



Ōmārama Gazette

November 2025

After 10 years ECan land disposal presses on

Addressing the 'disposal' of the former Rabbit Board land in Omarama appears to have taken another small step forward in its glacial progress towards resolution.

Last week the Omarama Gazette was told Environment Canterbury representatives were in town to assess the remaining block of land ahead of a decision.

In an email in answer to questions ECan Corporate and Public Transport Services director Giles Souhwell said the disposal/sale process of the Omarama land parcels with the Crown remained ongoing.

"Environment Canterbury staff were on-site to perform a routine property inspection and to assess what is required to appropriately define the legal boundary, which must be completed for the process to proceed," Mr Southwell said.

The Gazette also contacted the Waitaki District Council to ask if there had been any progress regarding the acquisition or otherwise by the council of this land.

This was the same question put to it in August.

- continued over

The former rabbit board land now under Environment Canterbury is in the centre of town.



After 10 years ECan land disposal presses on - continued

There had been no reply from the council staff concerned prior to going to print.

If it is not forthcoming the Gazette plans to ask for the information under an official information request. Any updates will be published next month.

Last year, the matter was raised with former mayor Gary Kircher at a public meeting in February and in April last year Mr Kitcher said he had raised the issue with Ngai Tahu who had first right of refusal to the land at the same time confirming Te Runanga o Waihao had bought part of the block.

Also last year Fenz Omarama Fire Brigade was granted title for a small section of the land which runs alongside the station to be set aside for fire and emergency purposes under the Public Works Act 1981.

The remaining block in the centre of Omarama land continues to be held by ECan.

In August, the Ōmārama Gazette also asked if the Waihao Rūnanga had considered buying the remainder of the land.

At the time Te Rūnanga o Waihao chairperson Dardanelle McLean-Smith said she understood a master plan for Ōmārama had been developed with the community, and Waitaki District Council had “clear plans for the site next to our property”.

“We have not made a decision on this as it remains with the current landowner,” Ms McLean-Smith said.

The community was informed by ECan in 2016 that it had moved to begin the Crown Disposal process of the land.

In March 2018 ECan’s Miles McConway told the Omarama Gazette it had applied to the Department of Conservation to dispose of the reserve land as it was surplus to requirements.

“Linz (Land Information New Zealand) completes the disposal/sale of the land (through an accredited agent) and this is the part of the process that this particular piece of land is in at the moment. A LINZ accredited supplier has been appointed to ensure all is in order for the sale and they are working through this.”

Last week, the Omarama Gazette has also asked Linz what progress has been made in the disposal process and received no reply before publication.

Background

The Ōmārama Rabbit Board land, which was originally part of Ōmārama Station, was passed to ECan in the late 1980s when Rabbit Boards were dissolved and it took over rabbit control management and the land the Board owned.

The whole parcel of land which extends west to the Ōmārama Fire Station was Crown-owned [Linz] Land – a reserve administered by the Department of Conservation and at present maintained by ECan on Doc’s behalf.

The disposal process involves first offering the land to iwi which has right of refusal before it can be offered on the open market.

Weather stories dominate October

It would not be overstating it to say the weather dominated the news, last month.

Screens were a sea of red and orange across the month as a succession of weather warnings preceded the fronts moving across country.

Wind, rain and snow, we had it all. And the rivers rose.

While we did escape the worst of it, we did have our wee dramas.

There were six days where wind gusts were recorded at more than 50km/h.

The strongest wind gust was 68.1 km/h on Thursday, October 23.

The Omarama Gazette weather station recorded 175.5mm of rain for the month, the highest since the floods of July 2022 when 204 mm was recorded.

October 23 was also when the Ahuriri River reached 356.24 cubic metres a second at the SH8 Bridge making the leap from around 60 cumecs within hours.

And for those on 2degrees the internet went out that Thursday.

In what seemed a curious turn of events Emergency Management and Recovery Minister Mark Mitchell declared a state of emergency for the whole of the Canterbury region which included Omarama and other upper Waitaki communities at 6pm on Wednesday, October 22, a day ahead of the forecast conditions.

Canterbury Civil Defence and Emergency Management Group Controller James Thompson said after discussion with emergency services and the council chief executives the decision was made to declare and because of the election and, with no mayors sworn, in Mr Mitchell was asked to make the call because of the forecast conditions.

Emergency Management Waitaki was stood up for the duration standing down around 3.30pm on the Thursday, coincidentally just prior to the Ahuriri River reaching its peak flow.

Five days later thick snow covered the landscape, breaking branches and felling trees.

Inevitably there were road closures leaving motorists stranded and on October 28 roads into Omarama were closed in all directions.

The rain caused washouts on Lake Ohau Rd, Qualiburn, Henburn, Shortcut and Birchwood roads.

The snow event did not trigger an emergency warning.



Glider Café off to flying start

After a 'soft launch' last week, the Glider Café is off to a flying start.

The café lease at the airfield recently changed hands and has reopened to enthusiastic acclaim. Barista Iona Fergus has been kept busy serving a steady stream of customers headed to the counter ready to savour the offerings of the day.

Chef Julie Grant has produced a mouthwatering seasonal menu, and customers can order the day's specials from the blackboard or chose from the cabinet.

The carte du jour includes all-time favourites like seafood chowder, pumpkin soup, Thai chicken curry, lamb's fry with bacon, and homemade venison pies.

