



Ōmārama Gazette

September 2023

Trail accidents trigger Gazette inquiry

This is a long read – the story is in the detail

An official information request made to Fire and Emergency New Zealand shows it raised the alarm in March with Alps 2 Ocean Trail management about the state of Quailburn Rd after a series of callouts to cyclists suffering injuries – some serious – after they hit thick, loose shingle on the road.

However, the council has not released the record of that email correspondence in its response to the request for the same information made on the same date – June 13.

After payment of \$1402.50 the council agreed to supply information the Gazette requested provided a time extension was agreed. (The story about this is in the July Issue). It supplied some of that on August 16.

However, some of the information was only released yesterday afternoon (2.40pm, Tuesday, September 5) after the Gazette complained that questions had not been answered in full as required.

Cyclists meet Quailburn Rd as they come off Tarnbrae, the mountain trail and highest point of the A2O Trail on section 4 which travels from Ōhau to Ōmārama



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Yesterday's information included a missing roading inspection report and one email – It was not one of the missing emails to Fenz – but one which refers to the roading report.

So, let's get down to the nitty gritty.

Cyclists meet Quailburn Rd as they come off Tarnbrae, the mountain trail and highest point of the A2O Trail on section 4 which travels from Ohau to Ōmārama.

It is noted on the trail website and brochure that a gravel road makes up 26% of the section 4 trail surface. Click through to the safety notes and there in the fine print among the other notes there is a warning the road can be corrugated with loose gravel, and to slow down because there have been “a number of accidents”.

Quailburn Rd has long been acknowledged as the second most dangerous section of the trail – the other being another shared gravel road – Hayman Rd in the Mackenzie District. It is why funds are being sought to take the trail off road in both these cases. This is becoming critical as record numbers of cyclists travel the trail. More on this later.

The A2O health and safety incident log was released by the council with the first batch of documents. In the log the council noted that despite frequent cycle accidents on Quailburn Rd its subsequent inspection found the road was “within spec”. The accidents were noted as being caused by “rider error” and logged as “not notifiable”.

In one month - March 2023 - there were nine reported cycle-related accidents noted in log as happening on section four. Trail management are not sure all incidents, especially more minor incidents, are being reported. Six of these were on Quailburn Rd from Woolshed corner where the trail meets the gravelled road to the tar sealed section. Two others were on the Tarnbrae trail and one happened outside HotTubs in Ōmārama. (Ambulances can only drive to the end of Quailburn Rd and may not go off-road, so cannot reach patients on the Tarnbrae portion of the trail. Search and Rescue are called to these cases. This lack of access can add significant delays to treatment.)

Of the six accidents in March on Quailburn Rd two were described as “major” but not notified. All cited hitting loose gravel and the accidents put down to “rider error”.

Each of these numbers is a person. As far as the Gazette is aware these people have had not had a chance to give their reasons for the accidents.

So, who knew what and when? [See Timeline overleaf for more detail]

“All incidents on the Trail are reported to the [A2O] Joint Committee in a health and safety report at each joint committee meeting,” a council spokesperson said.

“We do not hold in records to confirm the exact dates that the chairperson was informed of gravel issues.” The Joint Committee is co-chaired by Waitaki mayor Gary Kircher and Iwi representative Danual Cattermoul.

Last week, the Gazette spoke to long-time Quailburn Rd resident Hamish Smith, of Ben Dhu Station, about road conditions, maintenance and residents' safety concerns.

The road poses dangers to both vehicles and cyclists.

Residents had regularly voiced their concerns directly to the contractors and the council, he said.

Like other roads in the district Quailburn Rd was hit with washouts in last year's July-August flooding.

In September, as logged in the council's Health and Safety incident report, contractors made repairs and "metalled the road" and it was graded on March 6. Mr Smith understands from conversations he had with contractors and from his own experience that the shingle used to make the repairs was "not the right material". It has "no fines in it" and corrugates easily, he said. [*This was confirmed by the council roading inspection report - Ed*]

Fines are a fine dust mix which interlock the shingle and harden up the surface.

In effect, shingle with no fines acts like marbles on the underlying road surface.

Grading the material exacerbates the issue by spreading the shingle evenly over wheel tracks.

In deep gravel cycles try to stay in those wheel tracks, it is the only place they can ride, in wheel tracks cleared by previous vehicles. The gravel pushed to the sides is too deep.

"It's not the grader's fault. They're working with bog-shit material. It's shagged the road ... it's terrible to drive on," Mr Smith said.

Contractors had tried to remedy it by putting on material to mix in fines but "it's not really fixed the problem", he said.

As well, sometime during the maintenance process the camber on a critical corner was altered heightening the risk of a serious motor vehicle accident should someone come off the road at that point and hit the adjacent power pole, he said.

In his time, he had not seen the road in such a state of disrepair.

Regardless, it was unsuited to cyclists, he said.

It was a public road used frequently by agricultural servicing businesses and he quite often came across cyclists riding five-abreast oblivious to the dangers.

"People think the whole thing is a cycle trail. At least 10 trucks a week go through there ... there's nowhere for the cyclists to go. It's not suitable for cyclists, it's bloody dangerous. They have been talking about how dangerous it is for a cycle trail ever since the trail was put in."

He believed the council should "take a lead" and take the trail off the road at least "where all the accidents happen at the gorge".

Last week, on a visit, the Gazette noted a new warning sign had gone up very recently. (*Photo overleaf*).

With the new tourist season fast approaching and several thousand cyclists expected to travel the trail again this season many are wondering what will be put in place to improve safety.

According to a source these questions were raised again by tour operators at an invitation-only A2O hui at Lakestone Lodge late last month. (Wednesday, August 23). That person also said they were told that neither the Mackenzie nor the Waitaki District councils were granted their request to MBIE for funding to take the trails off road at the two trouble spots- Hayman Rd and Quailburn Rd. However, the Mackenzie Council had agreed to start work on Hayman Rd regardless, the source said.

In an email in response to questions about this put to the A2O trail manager Robyn Hyde yesterday [Tuesday] Ms Hyde said;

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“Yes, unfortunately at 5.40pm last night I received email notification from MBIE that the Trail’s business case application for funding was unsuccessful.

“This disappointing news was shared with the Alps 2 Ocean Joint Committee, and several senior MDC and WDC staff this morning. As you can understand, I am incredibly disappointed by this outcome. Next steps will be for this matter to be discussed with the Joint Committee along with the two councils, to understand the ramifications of this decision on the safety and improvement plans for the Trail. The MBIE response cites insufficient funding available in the NZCT fund at this time as the key reason for declining our application. The costs of repairing a number of the Great Rides damaged by the North Island weather events has reduced the budget available for enhancements for the foreseeable future.”

Council asset operations manager Josh Rendell added the following comment:

“We are unable to provide any comment on when the Alps2Ocean cycle trail might be taken off Hayman Road and Quailburn Road as there is at this point in time, no funding to do so. Council is starting to prepare its next Long-Term Plan which details the capital work programme for the 10-year period from 2024/2025 - 2034/2035. Council will consult with the community on that plan early next year, seeking submissions on what projects and programmes should be included.”

Ms Hyde said Mr Kircher had assured her that “they will be lobbying all the political parties to get the NZCT fund increased”.

“In the meantime, I will continue to seek alternative funding sources and apply for grant funds through the support of the Friends of Alps 2 Ocean Charitable Trust.”

In a follow-up email to Ms Hyde the Gazette asked why, in that case, had the Mackenzie Council agreed to start work regardless. Here is the reply;

“Yes, to the best of my knowledge, MDC and the project team are moving forward to deliver as much of the Pukaki East project as possible. MDC have funds allocated for this project (as any funding from MBIE needs to be matched with local share funds) and it is a high priority to deliver. As the MBIE application has taken a year to come to a conclusion, the planning side of the Pukaki East project has continued noting the risk. The project team will be meeting again next week to re-evaluate and determine the next steps, but the intention is for this project to continue, and we will deliver as much as possible with what we have.

As stated earlier today however, the ultimate decision lies with the Joint Committee and the respective Councils.”

Back to the material that was missing from the council’s response to that first request for information.

To reiterate the council supplied some – not the missing Fenz emails - yesterday. It apologised for not including the roading inspection report and the roading officer’s email sent to the Trail Manager on March 21.

“We recognise and apologise that this report and email was not picked up on during our search for the information you requested. The incident information was provided in the Health and Safety incident’s log we provided however we missed providing you this email with the report.”

The new information provides some conflicting information.

The council was asked for:

“Any **letters** from members of the public, or from cycle tour operators received by or forwarded to Robin Hyde about the condition of trail surfaces of section 4 and section 5 of the A2O trail for September 1, 2022 to April 30, 2023.”

