



# Ōmārama Gazette

July 2026

## Options for amalgamation presented

### Why are we here?

- from the Local Government Reform meeting, Otematata, Monday, June 22, 2026

- The Government intends to remove regional councils and combine councils to create unitary authorities nationwide by 2028.
- Councils must submit amalgamation proposals by August 9 under a “Head Start Pathway.”
- Those who do not submit will enter a “Backstop process,” where Wellington decides their structure.
- Waitaki’s situation is complex because it spans two regional councils (Canterbury and Otago).

*-continued over*

*We have been here before: in June 1861 the boundary between Otago and Canterbury was marked with a 'spadeline' the remnants of which can be found near Lake Ōhāu*



## *Options for amalgamation presented - continued*

- Options the council is considering
  - ⇒ Otago-wide unitary
  - ⇒ Inland vs coastal Otago unitaries
  - ⇒ Rural-based Otago unitary
  - ⇒ South Canterbury unitary
  - ⇒ Rural Canterbury unitary
  - ⇒ Something else centred on communities of interest.
- Most options could split the Waitaki district.
- Catchments—especially the Waitaki River—are not central to decision-making but are matters for consideration.
- Panelists agreed efficiencies, shared services, and standardised regulations are needed.
- Rural voice and technical expertise were highlighted as essential.
- Community concerns included tourism impacts, service provision, and losing Otago-based health/emergency services if Waitaki chooses to go north.
- Council is seeking community feedback to guide its early-July decision. Have your say here: [www.letstalk.waitaki.govt.nz/future-waitaki](http://www.letstalk.waitaki.govt.nz/future-waitaki)

## Here is the long read:

Attendees left last week's Waitaki District Council's Local Government Reform meeting with six possible options for a new structure to consider.

About 40 ratepayers and other interested parties from the Ahuriri Ward gathered at the Otematata Lakes Centre to hear a presentation from the Waitaki District Council about the Government's plans to simplify local government.

The Government began the process last year in November when it announced regional councils would have no place in its proposed structure.

The Ahuriri Ward of the Waitaki district is in the South Canterbury constituency of the Canterbury Regional Council – ECan – while the remainder of the district comes under the Otago Regional Council.

Furthermore, in May, the Government gave the territorial authorities – councils – a three month deadline to decide how they want to organise and amalgamate through its “Head Start pathway”, or risk having a new structure imposed from Wellington through a “Backstop process” .

There is no option for things to stay as they are.

Some Waitaki district councillors, Ahuriri Community Board members and council staff were at the Otematata meeting – the first of a series in the district - as was Otago regional councillor Kevin Malcom, and Mackenzie district councillor Frank Hocken.

The meeting began with a discussion led by Waitaki mayor Mel Tavendale and

chief executive Alex Parmley who were joined by a panel made up of Kaiwhakahaere of Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu Justin Tipa, Federated Farmers North Otago president Otto Dogterom and Ōmārama farmer Simon Williamson. For the Waitaki district matters were “actually really complex” and there were “quite a few decisions” which needed to be made “in a very short space of time”, Mrs Tavendale said.

Mr Parmley said the government reform was about combining the existing two layers of local government into a smaller number of unitary councils to reduce duplication and simplify decision making.

It wanted councils to voluntarily work towards that amalgamation through its fast track route to this – the Head Start Pathway. “And they gave us a really short deadline”.

Proposals must be submitted by Thursday, August 9 ahead of the Government’s finalising plans in September.

“For those who aren’t ready, there’s a backstop process, and it’s unclear what that backstop process is at the moment, but the word is that the Minister has said if you don’t do it, we’ll do it for you.

“So essentially it looks like Wellington will decide what the arrangements are for those councils who don’t engage with the head start process,” he said.

While the Government plans to keep regional functions with local councils, the proposal is that regional councillors will be gone by 2028.

“The direction is clear. It’s unitary authorities across the whole country, and that doesn’t mean existing district councils.”

The Government’s preference was for one unitary authority per region – made up of an amalgamation of district councils - but it could under “exceptional circumstances” consider “two or possibly three” in large regions, Mr Parmley said. – *continued over*

*Waitaki District Council Chief executive Alex Parmley leads the panel discussion at the Local Government reform meeting in Otematata last week.*



## *Options for amalgamation presented - continued*

“The bottom line is, in terms of what the government sets out, there's no option for our district or other districts to remain the same.

“We need to look at what are the options to amalgamate with other councils to form new unitaries.

“So that's what we're potentially looking at but no decision's been made on that.”

Once officials receive the proposals they will assess them, make recommendations to cabinet which will then decide which of those proposals will go ahead and which councils will go into the Backstop process.

If included in the Head Start process the changes come into effect towards the end of 2028 – the local body elections. If in the Backstop process it could be 2031 before the new arrangements come in.

“I think probably one of the differences is who holds the pen in terms of designing,” he said.

The council was considering how best to meet the assessment criteria which was; is it deliverable? Would it simplify the system and make it cheaper? And does it maintain a local voice? Catchments were not included as criteria.

“It's a consideration in the guidance, but it's not a criteria that you have to follow a catchment.”

Nevertheless, how catchments would be managed was a consideration, “ Mr Parmley said.

Mrs Tavendale said there was “a lot of risk” going to the Backstop process.

The district sat over two regional councils making it complex plus the Waitaki River catchment played “a really important part of our thinking”, she said.

Waitaki was a member of the Otago and Canterbury mayoral forums, so work was being done to see how it could best collaborate and also to get the “data” to back up the decisions.

However, because of the short time frame this would be unlikely to “give us the answers we are looking for”.

Mrs Tavendale then sketched out the options the council had been considering: an Otago-wide unitary; two Otago unitaries - inland and coastal; a rural based Otago unitary which excluded the large urban centres; a South Canterbury unitary; or a rural Canterbury council, or something else centred on communities of interest.

It had also acknowledged rural New Zealand needed to “look a bit different in this to what Metropolitan New Zealand might need to look like in the Otago sense”.

In each of these options, except for the creation of the rural-based Otago unitary, there was the potential for the Waitaki district to be split.

“There is part of that discussion and a number of people have raised it also about whether or not Waitaki stays as a whole.”

Panellists went on to voice their views on several issues put to them by Mr Parmley and Mrs Tavendale.

They agreed councils needed to be doing more to standardise regulations, share services and optimise ‘economies of scale’ in infrastructure and staffing.

They also agreed working towards the Head Start Pathway was preferable.

Mr Williamson said he would push for a unitary to go from “probably Palmerston right through to about the Selwyn River”.

“You've got something like 75% of the country's irrigation under one role, you've got the power generation about 70% of the power generation, all under the same roof. All of those watersheds lead from Mount Cook.