The cabinet houses fresh sandwiches -not to forget cheese rolls - along with Julie's famous home-baking; goodies, slices and cakes, and there are plenty of gluten friendly options.

There is a choice of indoor or outdoor dining.

The Café is set on an extensive lawn among trees and faces onto the airfield. Pilots often taxi in to relax and 'refuel'.

The views to the Omarama mountains are magnificent and on gliding days it is the perfect place to watch launches, or the elegant sailplanes quietly return at sunset after a days' soaring.

Indoors, artwork by local artists Lesley Jackson and Kathy Kerr features on the Café walls and in pride of place is a landscape by the late Kevyn Webb.

Manager Jennie Hales said the café was open now for Christmas bookings.

They also hope to open shortly on Fridays and Saturdays for evening dining as bookings dictate.

Jennie said the team would like to thank Airmax Refrigeration and Airconditioning Ltd, A2O Electrical, and "everyone associated with gliding" especially Malcolm, Terry, Hadleigh, Clive and Magda for their support.

Facebook: @theglidercafe

Open Tuesdays to Sundays

For bookings phone: 027 337 8388



Made with love to mark 50 years

In the high country we bake and cook to mark each new birth, or the end of a life, and every excuse in between – for a bit of a do, to take a plate or just so we can sneak “a little ‘smackerel’ of something”.

We fill the tins.

We take time for tea and a biscuit with a snippet of gossip, we have something on hand for morning smoko, lunch boxes and an after-school treat to fill those boisterous hollow legs which race through the door to a toasty warm kitchen bursting with fragrances of vanilla, ginger, cinnamon and chocolate...or cheese and bacon goodness.

It is with this heritage in mind Omarama Playgroup has put together a cook book - ‘*A Taste of Country Childhood*’ – filled with recipes “from hearty farm casseroles to delectable desserts” to mark its golden anniversary.

As it says in the forward, for 50 years the Playgroup has been a “*cornerstone of our community, a place where families connect, children blossom, and delicious memories are made*”.

“Within these pages, you’ll find cherished recipes passed down through generations, alongside exciting new creations ... Each dish tells a story, reflecting the rural heartland we call home. These recipes capture the essence of our community spirit.”

This book, produced with love, by playgroup volunteers is 156 quality pages of recipes tips and photographs of childhood and home, set in our own landscapes, lakes and mountains. “*Little hands, big adventures wide open skies.*”

There are the old favourites like Anzac biscuits, sugar buns and cinnamon oysters, and savoury fare from picnic pie to pizza and generous puds.

There are recipes for brownie and focaccia reflecting the confluence as newer generations join and move through these early years.

Scattered through are useful tips like repurposing botched baking, starting a veggie garden, how to bone out a front shoulder and setting the table... and table etiquette.

Remember licking the bowl before washing-up. Remember when your hand was slapped back because ‘that’ was for the visitors. Two pieces only for you – one plain, one iced.

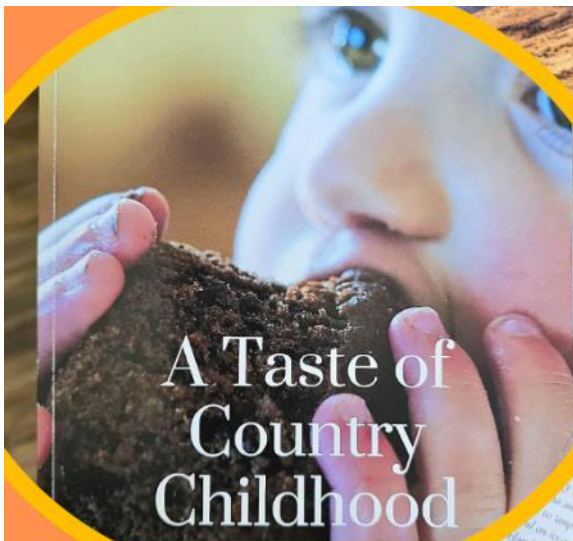
The book moves through a roll call of Omarama families and stations who have offered legendary high country hospitality through the years.

There is the recipe for the Patterson family’s (Longslip Station) chocolate eclairs which have arguably been a community favourite for decades, there is Bog Roy Station’s carrot cake and those cinnamon oysters. No-one ever made them quite like Nana.

There are the well-known comforting ‘cures’ for “mustering, feeding out, break-fencing in the cold.”

There are venison and duck recipes for the hunter-gatherers and smokos for the wool shed

This book is so much more than a catalogue of recipes but a treasury which has captured our heritage and spirit of community. It closes with this tribute; “*The saying “it takes a village to raise a child” rings especially true in places like Omarama and the surrounding districts. The kindness, support, and resilience of these communities are nothing short of extraordinary.*”



A Taste of Country Childhood

PRE-ORDER
Before 7th Nov

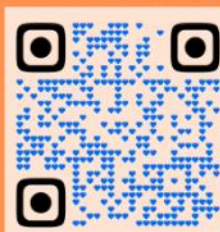
**BE PART OF THE FIRST PRINT RUN OF
150 BOOKS AND RECEIVE YOURS IN
TIME FOR CHRISTMAS**

OMARAMA PLAYGROUP COOKBOOK

PRICE \$50.00

SCAN TO ORDER

- 150 pages of easy to follow delicious recipes.
- Amazing local colour photographs
- Tips and tricks
- All profit goes to our community Omarama Playgroup.



omaramaplaygroup@gmail.com

Made with love to mark 50 years - continued

Below is an excerpt from 'A Taste of Country Childhood.' about the history of Playgroup.