The reply;

*“Council apologises that we didn’t answer this as part of your initial request. We can confirm there have been **no letters** from the public or cycle tour operators received regarding the condition of the trail surfaces on section 4 or 5 of the Trail.”*

However, tour operators have made contact because their names are logged as having reported the incidents noted in the H&S log.

Plus members of the public noted serious concerns about hitting gravel unawares in the A2O survey responses [See story overleaf]

The council was asked;

“How many CRM’s (council jargon for officially logged complaints) have been raised this year about concerns about the safety issues for **cyclists** on the gravel section of Quailburn Rd? What date were these raised?”

The reply:

*“There are no records of CRMs relating to safety concerns for **A2O users** in relation to Quailburn Road for 2023.”*

But the accompanying roading inspection report notes a resident raised a CRM about the gravel and grading on March 9 – albeit not directly related to cycles – but not long after one of the “major” cycle accidents. [See Timeline over]

The Gazette also asked that, given the spate of incidents, what warnings were given to tour operators about conditions for cyclists on the gravel section of Quailburn Rd. The council replied that the gravel section was already highlighted on the website and in the brochure with a photo of the road and safety notes.

“These resources are widely available to all trail users, including operators. Health and safety is a key topic when I am communicating with operators, and attendees at the recent A2O Hui were reminded again to use our website as a resource while briefing clients.

“It is important to remember that operators are also PCBU’s, (person conducting a business or undertaking) and have a primary duty of care to ensure so far as reasonably practical the health and safety of their customers. This includes providing appropriate safety information to them.

“I would also like to mention that a gravel road is a dynamic environment and changes based on the use by a range of vehicles, from cars to large trucks and farm vehicles,” the council spokesperson said.

And the Gazette asked about the new sign – the only visible new safety measure installed since last season.

“The sign was put up on the 21st August 2023.” [Two days before the Hui]

“As part of our continuous improvement approach to Health and Safety, I regularly connect with FENZ and St John to look for improvement in our practices.

“Following a medical event on the Trail we met to look for ways to improve access and response times for Fenz attending events on the Tarnbrae section of the Trail.

As part of this meeting Fenz and St John mentioned that when they get a call to Quailburn Rd, it is nearly always as one location [The troublesome gravelled corner – Ed]. Together we looked at this location and identified that speed was a key contributor to incidents. We agreed that a sign warning cyclists at the top of the incline to slow down and manage their speed may prevent future accidents at this site. As this is a road, I met with XXXX from the roading team to develop a suitable

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sign and confirm the location. The sign was designed by roading and installed by the roading contractors.”

Information about this meeting was also missing from the council’s response to the Gazette’s original official information request.

The Gazette has asked for a copy of the New Zealand Cycle Trail audit conducted in January.

This warning sign was installed by the Waitaki District Council on August 21, 2023



Timeline - March 2023 cycle accidents

TIMELINE: Quailburn Rd cycle incidents in March 2023 and actions taken
– *created from information supplied by Fire and Emergency New Zealand, and the Waitaki District Council and in response to requests for official information.*

March 1

Major accident, Quailburn Rd, Head, neck and back injuries, cyclist fell off in gravel, transported by helicopter, reported by Escape by Cycle, *(noted in the A2O H&S incident log, possibly not notified as note in the log says it was “unclear as do not have full detail of injuries at time of incident).*

March 2

Minor accident, Tarnbrae near woolshed, grazes, cyclists fell off in gravel, hit shingle and fell off, reported 16 June by Pure Trails. *(As noted in the A2O H&S incident log and noted as not notifiable).*

March 6

Road was graded. It was metalled in September 2022 *(noted in the A2O H&S incident log and the subsequent roading inspection report).*

March 7

Minor accident, Quailburn Rd, Upper arm injury, fell in gravel between Quailburn and Henburn Rd, reported by Sidetracks on June 13. *(As noted in the A2O H&S incident log and noted as not notifiable).*

March 9

Fire and Emergency New Zealand Waitaki District group manager Micheal Harrison first emails A2O trail manager Robyn Hyde about the "large amount of loose gravel". *(NB While this email was included in official information request response from Fenz it was not included in the WDC response.)*

An uphill view of the troublesome corner on Quailburn Rd



Timeline - March 2023 cycle accidents

- continued

“Afternoon Robyn, On Wednesday the 1st of March, the Omarama First Responders attended an incident on Quailburn Road, Quailburn involving a (REDACTED) that fell off bicycle (REDACTED) cycling the Alps 2 Ocean trail when fell off bike due to loose gravel.

The information I’ve received from the Omarama Fire Brigade is that the section of Quailburn Road where the incident occurred has a large amount of loose gravel on the road that makes cycling difficult.

Ms Hyde responds later that day and asks for the exact location. *“I will get the roading team to have a look at the road.”*

On the same day a CRM was raised with the council by a Quailburn Rd resident querying the method of grading where gravel was shifted to the centre of the road (as noted in council roading inspection report).

March 12 at 11.46am

Major accident, Quailburn Rd, face and shoulder injuries, fell off in gravel. Cyclist riding long steady decline down Quailburn Road hit loose thick shingle (9-12 inches deep) on roadway causing front wheel to veer severely resulting in loss of control of bike and rider being thrown off. Reported by Fenz Omarama and Trail adventures. *(As noted in the A2O H&S incident log and noted as not notifiable).*

March 12 at 3.09 pm

In the emails supplied by Fenz but not the council there is this email chain which includes council major transport projects manager, whose name is also Michael Harrison, plus the council roading team.

Ms Hyde refers the email from Fenz’s Mike Harrison about the incident on March 1 and the gravel issue to WDC’s Michael Harrison and the roading team and asks them to investigate.

NB The incident referred to in this email thread is NOT the one which occurred that day but the incident on March 1.

There is this reply and response to Ms Hyde from the roading Network Infrastructure Engineer.

Sent: **Sunday, 12 March 2023 3:59 pm**

Subject: FW: Alps 2 Ocean Quailburn Road Incident

Hi

“Can you please raise this issue at the C870 weekly meeting on Monday please?

Although the road is shared for all road users and the incident was 13 days ago, given the serious injuries we’ll need to have the section of Quailburn Rd in question inspected to see if it is out of spec.

Robyn, you may need to catch up with Mike later this week to discuss what mitigation can be done to help prevent this from happening again.

Thanks.”

Sent: **Sunday, 12 March 2023 6:03 pm** [from Ms Hyde] to the Network Infrastructure Engineer

Cc: Mike Harrison @waitaki.govt.nz>; @waitaki.govt.nz> ROADING

Subject: RE: Alps 2 Ocean Quailburn Road Incident

“Hi, Absolutely. Let me know how the investigation goes, and always keen to have a

chat about any mitigation measures we can work on to keep all users of Quailburn Road safe."

Thanks

Robyn

March 13

Ahuriri Community Board meeting discussion with Waitaki Mayor Gary Kircher as recorded in the minutes of the meeting p. 13

"The Mayor also briefed the meeting on discussions related to the A2O cycle trail that he had had with central government representatives in Wellington. There was an important role for Council to play in lobbying central government for more funding. There was brief discussion on ...the issues with Quailburn Road including that someone had come off their bike the previous day".

Mr Kircher is joint chairperson of the A2O Trail Joint Committee

A council officer visits Quailburn Rd and a Roadroid - road roughness test - was done. *"RIR reading of 5.5 within spec. Visually okay with clear cycle tracks forming along the RH side of the road. No indication of excessive gravel on shoulders. No apparent issues between gravel road and sealed surface."* (As noted in the A2O H&S incident log and the Roding Inspection report).

There is no indication of whether this is "in spec" for cyclists or other road users. (NB While this email was included in official information request response from Fenz it was not included in the WDC response).

March 14

Near miss, Quailburn Rd, deep metal where road transitions to tar seal causing a near miss, reported by Cycle Journeys. (As noted in the A2O H&S incident log and noted as not notifiable).

Also on **March 14** Ms Hyde emails Fenz about the roading inspection. (NB While this email was included in official information request response from Fenz it was not included in the WDC response).

From: Robyn Hyde

To: Harrison, Michael (Fenz)

Subject: RE: Incidents on Alps 2 Ocean

Date: Tuesday, 14 March 2023 10:30:46 am

Morena Mike

"... Our roading team were up at Quailburn Road yesterday doing a full inspection of the road following the incident reported on 1st. I understand new gravel has just been laid on this road."

Ngā mihi nui

Robyn

March 15 – two accidents

Minor accident, Tarnbrae, fall on rocky section, Note it will be remedied in coming months work is out to tender. (As noted in the A2O H&S incident log and noted as not notifiable).