“You've got tourism, you've got all of those issues that you can have one rule for rather than having five different councils at the moment that are all running five different sets of rules and it just becomes an absolute headache, especially for anyone that crosses over with both of them.”

“I think there is big savings to be made,” he said.

It was also his understanding that to “work” economically a unitary needed a population of 120,000.

Mr Dogterom said as to where the boundaries should be each person was likely to have a different opinion.

Mr Tipa said he agreed efficiencies needed to be found and also that it was not necessarily elected officials who had the expertise required to manage some of the complexities faced.

“I think having technical experts, whether that's via a commissioner... we've got to be open to hybrid models or other ways of doing things rather than just having elected officials running the show.

“It's about the local voice, whatever that mechanism looks like. I think the risk is that it becomes a political compromise between councils rather than really a transformational outcome of what could be for the district,” Mr Tipa said.

“We have to have a rural voice and we've lost it and it's become very apparent that we're toothless at the moment and all these issues that we've got, we have to deal with them, so we've got to get back to a system where the communities have a say, where the rural voice has a say, everyone has a say,” Mr Williamson said.

“Catchment is such an important part of this conversation and how we look after the Waitaki catchment and the reality is we've got another couple of councils on the other side of the Waitaki River that see it the same way,” Mrs Tavendale said.

It was difficult, especially given the speed at which councils were required to act, to know what the 'local voice' was on the potential future boundary.

*-continued over*

*The Spadeline of 1861 continues through to the Ahuriri Valley and is marked with this commemorative post*



## *Options for amalgamation presented - continued*

“We’re looking at that north-south all around Waitaki and so there’s so many different options at play.

“We can’t capture everyone easily in this mix in this shorter time, but the best we can do is to try and get a little bit of data to sort of show what our community might be thinking,” she said.

Mr Williamson said there were people in the community with history and knowledge to offer in both urban and rural sectors.

The speed in which the decisions had to be made was a “bad thing”, on the other hand without some pressure change might “never happen”, Mr Dogterom said.

Mr Tipa said he also supported going to the “knowledge holders” but also advised keeping the community well informed with regular updates from a “single source of truth”.

“I think over communication would not be a misstep in this environment.”

Former Ahuriri ward councillor Craig Dawson asked what bargaining power Waitaki had in the negotiations.

Mr Parmley said it was an opportunity to “get some real change” in how the whole system worked.

“As for rights and bargaining, I think we’re not even in that place.”

“...I think we’re at a place of looking at what are the realistic options and then you get into the you know the discussions and the horse trading and how it’s going to work.”

Ultimately, it would be a political decision made in Wellington, he said.

Mrs Tavendale said right now the council was in a difficult position to be able to “push back” against central Government although it would keep trying to do so.

“When it comes to us pushing back as a council, when we’re in the position we’re at and when we’re putting rates up to the level we are... we’ve really struggled to have a leg to stand on.”

When pushing Waitaki’s interests at national and regional level it has been easy for other parties to dismiss those.

“It’s really easy [for them] to just go; they [Waitaki] haven’t really got it sorted, they don’t really know what they’re doing and they can’t make good decisions.

“We are struggling in that sense ... our voice isn’t very strong for that big Wellington pushback,” Mrs Tavendale said.

The council has asked the Department of internal Affairs for clearer direction about whether what it is working on is viable but it was not getting any feedback, she said, She hoped the outcome of the meetings would give the council “a steer from our community” despite the tight timeframe.

“That makes it easier because it’s bloody tough to stand up here in front of your community and say this is what our district is going to be like for the next 40-50 years within it’s not even 11 weeks anymore, it’s a sort of a five-week period.”

David Douglas, of Dome Hills Station in the Kakanui Mountains, whose property is split by the Otago and Canterbury regional council boundary, said he believed it should be a Central South Island unitary rather than South Canterbury.

Considering catchments was vital and a Central South Island unitary could begin at the Kakanui Range and extend to the Selwyn River, he said.

All of the catchments in that region came out of the high country and that farming community already spoke with one voice to the Government through a couple of organisations, he said.

“Timaru, Fairlie, Waimate are urban, but they're rural servicing towns and I don't think we'll get the degree of politics that we've had with the ORC and ECan and locally,” Mr Douglas said.

Otago Regional Councillor Kevin Malcolm said he was “here for the Waitaki River”.

“No matter what way you decide to do to go, that catchment needs to be one catchment and I've maintained that ever since I've been on.

“I'm not actually too concerned who actually governs it, and perhaps it should be a separate body like we used to have – the Waitaki Catchment Commission ... that could also be done by a separate Act of Government.”

Primarily, the Government was driving the reform to gain efficiencies and there would be job losses and that would hit communities hard. But unless the cuts were made hand in hand with amalgamation the reform would not work, he said.

And Waitaki needed to go with Otago.

“I'm telling you that would be the best way to do it. Then we won't have to deal with the biggest problem in Canterbury - their nitrate problems ... I simply don't want to pay for that,” Mr Malcolm said.

Ōmārama resident Maurice Cowie said tourism not just farming was a consideration and as it was it was difficult for small towns to get funding from any party to deal with the side effects of that industry.

“We get no support from the council. We struggle with roading. We struggle with parking and everything else.”

Most of the town's services were provided by Otago-based entities.

“Health, it looks like we may get access to a new hospital. We could possibly lose that if we go north.

“St John runs out of Otago, police, Fenz, search and rescue, civil defence and on and on. all run out of Otago.

“So, what is the government going to do, change all that as well?

“We've been sitting on a boundary that's pretty dodgy for many years and everybody wants the money. But they don't seem to want to put it back into small communities.

“Like Oamaru, they're quite happy to take out a proportion of our rates for the facilities [there] but we get nothing.

“The taxpayers expect to come into our community and have the services. We haven't got any. We struggle. And we've got to pay extra for rubbish and for sewage to support tourism.

“That's where if we go to a bigger population like Dunedin then they should be assisting us with our rates.”

Ahuriri Ward councillor Brent Cowles said it was a “very short time frame” to talk about something so important.

“I have a very clear view of where I sit, but I'm not going to share it [although] I've shared it with the odd person”

He urged people present to reach out to their community representatives.

“It is a complex issue and there's a lot of things at play,” Mrs Tavendale said.

“Do tell us what you're thinking because it's going to feed into what decision we make in early July... we will keep the comms up on our council page to let you know what's going on, when and when decisions are being made,” she said.