Omarama Playgroup began fifty years ago at a small house located down Broken Hut Road.

A small group of mothers and children were meeting up and swapping books and toys weekly.

As the attendance grew, so did the need for a larger playroom, initiating the move of the group into the community hall on Chain Hills Highway.

As the group had no funds, the hall committee was approached, asking for use of the building at minimal charge.

This went down like a "lead balloon" at their AGM, however, the outcome saw a mother joining the hall committee and eventually a discounted rate was achieved by way of a cleaning service.

Initially everyone would take a book and toy along to playgroup but as the group gained more children, fundraising commenced.

Playgroup weekly meetings became a highlight for both mothers and children as they welcomed the contact with others as much as the kids did. For some it was the only time they left the farm!

One mother at Tara Hills was a school-teacher and a great asset to this small group.

The Omarama Rabbit Board had many families in those days and these kids got to play with farm kids before going to school.

New families were arriving as construction on the canals and dams at Twizel started and contractors were taking up any houses available.

Playgroup was making starting school easier for them all.

Fundraising began with the usual raffles, baking, etc. Catering in the hall for the annual stock sales was a must. Stock agents, farmers and buyers all called in for their lunch and smokos.

One bright fundraising idea was to buy "one-year-old" laying hens from a Waitaki poultry farm to on sell as "chickens" for the table.

After gathering numerous orders for them a trailer load was collected.

A group of willing mums gathered at the Longslip cookshop for the day armed with kids, food, refreshments, etc. The copper was boiled and a chain gang formed – financial goals achieved! It was a shame that the final product was extremely chewy!!

Eventually subsidies for pre-schooling became available which allowed equipment to be bought.

From those early beginnings it is wonderful to now see the purpose-built playgroup room added to the Omarama Hall, and the children and mums making full use of the opportunities now available to educate their children.

Scroll down to the Omarama Playgroup community report to pre-order this book. All profits raised from these books will go directly to the Omarama Playgroup.

Ōmārama dusts-off its glad rags for Cup

There was stunning fashion in the field and stunning fashion at the pub as Omarama marked the 165th running of the Melbourne Cup in style.

Punters gathered from around the area for the sweepstake draws and to watch the race which stop two nations led to a riveting finish by jockey Jamie Melham who created history as the first female jockey to complete the Caulfield-Melbourne Cups double by riding Half Yours to victory.

Boots and Jandals Omarama Fashion in the Pub competition results:

Best dressed lady; was Linda Cumming

Best dressed man; Neville Kitchen

Best dressed couple; Jan and Lex Perriam

Photos with thanks to Lex Perriam



Demonstration plot off to great start

A demonstration plot of native plants beside the Omarama Stream has had a great start with the help of the spring rains.

Earlier this year, kaimahi (the employees) of Temuka-based Arowhenua Native Nursery and Restoration planted the Golf Club Rd verge by the Omarama Stream with a selection of locally-sourced native species as a demonstration plot showcasing their work.

The wholesale native nursery and restoration business is a Māori-led enterprise dedicated to recloaking the whenua (land) with locally-sourced native species.

After receiving Jobs for Nature funding to set up the business, in just four years it has grown into a leading provider of eco-sourced native plants and restoration services.

General manager Felicity McMillan (Kāi Tahu) said Environment Canterbury's Upper Waitaki Water Zone Committee approached the nursery to plant a demonstration plot by the Omarama Stream.

It was commonly held belief native plants did not thrive in the area, she said.

"We wanted to show what natives do survive."

The nursery collects seed for all its plants from within the Arowhenua rohe (region), from the Waitaki Awa (river) to the Rakaia Awa, stretching west to Kā Tiritiri o te Moana (The Southern Alps)

The Omarama plot and plantings in Twizel would be the furthest inland the business has ventured, Ms McMillan said. The plants were low-growing, a mix of grasses, shrubs and small trees and chosen for their ability to withstand mountainous, dryland conditions. Generally, this meant they were not usually described as "pretty plants", she said. "It was all about the 'right plant in the right place'."

The plot includes Tauhinu or Cottonwood, Houhere or Lacebark with small white flowers, Kowhai, matagouri, mountain flax, Mingmingi or needle leaved mountain coprosma, snow and red tussock and Taramea or golden Spaniard.

As part of the supply agreement the kaimahi will make annual site visits in autumn and spring to check on the plants and carry out maintenance.

Ms McMillan said the nursery was "very grateful for the funding and the opportunity". www.arowhenuanativenursery.co.nz



Possum control to ramp up in TB fight

Last month, disease eradication agency Ospri introduced a new Otago movement control area to boost its possum-control operation, as it attempts to eradicate bovine tuberculosis.

There are 16 infected herds across New Zealand including five herds in Otago which no longer includes an Omarama herd.

The new MCA includes Tarras, Lindis Valley, the upper Manuhereikia and the top end of Ida Valley. About 110 farms and lifestyle blocks with deer or cattle are included.

Being in an MCA means all cattle and deer over three months old must be TB tested within 60 days of being moved off a property, and only animals going straight to slaughter do not need testing.

Manuhereikia, the Lindis, and Omarama are considered 'hot spots' for the disease which is present in the possum population – the possum is the main carrier of the disease in New Zealand.

