



Ōmārama Gazette

July 2025

School Board protests bus route changes

The Ōmārama School Board of Trustees is fighting a proposal to change school bus routes saying it could negatively impact its rural pupils' access to education and result in a falling school roll.

It has asked the government department in charge that it instead be funded to manage its own bus service, so it better meets the community's needs.

At present Ōmārama School has two Education Ministry-funded bus routes. In all, 11 pupils catch the bus at present. This will increase to 12 in term four. It is expected that from the middle of next year a further two will need transport. As the result of a review in February, the Ministry plans to merge the two services and to shorten some sections which do not have the required number of eligible pupils.

This review was initiated after both routes were found to carry fewer than eight eligible pupils — the minimum number required for a service.

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Change coming next year mean it will be the end of the road for some Ōmārama School bus routes

School Board protests bus route changes - continued

The Ministry has said the families of the three pupils who may need to travel further as a result of the change could apply for a conveyance allowance to help with transport costs.

In response the Board has written a strongly-worded letter expressing deep concern about the proposal. It says the Ministry's seeming "one-size-fits-all policy" does not serve Ōmārama's widespread and isolated pockets of settlement. The change could ultimately impede ready access to education and result in a declining school roll, it said.

In the letter it asks if it could negotiate with the Ministry to find ways it could run its own bus service which would then give the flexibility to operate in a way which would more closely meet the community's needs. It has asked the Ministry for information on how a system like this might work, what funding might be available, and whether future growth in numbers would allow for expanded support.

"We strongly support the idea of managing our own route," board chairperson Karl French said in the letter.

"We believe this would allow us to better serve our students, ensure their safety, and maintain equitable access to education," he said.

The board would like to work collaboratively on a solution that met "the needs of our community—not just what fits a template", he said.

However, in a statement the Ministry told the Ōmārama Gazette it was no longer entering "new direct resourcing agreements" – like bulk funding - with state or state-integrated schools.

A board spokesperson, who is also a parent affected by the changes, Jemma Gloag, said that Ōmārama was at the junction of several sparsely populated roads, which made "linear bus routes inefficient and impractical".

"The Board argues that the proposed changes do not reflect the real layout or needs of the region. "The one-size-fits-all" approach disadvantages Ōmārama's rural families, she said.

The new policy will place an unfair burden on rural families, particularly those with young children. By limiting bus access, it compromised equitable access to education and further isolated families.

Mrs Gloag said that one of the more surprising revelations which had come from local discussions was that pupils from Ōhau were being directed to Twizel Area School—despite the travelling distance to Ōmārama being the same.

The Board noted that Ōhau and Ōmārama shared local services and cultural ties, including public holidays and phone networks. It had made the point that this decision lacked logic or community alignment.

With fewer students able to access school transport, the onus would fall on families—particularly those in farming—to fill the gap, potentially increasing truancy and weakening the school's long-term viability.

At present one bus service travels as far as Birchwod Rd and the second turns around at Buscot Station – the Gloag family farm.

The proposed new turnaround - pickup/drop off - point to the north at the Quailburn Rd – SH8 corner is acknowledged to be "extremely hazardous" with a high accident rate, Mrs Gloag said. The corner is frost-prone and has poor visibility, creating a dangerous environment for both vehicles and pupils on foot.

As an aside, in recent times the bus had not travelled up the Quailburn Rd even

though there had been families living up that road. To meet the Ministry criteria for that it needed four children and there were only three, Mrs Gloag said. Under the change the pupils at the Birchwood Rd end of the run would now have to be transported to Short Cut Rd to meet the bus.

Mrs Gloag said the present review presented a prime opportunity to address not only what was happening now but also the anomalies.

"There are plenty of options. I'm sure there must be a way to work out something that would work better. I would like to see some give and take in that regard," she said.

In the statement to the Ōmārama Gazette, Ministry of Education school transport group manager James Meffan said that it acknowledged the board's concerns about the review and the potential impacts of the change of routes on pupil's access to education and the long term viability of the school.

"Reviews are a routine part of ensuring services remain efficient and reflect current student numbers. We understand that changes to the Ōmārama School bus routes have raised concerns for some families, particularly in the rural community. The Ministry provides school transport assistance to eligible students to attend their closest state or state-integrated school, mostly in rural areas."

Mr Meffan said the Ministry was aware that the Board had expressed interest in managing its own service.

"While some schools currently operate under a bulk-funding arrangement, the Ministry is no longer entering new direct resourcing agreements with state or state-integrated schools," he said.

"The Ministry will continue to monitor enrolments, and any future growth in eligible students will be considered in ongoing reviews."

"Regarding students near Lake Ōhau, they are not eligible for Ministry-funded transport to Ōmārama School, as Twizel Area School is closer."

The Ōmārama Gazette has asked for that reported fact to be checked but has not received a reply. Eligibility is based on distance to the nearest school.

"We remain committed to supporting access to education for all students and will continue to work with schools and communities to make sure transport assistance is fair and sustainable," Mr Meffan said.

Federated Farmers has also been meeting with the Minister of Education to raise its concerns over the cuts affecting rural school bus runs nationwide. The Ōmārama Gazette asked for comment from the lobby group. However, the Federated Farmers education spokesperson portfolio is at present vacant after Toby Williams stepped down from the role.

it is expected the changes to the school bus routes will be implemented at the beginning of the 2026 school year.

***Eligibility criteria for school transport assistance**

There are three criteria that students must meet in order to qualify for school transport assistance.

They are:

1. The pupil must attend their closest state or state-integrated school.
2. The pupil must live more than a certain distance from the school:
 - Years 1-8: At least 3.2 km
 - Years 9-13: At least 4.8 km
3. There must be no public transport options.

'Exciting' to step from farming to retail

It may seem a bit of a stretch to some to see dairy farmers move into retail but the skills needed to make it happen are not that far removed, new Twizel Mobil Mart owners say.

Richard and Nicola, Eve, Briar and Elsie McKerchar, of Ōmārama took over from former owners Terry and Michelle Walsh, also of Ōmārama, at the beginning of last month.

The family, who had been dairy farming, were looking for other opportunities in the area when they heard Terry and Michelle were leaving and so put in an offer to buy the business which was duly accepted.

"We're really excited. It's a side-step from farming but there are similarities," Nicola said.

"We build relationships with suppliers and reps, pay attention to compliance, recruit and supervise staff and so on."

In saying that, the couple have retained former staff including another well-known Ōmārama Face – Lynda Allen.

Nicola said they were grateful for all that Terry and Michelle had done to make the transition as easy as possible and the guidance they had given them to date with the promise they would be there for them into the future too.

"...the help finding our feet and showing us the ropes... we cannot say enough."

Twizel Mobil Mart specialises in convenience store and grocery lines and also has an extensive automotive sales section along with other high country essentials like snow chains and fuel containers. There are all kinds of refreshments for travellers; that all important coffee, food to go, frozen confectionary and "I've never seen so many kinds of energy drinks," Nicola said.

At present the couple are still busy learning the ropes although they have had a few thoughts as to what they might do in the future - nothing concrete as yet,

"The girls" had already cottoned on to the fact there may be some lucrative ways on offer to make extra pocket money and were learning how to make coffee.

