

MAYOR'S COLUMN



Mayor Craig Rowley

Spring has arrived and with that follows the official opening of the 2020/21 Waitaki Lakes Camping season. I'd like to extend a warm welcome to all campers this season, particularly to those new to our district. Enjoy the spectacular scenery on our doorstep, take a moment to understand the rules and expectations and most importantly, stay safe.

Those more familiar with the lake areas and the Council's camping grounds will see some significant changes to the landscape this year, specifically at Fisherman's Bend. In a working partnership with Meridian, Council are taking deliberate efforts to offset our carbon footprint,

supporting what is shaping up to be a very important cause. In the short term, the lack of trees may not look overly pleasing to the eye, but in the long run, the project will help enhance the area with a mix of totara and sterile radiata attenuata already replanted in the affected space late last month.

It's working progress, but going forward, the wide reaching benefits will be vast.

BACK TO BASICS - LET'S GO CAMPING!

With international borders closed due to COVID-19, there's no better time to go back to basics, get out and explore your own backyard.

Camping is a time-honoured tradition for many Kiwi families and the Waimate District has camping grounds in some of the most spectacular places in the country. Whether it's the popular Waitangi, Te Akatarawa, Fisherman's Bend Reserve or Briar's Gully, there's plenty of space for everyone and this year is shaping up to be a bumper summer.

Along the shorelines of Lakes Aviemore and Waitaki, activities range from swimming, boating, water skiing, canoeing, picnics, tramping and fishing - with the Lakes providing an ideal place to get away from the everyday hustle and bustle, relax and enjoy.

But don't just take our word for it, grab the caravan, tent, campervan or house bus and experience it first hand this season. All campgrounds have toilets, porta-pottie stations and drinking water, and are well equipped with rubbish and recycling stations.

Season tickets are now available from all selected sites (Waimate District Council, Waimate Event Centre, Whitehorse Motors and Kurow Autos). Casual concession tickets are also available at the registration booths on site at the respective campground.

In the lead up to the official season opening, an allocated set-up day has been scheduled for 19 September, with all camping getting underway from 25 September.

If you're new to the area, be sure to take a moment to familiarise yourself with the rules, guidelines and expectations, and study the map located on the reverse of the season brochure.

Above all, stay safe, respect others and most importantly, enjoy yourselves.

HOOK BEACH BRIDGE REPAIRS COMPLETE

Following several weeks of maintenance and scheduled bridge repairs, full access has now resumed at the end of Hook Swamp Road.

The repair work included replacing the superstructure of the bridge across the drain, with Council contractors able to use recovered materials from the former Waitaki Bridges at Kurow (circa \$18k).

Council's Chief Executive Stuart Duncan (pictured) took a drive out late last month to assess the final result, giving the bridge a big thumbs up and assessing the work as "a fantastic job".

"It's great to have the bridge back to working order and we know it will be well received."



WATTIE DEPARTS AFTER 45 YEARS

After more than four decades with the Waimate District Council, Parks and Reserves Manager Graeme Watts has clocked out for the final time.

With a career spanning almost 45 years, Graeme has worked for five superintendents, an equal number of Chief Executives, and alongside hundreds of colleagues.

Graeme, affectionately known to most as "Wattie", recalls the day it all began – a somewhat heads up from a family friend to speak with the then Parks Superintendent Reni Laplanche, and ask for a job.

Just two days later and Wattie had switched the classroom stationery for a wheelbarrow and spade, joining the team as an Assistant Gardener and soaking up everything there was to know about the horticulture industry.

"I went in to see Reni on the Friday and by Monday I was cutting the hawthorne fence at Victoria Park. From that point, I never really looked back and have been fortunate enough to work my way up the ladder and progress my career," he said.

"I love it, love the variety the role brings and I'm going to miss it a heck of a lot . . . it will definitely be mixed emotions."

Taking a trip down memory lane, there's been dozens of highlights – far too many to recount in one article, but it's fair to say, Graeme has left a sizeable mark on the district.

"It's difficult to pin point one or two special moments or high points, but overall I'm proud of what I've been able to achieve during my time with Council. I think after 45 years, it's time to take a step back," he laughed.

Though with four lively grandchildren in tow, it's hard to imagine he won't already be somewhat occupied as he takes time out to reflect on what can only be described as a remarkable career.



LET'S TALK ABOUT THE LTP

The Long Term Plan (LTP) outlines how the Council intends to provide services and improve the quality of life and economy in the district within the period of the next decade (2021-2031). The LTP represents the Council's planned and intended activities, details the overall vision and helps illustrate what projects the Council will undertake, when they are to be completed and how they are to be financed.

In short, it is a blueprint for the district's future.

The LTP has an impact on almost all aspects of the district, therefore affecting all members of our community. During the development stages of the LTP, community participation is an essential part of producing and implementing the best possible plans for the future of the district and next year, Council will both invite and encourage you to have your say during the LTP consultation process. Stay tuned.

GRANTS OPPORTUNITY NOW OPEN

Do you have an idea for a project that might support community involvement in the arts, engage young people in the arts or create cultural diversity in the arts?

You can apply for funding from the Creative NZ Communities Grant.

Applications are now open and must be received by 5pm Tuesday 15 September 2020.

Application forms and further information are available from the Waimate Event Centre (15 Paul Street) and at waimatedc.govt.nz