Earlier this year calves from the Lindis Pass area were sold at an Omarama calf sale, and the vendor later advised the calves had reactors to TB.

There was a known problem in the Lindis area but Ospri were too slow communicating with farmers and failed to set up movement control early enough to cover the area, landowners claimed.

About 70 landowners and other affected parties met with Ospri representatives at the Ōmārama Hall in July to discuss the matter and ways to prevent the spread.

A second meeting was held last month which 27 attended.

The primary reason for the second meeting was to discuss a review of the national control strategy.

But staff also fielded questions about the infected herd.

Once again the landowners expressed frustration with what they saw as a lack of communication on Ospri's part.

Although there was no legal obligation to let people know what had happened it was felt there was a moral obligation to do so especially to neighbouring properties, landowners said.

Not to do so only created panic, one farmer said.

Farmers wanted an assurance this would be remedied.

Ospri has also ramped up its TB testing for animals which have grazed in risk areas and which may have been in contact with infected herds.

It has also increased its wild animal control and survey programme for the 2025-26 year, including additional possum control.

Contractors have already begun the possum control programme, specifically around Clear Stream, Manuka Creek and the St Cuthbert Range, setting out Feratox in bait stations or bait bags, and using other ground control, and dogs and gun.

The work is scheduled to finish by June 30, 2026, when control efforts will be re-tendered.

Welcome to new adventures under our big skies

From adventures on ocean waves to new adventures under Ōmārama's big skies the new owner-operators of Four Square Ōmārama are welcoming the fresh challenge. Craig and Karen Bishop-Everett officially take over from Dave and Kim Mackenzie, who have moved to Four Square Fairlie, in the first week of November. But their high country initiation has begun and they are already familiar faces at the checkout.

The couple have moved to Ōmārama from On-the-Spot Richmond.

However, before returning to set up the Richmond store last year, "from an empty building", the couple embarked on what was to be a four-year sailing adventure. In 2019 they bought a 45ft (13.8m) Catalina Morgan sloop in Fiji then two years later bought another boat in the US to complete what was to be a four-year sojourn. All up they spent the four years and Covid lockdowns exploring the Pacific including sailing down through Mexico, the Sea of Cortés, to El Salvador, then across the Pacific Ocean to French Polynesia, American Samoa, Fiji, New Caledonia, Australia, Indonesia, and finally Malaysia, where they came to a decision, sold the boat and returned to life on land.

"We were sitting on a beach in Malaysia and started thinking about what we wanted to do, what we wanted to be involved in. We knew that we wanted to be in New Zealand and to be our own bosses again. We looked at all sorts of businesses across the country. But we knew that, ultimately, grocery was what we wanted to get back into. To be honest, we always knew we would eventually come home to serve our community as local grocers again," Craig said.

Prior to heading out they had sold their On the Spot Collingwood business to embark on their sailing adventures.

The couple had not been to Ōmārama until they came to view the shop, Craig said.

"We drove down to look at the store and community without any expectations. What we found blew us away really. The store has recently undergone a refit and looks fantastic and our first impression of the community was that it was exactly what we were looking for.

"We have the opinion that a store like this is not really owned by the operators, it's an asset that belongs to, and exists to serve the needs of, the community. We see our role as caretakers and guardians of that asset."

Craig and Karen are looking forward to getting to know the locals and encourage them to call in and say 'Hi'.



A haunting they did go

If you'd happened across the Omarama Fire Station on All Hallow's Eve you may have been forgiven for thinking you'd travelled through a portal to a Chamber of Horrors.

On Halloween a contingent of ghoulies, ghosties and long-legged beasts cast a cool chill as they wandered from the Omarama Hall through Ōmārama's streets trick or treating, before making it to their spirit world - the 'Dire Station' - for a hauntingly great time and even more treats.

But by midnight the spell was undone, and it became our beloved fire station once again.

The organisers would like to pass on a huge thanks to everyone for all their efforts this Halloween. It was an awesomely spooky afternoon!

Thanks to Omarama Volunteer Fire Brigade community Liaison officer Nicole Leopold for the photos below.



Omarama School Pet Day



Omarama School invites the community to come along and join us
for some pet day fun !

Agility course, artwork display, face painting, games and water fun

When: November 7, from 11.30am onwards

Where : Omarama Community Hall and back paddock

There will be a BBQ running and some delicious baking available

\$3 Sausage and \$2 baking

A big thank you to some generous local businesses for kindly donating prizes for the children and to Big Blue Cross Veterinary centre for providing a vet to come along for a chat and some judging. Also to our local volunteer fire Brigade for coming along to Join in the fun!



The Noticeboard

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

The South Island Regional Gliding Competition begins at the Omarama Airfield on Saturday, November 15 and continues until Saturday, November 22.

The Otematata Bowling Club has friendly bowls on a Tuesday afternoon at 1.30pm. The cost is \$5.00 for the afternoon or \$35.00 for a years social membership. Inquires to Pam McKay 027 325 9148.

The Leopold family will hold a celebration day and memorial of Doreen's life from 2pm to 5pm, Saturday, November 8, at the family home in Ōmārama.

Wishing a fond farewell to Dave and Kim MacKenzie who are moving to Four Square Fairlie, after a busy year at Four Square Omarama. Here is a message from Dave and Kim.