Minor accident, Woolshed corner, hit a loose stone and fell, reported by Cycle Journeys. (As noted in the A2O H&S incident log and noted as not notifiable).

March 16

Ms Hyde emails Fenz about its further reporting of incidents

(NB While this email was included in official information request response from Fenz it was not included in the WDC response).

Timeline - March 2023 cycle accidents

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From: Robyn Hyde @waitaki.govt.nz>
Sent: Thursday, 16 March 2023 9:04 am
To: Harrison, Michael <Michael.Harrison@fireandemergency.nz>
Subject: RE: Incidents on Alps 2 Ocean
Hi Mike

Gosh we are getting a spate of incidents. Hopefully primarily as a result of more people on the Trail. Thanks for the prompt reporting.

Cheers

Robyn

March 21

Fenz emails Ms Hyde about theories as to why there is an increase in accidents. Ms Hyde says she will *"review our wording on the website in terms of skills and experience required for the Trail"*.

(NB While this email was included in official information request response from Fenz it was not included in the WDC response).

From: Harrison, Michael <Michael.Harrison@fireandemergency.nz>
Sent: Thursday, 16 March 2023 9:23 am
To: Robyn Hyde @waitaki.govt.nz>
Subject: RE: Incidents on Alps 2 Ocean

"I think we're a victim of Waitaki's success in promoting the district! It's great to see so many people using the trail and the smiles of the people reaching Oamaru Harbour. Feedback from the crews attending these incidents is that there's a big increase in the amount of people using the A2O. It appears that the majority of users are older and there is a big variance in skill level. The use of electric bikes is also playing its part possibly due to their heavier weight."

From: Robyn Hyde
To: Harrison, Michael
Subject: RE: Incidents on Alps 2 Ocean
Date: Tuesday, 21 March 2023 2:19:57 pm
Hi Mike

Thanks for this, as you say, it's great to see so many people out and about enjoying the Trail. Of course, as a consequence of this, we perhaps are also getting more inexperienced riders out there which as you say, brings a big variance in skill level. I'm going I'm going to review our wording on the website in terms of skills and experience required for the Trail.

Having said that, I note a big variance in people's perception too.

Cheers

Robyn

March 26

Minor accident Quailburn Rd, Minor leg injuries, two cyclists (reported by Fenz)
(As noted in the A2O H&S incident log and noted as not notifiable).

March 28 *(NB While this email was included in official information request response from Fenz it was not included in the WDC response. It is unclear which incident this email refers to.)*

Sent: Tuesday, 28 March 2023 4:30 pm

To: Harrison, Michael <Michael.Harrison@fireandemergency.nz>

Subject: RE: A2O Incident - Quailburn Road

Released under the Official Information Act 1982

Hi Mike

I will add the additional incident to our register. A bit tricky to do a further investigation without additional location information.

Also based on the road assessment done by the roading team a couple of weeks ago, I wouldn't expect the road surface to have changed significantly.

I struggle to believe how cyclists can think it is a good idea to ride down the middle of a road – let alone when there is an emergency vehicle with lights and sirens coming!!

What are they thinking!! Anyways, happy to add a note to the next email out to operators to include in their briefings. While that will not capture everyone, it might get the message to some.

How did you get on with arranging a time for me to pop into the team at Ōmarama?

Does Thursday this week work? It would be early to mid afternoon I expect.

I am working from Fairlie and in meetings most of the day tomorrow, but will check my emails towards the end of the day.

Thanks

Robyn

DATE UNCLEAR – possibly April 10

From Fenz's Mike Harrison to the Omarama Brigade members.

Morning team,

This is a meeting invite for a visit to the Alps to Ocean Cycle Trail on Quailburn Road to discuss access for emergency services.

Plan is to meet at the Omarama Fire Station and then travel up together to Quailburn Road. Looking forward to seeing you on the 10th.

Nga mihi

Mike

August 21

A warning sign for cyclists was installed at the main accident hotspot on Quailburn Rd.

August 23

An invitation-only Alps 2 Ocean Hui was held at Lakestone Lodge where tour operators asked about what had been done to address safety issues with Quailburn Rd and Hayman Rd in the Mackenzie district. *Below: Quailburn Rd as it was last week*



Survey responses express concern

Survey responses obtained by the Ōmārama Gazette under an official information request show that while Alps 2 Ocean Trail users said the spectacular scenery more than matched expectations trail surface conditions and ratings prompted many to also raise concerns.

In May, in a press release, the Waitaki District Council reported the Alps 2 Ocean Cycle Trail had received the highest number of survey responses from Trail users compared to the other Great Rides.

“...the latest New Zealand Cycle Trail Monthly Report Survey received 807 responses from Alps 2 Ocean Cycle Trail users between April 2022 and March 2023,” it said.

Trail users who visit the website www.alps2ocean.com are encouraged to give feedback via a survey – managed by Get Smart survey solutions - and offered incentives to do so.

“The [survey] results exceed the benchmarked minimum and targeted feedback responses, which have been set at 300 and 500 respectively, meaning the sample can be considered representative and good for making robust, insightful analysis,” the press release said.

The Cycle Trail starts at the base of Aoraki Mt Cook in the National Park or alternatively at Takapō/Tekapo. The total number of trail users recorded for the whole trail not just sections 4 and 5 near Ōmārama were 78,224 for September 2022 to April 2023 with the peak at 16,045 in March 2023. There is no electronic counter on section 4 Ōhau to Ōmārama but Section 3 Twizel to Ōhau records a total for the season of 8597, peaking in March at 2026 users, and on section 5, Sailors Cutting to Benmore, at Rostreiver 11,498 were recorded, peaking at 2316 in March.

“Positive feedback that has been received month-on-month is centred on praise for the scenery, facilities, and experiences offered by the Trail. The on-road gravel sections, trail surface and condition are cited as opportunities to improve the overall experience,” the press release said.

The survey also provided an analysis of the quarterly economic contribution made by visitors from activities and admission fees, accommodation, cafes, transport, and snacks and groceries purchased in the area

“The contribution per person per night over the last 12 months for the A2O was estimated at \$299.60, compared to an average for all trails per person per night of \$238.40.”

“February and March 2023 witnessed substantial growth of visitors compared to the previous year, with a percentage growth of 56% and 38% respectively.”

To get a broader picture from the survey results the Gazette asked the council for a copy of the responses which informed the press release and because not all of that was forthcoming a formal request under the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 was necessary.

The Gazette was charged \$412.50 (\$165 per hour) specifically to extract the information from the survey database.

The Gazette asked for the “aggregated” and “anonymous” responses from September 1, 2022 to April 30, 2023 as collated by Get Smart system, and available to the Alps 2 Ocean Trail manager, to the questions about trail difficulty, condition of the trail surfaces, rating of trail signage, suggestions for improving the trail

experience, rating of information available on the Alps 2 Ocean website, and how many people needed to be rescued or evacuated.

The information requested June 13 was supplied August 16 with this comment; *"LGOIMA Q2 response is provided by NZCT Get Smart. Get Smart owns that information and have provided the statements below to be added.*

"The comments provided in LGOIMA Q2 response cannot be used as direct quotes or shared in the media/public environment. If comments were going to be shared publicly, Get Smart would need to have received express consent from the survey respondents to use their comments for this purpose. It is a one-sided view that only the comments in the "opportunities", section are required for this LGOIMA and not the "highlights/what people liked the most". Get Smart are very happy to verify directly to the requestor that the data provided is correct and complete, and if any help in interrupting (sic) any of the data is required, Get Smart would also be willing to help.

[No attribution was supplied – i.e who was it at Get Smart that said this? - Ed]

The Gazette asked for that specific information because it had not appeared in the press release which, understandably, gave primarily positive views.

(The question also arises –what more would the Gazette have had to pay to extract the "highlights/what people liked the most"?)

Overall, the survey responses supplied were what the survey said it was looking for – feedback, including constructive criticism aimed at improving the experiences for the next rider. Overwhelmingly, survey responders relished the experience and the camaraderie, even if at times it was more challenging than expected.

Suggestions for improvement confirmed what sources had told the Gazette (see *July 2023 story*).

In general, survey responders voiced concerns when their experience differed from the expectations formed from the information they had available and when there were no warnings about what to expect.

Here is a summary:

- Coming in for the most criticism; in the Waitaki District, was the trail surface on section four between Ōhau and Ōmārama, particularly the deep drifts of gravel encountered and the Hayman Rd section in the Mackenzie District.
- trail ratings underestimated the difficulty; some sections were not suited to recreational riders and differed from expectations. Respondents voiced concerns they were not prepared for what they were faced with and so could not make informed decisions about what bits of the trail they should tackle.
- Respondents found trail surfaces variable, poorly maintained and, in places they considered them dangerous.
- fuller briefings and more regular trail updates would have been helpful, as well as updates being posted on the A2O Facebook page in addition to the website.
- signage, particularly around washouts would have prevented people getting lost or having to navigate improvised detours.
- Shelters, more toilets, water stations, battery charger stations and more bike maintenance providers would have helped some. The state of the Department of Conservation toilet at the Quailburn Woolshed came in for serious censure.
- A suggestion was made that because those using the trail did boost local economies more money could be put into improvements.

