

MAYOR'S COLUMN



Mayor Craig Rowley

In recent weeks, Council has received dozens of emails from ratepayers expressing their concerns around the Government's Three Waters Reform Programme. While we acknowledge the public mood surrounding this topic and understand the overwhelming opposition to these proposals, we are unable to respond to emails that have been driven by an email database or subscription service such as Groundswell NZ.

However, plans are now underway to host another public meeting in the next month or so, with residents encouraged to head along and find out what this reform will mean for the Waimate District. At this stage, the date has yet to be confirmed, but we envisage holding the meeting at the Southern Canterbury

A & P Shears Pavilion on a weekday evening to cater for the majority of our community's busy schedules.

Elsewhere, it was pleasing to see the widespread media coverage for the White Horse opening late last month. After much collaboration, this is a space that has come alive and Council are delighted to have played a part in this upgrade. Full credit must go to Waimate2gether's project manager Jo Sutherland and her band of volunteers for their ongoing efforts and bringing the vision to fruition. Read on to see some further coverage of this memorable day.

Speaking of volunteers, next week (19 – 25 June) marks National Volunteer Week, so to end this column, I'd like to extend a wide-reaching gratitude and vote of thanks to each and every volunteer that helps to make their organisation, club and in turn, this district, a better place – thank you.

Until next time, take care.

WILLOWBRIDGE HALL

Willowbridge Hall committee members, from left Jennifer and Eugene Skerrett, Derek Botica and Lower Waihao Ward Councillor Sheila Paul were delighted to receive funding through the Council's Economic Development Fund, allowing them to spruce up both the exterior of the building and some indoor areas.



As the Willowbridge Hall approaches 100 years, the committee also plan to upgrade the window frames and doors, helping to roll back the years and give the building a fresh new look.

WATER MATTERS

METER ROLLOUT COMMENCES

In a bid to better understand how water throughout the Waimate District is being used or lost, water meters are now being rolled-out throughout all Waimate urban properties. While the installation of meters was initially scheduled for August 2022, plans have been expedited to ensure Council meets the full criteria and eligibility for the Government's three waters stimulus funding.

This criteria requires Council to have commenced the work prior to 30 June 2022.

Asset Group Manager Dan Mitchell says the addition of water meters will help Council better plan where resources should be placed and help manage growth.

"It's a really good tool for us and for people themselves to understand water usage," Mitchell said.

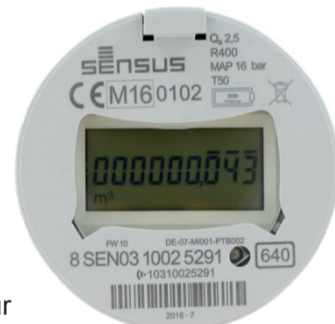
"Fundamentally, if we can identify and reduce water loss, we don't have to invest as much in pipework, we reduce our pumping hours and over time, there are significant cost savings to be had. Some people might hear the term 'water meters' and automatically think they will be charged more for water use, but I can assure them, the funding mechanisms already in place will not change... the status quo will be applied as per Council's fees and charges."

Throughout the project rollout, approximately 1400 water meters will be installed, with multiple contractors on board to complete the work. Residents can expect minimal disruption during the changeover.

"There will be a very limited window of disruption, if any. Essentially, contractors will knock at the door, explain what they are going to do and then within 20 minutes, the work is usually complete. It's really quite a simple measure, but one that will provide a range of benefits to us all."

Your water meter will be contained in a toby box with a blue lid, typically at the front of the property along your boundary line.

The water meters will continue to be rolled out throughout the year.



Water meters are being installed through the Waimate urban area.

MIRIAM'S COLUMN

HAVE YOU CONSIDERED STANDING FOR COUNCIL?



Cr Miriam Morton

If you'd asked me as I finished my high school years, what I would see myself doing in 30 years' time, there is no way "District Councillor" would have been anywhere on a list of possibles. Growing up in a small town in the far north of New Zealand, I learnt to swim at the town pool, visited the museum and parks, was a library user, learnt to drive on the local roads and of course, used the reticulated water, but I was not aware of anything that Council did, and could not even tell you the name of the mayor.

So how did it happen that – after further education, time in the workforce, interspersed with being a stay-at-home parent – I became an elected representative on this local Council? One of the life principles I picked up along the way to adulthood is: if you find yourself complaining about something, you should be prepared to do something about fixing it. In 2013, I realised that it was my turn to put my hand up and be willing to do something positive for the community.