And Nicola was already looking to recruit their friends at holiday times, she said laughing.

The adjacent workshop is run by Terry and Michelle's former employee mechanic Daniel Aitken.

The McKerchar family - Richard and Nicola, Eve (absent), Briar and Elsie (absent) are new owners of Mobil Mart Twizel.



Community resilience group initiated

Plans for the community to be ready in case of disaster have taken another step forward.

Last month, following the AF8 Roadshow outlining the alpine fault hazard in March, 11 people met with Emergency Management Otago Waitaki advisor Danny Fountaine to go over the requirements and resources needed to run a community emergency hub.

The Ōmārama Memorial Hall and Centre is Ōmārama's community shelter should evacuations take place for any reason.

Spokesperson for Ōmārama's Community Resilience Group, Jan Perriam, said the group would be responsible for running the centre and would work alongside Ōmārama Police and the other emergency services as well as Emergency Management Otago.

It would be working with Mr Fountaine to develop community response plans which would outline how they plan to respond and keep each other safe during an emergency event.

Training is provided to cover how to set up a community emergency hub and its operations, health and safety requirements and reporting and radio communications.

There is a follow-up meeting planned.

If anyone would like to know more they can contact Jan; 022 314 4291

Emergency Management Otago Waitaki advisor Danny Fountaine has been working with a small group to set up a community resilience group.



Health Trust working to secure funding

Small communities from throughout the Ahuriri Waitaki and Hakataramea valleys have responded to calls for feedback about the proposed new facility to meet health needs.

The Waitaki Valley Health Hub trust held drop-in sessions in Duntroon, Otematata, Kurow and Omarama in May and June.

Organisers said the the support and feedback were "incredibly valuable".

"The original plan was to confirm major funding before launching our wider fundraising, we were blown away by the number of people asking 'how can we donate now'", they said in an update.

The sessions gave people the chance to watch a video presentation about the project, view the plans and concept designs for the planned facility based in Kurow, ask questions and give feedback, and find out how to get involved.

In Ōmārama, Waitaki Valley Health Trust chairperson Jim Jerram said the new facility would "redefine rural healthcare delivery" and this in turn would help with attracting and retaining healthcare professionals, important particularly considering the declining number of rural GPs.

At present the Trust leased the existing facility in Kurow to the Gardner family and these buildings were no longer fit for purpose, he said.

The existing buildings were a collection of historical catchment commission structures on reserve land with three different titles, and were becoming unworkable due to lack of space, insulation, electrical upgrades, privacy and soundproofing.

The Trust investigated the cost of upgrading the buildings, but it was unviable, he said.

Over the past three years the Trust had worked to secure land and draft concept plans, and now has a clear plan in place. With that in mind it has launched its capital raising campaign and has appointed Michael Forgie as its project manager.

The new facility has been designed to meet the needs of the growing population which fluctuates throughout the seasons and the wide-ranging demographic it serves.

The hub would provide essential primary and emergency care and also integrate a community wing and other spaces to focus on general well being.

The underlying philosophy was that healthy lives led to a healthy and productive community, Dr Jerram said.

It is possible that depending on funding, the facility might have to be built in a staged process, taking care this did not make it more expensive, he said.

But the trust was hoping to secure cornerstone funders as soon as possible and then look for smaller grants and funders, he said.

Trust capital raising team member Kate Gibbon said it was also asking people to let them know how they would like to be kept updated about progress.

The trust has a website www.waitakivalleyhealthhub.nz and a Facebook page. www.facebook.com/WaitakiValleyHealthHub

A video outlining plans can be viewed on the website

TO DONATE: website and click the 'Donate Now' page.

<https://www.waitakivalleyhealthhub.nz/donation-info>

For larger donations, pledges, or partnership opportunities email info@waitakivalleyhealthtrust.nz

Flood clean-up and protection needs priority

Any management plan for the Ōmārama Stream reserve should prioritise clearing the slash and waste from the 2022 floods and completing other work needed to prevent further flooding.

This was the clear message put to Waitaki District Council staff by the 20 attendees at the meeting called last month to discuss future management of the Ōmārama Stream Reserve land owned by the council.

There was a good representation of both Ōmārama Stream ratepayers (who pay a special Environment Canterbury rate for stream maintenance in addition to council rates) and other ratepayers at the meeting run by Community Engagement Officer Jason Evered and recreation manager Lindsay Hyde.

Primarily, the concern was that any work done should repair the damage from the 2022 floods and prevent further flooding. Attendees said they enjoyed using the reserve for walking, including walking dogs, fishing, and picnicking. There was consensus that the present generations were guardians of that land and did not want to pass on the same issues to future generations.

Some ideas for its care and development included; developing a permanent frisbee golf course, adding storyboards which told of the cultural significance of the area, and making more plantings. Also, on the wish list was Improving access by installing footbridges and allowing for a parking bay for a small number of vehicles. There was no disability access. While the group did not want a manicured park-like appearance, there was general agreement that more and regular maintenance should be done, including restoring grazing, plus the condition of one particular culvert needed urgent attention.

Aside from the nohoanga site managed by Ngai Tahu, the point was made that camping should be banned from other areas along the Golf Course Rd and the reserve itself. This area had attracted non-compliant freedom campers prior to Covid 19.

The group discussed the various roles of the parties who had a say in the management of the land and what their responsibilities were.

Long term it was felt there was potential to work with landowners to extend the area within the reserve which was accessible.

Work was planned to burn or dispose of the slash and to maintain the stopbank. This work was being hampered by the various compliance and regulatory requirements of the interest groups involved. Volunteers wanted a plan which identified what work they were allowed to carry out so they could get on with the job.

There was a short discussion about the fairness or otherwise of ECan stream ratepayers' situation, considering this small group is rated to pay for the work needed to protect the whole of Ōmārama township from flooding. A site visit which includes ECan will be held in July, if possible.

The council has allocated \$25K allocated in this year's budget and \$5K next financial year to Ōmārama Stream Reserve Management.

There was also a discussion about how the council has been communicating with Ōmārama residents and ratepayers including about the impasse with the Ōmārama Gazette.

The group supported using the Gazette as a primary means of communication.

The Gazette editor said that this would only be possible if the constraint put on it by recent council policy was lifted.

In the week following the workshop the editor has met with council communications staff and can report good progress has been made towards this goal.

Obituaries

A time to mourn

Ōmārama is a town which is grieving right now.

In the past few months, we have lost many of our own.

While we may not have known each one, chances are good that at least one or two have touched our lives, and we are changed because of that.

There are loved ones and friends we need to hold close through this time.

There are memories and stories we will recount to each other.

We will laugh, we will cry. We will do this together. We will be there for each other.

This is our time.

“There is a sacredness in tears. They are not a mark of weakness, but of power. They speak more eloquently than ten thousand tongues. They are the messengers of overwhelming grief ...and of unspeakable love.” - Washington Irving

Soon enough it will be time to dance again. For now, it is time to take time.

Arohanui, much love to you all.