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# *Options for amalgamation presented - continued*

## The Waitaki District Council's proposed potential paths

- An Otago Region unitary authority - all Otago councils plus all or some of Waitaki
- Two unitary councils for Otago – an inland Otago unitary authority for Central Otago and Queenstown and a Coastal unitary authority for Dunedin, Clutha and some or all of Waitaki.
- A rural councils Unitary Council - Waitaki, Central Otago, Clutha and others north and south of Waitaki but excluding Dunedin and Queenstown.
- A South Canterbury Unitary with some or all of Waitaki, plus Timaru, MacKenzie, Waimate, and possibly Ashburton.
- A Rural Canterbury Council including some or all of Waitaki and the other councils in Canterbury outside of the Greater Christchurch area.
- Something else, to allow communities of interest to move into new Unitary Councils.

## Federated Farmers' recent proposal, 'Enough talk: Fix it'

- A single layer of local government
  - Two broad forms of unitary authority:
    - Metropolitan councils (urban centres of approx. 50,000+ population)
    - Provincial councils (formed through the consolidation of district councils).
  - A structure based on communities of interest, separating metropolitan and provincial governance where appropriate.
- [This thinking recognises that the needs of provincial communities are different from populations in metropolitan centres. Local governance should reflect these distinct provincial and metropolitan needs]

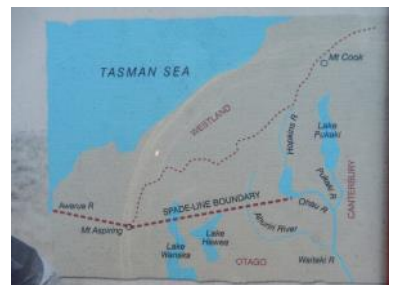
## The structure of Ngāi Tahu

[www.ngaitahu.iwi.nz/ngai-tahu/papatipu-runanga](http://www.ngaitahu.iwi.nz/ngai-tahu/papatipu-runanga)

In the case of Ngāi Tahu, 18 Papatipu Rūnanga are spread throughout Te Waipounamu (South Island).

There is recognition that within the structure no rūnanga is the same. Each rūnanga has its own governance structure and it is through this mechanism that the collective Ngāi Tahu voice in the region is represented and heard at local government and community level.

*The 1861 Otago boundary*



# Info-gathering on sports field project continues

While the numbers who attended the sports field mid-winter barbecue last month were low, the community response through the questionnaires are rather positive, organisers say.

The Residents' Association of Ōmārama held the mid-winter barbecue for the community to gather and discuss the potential the recreation reserve adjacent to the Memorial Hall offers for the future of sport and recreation in Ōmārama.

About 20 to 25 people called into the community picnic area throughout the afternoon to enjoy a sausage, a chat and to explore the reserve in warm sunshine.

As well as discussion, questionnaires were distributed to help gauge interest. So far there have been 21 questionnaires returned with more steadily trickling in.

The responses are only indicative at this stage so the project group can assess if there is enough interest and if it is feasible to take matters forward.

At present those tasked with exploring the options and feasibility are Hank Verheul, Nayland Smith, Maurice Cowie and Malcolm Cameron.

The group wants to know how the community feels about two things; what kind of sports facility does it want, and who is willing to put their hand up to help.

Here is a summary of responses so far.

Because of how the questionnaire was worded these will not read statistically.

Nevertheless, and by a meaningful margin, the response is to create a multi-use sports field (Rugby and athletics top the list.) with 17 of 21 responses in favour of this.

There was one vote against a rugby field, one against a football field and two against an athletics track with others saying the combination rugby field - athletics track was a deal-breaker.

Most responses include an offer to help through fundraising and sponsorship, labour, and with specific skills, including offers of help from several key volunteers.

Comments made also supported the idea including;

“A sports field for the community.

“It would be great for children to be able to participate in sports.”

Other suggestions made were for a squash court, a gymnasium, and planting clusters of fruit trees. It was important to have a dedicated space for the dog park, one responder said.

School pupils and playgroup are also being canvassed for their ideas.

The opportunity to have some input through either the questionnaire overleaf or email project convenor Hank Verheul at [hank@verheul.co.nz](mailto:hank@verheul.co.nz) or the Residents' Association [omarama.committee@gmail.com](mailto:omarama.committee@gmail.com) or write to the RAOI at P.O. box 93, Ōmārama.

Hank would also like to hear from those who would like to be part of a formal sub committee to manage the project.

- continued over

# *Info-gathering on sports field project continues*

## Background:

The large area of land to the east of the Ōmārama Memorial Hall (shown as a red rectangle in the graphic below which was clipped from the Ōmārama 2020 masterplan) is designated recreation reserve under the District Plan and part of this was used as a sports field in the past.

Waitaki District sports field maintenance is funded through rates across the district using district services charges but no money has been spent in the Omarama area within the last six years.

The Reserve Management Plan categorises reserve types and their service levels. The council has said as Ōmārama's reserve is no longer classed as a sports field, it is not maintained as one and so is not funded from the district sports ground rate.

*The sun rises on AI friend 'Nano Banana 2's' vision for the Ōmārama recreation reserve land. What do you think?*



## HOW COULD THE ŌMĀRAMA RECREATION RESERVE BE USED?

The Residents' Association of Ōmārama would like to know your thoughts about how the Waitaki District Council-administered recreation reserve behind the Ōmārama Hall and Community Centre could best be used.

1. What would you like to see developed on this former sports field:

- |                        |        |
|------------------------|--------|
| a. A rugby field?      | Yes/No |
| b. A football field?   | Yes/No |
| c. A cricket pitch?    | Yes/No |
| d. An athletics track? | Yes/No |
| e. A combination?      | Yes/No |

If so, what? \_\_\_\_\_

f. Other? \_\_\_\_\_

2. What are you prepared to contribute to help make it happen:

- |  |        |
|--|--------|
| a. Your time to help fundraise?                      | Yes/No |
| b. Your labour to help build that which is required? | Yes/No |
| c. Your specific skill or expertise?                 | Yes/No |
| Details: _____                                       |        |
| d. Money or products?                                | Yes/No |
| Details: _____                                       |        |

3. Do you have further ideas or comments?

If you would like to hear back from the team about this please put your best contact details here: \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for your time. Please feel free to pass this on to anyone who may want to help. Every idea will be carefully considered ahead of producing a concept plan. All updates on progress will be published in the Ōmārama Gazette

# LAND OWNERSHIP

Figure 7 provides a map of Ōmārama showing land that is currently in public ownership (Waitaki District Council, Environment Canterbury, Department of Conservation and Land Information New Zealand pastoral lease).