"So here we are, Omarama, the end (to the day!) of our 365 days owning Four Square Omarama...The support we received from our team, our family, and our customers has been humbling. You've lifted us through long days and cold mornings, and reminded us why community is at the heart of what we do. It's definitely bittersweet saying goodbye so soon. To those locals who have supported us day in and day out, thank you, you are the reason small towns thrive. Our time here has been a pleasure. We've laughed, learnt, and built memories we'll carry with us. As we hand the keys to Craig and Karen, we do so with complete confidence that they will continue the proud Four Square legacy that Omarama deserves. Thank you Omarama, for your support, your friendship and the community connection. We'll miss you, but are looking forward to going back to being bach owners in a place that we truly love."

And wishing Noah Tiplady all the very best as he heads out to new adventures.

Happy 70th Birthday to Terry Jones.

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

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 12.30pm tee-off 1pm. Club captain: Greg Stuart 027 438 9018, secretary: Arron Chambers 027 203 2340.
www.omaramagolfclub.co.nz

The Ahuriri Community Catchment Group Annual Meeting is 1pm Friday, November 21, 2025 at The Glider Café Contact project lead Bridget Pringle bridget@irricon.co.nz 021 0722 113

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 phone or email president Olivia Black 027 833 0869, vice-president Jess Townsend and secretary Bridie Brosnahan 027 341 3010 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 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.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/

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 December Issue of the Omarama Gazette
is Wednesday, December 3, 2025.**

Please submit copy
by Thursday, November 27, 2025

The Community Reports

Ōmārama Police



Hi Everyone,

it's been a few months since my last lot of news, the main reason being that it's got to the point where I don't want to repeat myself, so I'll wait until I have something to actually report. Otherwise It's the same old....."attended a car crash in the Lindis Pass.... caught some speeding tourists" etc.

I did note the article in stuff about senior constables Dan Bartlett and Helen Jones from Oamaru road policing catching so many speeding tourists here, nothing new there but good to bring attention to the issue once again.

Speaking of tourists, I recently drove past one such gent in a campervan parked on the side of the Omarama-Lindis Pass Rd where they parked up to look at the Clay Cliffs from a distance. I noted as I drove past that he had a yawn and stretch before walking away from his campervan in an effort to appear all innocent like.

His actions raised my suspicions, so I watched him in my rear view mirror and saw that once he thought he was out of my view, he knelt down beside his van. I quickly spun around and went back to him to catch him red-handed as he was actually dumping his wastewater out on the side of the road.

Long story short, I gave him his pedigree and even offered to go to Auckland and do the same at his place. Once I'd calmed down I informed him that he could expect a hefty fine in the mail. I contacted the Waitaki District Council who were great in ensuring that he was issued a \$400 fine for breaching the Freedom Camping Bylaw.

I've recently been in contact with the NZ Transport Agency who have assured me that they are working on painting yellow lines on the Omarama-Lindis Pass Rd near Shortcut Rd, where there is a sweeping corner and slight brow of a hill which hides part of the road from view. They've assured me that they are looking into it and have actually identified two sections in which yellow lines may be required.

Labour weekend in Otematata was good this year. The council had imposed the temporary liquor bans for Otematata township and Loch laird Rd and camp site. The main concern for me were a couple of holiday homes where it appears the parents have allowed their kids (and their mates) to use the property without any adequate supervision. It wasn't a big issue but I did receive a few noise complaints. On that Police are not noise control, nor are we dog control. If you need either please phone the council in the first instance. I'm happy to help but you need to phone them first.

That's it from me, stay safe. Bean.

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 Ōmārama Volunteer Fire Brigade Rural Recruit Firefighter Arron Chambers

We may have been a little quick to announce the arrival of Spring last month — what a month October turned out to be! The Brigade has seen the usual seasonal increase in both vehicle and medical callouts, with more traffic on our roads and around the village as summer visitors begin to return.

The recent wind and snowstorms certainly kept us on our toes. It was great to see the community taking early warnings seriously — securing property, checking on neighbours, and preparing as best as possible. That collective effort meant we came through with minimal damage and injuries. Well done, everyone!

October also marked our annual Honours Night — a highlight for the Brigade each year. It's a special occasion to recognise our members for their commitment and service to the community. We also extend our thanks to the employers who continue to support our volunteers. Without their flexibility and understanding, it would be much harder for us to respond as effectively as we do.

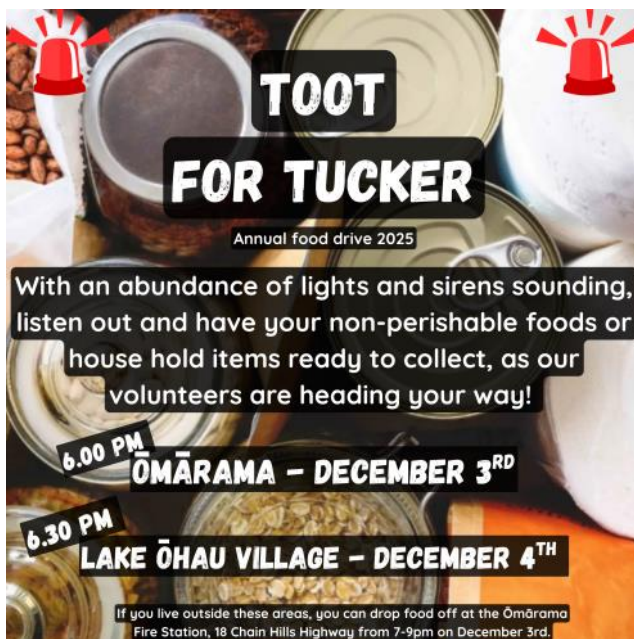
Birds have been busy building their nests over the past few months, so as holiday homes are opened up and fires are lit to keep warm, please take a moment to check that chimneys are clear and smoke alarms are clean and working.