Local heroes stage successful fundraiser

Thanks to a whole bevvvy of local heroes Ōmārama School has received a welcome boost to the coffers and will now be able to employ a teacher aid and support other activities for pupils in 2023.

A ball and auction organised by Ōmārama Friends of the School - the Hoar Frost Wonderland Ball - was held at Wrinkly Rams last month to raise much needed funds for the school.

One of the organisers Christy Zeestraten said an "incredible amount" was raised which was enough to cover the salary of a teacher aid, support school skiing, camps and other extra circular activities for 2023.

School principal Alison Holden thanked everyone involved in organising the event. "It was a wonderful and very successful event and the school is most grateful for this support. A special thank you to Christy Zeestraten, Jo Golder, Kathy Kerr, Coralea McCabe, Petrina Paton and all the other people that contributed in some way. It was lovely to see the community coming together and just showed the investment that the Omarama community is willing to put into Omarama school for the benefit of our wonderful students," she said in the school newsletter.

Board of Trustees chairperson Jemma Gloag said she wanted to congratulate Friends of the School, on behalf of the board and the school community. "...for not only organising an exceptionally fun ball but raising a substantial amount of funds for the school. They have done a huge amount of work which will result in a massive benefit for the children of Ōmārama school and their learning. We are extremely grateful."

More photos and details of the sponsors can be found on the Ōmārama School Fundraising Facebook page.

Photo below: Christy Zeestraten



Goodbye and all the best Kumar

Ōmārama will always hold a special place in departing chef Adip Kumar's heart.

Kumar came to Ōmārama almost six years ago after completing his Level 5 chef training at North Shore International Training Academy - a culinary arts and hospitality academy, in Auckland.

It proved to be a tumultuous five and a half years.

"Some of the most important parts of my life were here," Kumar said.

Although he came for the "peace and quiet" he arrived Christmas 2017 at the busiest time of the season. Still, it was nothing like Auckland, he said.

"I have really enjoyed my time here."

He arrived single and is now married to Phan Nguyen and they have a two-year-old daughter Annika.

His years have seen him work through the Covid 19 restrictions upheaval and almost a year of renovations at the hotel.

During that time staff had to work from a small container kitchen and had to learn to change and adapt quickly, he said.

He won't forget that old building - more than a century old - and rushing up the "small, haunted hallway" to the bar.

Kumar said he had made many friends - in fact, they had become family..."Wingy, Elaine, Lou, people much wiser."

Sadly, he also lost good friend, former chef the late Michael Jackson.

"The saddest time for me was when Mike passed away."

He was like a father and mentored Kumar. "I learnt from him a lot."

Employers Bruce and Julie Dyson had also become much more than friends.

"They're the best people I ever found to work with ...far more than employers."

The family are moving to New Brighton and Kumar will work at Pegasus, north of Rangiora.



Ōmārama's glitterati dazzle on the red carpet

Omarama's glitterati were out in force last month and set to dazzle at The Oasis Café and Bar's Red Carpet Party - all legends in their own right. Café owner Michelle Hancox captured these special moments as each of the 'world famous in Ōmārama' stars grabbed their moment in the spotlight. Event organiser Jan Perriam reported they all partied like rock stars. View more star studded moments captured by Ōmārama's own paparazzi - the celebrated Lex Perriam - on the Ōmārama Gazette Facebook page





MOU review - compromise reluctantly agreed

Those working to get a change made to the agreement between Fire and Emergency New Zealand and Hato Hone St John to allow a local agreement for the Omarama First Response unit have reached a compromise with the agencies involved – albeit reluctantly.

A year ago the Ōmārama Community gathered in force at a forum to press home to the two agencies that its community funded and volunteer-crewed First First response unit wanted to be called to all medical 111 calls to give assistance until an ambulance or other aid arrived because it was the closest help available.

The agencies left the meeting promising to consider the request as part of the review of their Memorandum of Understanding. The agreement is still under review.

Last month, Fenz personnel involved met with members of the Ōmārama Co-Response Trust via a video link to discuss ongoing emergency care for the people of Ōmārama. No St John Personnel were present.

In a follow-up meeting of the Trust it reluctantly agreed to the proposal put to them by Fenz – that is, in effect, the MOU would remain not materially different to the original agreement.

However, the two agencies have agreed to a “closer working relationship” with Ōmārama's First Response and to “ensure emergency call outs are well considered”.

Yesterday, (Tuesday) Fenz and St John both issued statements.

Fenz said it had found the meeting with the Trust to be to be “a positive, supportive discussion”.

“We acknowledge the Trust’s agreement to work with what has now been decided by Hato Hone St John.

“This will mean the Ōmārama Volunteer Fire Brigade will respond to medical emergencies according to the current National Memorandum of Understanding with Hato Hone St John, and as requested by Hato Hone St John despatchers.

“Hato Hone St John agrees it will also work with Fire and Emergency on a process to ensure emergency call outs are well considered.

“We support this approach and are confident there will be a closer working relationship with all parties in future,” the Fenz statement said.

St John said it was grateful to the Ōmārama Co-Response Trust, the Ōmārama Fire First Response Unit, PRIME and rural General Practice colleagues, along with the wider community for their ongoing interest and support in providing emergency care to residents and visitors in the area.

It wanted to acknowledge dedicated volunteer fire brigades, including Omarama, that had been trained to ‘First Responder level’, allowing them to respond to actual or potential life-threatening emergencies in their communities.

“While the Trust’s request for FFRU to be deployed to all 111 calls in their area is not supported, Hato Hone St John is developing a process to ensure any request for an FFRU is well considered, especially for vulnerable patients (such as elderly who have fallen) and patients who may be exposed to environmental factors that make them prone to deterioration prior to ambulance arrival,” the St John statement said.

Omarama Co-response Trust chairperson Lindsay Purvis said he had acknowledged

receipt of the joint statement and decision.

"While it is not exactly the result that we put so much hard work into trying to achieve, Hato Hone St John were very strong in delivering the message via Fenz that they would not entertain the idea of continuing with the enhancement of the Memorandum of Understanding that we have had over recent years.

"While the exact reason for this decision remains a mystery to me, for the sake of future governance of our Trust and Fire Brigade it was decided that we must accept their ruling but continue to monitor the calls that we do and don't receive.

"If you are unfortunate enough to be in a position of having to make a 111 call please do not understate the conditions, both medical and climatic that either you or your patient are in.

"The answers you give to questions asked by the dispatcher will determine the amount of support you will receive.

St John's ruling made it unique as far as he was concerned.

"In so far as in this modern time it is almost impossible to find an agency that will push back on something that is being offered with no gratuity involved.

"Following on from our public forum of last August there has been an incredible amount of work involved in trying to resolve this matter and I would like to thank those individuals responsible.

"It has been an unsettling time for our Trust and I think we all look forward to putting this behind us and getting on with the job of supporting our first responders while they deliver such an amazing amount of commitment to the care of our community," Mr Purvis said.

The Ōmārama Gazette has been advised that the community's petition to Parliament asking for change is still being considered by the Petitions Committee.

Although, this Parliament has been dissolved ahead of the elections next month, the petition would "very likely be picked up again" in the next Parliament by the new Petitions Committee. That's likely to be in October or November, the spokesperson said.

"We will get in touch with the petitioner as needed in the new Parliament."



Contractors on target

Ōmārama's new water treatment plant looks to be on schedule for its completion date in December, the Waitaki District Council says.

"Work has ramped up in recent weeks and all going well, things are looking good for scheduled completion in mid-December," senior projects manager Gareth Phillips said.

"While the weather has been a challenge for our contractors at times, with some very cold overnight temperatures, they are making excellent progress."

The new plant and supporting infrastructure has been designed to supply water that meets the New Zealand Drinking Water Standards and caters for future growth. It will withstand severe earthquakes and the final design would also be sympathetic to the surrounding area, he said.

Three of the water bores have had new pumps installed – as well as pump risers, meters and other equipment.

In late 2021, the council bought the block of land at a cost of \$235,000.

It sits outside the flood prone area, adjacent to the old treatment plant site.

It also agreed to move its transformer from the original site to the new site at an estimate cost of \$50,000.

As part of the development neighbouring trees which the council says could pose a health and safety risk or a risk to underground services (electrical and pipework) will be removed at an estimated cost of \$18,700.