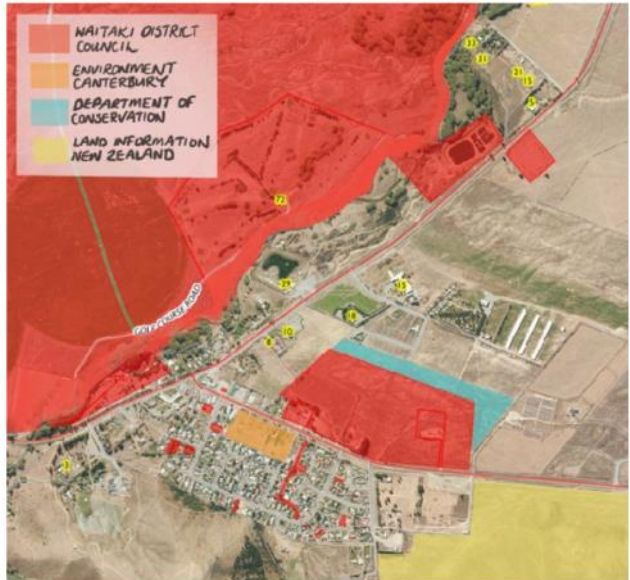
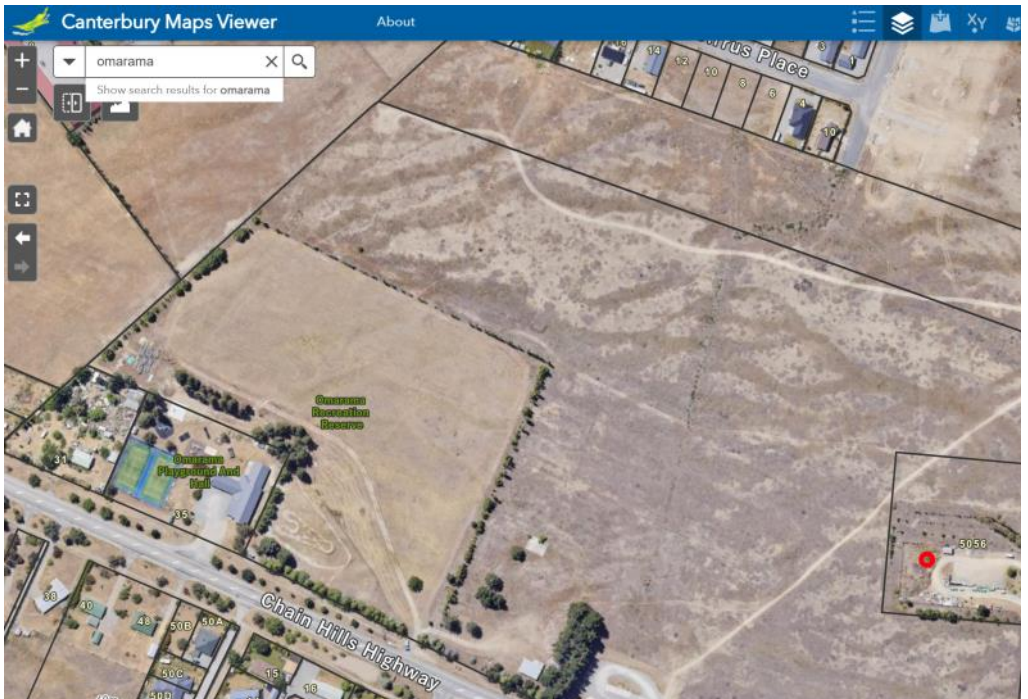


Figure 7: Land in public ownership/management.

The large area of land to the east of the Ōmārama Memorial Hall (shown as a shaded rectangle in the graphic above which was clipped from the Ōmārama 2020 masterplan, and in the more detailed map below that) is designated recreation reserve under the District Plan and part of this was used as a sports field in the past.



# Care centre sub-committee formed

The small group of residents who have agreed to carry out the project to extend the Ōmārama Memorial Hall has been officially endorsed by its umbrella society.

Last month, the Residents' Association of Ōmārama Inc committee authorised Natalie Beiboer (children, youth and sports), Glenys Dawson (fundraising), Annabelle Subtil (community and heritage), Richard McKerchar (project management), Ruth Grundy (communications), led by Ann Patterson to begin work on the extension project.

The present-day community centre and hall are in constant use and more space is required. The draft proposal is to build an extension on to the Memorial Hall – in effect becoming Stage II of the original 2011 Omarama Community Centre rebuild project.

The project working group will begin with about \$118,000 which was vested in the association by the Presbyterian Synod of Otago and Southland and its Otago Foundation Trust Board after the sale of the church on the proviso it is used for a project similar in intent to the original gift.

The project has the working name of St Thomas's Care Centre in recognition of the link.

The subcommittee is now seeking community input.

As the feedback comes in it is being carefully considered ahead of plans being drawn up, Mrs Patterson said.

So far the priorities are a dedicated space for counselling and contemplation plus extra storage. Once plans are finalised fundraising will begin.

There will be regular updates on progress through the Ōmārama Gazette.

**Residents are welcome to email with suggestions or questions to Mrs Patterson [merinolodgeomarama@gmail.com](mailto:merinolodgeomarama@gmail.com) or Residents' Association chairperson Stephen Grundy [omarama.chairperson@gmail.com](mailto:omarama.chairperson@gmail.com)**



*The RAOI proposal is to extend the Omarama Memorial Hall to the east to house the St Thomas's Care Centre.*

# Airfield loan discussed behind closed doors

A Waitaki District Council decision about whether to renegotiate its loan to the Ōmārama Airfield Company is under wraps for now.

In September 2023 the Omarama Airfield Company received a loan of \$415,000 to complete the development of the Nimbus Rd subdivision.

The company, which was at the time a council-controlled organisation, had an ongoing project funding facility agreement with the council for up to \$550,000 (secured by a mortgage for the Nimbus Drive development), with deferred financial and development contributions to be paid back as lots settled.

It was due to repay the loan plus interest by May 27.

In the company's December half-yearly report to shareholders it reported that during the period one property sale was settled and a second went unconditional for settlement in 2026, and enquiries for the period were slow.

In May, Ōmārama Airfield Ltd chairman Clive Geddes told the Ōmārama Gazette the development loan to the airfield company had been paid down to \$246,000.

It would have been cleared had the company not had to buy the tow plane operation which it did with council consent, he said.

The company's priority was to repay it as soon as possible, he said in an email.

In last week's Performance Audit and Risk committee meeting, when discussing the council's proposed Treasury Strategy for the first quarter of the 2026-27 financial year and loans to external parties, Councillor Dan Lewis asked about the loan status, noting it had been due for repayment and that there was a report coming to the council meeting following the committee session to ask for renegotiation.

"Are we comfortable with that?" Cr Lewis said.