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)



**TOOT
FOR TUCKER**

Annual food drive 2025

With an abundance of lights and sirens sounding,
listen out and have your non-perishable foods or
house hold items ready to collect, as our
volunteers are heading your way!

**6.00 PM
ŌMĀRAMA – DECEMBER 3RD**

**6.30 PM
LAKE ŌHAU VILLAGE – DECEMBER 4TH**

If you live outside these areas, you can drop food off at the Ōmārama
Fire Station, 18 Chain Hills Highway from 7-9pm on December 3rd.

Fire brigade honours Night

By chief fire officer Jack Zorab

In October, the Ōmārama Volunteer Fire Brigade hosted our annual honours night event, recognising numerous achievements throughout the past year within the brigade.

Our brigade members have continued to show an amazing amount of effort, hard work and determination, regularly extending their knowledge base to further help our community.

On the night, a huge thank you was extended to all family and employers of our brigade members for their unconditional support. Certificates of appreciation were presented for the new employers of volunteers that have come on board over the past 12 months.

A number of our volunteers received service honours, given to recognise their length of service with Fire and Emergency NZ. A special call out to Deputy Brigade Leader Tania Innes who received a medal for five years of service.

Our brigade trophies were also presented on the night, these are awarded within the brigade based on the performance and achievements of individuals through the year. Winners of each trophy are below and if you keep an eye on our Facebook page over the next couple of weeks, you'll learn more about why each person was a worthy recipient.

Service honours awarded:

Deputy Brigade Leader Tania Innes - Five-year medal; Two-year silver bars: OS-FF Charlotte Derosa - 7 years, BS Adrienne Harper - 7 years, OS-FF Geva Innes - 11 years, SFF Zane Lord - 13 years; Two-year gold bar SO Maurice Cowie - 52 years

Brigade trophy winners:

Rex Allen trophy for Most Improved Firefighter: Zane Lord

Howard Williams trophy for Firefighter of the Year: Arron Chambers

John Rogers trophy for First Responder of the Year: Lynley Pryde

Graham McLean trophy for Ops Support of the Year: Ken Morton

Greg and Adrienne Harper Clay Cliffs Trophy for Outstanding Service: Ken Rogers

Conrod trophy: Vicky Chambers

Muck up Award: Ken Morton

Fred Hondelink trophy for Most Musters: Jack Zorab and Tania Innes



Christmas Housie



Monday, December 15



at the

!!* Ōmārama Community Centre*!!

A shared lunch at 12 noon, Housie at 1pm,

All the usual fun

Plus just a few little surprises

A warm welcome to all



Age Concern Ōmārama

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 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

Knit Night Ōmārama

Ōmārama Knit Night
takes place at the
Community Centre
on Tuesday evenings at 5.15pm.

Ōmārama Golf Club

Saturday Club Day: cards in 12.30pm and tee-off at 1pm.

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 MenzShed

Omarama MenzShed would like to thank Dave and Kim MacKenzie for their generous donation of a trailer with a cage. The guys wish them both well as they head to their new venture at Four Square Fairlie.

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

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



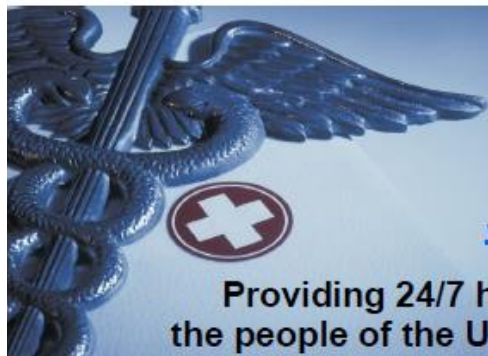
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Twizel: Monday to Friday 8.30am to 5pm, Saturday 9am to 12pm

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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

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Ōmārama School

From the Ōmārama School Newsletter

By Alison Holden, Ōmārama School Principal

In the school holidays I was fortunate enough to travel to Finland and learn about the Finnish education system. I also visited multiple schools (big and small), (city and rural) and that was very inspirational.

Finnish children are renowned for their wonderful education and society is recognised as one of the happiest and content cultures in the world. My visit to the schools gave me much to think about and may generate some small changes to our learning journey next year.

This term is another busy term with Athletics, Pet day, Production, Assessments and Report writing, William Pike challenge completion and of course our end of year whole school camp at Camp Columba in Gore.

I am sure this term will fly by so fast and before we know it we will be celebrating the end of another school year.

Last Wednesday we held our very own Athletics Day

This was a successful and fun day for Omarama students, with some very pleasing results. We also managed to squeeze in three whanau group activities for fun (three-legged race, water race and tug of war).

As the weather was warm and sunny we finished off the day with a well-deserved ice-block. Thanks to Jacob Hannagan for his organisation for this athletics day. Thanks to all the parents that came along to enjoy our athletics event.

Omarama, Duntroon, Waitaki Valley and Twizel results now get collated and the top 2 contestants for each age group and event across our zone, go through to the North Otago athletics event on Monday, November 3, in Oamaru.