In April 2022, council officers asked the council for an additional amount of \$1.62 million for the upgrade project, meaning a revised total project cost estimate of around \$3 million.

The initial cost of \$1.4m for the upgrade was covered by the first tranche of Three Waters Reform funding (now known as the Affordable Waters Reform) which was announced in 2021.

The increased project costs will be loan-funded with the balance transferred to the new Affordable Waters entity, and future pricing/funding models were yet to be determined," Mr Phillips said.

Included in the building plans is a \$200,000 fluoride treatment room in anticipation of central government requirements.

However, the water would not be fluoridated unless there was a government requirement to do so.

"This is preparation in case this becomes a requirement," Mr Phillips said.

During the excavation process excess soil was shifted to the council-owned reserve land leased by Ōmārama Top 10 Holiday Park to form bunds to help prevent future flooding.

The contractors working on the site are; Corde - who is responsible for the building and pipe construction, Plunket Electrical, WaterForce and Filtec - water treatment equipment design and installation, specialists.

For further information contact the Waitaki District Council
at service@waitaki.govt.nz · Phone 03 433 0300

Community Housie ends for the season

It was all eyes down looking for a full house on the last day of the weekly winter community housie sessions held at the Wrinkly Rams Café last month. Once again, the Otematata ladies brought their strong winning streak to the game. Housie sessions this year have been well attended throughout and were possible thanks to the support of Age Concern, the Residents' Association of Omarama and all the regular volunteers who help set up, take down, supply afternoon tea, call and run - this would not be possible without you. And while it may be time to pop away those dabbers for a bit... the annual Christmas Housie session will return with all those festive bits and bobs at a date and venue to be advised.

Photo: Shona Smith



Annual Meeting

The annual meeting of the Omarama Residents' Association Inc
is 7pm, Thursday, October 19, 2023,
at the Omarama Community Centre
All are welcome

- Help plan new recreational facilities and fun activities for all ages
- like winter housie and our new basketball court
- Help care for our Community Centre
- Help lobby on issues we all care about - such as our First Response Unit

It's about all of us
Let's work together to make the difference

One meeting, one hour, once a month

Omarama is at the heart of what we do

The Noticeboard

To have your community notice included here
email: omaramagazette@gmail.com

Sincere condolences to the family and friends of glider pilot Phil Dolan, who died last month in a mid-air collision while competing in a United Kingdom regional contest - a Challenge Cup event. Phil, who was from Edinburgh, was chairman of the Scottish Gliding Centre and an Ōmārama gliding instructor.

Congratulations to Erwin and Natalie Beiboer and the family on receiving the ReviewPro Business Recovery Award at the Holiday Parks New Zealand Awards in Rotorua. It may not be the award you wanted but acknowledges the months of angst and effort involved in restoring the camping ground after the floods a year ago.

Congratulations to Dwayne Rennie and Hugh Spiers whose story and rebuilt home, The Barn at Killin, Lake Ohau featured in the latest issue of NZ Life & Leisure. The online platform also features a story about Dwayne's Landscape photography

Thanks to Michelle and Todd Hancox who paid for the replacement flag for Ladybird Hill.

Welcome back campers: The Waitaki Lakes camping season opens at 8am on Saturday 16 September. www.facebook.com/waitakilakes

Age Concern coffee afternoons in Ōmārama from 1pm to 3pm at the Ōmārama Community Centre on the second Tuesday of each month.

Kurow Medical Centre Ōmārama Clinic at the Ōmārama Community Centre, is open Thursdays, 8.30am to 12.30pm. 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

The Ōmārama Community Library is open 9.30am to 11am, Wednesdays and Saturdays. Library hours can change. Contact Yvonne: 027 476 7473.

The Ōmārama MenzShed Group meets each Saturday at 10am and at other times too. For further information please contact Malcolm Cameron 022 476 2225

St Thomas' Ōmārama Church Community:

chairperson: Ven Dr Michael Godfrey, phone 022 342 9977 or email Dylanfreak@gmail.com; committee secretary (Presbyterian): Rev Lee Kearon, phone: 021 250 1060 or email: lee.kearon@gmail.com

The Ōmārama Golf Club Saturdays cards in 12.30pm, tee-off 1pm. Club captain Adrian Tuffley phone: 027 347 8276 www.omaramagolfclub.co.nz

The Ahuriri Community Catchment Group meets once a month. For time and place contact facilitator Nicola McKerchar. Phone: 022 612 7570; email: committee@ahuriricatchment.com

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.

Ōmārama Playgroup meets at 9.30am each Wednesday during the primary school term at the Ōmārama Community Centre. For more information phone president Nic McKerchar 022 612 7570 rn.mckerchar@hotmail.com or secretary Tarsh Bell 027 349 0016 tomandtarsh@mchoney.co.nz

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

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

A gentle exercises and social afternoon group meets at the Otematata District Club at 1.30pm Thursday afternoons. Gold coin donation and a cuppa after the exercises.

The exercises are run with the guidance of personal trainer Lauren Maree. Gold coin donation and a cuppa after the exercises. Contact Ethel Gray 03 438 7764.

Waitaki Newcomers Network: For more information about this group and to subscribe to regular updates send contact details to E: waitaki@newcomers.co.nz W: www.newcomers.co.nz F: facebook.com/WaitakiNewcomersNetwork/

Plunket Line: 0800 933 922

Ōmārama Plunket Committee: Aimee Snelgrove 022 350 5536
aimeesnelgrove@hotmail.com

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

To receive email alerts between monthly editions of the Omarama Gazette sign up to our 'Local List'. Email omaramagazette@gmail.com

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

**The October Issue of the Omarama Gazette
is Wednesday, October 4, 2023.**

Please submit copy
by Thursday, September 28, 2023

Reporting issues is a snap with our Snap Send Solve App

Did you know Waitaki District Council has a FREE smart phone app to help make reporting issues easy? If you spot a pothole on a local road, damage to a footpath, a water leak or any other issue that you think Council may be able to sort, then you can use this clever app to report it by taking a photo (SNAP) and sending (SEND) it to the Council (SOLVE).

The app works by identifying the location of where the photo is taken using your phone's GPS data. You can fill in a few details then hit send. A report is then allocated to the relevant Council department. *Find more info and a link to the app on our website.*



Waitaki
DISTRICT COUNCIL
TE KAUNIHERA A ROHE O WAITAKI

www.waitaki.govt.nz

Scan for more info
and app download



MILES ANDERSON ✓ FOR WAITAKI

**GET WAITAKI
BACK ON TRACK**



Authorised by Miles Anderson, 162 Anderson Road,
Southburn, RD2, Timaru

AHURIRI LINK

NEWS FROM COUNCIL & THE COMMUNITY BOARD

The next Ahuriri Community Board meeting is at 2pm, Monday 11 September at the Otematata Community Hall.

Check Council's website for Agenda papers and to register for the public forum.

21 FOR SEPTEMBER

Motorcycle riders are 21 times more likely than other road users to be killed or injured on our roads. That's why this Motorcycle Awareness Month is themed '21 for September'.

Waitaki Road Safety caught up with local Constable Olivia Winbush who says: "As an officer, lane splitting and not observing following distances are often the causes of the worst incidents I have attended involving riders. As a rider myself, it's always good to look ahead to give yourself time to prepare and react. Riders should always check their bike and their safety gear before they ride."

All Ride Forever courses from Love Motorcycle Training are FREE in September and October - Use the code MAM23 when you book online at www.lovemoto.co.nz

WELCOMING WEEK

Join Waitaki Multicultural in a Planting Day for Waitaki Migrants with Whiria te Waitaki on Friday 8 September, 10am - 2pm.

Free event but spaces are limited. Lunch and water provided. Book with Paula - coordinator@waitakimulticultural.org.nz



WATER TREATMENT PLANT UPDATE

Work has ramped up in recent weeks at the site of the new Ōmārama Water Treatment Plant and all going well, things are looking good for scheduled completion in mid-December.

While the cold weather has been a challenge for our contractors at times, they are making are making excellent progress.

The new plant and supporting infrastructure has been designed to supply water that meets the New Zealand Drinking Water Standards and caters for future growth.

The building, is being constructed to withstand severe earthquakes and the final design will be sympathetic to the surrounding area.

To help reduce flood risk in the wider area as part of this project, Council staff have also been working with Environment Canterbury and neighbours. As a result, excess soil from the treatment plant site is being used for bunding work to help prevent flooding.

We'd like to say a BIG thanks to the site's neighbouring landowners, who have been very accommodating during all phases of the project!



www.waitaki.govt.nz



Waitaki
DISTRICT COUNCIL
TE KAUNHERA Ā ROHE O WAITAKI

11/8/23

Dear Mr Bean,

The speed limit needs to be reduced outside our school. I believe this because of the following reasons.