In reply, independent chairman Simon Neale said that discussion would be best held over until the full council meeting.

According to the report the council's loans to external parties stand at \$18.692 million (as at May 31) including accrued and compounding interest.

The figure includes loans to seven entities including the airfield, the Whalan Lodge Trust and the Kurow-Duntroon Irrigation Company, with three entities asking for renegotiation or extensions.

These negotiations were held in the public excluded session of the full council meeting which followed the Performance, Audit and Risk meeting.

The reason given for the public excluded session under the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 was to "enable council to carry on, without prejudice or disadvantage, negotiations (including commercial and industrial negotiations)."



The PAR meeting is recorded on the Council's YouTube channel.

# Weathering the 'weirdness' of winter

The word on the street is the weather has been weird.

Weird, while not a strictly meteorological term, is probably the best way to describe it.

How else do you explain reaching the month's highest temperature of 19.1C at 3am – yes, am – on June 20 – the day before the winter solstice.

That day Christchurch saw its hottest June temperature on record, hitting 25.1 C at 2pm surpassing its previous June high of 22.5 C in 1988 (records began in 1953).

But that was the middle of the afternoon. By then Ōmārama's temperature had dropped to 11C and the rain was coming down.

We had 48.5mm that day contributing to the month's total of 114.6mm.

The Ōmārama Stream flow reached 13 cubic metres a second following the rain putting the recent SH8 Bridge works through their first modest test.

And there were again washouts on the Alps to Ocean Trail – most notably on the section to Sailors Cutting where there was considerable damage in the 2022 floods at the junction of the St Cuthbert Range Easement.

We did receive a dusting of snow this month and some hard-ish frosts but nothing like other years.

The record low temperature for Omarama is -21.0°C, which was recorded on June 24, 2015.

So, that's June done and dusted, bring on July and August,

*Below: The night time temperature on June 20, 2026; Water flows down the Alps to Ocean Trail on June 22, last week, after heavy rain two days earlier. Photo: Greg Harper.*

## June 20, 2026



# A barking mad success in Ōmārama

If you ever wanted to know what actually goes through a working dog's head during a chaotic high-country muster, Emma Newborn and Amelia Dunbar provided the side-splitting answers last month in Ōmārama.

Supported by FMG, Farmstrong and Halter the comedic duo brought their latest live performance to town, proving once again why they are undisputed icons of rural New Zealand comedy.

For 55 minutes, Newborn and Dunbar effortlessly transformed into an array of brilliant canine characters.

The scene was set when the show opened to time-honoured strains of Country Calendar and the documentary's commentator Dan Henry injected his voice of calm and reason to the sheer disarray of a farm pack.

With the matriarchs locked away on heat, the underdogs were left trying to impress the boss, resulting in a masterclass of physical comedy, breakneck character shifts, and lightning-fast wit. You don't just laugh at the absurdity; you laugh at the absolute accuracy of the dog behaviours. Or are they human behaviours?

It is an affectionate, terrifically bonkers love letter to rural communities and the four-legged legends that keep them running.

Coupled with a great community turnout, the night provided exactly what it promised: immense vibes, big laughs, and unforgettable heartland fun, and a real heartwarming lift to winter spirits.

Ōmārama School Board of Trustees presiding chairperson Jemma Gloag introduced the evening which was to help raise funds for equipment and to support pupils in outdoors activities such as school camps.

Main sponsors were FMG, Farmstrong and Halter and Bidfood and ANZCo foods for the burgers. Other sponsors are detailed on the photo over.

*Photos: Lex Perriam, with wife Jan, won best dressed male in the most outstanding rural outfit; More outstanding rural outfits were modelled by Nicola McKerchar and Geva Innes; Omarama School Board of Trustees presiding member Jemma Gloag opens the show; the crowd builds in anticipation of a great winter's night out. Photos: Ruth Grundy.*

*The sponsors made the night possible. Photo: Ōmārama Friends of the School Fundraising*





Thank you to our sponsors for this evening!

WE HAVE SOME AMAZING PRIZES FOR YOU TONIGHT!

A HUGE SHOUT OUT TO THE WONDERFUL BUSINESSES AND INCREDIBLE HUMANS THAT HAVE KINDLY DONATED, SPONSORED AND SUPPORTED TONIGHT'S EVENT!

The Lindis Lodge  
Distinction Hotel  
Hot Tubs Omarama  
Omarama Lodge  
Ohau Lodge  
Top 10 Omarama  
The Wrinkly Rams

ANZ  
Bidfoods  
Dalrachney Station  
Fraemohs Homes  
Mons Royale  
Whistle & Pop  
The Glider Cafe  
Country Girls Creations  
Total Interiors

Boots and Jandals  
Te Akataramea Station  
Blue Cross Vets Omarama  
Hair Plus Christchurch  
Twizel Mobil  
Mackenzie Country Honey  
Cloudy Peak Butchery

FARM STRONG  
Halter  
ANZCO FOODS  
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# Public Notices

## Possum Control – Poison Warning

Rentokil Rural and Environmental Services wishes to advise that a ground-based possum control operation will be taking place to keep possum numbers under control to prevent the spread of bovine TB. This operation will be conducted as a part of the TBfree New Zealand programme.

**Areas covered:** The area known as South Canterbury South is situated on the western side of the Waitaki Lakes, from Maraewhenua River in the South to Omarama in the north.

**Operation date:** 1 July 2026 to 30 June 2027

**Poisoning methods** Feratox capsules to be placed in a peanut paste inside blue biodegradable bait bags and bait stations. Cyanide paste may be used in the high country.

The public is warned to take care in these areas and not to remove carcasses or baits. Baits are dangerous to people and dogs.

### General warning

- Do not touch poison baits/bait stations/traps
- Do not touch poisoned possum carcasses
- Keep pets under supervision
- Do not leave children unattended
- Follow the advice on the poison warning signs.

### If you suspect poisoning

- Contact your local hospital, or dial 111
- National Poisons Centre 0800 POISON – 0800 764766
- In the case of a domestic animal being poisoned, contact a local veterinarian

**For further information (including maps of the operational area), contact Rentokil Rural & Environmental Services – Tel. 0508 POSSUM (767 786) or email: [south-island@rentokilruralenvironmental.co.nz](mailto:south-island@rentokilruralenvironmental.co.nz)**

# Can you help?

Whalan Lodge is a treasured part of our rural community and we have been encouraged by the support we have had from our amazing community over the years.

We are seeking donations of livestock from local farmers to help raise funds for the ongoing operation of Whalan Lodge.

Every animal donated will make a real difference in helping us continue to provide quality care and maintain this valuable asset for future residents.