Ruth

Just to let you know, the family of Robbie Perriam, who died in April, and who played a significant role in Ōmārama's recent history, has plans to prepare an obituary to honour that contribution for publication in due course.



A great and loyal friend remembered fondly

Little would he have known that when he decided to leave Te Puke for the Waitaki Valley as a teen he would put down roots for a lifetime and leave a legacy which will last well into the future.

Our own John Michael Rogers (JR) - former chief fire officer of the Ōmārama Volunteer Fire Brigade - died at Margaret Wilson Rest Home in Timaru on Sunday, June 8, age 80, three days short of his and wife Sharon's 54th wedding anniversary.

He was regarded with such fondness throughout the community that he lived, worked and served in that he was bestowed many nicknames. There was JR (of Dallas fame), Jolly John, John Boy and more. He was a proud and loved member of 'The Last of the Summer Wine' mail run contingent.

The large turnout for his final farewell at Ōmārama Memorial Hall on June 14 was tribute to the love and respect he had earned.

His flag-draped casket carried the white helmet of a fire chief and was decorated with the insignia and medals earned throughout his 30 years in the fire service.

It was carried into the hall to Ray Charles and Willie Nelson singing Seven Spanish Angels.

Funeral celebrant Wendy Lang welcomed those who had come to say goodbye to "a kind, loyal friend who ... touched the life of many people".

Those friendships and relationships would be an "everlasting memorial", she said. "...[His] sense of fun, strength and determination, dedication to his family and his community, he was very loved by all."

It was also time to acknowledge those who were closest to John and to share in their grief and show love and support. To Sharon "54 years together, was a credit to both of you".

Ms Lang read the poem by Linda Ellis called 'The Dash'.

John was the fifth child of six and grew up in Te Puke before moving to the Aviemore and Benmore Dam projects.

He worked for the Rabbit Board and completed his army training including a stint at the Tekapo military training base.

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A great and loyal friend remembered fondly - continued

He went on to spend 30 years as an animal research technician at the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries research station, Tara Hills, and it was said he had an “extraordinary relationship with animals”, she said.

When he was made redundant, he moved to selling firewood, mowing lawns and was, for a time, the groundskeeper at the airfield – “versatile and dedicated”.

In what was to become the “most profound chapter” of his life he met Sharon fixing a puncture at the local garage which “sparked a long journey together”.

They were married at the Otematata Presbyterian Church on June 11, 1969 and raised three sons. He was an “involved and present father” who shared his love of the land, his love of hunting and fishing and the satisfaction of hard work on the farm with his sons. John and Sharon built their first home in Black Peak Rd, Ōmārama in 1974.

After being an integral part of the fabric of the Ōmārama community for so many years it was poor health that saw him move to Harbour View Rest Home in Oamaru five years ago. After taking a turn for the worse in recent months he moved to Timaru where family was able to gather to spend his final days with him.

Ōmārama Volunteer Fire Brigade chief fire officer Jack Zorab told those gathered that John - the Jolly Roger - joined the brigade in 1967, the year after the Ōmārama Brigade was formed. He was “a fresh faced 24-year-old” working at Tara Hills and followed his older colleague in to the new brigade.

A few years later the Wajax firefighting competition was born of which he was a founding member, spending many evenings practicing with great success. “They took home the shield seven times in the first 16 years,” Jack said.

“Never one to panic or find himself in a hurry he trundled along at 20mph in the old Nissan Patrol. Sometimes reaching 30mph if the hooter went.”

On one occasion brigade members had travelled to Burkes Pass for a funeral when John and Dave Urquhart decided to take the long way home. When they had not returned the following day alarm bells rang and after three days both Twizel and Ōmārama brigades swung into action and a full search and rescue operation was launched. When the missing pair showed up after a “spontaneous tiki tour of the countryside”, John could not understand “what all the fuss had been about”, Jack said.

John worked up through the ranks to become deputy chief fire officer under Fred Hondelink in 1979. He became Ōmārama's longest serving deputy, spending 10 years in the role and took over from Fred in 1989. During his time as chief he represented the brigade at many UFBA (United Fire Brigades' Association) national conferences and was president of the North Otago sub association from 1995 to 1996. It was under his watch that the co-response unit was formed, the second one to be formed in the country, Jack said. He was the first person in the Ōmārama brigade to be presented with a gold star for 25 years' service and was later made a life honorary member.

“Thirty 30 years is a long time to dedicate yourself to one organisation. He didn't do that alone, Sharon was by his side working with other wives and partners to make sure volunteers were well fed and cared for after a callout.” Sons Aaron and Jason became firefighters.

As part of his legacy the John Rogers trophy is presented annually to the co-responder of the year.

Long time friend Lex Perriam told those gathered John had been “a legend”.

“He was my legend... a true mate. It's not often you have true mates like him. We played hell together when he had that smile on.”

Lex was the Rural Fire Officer for Waitaki, Mackenzie and Waimate district councils and the Department of Conservation.

"With John as chief ... we got a few things achieved." - many of those were adventures spawning numerous tall tales. Lex said. There was the time of a darts match when "everything froze".

"The water froze up in the hall, but we had rum. I put tomato sauce with the rum ...got in a bit of a mess and Johnny took me home."

There were a lot of good times on the mail run, Lex said. John knew every fruit tree in the district and he knew when it was time to pick them. "If I drove past he wasn't a happy camper."

"There are a lot of stories to tell about John Boy. He was really respected at Tara Hills." Lex recalled the days of Maf's summer programmes and the guided walks and tours.

Son Aaron Rogers gave the final tribute recounting John's last 40 days.

"There is so much to say about a great dad." The last 40 days began in the emergency department in Oamaru where the family was told there was no hope for John. A scan followed with John remaining calm and relaxed. "Yep, nothing worries Dad."

"I knew where Dad's belief was, with the Lord, quoted John 3:16 offered prayer and he said yes. After we prayed, he went for the scan."

The doctor reported the blockage had gone making it possible to treat the infection, Aaron said.

At the end of that day he moved to the ward, "then it was just a rollercoaster on a tightrope". A few times they removed all care from him and with the power of prayer and a wonderful medical team he came back, he said. It was described by a doctor as a miracle.

"This meant there was a lot more time for Dad."

There was time for a visit from the fire brigade and many others.

In one instance when the care was removed from Dad, [niece] Summer [McDougall] was there, "then when we came back Summer was feeding him icecream".

Once settled at Margaret Wilson Rest Home John got involved in housie, quizzes, joined people playing guitar and singing sessions, "like the old Dad we all knew".

"It was a blessing to have this time."

Aaron said the family were truly grateful to medical staff and for "seeing the Lord's hand at work" and with John's blessing, to share that message.

Aaron then played guitar and sang 10,000 Reasons (Bless the Lord), a song by Matt Redman and Steve Angrisano.

The service concluded with a photo tribute before John's casket was carried through a fire service guard of honour to be driven past the fire station where the siren sounded, and then past the family home on his final journey.

Our sincerest condolences are extended to Sharon, Philip, Jason and Shona, Aaron and Alexia, Jimmy, Summer and Nick and all John's family and friends.