Firstly, I believe that the speed limit going past Omarama school needs to be reduced to 40 km instead of 60 km because it is dangerous.

Secondly, our school is built right on a state highway which our students could get hurt.

There is a blind corner coming into Omarama and the government is encouraging us to walk to school. And if a ball goes over the road we have to go get it.

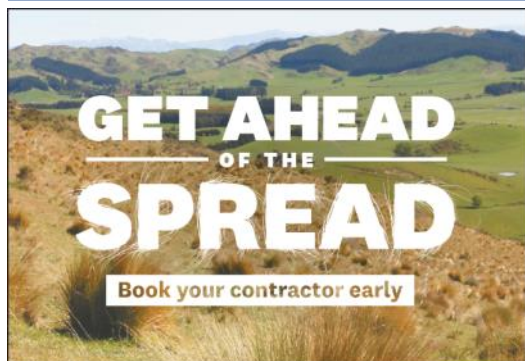
I want, a speed bump or a speed camera to slow the cars down.

Sincerely From

ANNUAL MEETING

The Whalan Lodge Trust
Annual General Meeting
4pm, Thursday, September 21, 2023
at the Kurow Information Centre

Apologies to: B McCone (chairperson) 03 436 0707
or J Croft (secretary) 021 105 3330



One mature **nassella tussock** plant
can produce over **100,000 seeds**.

How many of these plants are you prepared
to leave uncontrolled on your property?

Learn how to control nassella, available contractors
and how we can help, visit ecan.govt.nz/nassella

The Community Reports

Upper Waitaki Police News



Hi everyone,

- been a while since my last update, mainly because I've had buggar all to report which is good.

I have attended the odd crash but with it being such a mild winter the roads have been fairly good. I have had some other files to deal with which have taken some time.... family harm, disorder and a wee bit of dishonesty stuff. Nothing for anyone to worry about as most of this has been out of my area.

It was great to see the Friends of the School (FOS) Ball went off without a hitch.

They do an amazing job raising money for the school, and from my point of view it was great to see everyone did the right thing by not drinking and driving. I did stop quite a few cars that night and not one person was over the limit which is great! Although I did hear one dick thought they'd try to drive, but thankfully the keys were taken from him. Well done FOS!!

I was recently lucky enough to be invited to Ōmārama School where the older kids presented me with written submissions in regard to their concerns about cars speeding past the school. The main concern for them was the speed restrictions and signage or lack off rather. It's a concern for me also and I do intend trying to do something about it. Writing tickets is easy but that's not going to change driver behaviour for most people who speed past, as the majority of offenders are overseas tourists. So to combat it we need to actually change the environment. For me this means; more school zone signage, ideally narrowing the road so it doesn't feel like open road, possibly doing this by having a raised island in the middle? (Might be asking a bit much there but can only try), moving the south side 70kph zone back past the bridge so people don't start speeding up before it. Basically, changing the environment to better keep our school kiddies safe.

I've been speaking with the Council's Road safety promotion and education co-ordinator Carrie Hamilton who was very helpful. She advises that because the school is located on a State Highway it is up to NZTA - Waka Kotahi to organise. But she's offered her expertise and assistance in helping. So watch this space.

*That's it from me,
Stay safe, Bean*

Senior Constable Nayland Smith

Sole charge Constable / Omarama / Po Box 101, Omarama 9448.

Phone: (03) 438 9559 / Ext: 34580 / mailto:nayland.smith@police.govt.nz

Left: one of the 15 letters sent to me. This one from Angus.

Ōmārama Volunteer Fire Brigade



Kia ora

Welcome to spring, which means it is time for the change to daylight saving and it is time to check our smoke alarms. If this is too difficult please contact us and we will gladly come and assist. This also a bad time for sun strike early in the morning and late afternoon. The holiday makers will be on their way back so more caravans, campers and cyclists on the roads. Keep an eye on the fire season status, it could change at any time. The prediction is we could be in for a dry summer. If you are burning any heaps check the weather conditions and make sure they

are extinguished properly.

Stay Safe

Greg Harper and the team at the Ōmārama Volunteer Fire Brigade

**Greg Harper, Chief Fire Officer, 021 293 1171,
greg.harper@fireandemergency.nz**

Facebook: /Omaramafirebrigade

The Omarama Top Guns take the Waitaki Valley pub challenge trophy after a long six years of no tournaments. Congratulations Sam, Toddy, Sharon, Will, Ricky, and Junn for bringing the cup home to its rightful place.

With thanks to Boots and Jandals Hotel for the photo and caption.



OMARAMA GOLF CLUB



Labour Weekend Fun day Stableford Tournament

Proceeds to Omarama Fire Brigade

EVERYONE WELCOME - golfers and non-golfers
(don't be shy, come have a go and support a great cause)

Saturday 21st October 2023

Cost \$40.00 p.p.

Cards in by 12.30 p.m. Tee Off 1.00 p.m.

BBQ on course & Meal afterwards

Prizes and Raffles

Contact Greg Harper 021 293 1171. Please email your entry to
secretary@omaramagolfclub.co.nz

Age Concern in Ōmārama

By Waitaki District Libraries Customer Services Coordinator Eileen Armstrong

Last month, we had a lovely afternoon at the Ōmārama Library with the Age Concern Coffee Group and introduced them to the new Memory Care Collection.

The Memory Care Collection is made up of a variety of resources and equipment that is dementia-friendly.

The resources include items such as books, jigsaw puzzles and memory kit bags.

The memory kit bags contain a themed selection of objects chosen to help stimulate the senses and promote joy, reminiscing and discussion.

Waitaki District Libraries will continue to develop and expand the collection. It is free to access through the community libraries across the Waitaki District.

The aim of the Memory Care Collection is to improve the quality of life for those with dementia and for the people supporting them. We believe the collection will enrich their lives and will be a creative way of communicating and increase overall well-being.

As those with dementia feel understood and supported, their well-being and quality of life increases. They can remain active, connected and can contribute to their community.

The development of this collection is a direct response to a growing awareness of the need and requests for dementia-friendly resources and equipment.

This is a wonderful opportunity to grow awareness of dementia and access to resources and equipment in the community and how libraries can help people with dementia live well.

A dementia-friendly community is one that enables people to find their way around and be safe, access local facilities and resources, and maintain social networks.

Kathryn Bennett, Waitaki Coordinator

03 434 7008; 027 4347 089

NthOtago@ageconcernotago.co.nz

Hours: Mon-Wed 9- 4.30pm / Thur- Fri 9-12.30pm



**Age Concern Coffee
afternoons are
on the second Tuesday
of each month
at the Ōmārama Community
Centre.**

**The next coffee afternoon
is 1pm to 3pm,
Tuesday, September 12, 2023.**



Cyber Safety **recognising a scam**

Omarama Coffee Afternoon

Become scam savvy!

- Protect your personal & financial information
- Learn how to spot common scams
- What to do if you suspect you're a victim of a scam

Kristen Beardsmore will share tips on how to spot a scam and ways to protect yourself and your money.

For more information

Kathryn Bennett

Age Concern Otago-Waitaki

P 027 4347 089

E NthOtago@ageconcernotago.co.nz

Join us

Tuesday 12 September
1:00pm to 3:00pm

**Omarama Community
Centre**
Chain Hills Highway
Omarama



AGE
CONCERN
OTAGO

He Manaakitanga
Kaumātua Aotearoa

Ōmārama Community Survey

Some of you may remember being asked to answer some revealing questions recently?

Ahuriri Community Board member Mike King was asked by the Residents Association of Omarama to conduct a survey to find out what the community wants planners to consider when developing the town.

If you would like a copy of the results please email Mike. mlking@xtra.co.nz

Mike replicated recent questionnaires and interviewed 50 residents, as had also been done previously by council representatives. The results matched the information gathered at the 2018 Town Visioning session.

The results were presented to last month's Residents' Association meeting and will also be taken to the Ahuriri Community Board, Mike said.

They will be used to help Waitaki District Council placemaker Cyndi Christensen "with her quest to fund required work to the township", he said.

Ōmārama Rodeo Club

By secretary Charlotte Montgomery

We had a successful AGM last month. Thank you to everyone who came along. The Club was rapt to see many new faces!!

The new and returning office holders are:

President: Daniel Montgomery

Vice president: Simon Hales

Treasurer: Wendy Parsons

Secretary: Charlotte Montgomery

We had two of our long standing members take a step back, and although their names aren't above anymore, they will always be crucial members of our club and we Thank them both for all the hours they have put in over the years. Marcia Green and Lachie Wettenhall - You two are amazing. The Omarama Rodeo Club was lucky to have had you for as long as we did.