We are also looking for expressions of interest from anyone who would want to supply and raise a calf to 100kg for Whalan lodge.

If you are able to support Whalan Lodge through a donation of livestock, or a portion of an animal, or raising a calf, we would love to hear from you.

Your generous donations will directly benefit the elderly members of our community.

**To find out more or book some livestock in, please give one of these Trust members a call:**

**Simon Taylor 027 541 3070**

**Hamish Kay 03 436 0465**

**Ping Horn 021 176 2812**



# The Noticeboard

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

**Many Happy Returns**  
to all with July Birthdays  
There are quite a few this month  
and some will have been missed,  
Mike King, Lorraine King, Jan Perriam,  
Gary Sutherland, Ruth Gordon  
and joint Patterson family birthdays.  
May you all be thoroughly spoiled! :)

**Kurow Medical Centre Ōmārama Clinic** at the Ōmārama Community Centre, is on Tuesdays. Appointments are available 9am to 4.30pm.  
To make appointments for all clinics, order repeat scripts or make enquiries please contact Kurow Medical Centre 03 436 0760 or Mackenzie Health Clinic 03 976 0503 .  
[www.kurowmedicalcentre.org.nz](http://www.kurowmedicalcentre.org.nz)

**The Ōmārama Community Library** is open 9.30am to 11am, Wednesdays and Saturdays. Library hours can change. Email: [omaramalibrary@gmail.com](mailto:omaramalibrary@gmail.com)

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

**Kurow Presbyterian Church:**

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](mailto:westonminister@gmail.com)

**The Ōmārama Golf Club** Saturdays cards in 12 noon, tee-off 12.30pm. Club captain: Greg Stuart 027 438 9018, secretary: Arron Chambers 027 203 2340.  
[www.omaramagolfclub.co.nz](http://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](mailto:bridget@irricon.co.nz)

**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.

**Ōmārama Playgroup** meets at 9.30am each Wednesday during the primary school term at the Ōmārama Community Centre. For more information phone or email president Olivia Black 027 833 0869, vice-president Jess Townsend and secretary Bridie Brosnahan 027 341 3010 [omaramaplaygroup@gmail.com](mailto:omaramaplaygroup@gmail.com)

**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 regularly at its flying ground at the Ōmārama airfield. All welcome - Contact Bevan Allan [bjallan@xtra.co.nz](mailto:bjallan@xtra.co.nz)

**FENZ 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.nz](mailto:omarama@fireandemergency.nz) or contact Jack on 020 4045 0909. You can follow us on Facebook (Omarama Volunteer Fire Brigade)

**During winter months a gentle exercises** and social afternoon group meets at the Otamatata District Club at 1.30pm Thursday afternoons during winter. Gold coin donation and a cuppa after the exercises. Contact Shirley - 021 165 6439, or Diane 021 237 9636.

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

**Plunket Line:** 0800 933 922

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To read more, enjoy more photos and watch our place 'come to life' check out our Facebook page and website.

[www.facebook.com/omaramagazette/](http://www.facebook.com/omaramagazette/)  
[omaramagazette.nz](http://omaramagazette.nz)

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

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 5, 2026.**

Please submit copy  
by Thursday, July 30, 2026

# 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

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## Ōmārama Volunteer Fire Brigade



*By Fenz Ōmarama operation support volunteer Blair Shaw*

June has been a quiet month for the brigade, considering the foggy, icy weather we have had.

We've attended a mixture of MVCs and medicals, and a family who thought it would be a great idea to light a fire on the shores of Lake Ōhau shore despite the total fire ban.

The brigade's 2027 calendars are now out and look fantastic. They are \$25 each. If you would like one, ask anyone in the brigade or check out the posters with QR codes around local businesses. We'd also like to thank all the local businesses for their support in sponsoring the calendars. All proceeds will go towards replacing our First

Response vehicle, which plays a vital role in the community.

Maddie Innes and I have just completed our Operational Support course in Christchurch, where we honed our skills across a broad range of subjects including traffic management, scene lighting and ladders. With the wild weather in the North Island, around half of the course participants were unable to attend, so it was great to receive more in-depth attention from the trainers.

During the traffic management training, we learned that Auckland crews put out around 80 to 120 road cones at every incident they attend, while we can do a very similar job with just 10. City versus country. We also worked on options for how all drivers are different and ways to manage some of the difficult ones.

With the scene lighting they showed us different lighting technics for the various scenes we may encounter to give fire personal the best working conditions. There was also discussion around keeping all personal involved in the scene safe including the public.

Talking with the other attendees, our brigade is in a very good position with the equipment and skills we have onsite.

If you would like to be part of the brigade, training is held each Wednesday at 7pm. There are various roles within the brigade, including Operational Support, First Responder, Firefighter and Rural Fire, so you can choose what suits you best

# CALLING ALL PAST MEMBERS!



## ŌMĀRAMA VOLUNTEER FIRE BRIGADE

*You're part of our 60 year story.*

We're celebrating 60 years of service to Ōmārama and the surrounding districts - and we'd love to see you back on station.



**FRIDAY 25 SEPTEMBER - FROM 4PM**  
Informal BBQ on station



**SATURDAY 26 SEPTEMBER - FROM 10AM**  
Open station for the community



**SATURDAY 26 SEPTEMBER - FROM 4PM**  
Honours night & 60th celebration



**Email**

**[omarama@fireandemergency.nz](mailto:omarama@fireandemergency.nz)**

if you'd like to attend and we'll send you the details.

*We'd love  
to hear from  
you!*



**Antony Ford CA**



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*If you would like us to visit you, please call and arrange a time.*

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

**PHONE 03 687 2080**



**Brodie Craig CA**

# 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 Olivia Black 027 833 0869, vice-president Jess Townsend and secretary Bridie Brosnahan 027 341 3010  
omaramaplaygroup@gmail.com

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# Ōmārama School

Ōmārama School contact details:

Phone: 03 438 9815

principal@omarama.school.nz,

office@omarama.school.nz

www.omarama.school.nz



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**Rachel Sheridan**  
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pmrentals@mcre.co.nz



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PRIZE

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PRIZE

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FOUR SQUARE VOUCHER



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**1500**  
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OR FOUR SQUARE OMARAMA

**4**

**FOUR  
SQUARE**

**OMARAMA**  
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SEE INSTORE FOR TERMS AND CONDITIONS.

# Ōmārama Golf Club

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

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

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## Age Concern Ōmārama

Save the date: The next 'Pop-Up Cafe' is 1pm, Monday, August 10. Heart health promoter Jan Keown will give a presentation about healthy lifestyles, heart health and heart disease.

