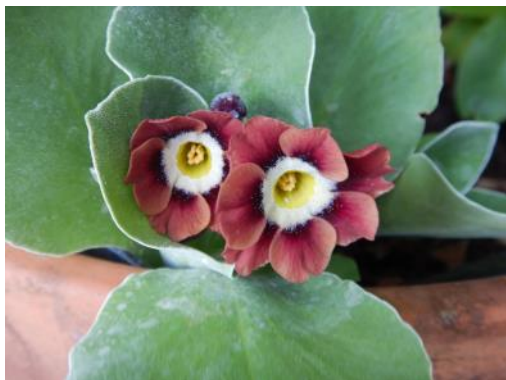
A penchant for the unusual was either a sign of the times or a mark of my grandparents' humour. In Grandma's garden a towering tree echium 'Echium pininana' had pride of place by the path. I gave it a wide berth – it was prickly - but when you looked up and up and up to see, there was the spire of bluepink flowers covered in bees. It seemed to forget it was a Mediterranean plant growing as it did in Dunedin's cool, shady Woodhaugh valley.

In Nana and Grandad's Nelson garden there was a circular bed of protea neriifolia. This has to be the weirdest, fuzziest bumble bee bum-like flower ever.

As South Africa's national flower maybe it was quite fitting. Born in Southland during the Boer War Nana was named Alice Ivy Pretoria.

But cool move, Grandad, to grow a plant with a scary monster flower bigger than your grandkid's head in the front garden.

- Ruth Grundy  
( I garden a small space under a big sky  
in Omarama)



# The Last Page is Classifieds

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