Pall bearers were:

Cortege: Jason Rogers, Aaron Rogers, Jimmy Courtney, Travis Courtney, Caleb Rogers and Bianca Courtney.

Committal: Aaron Rogers, Jason Rogers, Jimmy Courtney, Dave Urquhart, Harry Urquhart and Corey Burnard.

Messages: P O Box 95 Omarama 9448

Funeral Directors: Betts Funeral Services where the video from the service can be viewed.

Thank you

Words cannot express how grateful we are to you all for the care and love we received after the passing of John (JR).

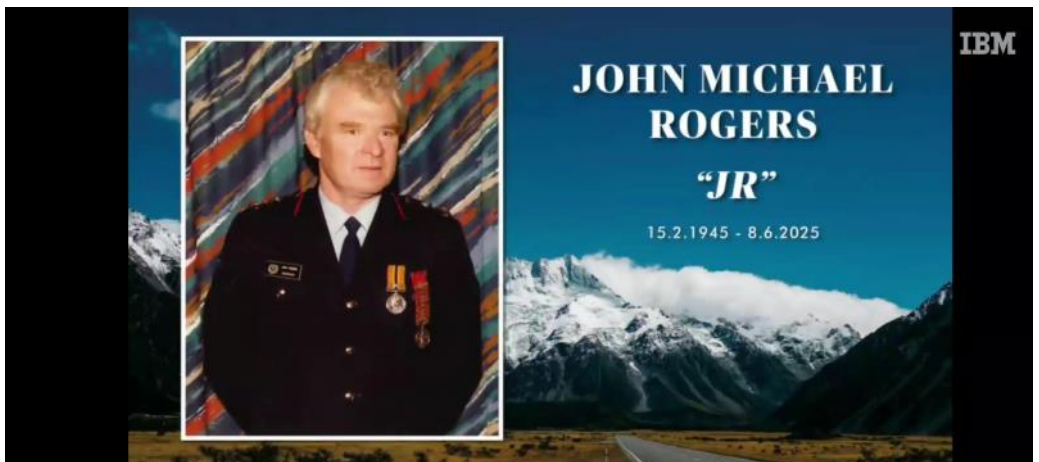
Your generous contributions of cards, messages, gifts, flowers and baking meant so very much to us.

A special thank you to the Ōmārama Fire Brigade for all your support. This was very much appreciated by the whole family.

A massive thank you to everyone who stood by us and offered both your friendship and empathy.

We feel incredibly fortunate to have such wonderful friends, family and a community like we do.

- Sharon, Philip, Jason & Aaron xx



A tribute to an Ōmārama icon

Marylou celebrated her 90th birthday in February, last year, with family at her home, The Briars. The Ōmārama Gazette wrote this as our community shared birthday wishes. This is republished here as our tribute, and in celebration of her life.



Since moving to Ōhau Downs in 1956 as the late Don Blue's young bride Marylou has woven herself inextricably into the fabric of Ōmārama history. She has recounted just some of her story to oral historians Lynley Eade* and Eileen McMillan**. She told Lynley she loved "back country" even as a young teacher and it was that which made her ask her father, stock agent Doug Willcocks, to find out if anyone on farm might need a hand.

It just so happened that the Wigleys at Glen Lyon Station needed help with the children during the holidays.

It was the summer of 1954 and that is when she first met Don, shoeing his horse. The Blues raised five children on Ōhau Downs, John, Jennifer, Susan, Margaret and Maryanne.

The isolation – the first three years without a phone and only one vehicle, the farm truck - meant day-to-day life was not without its testing times.

They were "tough old days" but happy ones, she recounted.

Mail and groceries were delivered to the gate each Tuesday but on Fridays only came as far as Benmore Station (Clearburn)

She remembered sitting up in bed feeding the baby in the cold of freezing winters, "but we put up with it because it was the way it was".

Anyone raising babies and busy toddlers can relate to these next stories.

The old Ōhau Downs Station homestead had painted grey floors .

Marylou was using caustic solution to get the paint off the spare room floor when she said she left for a moment and when she came back she discovered two-year-old John had been into the caustic and he was vomiting.

With no phone and Don away in the truck she set off with baby Jenny in the pram and John in the front to walk to the telephone at Benmore Station – it was a mile just to the gate along a shingle drive and a further two miles to Benmore.

After making it half-way down the drive harsh reality hit home and she realised they would not make it in time to save John regardless so she made "probably one of the hardest decisions I've ever had to make" and turned around and went back home. She said it was a harsh lesson about just how careful she needed to be.

"There was literally no help for miles".

Another time toddler John disappeared and after what seemed hours of worry and fruitless searching of water races, sheep dips and other hazards, and with thick mist closing in, she searched the homestead once again and, in a closed office used only for stores, she found "gloriously happy" John surrounded by sugar, cocoa and macaroni.

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A tribute to an Ōmārama icon - continued

In 1990, Marylou and Don retired 'into 'town' and built 'The Briars' and the second garden she and Don created from scratch.

Always a keen gardener, when she arrived at Ōhau Downs as a young woman she had set to and tackled the area around the house, which had not been much lived in. It had a mud drive and cocksfoot grass as high as the window sill.

Marylou picked up a pair of sheep shears and on her hands and knees cut a 12ft to 15ft (about 4.5m) strip around the house and then longed for a push mower to keep the grass down.

They had the drive shingled and fencing put in.

She dug out the poor soil and stones and barrowed it away, and Don brought in trailer loads of top soil for the new garden.

Finding plants which would thrive in the conditions proved difficult until her mother suggested she try species roses, and from then her lifelong passion for old roses began.

Marylou got to know Otematata township head gardener Jim Mitchell who gave her a grounding in landscape design.

Resourcefulness, hard graft and the barrow were also key to developing The Briars. Reportedly, both Marylou and Don, carved out the large terraced garden with a crowbar, two picks, two shovels and two wheelbarrows.

Marylou set to turning the scrubby and rocky hillside into orderly dry stone walls and briar rose hedges – shelter for the emerging new garden.

For several years, this garden was registered with the Royal New Zealand Institute of Horticulture New Zealand Gardens' Trust.

Friends say Marylou has always been an outstanding hostess creating legendary spreads for the regular visiting tours and groups.

In 1969 Marylou began running "homestead accommodation" at Ōhau Downs, what we would now call bed and breakfast – only this was full board, – morning and afternoon teas and lunches, often picnics.

She was one of the first in the area to open her home to paying guests, The business thrived capturing overseas travellers on the tourist route from Christchurch to Queenstown

She and Don continued to take guests when they moved to The Briars.

Marylou has always been heavily involved in our community, many times behind the scenes.

She was Twizel's first commissioner of Girl Guides and many young women have fond memories of 'Brown Owl' and meeting with fellow brownies at the Community Den, in Ōmārama.

And when The Briars last opened to the public in October 2017 it was to raise funds for the Ōmārama Sports Courts.