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

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## 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 Community Garden

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>

And watch this growing space, Contact: Jennie Hales, [jenniehollows@hotmail.com](mailto:jenniehollows@hotmail.com)

## Let's get growing together!

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# Ōmārama Community Pantry

The Ōmārama Community Pantry has closed its doors for the winter months.

But although the doors may be closed to keep weather and vermin out and while there is not much surplus produce around, they are not locked.

So, if you have anything you want to leave please continue to use the cupboard, just send a text to 021 294 8002 and I'll get the word out there.

PS Please leave the doors closed (not locked) for now and we will reopen again in the warmer months.

The Ōmārama Community Pantry is at the entrance to the community gardens and picnic area at the Ōmārama Memorial Hall and Community Centre.

No donations are necessary but if you'd feel more comfortable giving a small koha this will go to our two community gardens, at the community centre and the school.

Take what you need, leave what you can.



# Kurow Medical Centre

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

E: [info@kurowmedicalcentre.org.nz](mailto:info@kurowmedicalcentre.org.nz)  
W: [www.kurowmedicalcentre.org.nz](http://www.kurowmedicalcentre.org.nz)  
[www.facebook.com/kurowmedicalcentre](http://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 \$50.00**

**Care Plus – Free to eligible patients only. Community Services Card \$20**

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**

Omarama: Tuesdays 9am to 4.30pm

Kurow: Monday to Thursday 8.30am to 5pm, Friday 8.30am to 1pm

Twizel: Monday to Friday 8.30am to 5pm, 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*

# !!Weekly Winter Housie 2026 !!

Every Wednesday through winter

@ the Ōmārama Fire Station

\*20 Houses \*Super House \*Afternoon Tea

\*Raffles \*Supported by Age Concern

(Please bring small denominations or coins )

A warm welcome to all



**Wednesdays at 1pm**

One day  
I'll start  
behaving  
myself...

Maybe  
tomorrow.

# 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

Benmore Place, Twizel, 7901

[admin@twizelcare.co.nz](mailto:admin@twizelcare.co.nz)

03 4350687

**Open Monday to Friday 9am-4pm**  
**The Twizel Community Care Trust**  
**offers a range of services including:**

**Forms** for Work & Income, IRD, Immigration, Passport & other Government agencies

**Twizel/Tekapo Community Vehicle** – booking system for trips Monday to Friday

**Frozen meals** – A variety for purchase including main meals and snack sizes

**Food bank** – Anyone requiring assistance with food, contact us for confidential help (donations of non-perishable or foods that can be frozen always welcome)

**Plus** – access to a computer, printing, free WIFI, community notice boards and Cancer Society gazebos for hire



## Twizel Linkage

### Morning Tea

Come along to LinkAge where we meet up for company, a giggle, and a catch up, with guest speakers, entertainment & up-to-date information, plus much more.

Every Thursday - 10.30am-12pm

All very welcome

Community Lounge at the Events Centre

# 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.  
Email: [upperwaitaki@youngfarmers.co.nz](mailto:upperwaitaki@youngfarmers.co.nz)

Join the Facebook group.

## CHIROPRACTIC CARE OMARAMA

**Monday & Wednesday, 2–6pm** - Omarama Community Hall

**Your body was designed to move.**

To work hard. To keep up. To wake up feeling ready.

When your spine isn't moving well, your nervous system can't communicate clearly — and your whole body feels it. The stiffness. The fatigue. The niggle that's just become normal.

That's not ageing. That's your body asking for support.

Chiropractic restores movement to the spine, removes the interference, and lets your body do what it was designed to do.

If you're not moving at your best — come and talk to us.

Move better. Live better. Feel better.

Get in contact with us or book online to start your journey towards better health

***ACC Accredited and registered - no referral required***

**Where you'll find us:**

**Omarama Practice:**

Omarama Community Hall  
35 Chain Hills Highway,  
Omarama, 9412

☎ 027 214 2533

@ [info@waitakichiropractic.co.nz](mailto:info@waitakichiropractic.co.nz)

🌐 [www.waitakichiropractic.co.nz](http://www.waitakichiropractic.co.nz)

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CHIROPRACTIC



# Now Open: Kurow Depot

## 35 Bledisloe St, Kurow

North Otago Pastoral Services is expanding — with a new depot in Kurow to better service local farmers.

Available now:

### Permapine posts

- 1.8m Posts
- 2.1 strainer Posts
- 2.4 Strainer Posts
- 2.4 Stay Posts

### Waratah fencing products

- 2.5mm HT Wire
- No 8 Wire
- 5ft Waratahs
- 5ft 6 Waratahs
- 8/90/30 x 100m TL Netting
- 8/90/30 x 200m TL Netting
- 15kg 50 x 40 Barb Staples

### McAlpine's bulk timber packs

- 150 x 50 x 4.8m H4 Timber Packs 55 lengths
- 150 x 50 x 6m H4 Timber Packs 55 lengths
- 200 x 50 x 6m H4 Timber Packs 44 lengths

### Hanham concrete troughs

- Rectangle Trough 318lt
- Round Trough 700lt
- Round Trough 1350lt

### Tornado gates

- 14ft Econ Gate
- 14ft Cattle Gate
- Gudgeon Packs
- 2.5mm HT Summit Wire

### BA Pumps & Sprayers

- TSX 400lt Trailer Sprayer
- LM1150X 2073 3 Point linkage 12m Hydraulic Spray Unit

**This depot is unmanned. For all product enquiries, or to arrange pick-up/delivery contact our Oamaru store:**  
3 Usk Street, Oamaru 9400 | [www.nops.co.nz](http://www.nops.co.nz) | 03 434 7766



# Hill Billy Hunt & Quiz Night 2026

Hunting competition suitable for the whole family and all ages.

July 10-12

*20 year anniversary*

Rego Friday 6.30pm -Ph Entries

Accepted

Quiz 7pm

The Wrinkly Rams Omarama

\$50 Teams of 2-4

Weigh in Sunday 3.30pm

*exciting spot prizes*



*Thanks to our Sponsors*

Central Otago



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

OMARAMA RODEO CLUB

# MID WINTER QUIZ NIGHT

TEAMS OF 4 \$50 ENTRY FEE

The Wrinkly Rams Omarama

7pm July 10th



# 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

**Your local MP welcomes  
all enquiries.**

[waitaki.mp@parliament.govt.nz](mailto:waitaki.mp@parliament.govt.nz)

### **Oamaru**

127 Thames Street  
03 434 7325

### **Wanaka**

Spencer House Mall  
12/31 Dunmore St  
03 443 4820



Authorised by M Anderson,  
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# Ōmārama Gliding Club

*By Hugh Colton*

Ōmārama resident Hannariina Laukkanen, one of the younger members of the Ōmārama Gliding Club, was invited to Atlanta, Georgia, USA, to give a presentation on gliding to the local chapter of the Experimental Aircraft Association's Youth Summer Camp.