Planning is underway for our December 28, 2023 rodeo, so book the day off and we will see you there!

**'The Community Reports' is
dedicated to news
from clubs, groups and sports teams.**

**Contributions are welcome.
omaramagazette@gmail.com**

Ōmārama Community Garden



Just look what's popped up?

Spring has sprung and green fingers are itching to get stuck in. Someone has already been busy and started planting the garden plots at the Community Centre with generous donations of various veggies, herbs including rhubarb.

We are a group of gardeners who work together to create something for everyone in our community.

The gardens are under construction behind the Omarama Community Centre and anyone is welcome to pop along and have a look, and also to put in any plants they may have ready to go in now.

Join the Facebook group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/742877880594146>

Contact Heather Smith, 027 330 0249

Ōmārama MenzShed

The Ōmārama MenzShed meets
at 10am each Saturday
and at other times, too.

**For further information contact:
Malcolm Cameron 022 476 2225**

Daffodil Day 2023

By Bev Purvis

A great big 'Thankyou' to all who supported this wonderful cause
The total collected for Daffodil Day Ōmārama was \$679.10
Winner of the raffles drawn at the Boots & Jandals Hotel
No 18 \$50 scratchies Glen Rutherford
No 36 \$100 note Glen Rutherford

Below: Bev Purvis and Shone Smith enjoy the a sunshiny daffodil day fundraiser in Ōmārama. Photo: Supplied



Ōmārama Playgroup

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

For more information contact:
president Nic McKerchar 022 612 7570
rn.mckerchar@hotmail.com
or secretary Tarsh Bell 027 349 0016
tomandtarsh@mchoney.co.nz
Plunket: Aimee Snelgrove 022 350 536
aimeesnelgrove@hotmail.com

Ōmārama Community Library

- a message from Waitaki District Libraries

Joining your local library this September could bag you a \$50 dollar Prezzy voucher.

September is 'Love Your Library' month, and everyone who signs up will go into the weekly draw to win one of the prize cards.

The six Waitaki District Libraries are host to a world of resources, and your library card is the key to unlocking them.

There is nothing like losing yourself in a good book, but the library really is more than books these days.

By signing up to the library, you also get access to our e-book and e-audio collection on the Borrowbox platform. "This September we want everyone to love their library, and all the things the library can do for them," Waitaki libraries manager Jenny Bean said.

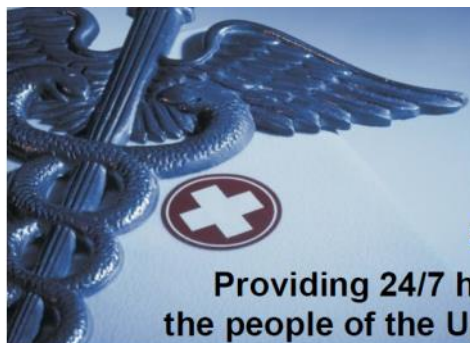
www.waitaki.govt.nz/Libraries/

The Ōmārama Community Library
is open 9.30am to 11am, Wednesdays and Saturdays,
at the Ōmārama Community Centre.

Email: omaramalibrary@gmail.com

Contact: Yvonne 027 476 7473





Kurow Medical Centre

8 Wynyard St, Kurow
P: 03 4360760 F: 03 4360780

E: info@kurowmedicalcentre.org.nz

W: www.kurowmedicalcentre.org.nz

www.facebook.com/kurowmedicalcentre

**Providing 24/7 health care and support to
the people of the Upper Waitaki and Mackenzie**

**Kurow Medical Centre and its satellite clinic
in Twizel Mackenzie Health Centre and Outreach Clinic
at the Omarama Community Centre**

are proud to offer our registered and casual patients the following services:

- * Ultrasound performed by a qualified clinician (great for minor fractures, gall stones, kidney stones, heart and lung problems, foreign bodies, blood clots, detecting early pregnancy and much more!)
- * Minor surgery * Vasectomies
- * Mole checks and removal * Steroid injections * Venesection.
- * Aviation, workplace and driving medicals * Botox for Wrinkle reduction.
- * Workplace health screening * Counselling
- * Spirometry to diagnose asthma and COPD
- * Hearing and sight tests for adults and children * Ear syringing
- * Liquid nitrogen for warts, verruca's, and skin lesions
- * Cardiovascular risk assessment and diabetic checks (funded for eligible patients) * Travel advice and vaccination.
- * Cervical smears (funded for eligible patients)
- * Seasonal flu shots and shingles vaccine (funded for eligible patients)
- * Childhood Immunisation * Before school checks
- * Postnatal and six-week baby health check

And much more!

GP consult fees: Under 14yrs Free; Adult \$43.00

Care Plus – Free to eligible patients only

We also offer the following services from external Health Care Providers:

- * Counselling * Ear Health (Kurow only) * Audiometry
- * HIP (Health Improvement Practitioner) – Free service provided by WellSouth.
- * Health Coach – Free service provided by Wellsouth.

Open

Kurow: Monday to Thursday 8.30am to 5pm and Friday 8.30-1pm. **Omarama:** Thursday 8.30am to 1pm. **Twizel:** Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday 8.30am to 5pm and Saturday 9am to 12pm

Please note: We provide 24/7 on call after hours cover by our doctors and PRIME nurses for all our registered and casual patients!

If you require further information or an appointment, please contact us on:

For Kurow 03 436 0760 or for Twizel 03 976 0503 - Dr Tim and Juliet Gardner

Look us up on our website or Facebook page for more information.

Introducing a new column...

Wellness matters

*A health column from the Kurow Medical/Mackenzie Health Centre Team
- by Fiona Chamberlain*

As the colours of spring start to paint the world around us and the weather warms up, it is also a good time to think about our health.

Breathe easy this spring!

Respiratory tract infections continue to affect people of all ages in our community. Here are some tips for staying and getting well.

Breathe clean air! Quit smoking and avoid exposure to environmental pollutions, being mindful that some indoor chemicals can also irritate our lungs.

Help support lung health by staying hydrated, exercising, and eating foods rich in antioxidants, vitamins and omega-3 fatty acids like berries, citrus, leafy greens and fish.

If you are prone to allergies, developing a self-management plan is a good idea, as usually early intervention can minimise progression of allergy symptoms.

Vaccines are an important defence against illness. Find out more about the range of vaccines available at www.immunise.health.nz.

Antibiotics are for bacterial infections and can't fix a virus like a cold or flu, so if you do get sick with a virus, self-care measures are recommended. Contact your healthcare provider for advice if needed.

Cervical Cancer

September is cervical screening awareness month and from the 12th of the month, the primary test for cervical screening will change to a human papillomavirus (HPV) test, with the option of self-testing.

If you are between 25 and 69 and have ever been sexually active, screening should be every five years unless advised otherwise. This can detect abnormal changes in the cells of the cervix caused by HPV. Left untreated these can develop into cervical cancer over time.

Together, the HPV vaccine and test are your best protection against cervical cancer. Anyone under the age of 27 can receive the HPV vaccine for free. For more info call 0800 729 729 or check out www.timetoscreen.nz/cervical-screening.

Prostate Cancer

September is prostate cancer awareness month; the most diagnosed cancer in men. Early detection can save lives and there may be no warning signs. The most common sign is problems with urination. If you have unusual symptoms like this, is important to see your doctor. This can happen as men get older and can be due to prostate enlargement, not cancer.

If you are between 40 and 50 with a close family member affected by prostate cancer (e.g., father or brother) you should be tested.

It is recommended that men learn about the benefits and harms of testing and treatment and what they might mean. You can ask your doctor about this or use a helpful decision-making tool at www.kupe.net.nz and check out Blue September at www.prostate.org.nz.

Until next time enjoy the warmer weather and longer days and stay well!

Ōmārama School

By Ōmārama School principal Alison Holden

Kia ora from Ōmārama School

As we work towards the end of a very busy term, we reflect on all the amazing things that our students have participated in and experienced this term, including curriculum, sport and well-being.

For Literacy we have been focused on expository writing where the writer attempts to persuade the reader, to argue their point of view. This involved some students writing to Bean and drawing attention to the speed in which some motorists pass by Ōmārama School. Bean and Helen visited school and great conversations about road safety were held. The highlight was a sit in the police car monitoring speed!

Dear Waitaki District Council

At the moment in Ōmārama we have one wheelie bin that could get collected on a Monday or a Friday and this is for all household rubbish including any recycling. There are no separate bins for glass or plastic. I would like recycling bins in Ōmārama for the following three reasons.

Firstly, everyday I find lots of rubbish everywhere, but if we place recycling bins around Ōmārama the amount of rubbish will decrease.