Ahuriri Class - Finland mini study

Ahuriri Class has been learning about education in Finland, after Mrs Holden's trip to Finland in the school holidays. They were interested to see where Finland was located in Northern Europe and the travel path to get there.

Ahuriri students learnt about a typical school day in Finland, discovered that Finnish people really enjoy taking a sauna and to learn that Finland is recognised as a happy and safe place in the world.

The year 1-2 group then made a poster to share the facts they learnt about Finland. The year 3-4 group identified a country of interest to them (generally with some family connection) and researched facts, flags, maps and figures in a poster form also. They look amazing and are currently displayed in the Ahuriri classroom. Our older junior students are very good researchers and love to locate information.

Clay Cliffs sharing - Solar System

It's been a busy and exciting start to Term 4. Students have been exploring our Solar System in Science, beginning with Mercury and Venus. To help understand Mercury's cratered surface, they carried out a fun hands-on experiment using flour as the mantle and cocoa powder as the crust, dropping different-sized rocks to see how craters form and how the layers react.

Our student inquiry projects are also in full swing for the final term, with a fantastic variety of ideas taking shape. We have young scientists mixing and experimenting (a big thank-you to the Hales family for donating some great little science boxes!), three

different languages being explored, chisels and drills being used to make a homemade golf club, dough and dye turning into colourful sculptures, Christmas planning already underway, and many more creative projects on the go. It's shaping up to be a wonderful final term of learning, making, and discovery!

Pet Day on Friday

This is going to be a fun family day at the community centre grounds, starting at 11am. Jo Golder and others have worked hard to create this event and we are fortunate to have the vet and Fire Brigade members attend to support, educate and judge events on the day. We have long awaited a Pet day at Omarama School and finally here it is. Please come along, invite your friends and help us enjoy a family fun day with the animals



Ōmārama School contact details:
Phone: 03 438 9815

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

Ōmārama Playgroup

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



The Omarama Playgroup 50th anniversary recipe book is now available for preorders via the online form by Friday, November 7 to make the first print run in time for Christmas.

\$50 includes 150 pages of Colour photographs of wonderful food and local places. The flyer is on page 6

The Playgroup Christmas Party is Wednesday December 3 from 10am to 11am with Santa visiting at 10:30am. Location: TBC. Come along and join in (bring your child their own gift for Santa to hand out - limit \$10 value).

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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Brodie Craig CA

Ōmārama Gliding Club

- from the *Jonker Sailplanes* facebook page.

Congratulations to Omarama Glider pilot and club instructor Tuulianna Laukkanen who was a Jonker Sailplanes challenge winner at the South African Nationals 2025 in Potchefstroom last month.

Earlier this year, Tuulianna was announced as the Jonker Challenge winner for juniors on WeGlide, sponsored by JS.

Her prize — an invitation to compete at the South African Nationals — gave her the chance to fly in what is said to be one of the most exciting soaring environments in the world. Tuulianna wrote this account for Jonker Sailplanes...

To her surprise she took to the cockpit on her very first day in South Africa.

Her first flights were familiarisation flights in a Janus.

Over the following days, Tuulianna took part in the Nationals with an LS3, gaining valuable experience in South Africa's unique conditions.

The contest brought its share of challenges — from strong winds and unexpected landouts to discovering that the audio vario was set up incorrectly!

But each day offered new lessons, and her determination never faded.

While early contest days were affected by weather, the later stages brought excellent soaring conditions. Tuulianna enjoyed powerful thermals, impressive cloud streets, and speeds of over 100 km/h — flying just a few kmh slower than the day winner on one of the best racing days. One of the most memorable moments came on the final day, when she had the chance to fly the very first JS1 ever built in 18-metre configuration.

"It's a beautiful glider — I've always thought JS has the prettiest wings of any manufacturer," she said.

"The handling was amazing. I could just set it up in a thermal and take my hands away — perfect for taking pictures!"

The adventure concluded with an exclusive tour of the JS factory, where Tuulianna got to see how Jonker Sailplanes are designed and built.

"It was so fascinating to see the process behind these incredible aircraft," she said.

Last month members of the Otago Aero Club visited Omarama for a day of gliding.

The visit was arranged by Malcolm Wright with the help of winch driver Felix Harper launch point controller, Karen Morgan, a ground crew of Phil Plane and Terry Jones.

Malcolm and Tuulianna were the instructors and Charlie Irvin who manned the office. Reports were the flying was superb and about 10 Otago power pilots were "all smiling at the end of the day." [Glide Time NZ](#)



WE ARE HIRING

CARETAKER/ HANDYMAN

We're looking for a practical, hands-on person to help with the general maintenance and smooth running of Lake Ōhau Lodge and grounds. The role is varied — no two days are ever the same!

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- Recycling
- Fitting chains (winter months)
- Assisting guests with baggage portage

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Omarama



Ōmārama Residents' Association

The Omarama Residents' Association annual meeting was held last week. An election of officers was held and the new constitution and bylaw regarding St Thomas's Church funds was adopted.

The minutes of the annual meeting and the October meeting are available from the secretary and will be published in the Gazette next month.

The November meeting of the Ōmārama Residents' Association is 7pm, Thursday, November 20, 2025 at the Ōmārama Community Centre.