References:

*Twizel Town and Around. Remembering the Dam Days and More, by Lynley Eade. Published 2012

** Frugal Country and Hard on the Boots , A History of the Lake Ohau Valley, by Eileen McMillan. Published 2012.

Our sincere condolences to the family and friends of Marylou Blue who died in Timaru on Friday, June 6. She was the dearly loved wife of the late Don, mother of John, Jenny, Susan, Margaret and Maryanne, a loved grandmother, and great grandmother. Messages to Susan Simpson, 216 Ohupa Dam Rd, RD17, Fairlie7987

Farewell Brian - one of life's true gentlemen

We farewell Brian Sharpe

- a tribute from the Ōmārama Gliding Club and Gliding NZ, by Rod Stuart

I bet they serve cold Guinness up there at 6pm!

In a little bar looking out on a gliding airfield with mountains as far as the eye can see.

We will all miss your smiling face, your enthusiasm and your wit, Brian.

You have become the father of a new way of doing things in Ōmārama.

Manager of the Omarama Gliding Club for two seasons. You put your heart and soul into the job and created a legacy.

The seeds you have sown and the ideas you have put in place will live on.

We owe it to you to continue the beautiful work you started. Creating a world class mountain gliding club.

"Have a great day on the airfield in the sky!"

We love you Brian

From President Alex Boyes:

It is with heavy hearts that we announce the passing of Brian Sharpe.

Brian served as our club manager in Omarama for the past two years, bringing incredible passion and dedication to gliding and our Omarama operations.

Throughout his tenure, he worked closely with the executive committee to help reform and shape our club's vision and future direction.

Brian's tireless efforts to improve and grow our sport and strengthen our club will be gratefully remembered. His commitment to excellence and his enthusiasm for gliding touched all who worked alongside him.

He will be deeply missed by our entire gliding community.

A memorial service for Brian will be held in Hawke's Bay in the coming months. We will keep members informed of the specific details as they become available.

Our thoughts are with Brian's family and friends during this difficult time. Alex Boyes President.

A tribute to Brian by his son, reporter Marty Sharpe is at

<https://www.stuff.co.nz/nz-news/360720815/life-brian-goodbye-dad>

Brian at the OGC club dinner at Ōhau Lodge April 2025. Photo supplied



Situation vacant

Ōmārama Volunteer Fire Brigade - Secretary

The Ōmārama Volunteer Fire Brigade is on the look out for a new secretary. The brigade is a critical service for the community, usually the first to provide assistance when people call 111. We're made up entirely of volunteers who give their time to serve the community we live and work in.

The secretary role keeps the wheels turning behind the scene which allows our volunteers to do what they do best, help the community! It's a great way to get involved without having to attend call outs when the siren sounds.

You'll need to attend our monthly meetings, work closely with the Chief Fire Officer and want to be part of a team that looks out for the community. Some experience in a secretary role within a community group is a benefit but not essential.

If this sounds like you, or you want to know a bit more about the role, get in touch with Jack on 020 4045 0909, or email omarama@fireandemergency.co.nz before Sunday, July 13.

Photo of the month

Last month there were some spectacular sunrises in Ōmārama. This one was particularly stunning and was captured by Fiona Chamberlain who sent it to MetService New Zealand.

It made its Kapua o te Wiki/Cloud of the Week

The combination of eerie lenticular clouds together with the perfect angle of the sun made for this spectacular shot, MetService said.



P is for Party time!!!

What: A Vice-versa P Party

Where: Boots and Jandals Hotel Omarama

When: 7pm, Saturday, July 26

*** Guest DJ**

*** Supper at 8pm and 10 pm**

*** Tickets \$40pp * Numbers limited**



(Some proceeds will go to someone we love to help with medical costs)

Contact Jan Perriam text: 022 314 4291

A fabulous night with great music great food and lots of laughs.

The Noticeboard

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

With sincere thanks: Ōmārama Volunteer Fire Brigade secretary Ken Rogers is resigning the position after 20 years of service. Thank you Ken, from all of us, for all you have done behind the scenes.

Congratulations to those from the Ōmārama side of the hill, who placed in the recent 2025 Otago Merino Association fleece competition:
16 to 16.9 micron Second place; Hugh, Joe and Philippa Cameron (Otematata Station); 17 to 17.9 micron First Place: Trent Spittle (Quailburn Downs), and third place to Andrew and Deidre Sutherland, Bill and Kate Sutherland (Ahuriri Downs).
18 micron and coarser: Bill and Kate Sutherland, Andrew and Deidre Sutherland (Benmore).

Notary Public Services temporarily available: Notary Public David Stone is returning to his rebuilt home at Lake Ohau Alpine Village for seven weeks from July 3. He will be available in the area during this time to provide notarial services.

As a Notary Public he can certify and witness documents for use overseas only. (Justices of the Peace provide that service for local use ie use in NZ only. Unlike JP services there is a charge for a Notary Public's services. This depends on how many documents require to be Sealed and the time expended plus travel if required. Current Photo ID of the appearer is required and the originals of documents, copies of which are to be certified must be produced for sighting.
Contact details: 0274 909 188 david@stone.org.nz

And this is new...KNIT NIGHT, Omarama!!

Who: anyone with fingers who can manipulate two needles effectively. Whatever your level of experience, absolute beginner or brioche master, this is for you!
What: knitting (and perhaps a little spinning). When: Each Tuesday, 5.15-7pm.
Where: Upstairs room, the Terminal Building, Ōmārama Airport.
Contact; Charlotte Newfield 027 940 1648

Kurow Medical Centre Ōmārama Clinic at the Ōmārama Community Centre, is now open Tuesdays 9am to 5pm (Nurse only) and Thursday 8.30am to 1pm with Dr Tim Gardner. 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.

Ōmārama MenzShed 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: Kurow Presbyterian Parish: Rev Eymbert Johannes Schoneveld, Interim Moderator, Kurow Presbyterian Parish, Waiareka-Weston Community Presbyterian Church, 48 Main Street, Weston. Phone: 022 683 5117
email: westonminister@gmail.com

The Ōmārama Golf Club Saturdays cards in 12noon, tee-off 12.30pm. Club captain: Greg Stuart 027 438 9018, secretary: Arron Chambers 027 203 2340.
www.omaramagolfclub.co.nz

The Ahuriri Community Catchment Group meets once a month. For time and place contact facilitator Bridget Pringle, 021 072 2113 or bridget@irricon.co.nz

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 Olivia Black, 027 833 0869.

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 Bevan Allan bjallan@xtra.co.nz

FENZ Ōmārama Volunteer Fire Brigade meets 7pm each Wednesday and has its meeting at 7:30pm on the third Wednesday of the month. . If anyone would like more information about the various volunteer roles available within the fire brigade please get in touch. Email omarama@fireandemergency.co.nz or contact Jack on 020 4045 0909. You can follow us on Facebook (Omarama Volunteer Fire Brigade)

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. Contact Ethel Gray 03 438 7764.

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

Plunket Line: 0800 933 922

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 August Issue of the Omarama Gazette
is Wednesday, August 6, 2025.**

Please submit copy
by Thursday, July 31, 2025

Ōmārama Golf Club

Saturday Club Day: cards in 12noon and tee-off at 12.30.