Also, from what I have seen when it rains rubbish washes down into creeks, ponds, lakes and rivers, also when rubbish covers the stormwater drains the roads flood.

Lastly, I am sure that the Ōmārama community would like to be good people and reduce, reuse and recycle to help the environment.

Therefore, for the reasons I have written, I believe that we need recycling bins in Ōmārama.

Yours sincerely

Eira Warnock" (Expository writing about recycling)

Early in the term the Senior class participated in an EPr08 challenge which is an Inter-school Science and Engineering competition. This was a huge success and we hope to participate in this competition again next year.

Ōmārama school students are building leadership capabilities within the school and this is supported through the PALs programme, where leaders run physical activities for groups of students.

Education outside the classroom has included several weeks of skiing at Ōhau, cross country and we are going on a whole school camp to the Snow Farm soon. Some students will cross country ski out to the Musterer's Hut and stay overnight, while other students will stay at Glendhu Bay and experience many exciting activities. A group of Ōmārama students qualified to go down to Oamaru and participate in the North Otago cross country races also. And last week a group of Y5 and Y6 students placed 3rd in the Athletics competition in Oamaru.

'Learning and thriving in the place of light'. 'Ki te Whei Ao, Ki te Ao Marama e!'

Contact details

Phone: 03 438 9815

principal@omarama.school.nz

office@omarama.school.nz

Ōmārama School Board of Trustees

By Ōmārama School Board of trustees chairperson Jemma Gloag

The recent Parent Community Consultation Evening, held by the Omarama School Board at the Community Hall in early August, provided a platform for parents and caregivers to share their aspirations and values regarding their children's education, and learn about the school's Strategic Plan and behaviour management process.

This event was all about understanding what's important to the school's community and how everyone can work together to make education meaningful and effective. The evening emphasised the need for openness of dialogue between the school, parents, and caregivers. Parents highlighted their desire for a curriculum that extends beyond the traditional academic subjects to equip students with skills that would be relevant in real life and set them up for their futures, like reading, writing and maths, but also develop qualities like confidence, independence, and kindness. Values that extend far beyond the classroom. This exchange illuminated the importance of a well-rounded education that resonates with students' real-life experiences.

The substantial turnout demonstrated the community's commitment to creating a supportive and inclusive learning environment. This collaborative spirit highlighted that education is a two-way street, where the school learns from parents' insights and parents gain a deeper understanding of the school's efforts.

Additionally, this event served as an opportune moment for Alison Holden, our new principal, to gain invaluable insights into our community's priorities and effective ways to collaborate with our school community. The event exemplified the mutual learning that occurs within the Omarama School community, reinforcing the idea that every stakeholder plays a part in shaping a successful learning environment.

The insights gathered during this evening will be used by the Board to shape the school's Strategic Plan which sets the direction for the school and identifies the priorities the board expects the principal to be leading. The Board understand that strengthening the school, parent/caregiver, and student relationship is key to a successful learning environment and fostering positive behaviours. So, at the next meeting, the Board will be working on action plans based on the feedback received. This will ensure that Omarama School continues to evolve as a place where every student can learn, grow, and thrive.



Ōmārama Residents' Association

The next meeting will be
7pm, Thursday, September 21, 2023
at the Ōmārama Community Centre
An invitation is extended to all

Contacts:

Lindsay Purvis, chairperson, 027 438 9630

Yvonne Jones, secretary, 027 476 7473

(Minutes of the previous meetings are available from Yvonne)

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, Ōmārama 9448.

The association's email address is omarama.committee@gmail.com

ŌMĀRAMA COMMUNITY CENTRE HALL HIRE

To make a booking for an upcoming event or for more
information about hall hire and availability
please contact Michelle Kitchen 027 280 5446
or email hallhire.omarama@xtra.co.nz



Care in the community

Ōmārama Community Care Group

Because all Covid 19 restrictions have been lifted and the last time the Care Group was asked for assistance was in June I will put a proposal to Residents' Association of Omarama's next meeting that the Care Group be formally wound up on September 30 and the funds dispersed as appropriate.

At present, there are three proposals to put to the committee for the reallocation of funds. That the remaining funds:

1. Be moved to the Community Garden project fund and used to build a crop swap and share trolley to have stationed close to the community garden.
2. Be donated to the Ōmārama AgeConcern Group to assist with group bus trips.
3. Be donated to Playgroup to help pay for baking and meals to donate to new parents.

If you would like to contribute to the discussion please attend the meeting 7pm, Thursday, September 21, at the Ōmārama Community Centre, or if you are unable to attend email Ruth: omaramagazette@gmail.com or phone 021 294 8002 with your suggestions.

Twizel Community Care Centre

If you need any of the services listed below please contact the

Twizel Community Care Centre

Mount Cook St, Twizel

Phone: 03 435 0687

Email: twizelcare@xtra.co.nz

Open 9am - 2pm Monday - Friday

- Work and Income – assistance with applying for benefits, helping with queries regarding superannuation, and any other financial assistance you may receive. Printing and scanning of documents.
- Inland Revenue – queries regarding anything IRD related, access to forms.
- Twizel-Tekapo Community Car bookings – this is a community car that picks you up from your house and takes you wherever you need to go such as town here in Twizel or Timaru for an appointment, whatever you need. There is a cost involved depending on destinations.
- Home Delivered Meals – We have small roasts for \$10, Regular meals for \$8 and small snack meals for \$4. We can deliver to your home.
- Printing/scanning services
- Assistance with finding jobs in the area.
- Foodbank – donations, and supply people with food parcels when in need
- Any other government services – ACC, Department of Corrections, etc
- Arowhenua Whanau services – Free health clinic on the first Wednesday of each month.
- Computer/cellphone assistance – needing help with something on your computer or cellphone. Free WiFi
- Rat tests/Mask supply free of charge
- Assistance with filling in any forms or paperwork.
- Offer room hire to community groups and businesses.



Omarama Hotel, Boots and Jandals Social Club

Social Function, Sunday 24th September 2023

Fun theme - Children dress up as pirates afternoon.

3pm Start – Free Barbeque meal provided later in the day. Hope to see you there for a fun afternoon

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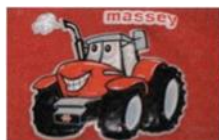
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Get your environmental project off the ground

Apply for support from the Upper Waitaki Action Plan budget.

If you've got an idea for a project that will help improve water quality, enhance biodiversity, or engage the community on environmental issues – we might be able to help.

The Upper Waitaki Water Zone Committee makes recommendations to Environment Canterbury about how to allocate \$75,000 each year to help implement the committee's Canterbury Water Management Strategy Action Plan, and improve our lakes and rivers in the area.

Previous projects the zone committee has supported include native plantings to enhance a walk/cycle trail in the Lake Takapō/Tekapo area, and a soil moisture monitoring pilot project in Ōmarama.

Email Murray Griffin to apply – murray.griffin@ecan.govt.nz

Find out more at ecan.govt.nz/upperwaitakicommittee

The Upper Waitaki Water Zone Committee is made up of community members, Rūnanga and Councils.



HERE'S A PROJECT WE'RE ALREADY SUPPORTING

The Ōhau Conservation Trust has received more than \$23,000 from Action Plan funding to help control pest plants at Lake Ōhau and Lake Middleton

Apply now for Meridian's Power Up Community Fund

At Meridian, we only generate from 100% renewable resources: wind, water, and sun. We're committed to doing good things with our energy. That means good for people, and good for the environment.

We're proud to back local projects in the communities around our wind farms and hydro stations with our Power Up fund.

With Power Up, your community has a say on what initiatives we support and fund. Managed by a panel of locals and Meridian staff, we're working together to build strong, sustainable communities.

Power Up Waitaki provides grants for projects in Aoraki/ Mount Cook, Twizel, Omarama, Otematata, Kurow, Hakataramea, Duntroon, Ikawai, Papakaio, Glenavy.

How to apply

Applications for the next funding round are open until midnight on 24 September 2023.

For more information and to apply:

- visit meridian.co.nz/pu-waitaki
- email community.fund@meridianenergy.co.nz
- call 03 357 9732

Do you know of a community project that's working to reduce carbon emissions? Visit meridian.co.nz and search "Decarb fund" for more information.



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The café is now closed for the season
Re-opening Labour weekend

Tanya and Dannie would like to thank all for their patronage





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Business Partner & Sales Consultant

027 432 6615

gary.sutherland@tallpoppy.co.nz



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)

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

August 2023

Highest temperature: August 31, 16.8C

Lowest temperature: August 22, -6.5C

Most rainfall: August 1, 17 mm

Total rainfall for August: 20.1mm

The Ōmārama Gazette

Ōmārama's news delivered to your inbox
the first Wednesday of each month

To subscribe email:

omaramagazette@gmail.com

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