Hannariina wowed them with her gliding history having solo-ed aged 13. She's lucky enough to spend the New Zealand winter in Minden, Nevada, USA.

Just a couple of weeks ago she flew a Nevada state record for 200 km with no other than Jim Payne sitting in there back of the two seat glider as she's too young to go cross country alone.

Jim holds the world altitude record having reached 76,000' (23,000 m) from El Calafate in Argentina.



# Ōmārama Residents' Association

The July meeting  
of the  
Ōmārama Residents' Association is  
7pm, Thursday, July 23, 2026  
at the Ōmārama Community Centre

The minutes of the last meeting are available from the secretary

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

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

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## 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](mailto:hallhire.omarama@xtra.co.nz)

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# Ōmārama Community Library

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

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## Knit Night Ōmārama

Knit Night Ōmārama  
5.15pm each Tuesday  
at the Omarama Community Centre  
Gold coin donations towards room hire  
would be appreciated.

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## Omarama Storage



- Secure Lockup Storage
- 3.6m h x 3m w entry
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Don't let the weather deteriorate your caravan, boat or motorhome over winter. Spaces available now. Contact Bridget – [bridgesp@xtra.co.nz](mailto:bridgesp@xtra.co.nz) or Ph /txt 021572798

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

Contributions are welcome.  
[omaramagazette@gmail.com](mailto:omaramagazette@gmail.com)

# Waitaki District Council news in brief

Council meetings are recorded and can be found on its YouTube channel.

## **Protest march and petition**

Last week, The Oamaru Mail reported residents of the district turned out in droves at Takaro Park before marching to the steps of the council building to present a petition with more than 5000 signatures to Mayor Mel Tavendale protesting the amount of the rates rise.

In their meeting Waitaki district councillors voted to scale back a previously agreed 22% rise to 17%. Mrs Tavendale was noncommittal about whether the protest action would result in any further change. A council spokesperson says the next steps will be for the petition to be added to the agenda of the next council meeting, Thursday, July 9 where the Annual Plan will be discussed. The petition organiser will be invited to speak at this meeting.

**Oamaru Residents and Ratepayers Group chairperson Ray Henderson** has asked the council a series of questions. The council has published the answers to those questions on its website.

## **Council revokes 22% rates increase in favour of 17%**

Last week, councillors voted to overturn their earlier 22% rates decision (made 26 May 2026). A new 17% rates increase will now be used for the 2026–27 Annual Plan. Because the plan must now be reworked, the council will not meet the June 30, 2026 legal deadline to adopt the Annual Plan and set rates. The Minister for Local Government, Simon Watts, will be formally notified of this breach.

The shift to 17% is enabled by: Reduced fuel prices, easing operating cost pressures; A one-off \$1 million special dividend from Whitestone Contracting Ltd (a Council Controlled Organisation); A directive to find cost savings, which may reduce some service levels.

The council will need additional borrowing in 2026–27 to cover operating costs. Repaying this borrowing will influence future rates and the development of the 2027–37 Long Term Plan.

## **Water Services Delivery Plan**

The council has approved its amended Water Services Delivery Plan, confirming it will join the new Southern Waters CCO to run drinking water, wastewater and storm-water services from July 1, 2027. The plan includes \$274 million in water upgrades and projected charges for water services through to 2034.

While the cost of water services will increase in the next decade, to reflect the investment made, it is expected to save households about \$324 a year in the long term compared with keeping services in-house.

Around \$80 million of water-related debt will transfer to Southern Waters on July 1, 2027, reducing the council's total debt to about \$41 million.

From 2027, water charges will be billed separately, no longer through rates.

Water charges are set to increase over the next decade to pay for the infrastructure upgrades required to meet standards. The Department of Internal Affairs has approved the new plan. The council will work with the Southern Waters organisation and other shareholder councils to transfer assets, debt and services on July 1, next year. It will also transfer staff to the new organisation.



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# Garden Diary - Catching the light

*"I must have flowers, always, and always."* – Claude Monet

On these freezing fog-filled days when the invitation to step outside is not as welcoming as that to stay by the fire I love leafing through my photo books.

Inevitably, these get overtaken by a social media scroll as I log in to see what is going on in the backyards of those gardens right now, eyes feasting on glimpses of summertime on the other side of the globe – albeit carefully curated photos to exclude the crowds of sticky, noisy tourists.

A favourite place to armchair travel and dream is the Maison et jardins de Claude Monet à Giverny -The house and garden of Claude Monet at Giverny.

I'm looking through the portal to mid-summer. And it's been hot over there in that garden, 27° C to 37°C. For Monet, his garden and his art were inextricable.

*"I am following Nature without being able to grasp her, I perhaps owe having become a painter to flowers."*

It seems he tended gardens wherever he lived but the most well known is his garden at Giverny where he escaped with his blended family – eight children – and that's a whole 'nother story.

*"How can one live in Paris? It's hell. I prefer my flowers and this hill that surrounds the Seine to all your noises and nocturnal lights."*

He was 43 years old when he found his place to stand, and he and the garden journeyed the remaining 43 years of his life together.

In the beginning he worked alone as an impoverished, unacknowledged artist but in later years he employed a gardener as his talent was recognised and rewarded.

An impressionist painter, his art and that newfangled technology – photography – a great interest of his – emerged into the world together, which seems fitting - both seeking how to capture the light. I wonder what he would have made of the new cameras.

I have this vision of those painters standing with easels on the grassy banks of the Seine on a blustery summer's day flicking brushes and paint as fast as the hand could move to try to capture what the eye could see – the fleeting colours - then whipping off one canvas and beginning again as the vision of the landscape transformed in the evanescent light.

In his garden his scope was limitless, there was the Grand Allée, the arching bridge over the pond and those water lilies. As others have said Monet didn't paint the flowers as such but the intensity of light on the flowers.

Light painting the garden – that's what's makes it enchanting, captivating, alive.

And all moments are fleeting, no two the same, it's mesmerising.

The blue light through a frosty fog which clears to a steely dome of sky which then transforms in colour as the earth turns, from gold and pink and violet and indigo into starlight and moonlight.

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

*\*Monet's garden Through the Seasons at Giverny  
by Vivian Russell.*





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.

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

June 2026

Highest temperature: June 20, 19.1C

Lowest temperature: June 27, - 6.2C

Most rainfall: June 20, 48.5 mm

Total rainfall for June: 114.6mm

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