If you are interested in joining the club
email Arron Chambers,
secretary@omaramagolfclub.co.nz for details.
Club captain: Greg Stuart phone: 027 438 9018
Secretary: Arron Chambers phone: 027 203 2340
email secretary@omaramagolfclub.co.nz

www.omaramagolfclub.co.nz

Ōmārama Community Gardens

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

Anyone is welcome to pop along to the Community Centre and have a potter, and also to pop in any plants they may have ready to go in. Join the Facebook group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/742877880594146>

Contact: Jennie Hales, jenniehollows@hotmail.com

Friends of Ōmārama School

Friends of the School

ANNUAL MEETING

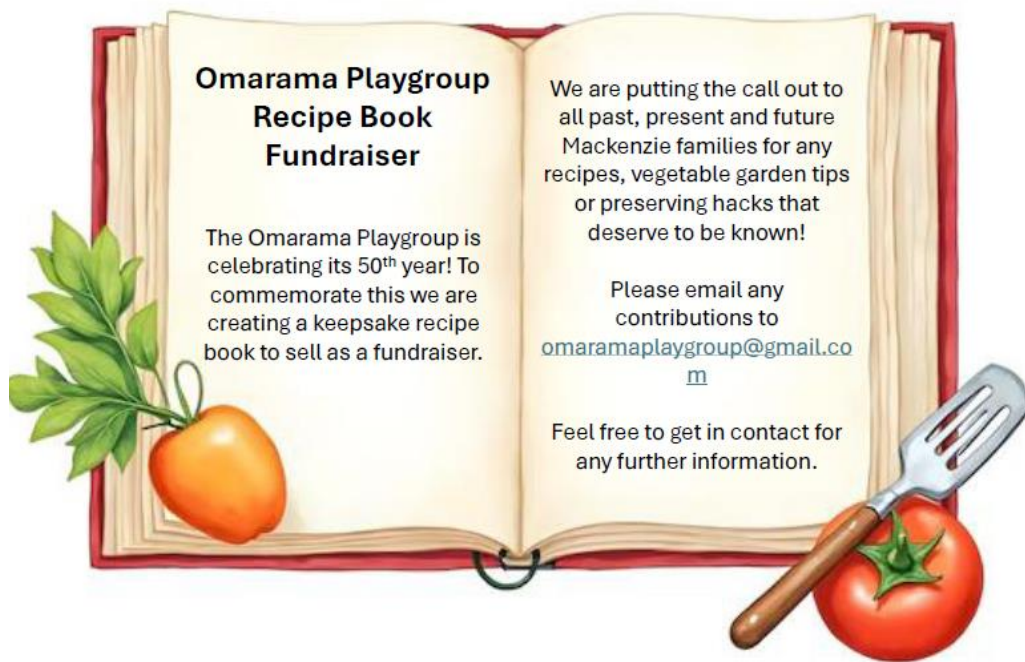
6pm, Tuesday, July 15
at Boots and Jandals Hotel

Everyone welcome!

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 Olivia Black, 027 833 0869.



Antony Ford CA



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e. office@fordsimpson.co.nz

w. www.fordsimpson.co.nz

PHONE 03 687 2080



Brodie Craig CA



ŌAMARU

Community Funding Session

THURSDAY 17 JULY

4:00 PM

THE CHAMBERS, ŌAMARU OPERA HOUSE
90 THAMES STREET, ŌAMARU

Need funding for a community project?

Come and meet your local funders to learn more
about the funding available and how to apply.



Waitaki
DISTRICT COUNCIL
TE Kaitiaki o Waitaki



Otago
Regional
Council



OTAGO
Community Trust



DUNEDIN
CITY COUNCIL
kaunihera
a-rohe o
ōtepoti



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Your Knowledge.
Your Call.**

**Stand
for your
Regional
Council.**



Your Region

ecan.govt.nz/stand

**Environment
Canterbury
Regional Council**
Kaunihera Teiao ki Waitaha

The Community Reports

Ōmārama Police



Call triple one (111) when you need an emergency response from police, fire or ambulance.
Use Ten Five (105) to report things that don't need urgent Police assistance.

Usual office contact details:
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

Ōmārama Volunteer Fire Brigade

By Senior Fire Fighter Greg Harper.

Hello to you all.

Here we are into July past the shortest day and into the downhill slide to Christmas. We had ten calls [up to June 26]; one medical, three fire related and six were motor vehicle crashes mainly due to winter driving conditions so please take care when traveling, there can be patches of ice at any time of the day.

Things are going well at the brigade with a number of people showing some interest in joining our team this is great to see. If you have been considering joining the brigade, come along and check out what it involves.

The team are busy with training that doesn't involve the use of water at this time of year.

A bit of breathing apparatus involving searching techniques and safety for all involved at calls where its use is necessary.

The First Response team are working through the field guide and training with the equipment they have available to them on the First Response vehicle.

Continuing with home fire safety for the colder months. If using electric heaters, please plug into the wall plug not through multi-boxes as they can overheat if the load is too great.

Try and keep your firewood dry as wet wood will make the flue soot up faster. The wood will also burn hotter if it is dry.

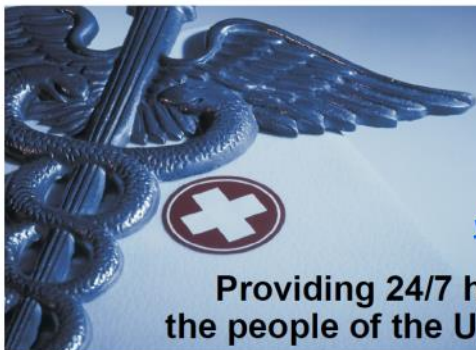
Stay Safe

Greg Harper

The Ōmārama Volunteer Fire Brigade meets at 7pm each Wednesday at the Ōmārama Fire Station and has its meeting on the third Wednesday of the month. If anyone would like more information about the various volunteer roles available within the fire brigade please get in touch.

Email omarama@fireandemergency.co.nz or contact Jack on 020 4045 0909.

You can follow us on Facebook (Omarama Volunteer Fire Brigade)



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 clinics
in Twizel (Mackenzie Health Centre Private Clinic)
and Omarama (Community Hall)**

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 checking 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 \$45.00
Care Plus – Free to eligible patients only**

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

- * Podiatry and Ear Health (Kurow only)
- * Physiotherapy, Acupuncture and Massage (Kurow and Twizel)

Opening hours

Kurow: Monday to Thursday 8.30am to 5pm and Friday mornings 8.30am to 1pm

Omarama: Thursday 8.30am to 12.30pm

Twizel: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday 8.30 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

Wellness Matters

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

Nurturing the Next Generation: Supporting Otago University Medical Students

Our practice is making a significant impact by shaping the future of healthcare through clinical placements for medical students from the University of Otago. These placements serve as a crucial link between academic learning and practical experience.

Each year we host students with the aim of familiarising future doctors with the unique challenges and rewards associated with rural medicine, where resourcefulness, strong patient relationships, and community connections are paramount. Students participate in various aspects of care, ranging from routine consultations to minor surgical procedures. Last month final-year trainee intern Katie Atwell joined the team in Twizel, Ōmārama and Kurow for her placement. With just six months until graduation, Katie rated her experience as “extraordinary” and said it was the best learning opportunity she could have hoped for. “Dr. Tim has been an amazing mentor, both professionally and personally. On the clinical side, he’s shown me just how dynamic and rewarding rural general practice can be. From hands-on procedures to managing a wide range of presentations, I’ve had the chance to truly develop my skills, try new things, and learn on the job in a way that’s both exciting and empowering,” Katie said.