Residents' Association of Ōmārama committee 2025-26

Stephen Grundy, chairperson

Michelle Kitchen, vice-chairperson and hall curator

Vicky Chambers, secretary

Richard Kitto, treasurer

Hank Verheul, building/projects convenor

Malcolm Cameron, MenzShed representative

Natalie Beiboer

Maurice Cowie

Jennie Hales

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 Community Garden

Last week, community gardeners got busy at the garden plots for a potter and a natter and yes, they weeded, popped in new plants, weed whacked and mended some of the wind damage to the covers.

On the agenda for this year is to set up a 'crop and swap share shed' to store and display crops and produce to share. Watch this space !!

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

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.

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'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.
- **Printing/scanning services**
- **Arowhenua Whanau services** – Free health clinic on the first Wednesday of each month.
- **Access to a computer**, printing, free WIFI, community notice boards

Waitaki District Council October news

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

Yesterday, in its first meeting of the new term the council decided on appointments to positions and committees, and the adoption of the code of conduct and standing orders.

As well, it considered the October 21 letter from Local Government Minister Simon Watts about the appointment of former Minister Amy Adams as Crown Facilitator for water.

The council had some concerns primarily that the notification was given before it had a chance to meet and consider the letter. In its response it will indicate that it wishes to be a "guiding part of the solution".

The council wanted to provide the Department of Internal affairs with the information it needed quickly to reduce the costs of the Crown Facilitator on ratepayers, mayor Melanie Tavendale said in a statement.

The appointment of a facilitator was one of the options outlined by Local Government Secretary Paul James in his letter to the council on October 6 which rejected the council's original Water Services Delivery Plan.

The council was also told the Department of Internal Affairs assessment was that the Water Service Delivery Plan did not comply with the legislation and asked it to "reassess, amend and resubmit" the plan along with an asset review of the current condition, lifespan and value of the entire water services network and issues associated with that review – and to make amendments to the plan based on this.

Earlier this year the council voted against its initially preferred option of joining with Central Otago, Gore and Clutha district councils in the Southern Water Done Well group, and decided to go in-house to provide a water plan.

Elections

The final count in the October 11, 2025, Local Government Election confirms;

- ☐ The election of Melanie Tavendale as Waitaki District Mayor.
- ☐ The election of Brent Cowles as Ahuriri Ward Councillor.
- ☐ The election of Steve Dalley, Mike King, Alan Pont, Calum Reid and Karen Turner as the Ahuriri Community Board.

Elected members were sworn in at an inauguration ceremony at the Oamaru Opera House. Mrs Tavendale announced that Councillor Rebecca Ryan, who received the highest vote total for the Oamaru Ward, will be Deputy Mayor.

Chief executive's contract extended by 2 years

The newly elected council has confirmed a two-year extension to the current employment contract of chief executive Alex Parmley.

The agreement was reached before the elections, but not publicly announced until after voting concluded.

He has been set the tasks of completing work-in-process and delivering Government directed reforms.

Justices of the Peace

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- * Certify copies.
- * Take declarations, affidavits and affirmations.

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- * 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

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Garden Diary - 'from where I stand'

November 1 and the wind stopped. Stillness.

The sun shone with warmth in its glow, finally.

The heaviest snowfall of the year had all but cleared leaving behind welcome moisture and no frost. You could almost hear garden sigh with relief as it gathered its dishevelled and tousled self to assess the damage and begin again. The budding peaches have made it through that test. There is the sound of chainsaws across the neighbourhood and the scent of freshly mown grass on the air.

Almost overnight there has been another change as the soft and pretty, butter wouldn't melt, pink, chartreuse and lemon colours fade from the garden and the vibrant and elegant jewel colours set into the emerald green of late spring take the stage. There is occasionally the hazy hint of a lazy summer's day... the gliders are whirling up and up above Black Peak.

Thoughts tumble over themselves, the 'to do' list is endless, overwhelming – happens this time every year. There is no time to “Le repose sous le lilas” as their heady scent drifts in the warm sunshine.

There are new plants to be unboxed and dug into their new home, river stones to be barrowed into place, weeds and yet more weeds.

So much to do it's easy to be distracted from the awesome transformation at my feet.

As I hid from the spring storms the unsung heroes of the plant world - Gibberellins - have been hard at work.

These plant hormones work an amazing feat each year, waking up the plant and coaxing them into growth.

In just a few short months the annuals and perennials will have produced a growth spurt which would be the envy of most teenagers, sending shoots from ground level skywards anything up to metres high and into flower.

We hardly notice them hard at work.

It is the time to sow. Some have button tins, I have a seed basket - a treasury of little packages of hope. I sort and shuffle and stack but they contribute nothing while still gathering dust in the packet.

Some broad beans past their use-by by years did make it into the veggie garden in August and against the odds have each germinated. This year it has mostly been Mother Nature taking care of business.

The new house sits in the garden. No landscaping has been done yet but despite that pushing through the rubble are irises, hellebores, peonies and poppies.

I have no idea what colours, but their persistence is astonishing.

There's even broccoli.

"A thousand-mile journey begins where one stands" - from the Tao Te Ching ascribed to Laozi

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





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

0800 RURAL HELP (0800 787 254)

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

October 2025

Highest temperature: October 11, 21.6C

Lowest temperature: October 2, -3C

Most rainfall: October 20: 38.6 mm

Total rainfall for October: 175.5 mm

The Ōmārama Gazette

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

To subscribe email:

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