“The experience helped me navigate many of the complexities of medicine, including the uncertainty and the anxiety that often comes with it. The supportive and encouraging environment was rich with opportunity and was exactly what I needed,” she said.

One highlight for Katie was engaging with the community and she thanks everyone for their kindness and patience. “Observing the trust and mutual respect in the doctor-patient relationship has been inspiring, and something I’ll carry into my own practice,” Katie said, reflecting on how relaxed and genuine Dr Gardner is with each of his patients.

“My surgical inclination like fixing problems right on the spot, usually with injections or drainage, has made the rural experience incredibly rewarding for me. There’s a satisfying immediacy to this kind of medicine that aligns well with my interests and instincts”, she said.

“I am deeply grateful to Dr. Tim, Juliet, Tom and the clinical and reception staff for their warmth and support,” Katie said, adding she will keep the experience with her throughout her medical career and life.

“Outside of medicine, I made the most of the stunning region; completing my first half-marathon, hiking up Kurow Hill, walking the Clay Cliffs, and gawking at Aoraki/Mount Cook, whether from a distance or up close” she said.

While on placement, students acquire invaluable practical insights and a diverse clinical skillset, while the community benefits from the enthusiasm and innovative perspectives that students bring. For some students, this exposure serves as a pivotal moment in their careers, igniting a sustained interest in rural health.

As rural healthcare encounters increasing demands, initiatives like this highlight the significance of collaboration between educational institutions and medical practices. By welcoming students into our practice, we contribute to teaching medicine, teamwork and fostering the development of a resilient and comprehensive health system, with the aspiration that students will pursue general practice in their professional careers.

“We see it as both a privilege and a responsibility to help train the next generation. Rural medicine is incredibly fulfilling, and we want students to experience that firsthand. It has been a pleasure having Katie on board as part of the team and we wish her well for her future,” Dr. Gardner said.

Age Concern Ōmārama

The next coffee afternoon will be
1pm, Tuesday, July 8
at the Ōmārama Community Centre.

Kathryn will show a powerpoint presentation about
Cyber Safety - Recognising a Scam.
Join us to hear tips and tricks to spot a scam!

Kathryn Bennett is the coordinator for Age Concern Waitaki, based in Oamaru.
Kathryn's contact details are: 03 434 7008, 027 4347 089
NthOtago@ageconcernotago.co.nz
Hours: Mon-Wed 9- 4.30pm / Thurs - Fri 9-12.30pm

Ōmārama MenzShed

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

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

Ōmārama Rodeo Club

By Charlotte Montgomery

Our Ōmārama Rodeo annual meeting was held on June 16 at The Otematata Hotel. We had a fabulous turn out.

We have no change in our key committee members, and our wider committee has grown which is great.

The president Daniel (better known as Monty) thanked everyone for their efforts for the last year, there was great feedback from the wider rodeo contestants and attendees, saying the club has gone from strength to strength.

Monty spoke about how it is a real community club and we love to run our events in our community for the community. Each year we have been able to donate funds back into the community and that's something we are particularly proud of.

All is going ahead for another year of rodeo- December 28, 2025, but before then is our annual quiz night and Hill Billy Hunt July 4 to 6. It's always a fun weekend, and we hope to see those familiar teams back again and some new ones too.

If anyone would like to know more about the Rodeo or join us please contact us via Omaramarodeoclub@gmail.com or find us on Facebook.



OMARAMA RODEO CLUB

MID WINTER QUIZ NIGHT

TEAMS OF 4 \$50 ENTRY FEE

The Wrinkly Rams Omarama
7pm July 4th



Hill Billy Hunt

Awesome hunting competition suitable for
the whole family and all ages.

Friday July 4-6

Rego Friday 6.30pm-Ph Entries
Accepted

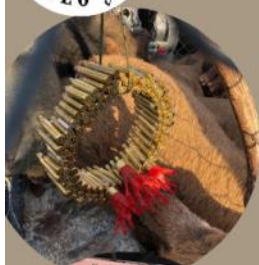
The Wrinkly Rams Omarama

\$50 Teams of 2-4

Weigh in Sunday 3.30pm

Thanks to our Sponsors

Central Otago



Hunting & Fishing  **The Wrinkly Rams**
NEW ZEALAND

Phone entries to 0273470329, with Team Name & members,
one person to have Current Gun License

Ōmārama Community Library

By Ōmārama Community Library volunteer Sandy Webb

Things you may not know about the Ōmārama library.

Things you do know: our library is run by friendly local volunteers, is open two mornings a week in the Community Centre, and you can borrow books for every age group. If you can't get to the library when it's open, the kind staff at Glencraigs will accept returned books and arrange for them to go back to the library.

Things you might not know: Ōmārama Library is part of a group of libraries including Oamaru, Kurow, Palmerston, Hampden and Otematata. Once you have a library card you can use any of these libraries, including the extra facilities at Oamaru which is also a Council Service Centre.

Apart from our basic collection, new books are regularly added, and some books which don't get read are removed. We have a shelf for recently added books, and one for large print books. There are also several shelves of books which belong to a travelling collection (mainly non-fiction) and are rotated around the group several times a year.

Your library card also gives you access to the free digital collection of online books and e-audiobooks including everything from fiction to comics and car manuals. There are also movies, and access to Ancestry Library Edition.

If you don't yet have a library card, pop in during opening hours for a chat and we will join you up!



The Ōmārama Community Library's
opening hours are 9.30am to 11am,
Wednesdays and Saturdays,
at the Ōmārama Community Centre.
omaramalibrary@gmail.com

Justices of the Peace

JPs are available by appointment to:

- * Witness documents such as applications for citizenship.
- * Certify copies.
- * Take declarations, affidavits and affirmations.

The service is free of charge.

To make your visit quick and easy:

- * Do not sign anything beforehand.
- * Do take photo identification.
- * Remember to take the original as well as the copy to be certified.
- * Check that a New Zealand Justice of the Peace can complete your documentation



Vicky Munro

Otematata

03 438 7855 021 438745



Alona Shaw

Omarama

027 773 4214

Miles Anderson MP for Waitaki



Wishing you a happy summer break, I hope you can enjoy time with family and friends. Travel safe over the Christmas and New Year period.

Our Wanaka and Oamaru Offices will be closed from 20th December 2024 and reopen on 8 January 2025.

 Waitaki.mp@parliament.govt.nz

Oamaru

127 Thames Street
03 434 7325

Wanaka

Spencer House Mall
12/31 Dunmore Street
03 443 4820

Authorised by M Anderson, Parliament Buildings, Wgtn.



Ōmārama Residents' Association

The next meeting of the
Ōmārama Residents' Association is
7pm, Thursday, July 17, 2025
at the Omarama Community Centre

The minutes of the previous meeting are available from Vicky

Residents' Association of Ōmārama committee 2024-25

Michelle Kitchen, chairperson and hall curator

Vicky Chambers, secretary

Hank Verheul, building convenor

Malcolm Cameron, MenzShed representative

Natalie Beiboer

Maurice Cowie

Stephen Grundy

Jennie Hales

Lindsay Purvis

Gary Sutherland

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



Ōmārama School

There were smiley happy faces, singing, stunning artwork on display and proud carers and teachers present on the last day of the school term last month. Ōmārama School principal Alison Holden congratulated all on a “wonderful term two” and on their academic achievements and hard work, and the kindness towards each other despite the constraints the winter months brought. There had been considerable effort put into learning opportunities and most recently in “embracing Matariki” through stories and artwork. Ms Holden thanked parents and whanau for help with activities outside the classroom.

And gave a special thank you to the staff: Jacob, Bailey, Kay and Ange. The Clay Cliffs class had studied the meaning of Matariki in different countries; Hawai’i, where it is called Makali’i, the eyes of royalty, Japan where it is called Subaru, Greece where it is Pleiades, or the Seven Sisters and Aotearoa, where it is Matariki, short for Ngā mata o te ariki o Tāwhirimātea, the eyes of the god Tāwhirimātea.

The Ahuriri Class had celebrated the Maori New Year through reading, storytelling and artwork inspired by ‘The Little Kiwi’s Matariki’, by Nikki Slade Robinson. The artwork was carried out under the tuition of local artist Kathy Kerr.

Years seven and eight pupils recounted the work they had done to complete their William Pike challenges. There had been passion projects like canoeing and mountain biking, community service projects like selling butter and planting bulbs around the graves at the Ōmārama Cemetery, and the completion of the overnight hike to the North Temple Basin.

Ms Holden said the year four and five pupils had achieved great success in the EPro8 Challenge - the inter-school science and engineering competition – in Cromwell.

Despite their lack of experience they had “put Ōmārama on the map”, she said.

-continued over



Ōmārama School contact details:

Phone: 03 438 9815

principal@omarama.school.nz, office@omarama.school.nz

www.omarama.school.nz

Omarama School, continued

District-wide achievements so far this year:

The Upper Waitaki RSA writing competition; Briar McKerchar, 2; James Mason, 3.
Epro8 challenge: The year five team of Ashlee Carter, Mazie Paton, Briar McKerchar and Maddy McCabe took second place.

Speech competition; Mazie Paton, first place in her age group.

Technology; Year three, Louis Aubrey 1, Year five, Tom Aubrey, 1.

Term two

LIGHT awards: Clay Cliffs; Leadership: Briar McKerchar, Inclusion, Emilia Newfield
Growth mindset, James Hunter, Honesty, James Mason, Teamwork: Liam McLeod

Ahuriri: Leadership: Carter Golder, Inclusion: Thorin Leopold, Growth mindset: Ava Sloan, Honesty: Liam Lord, Teamwork: Zophie Hall

Academic achievements

Year one and two: Literacy; Lucy Newfield; Numeracy; Sienna Nelson

Year three and four: Literacy; Louis Aubrey; Numeracy; Max Gloag

Year five and six: Literacy: Mazie Paton; Numeracy; Toni Hales

Year seven and eight: Literacy: Charlotte Hales, Numeracy: Nicole McMurtrie



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More wool - More milk - Less crop feed required.**

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Swiftcontracting.co.nz

Steve 021 99 33 52





Upper Waitaki Young Farmers Club

The Upper Waitaki Young Farmers Club
meets at
7.30pm on the first Monday
of each month
at the Kurow Hotel.

All welcome. Join the Facebook group.

Omarama Storage



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- 3.6m h x 3m w entry
- Short & Long term

Don't let the weather deteriorate your caravan, boat or motorhome over winter. Spaces available now.

Contact Bridget – bridgesp@xtra.co.nz
or Ph /txt 021572798

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

Contributions are welcome.
omaramagazette@gmail.com

Care in the community

Ōmārama Community Care Group

If you are in need of any assistance please do not hesitate to contact Ruth Grundy 021 294 8002 and we can work together on options and put you in contact with those who can help or for whatever will best suit you.



Twizel Community Care Centre

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

Twizel Community Care Centre

Mount Cook St, Twizel

Phone: 03 435 0687

Email: admin@twizelcare.co.nz

Hours of opening: 9am - 3pm

Days of opening: Monday - Friday

- **A reminder we have a food bank** available with no questions asked
Our contact details are 03 4350687 and email admin@twizelcare.co.nz if you would like to arrange a convenient time to collect a parcel. (Donations of non-perishable or foods that can be frozen always welcome)
- **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. Monday to 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.
- **Immigration** - passport and other Government agencies.
- **Cancer Society Navigator** – support for anyone with any cancer each third Thursday of every month
- **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.
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Garden Diary - hope springs eternal

I know, I know, I know, when you get past the winter solstice even though daylight hours grow as a dear friend just said, "the weather is about to %@#& itself!".

But if the snowdrops can push up their snubby little noses ready to face the oncoming onslaught in the hope of spring, then so can I.

The Tête-à-tête daffodils are following fast behind.

There are twigs reaching for the sky, swelling with the promise of pears, apples, plums, and peaches red and gold.

A thrush sings its heart out at the top of the hazelnut and its golden catkin tassels glitter in the frosty morning sunshine.

In every direction, up and down and underneath there are signs of life stirring.

Yet by the time it gets to August I'll be sighing with impatience and saying when, when, when?

In May I shoved 50 brown papery Tulip 'Super Parrot' bulbs into pots at the front door. The name might suggest flamboyance but she is utterly elegant, white with a stripe of green and a slight ruffle.

At the back door there are pots of scarlet T. Ile de France to push through lime green Sedum 'golden planet' – now that will be eyewatering! 'Le jour de gloire est arrive!'

And as I promised, I have planted more pink and purple under the flowering cherry and dogwood – jewel-coloured T. Barcelona and T. Saigon. I am impatient.

But for now, the unassuming brown papery packages are under dark soil and decaying leaves. Lost.

All carry within the DNA of faraway places and their legacy from past times - so much promise.

I look at the grey green lichen on the dogwood's bare branches and my thoughts turn again to those 'three friends of winter' and the wisdom of the ancient Chinese

gardeners who observed the pine (松), bamboo (竹), and plum (梅)

In their harsh winters it was these three which thrived.

It was this ability to withstand the elements which saw them become symbols of encouragement to push through adversity, to be steadfast, and to persevere in spite of the odds.

And I think yet again there is absolutely nothing as unquenchable as the sheer optimism of a gardener.

How else can we trust that a dusty brown packet of a bulb will spend months underground only to break through and dazzle come springtime.

I am impatient.

*By Ruth Grundy,
I garden a small space under the big sky in
Ōmārama.*





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0800 RURAL HELP (0800 787 254)

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

June 2025

Highest temperature: June 25, 17.2C

Lowest temperature: June 18, -5.8C

Most rainfall: June 4: 18mm

Total rainfall for June: 89.7mm

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the first Wednesday of each month

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