I had little understanding of how Council worked and what Council actually does. But I was willing to learn, and the community had faith in me. The training and support offered has been helpful, and the opportunities to learn more about our wonderful district and its amazing people have been invaluable. The last nine years have been an eye-opener. I have a better understanding of the delicate balance of keeping the rates affordable and fair, and meeting the needs of our district both now and into the future. I have developed an appreciation for the hard work done by our Council staff to maintain our assets to the best standard on a shoe-string budget. I have learnt that minimising staff levels might look good on paper, but the hidden costs outweigh any benefit to ratepayers.

So here we are with another round of Local Government Elections – an opportunity for you to consider how you might be involved. Yes, you!

Are you a New Zealand citizen over the age of 18? We need you, or someone like you. We need people who are prepared to listen to others and speak on their behalf. People who understand the range of concerns that affect our residents. Talk to your friends, neighbours, workmates, family. Offer to nominate someone who you would like to have representing you. If you want someone to ask questions of, with no strings attached and confidentiality respected, I am happy to help out in that way. You can reach me on 027 778 0781, or find me through Facebook under Miriam Morton WDC.

*Miriam is finishing her third term with the Waimate District Council and will not be seeking re-election this year. Cr Morton has served as a Waimate Urban Ward councillor since 2013.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Waimate District Library Extension & Refurbishment

In April, Councillors agreed to move ahead with the Waimate District Library extension and refurbishment, bringing to an end decades of discussion. This project forms a key part of Council's budget for the upcoming financial year and has been deemed as a priority to advance. Here, we take a look back at the history, what's planned and provide a breakdown of the costs, the impact on your rates and the expected timeframe.

LIBRARY EXTENSION

THE HISTORY

For almost two decades, the library extension has been discussed in great detail and included within several Long Term Plans.

In the 2009/10 Annual Plan, the library extension was first budgeted at \$1.5 million. As years passed, other significant projects were expedited, with the Waimate Event Centre build taking centre stage from 2016, meaning the extension was deferred.

In future Long Term Plans, Council earmarked this development as a must do. Fast forward a few years and suddenly, a global pandemic emerges and creates a whole new wave of complexity. Due to widespread uncertainty and

a need to err on the side of caution, the project was again deferred, only for the Waimate area to be hit with a 1 in 100 year flood in early 2021.

As a result of flooding to the Local Government Centre, money from the library extension budget has been used ahead of time to re-roof the building (which was deemed unsafe due to the weight of the concrete tiles) and refurbish the Council offices – with the library extension project itself now finally ready to commence. In their move to approve the extension, the majority of Councillors were of the same opinion, with a simple instruction to “just get on with it” – a view they believe is shared by the majority of residents.

WHY CAN'T COUNCIL DEFER IT AGAIN?

A quick countback on figures show \$1 million in the year 2004 (when the project was first discussed) was equivalent in purchasing power to approximately \$1.53 million in today's monetary terms. That's an increase of \$530,487 over 18 years. With the rising cost of inflation and the global squeeze on materials, deferring this project any longer will simply cost more money in the long run, for what will be a similar outcome.

Doing nothing is simply not an option, therefore Council believe it's time to progress and have budgeted \$1,276,330 for this in the upcoming financial year. There are a

number of upgrades required to bring the building up to modern day standards and to ensure the building meets all health and safety standards.

As part of the project, we are also relocating the Information Centre back to Queen Street, situating the service area within the library. This will bring the focal point back to the main street and will be clearly signposted for all visitors to locate, operating five and a half days a week. As the district continues to grow, we see this as an important move to continue promoting the Waimate District and all the wonders that lie within, particularly in the resurgence post-COVID, which will in turn help to bring foot traffic back to the CBD.

IS THE LIBRARY WELL UTILISED?

Prior to the first indication of COVID-19 in 2020, door count figures at the library were stable and trending upward. In the harsh wake of the pandemic, patronage declined, but use of digital services went up as people were looking for things to do in isolation and lockdown.

On average, the last decade has seen a physical patronage of 50,000 library users through the door every year. Of course, this is largely repeat custom, but the figures clearly show the library is well used.

In fact, we expect figures to continue climbing post-COVID, as people look forward to returning to a social space and

community hub. Many schools throughout the district, including early childhood centres, rely on the library as a meeting area and enjoy various activities hosted by the library throughout the year.

Extending the library will mean we can accommodate larger groups, providing the much-needed space and dedicated learning areas required.

THE BENEFITS

Like most things in life, libraries are evolving and adapting with the times. No longer is a library just a place to read a book with a loud “sshh” from the librarian at any inkling of sound, it's a safe space for people to read, research, browse newspapers, read magazines, use free Wi-Fi and the in-house computers.

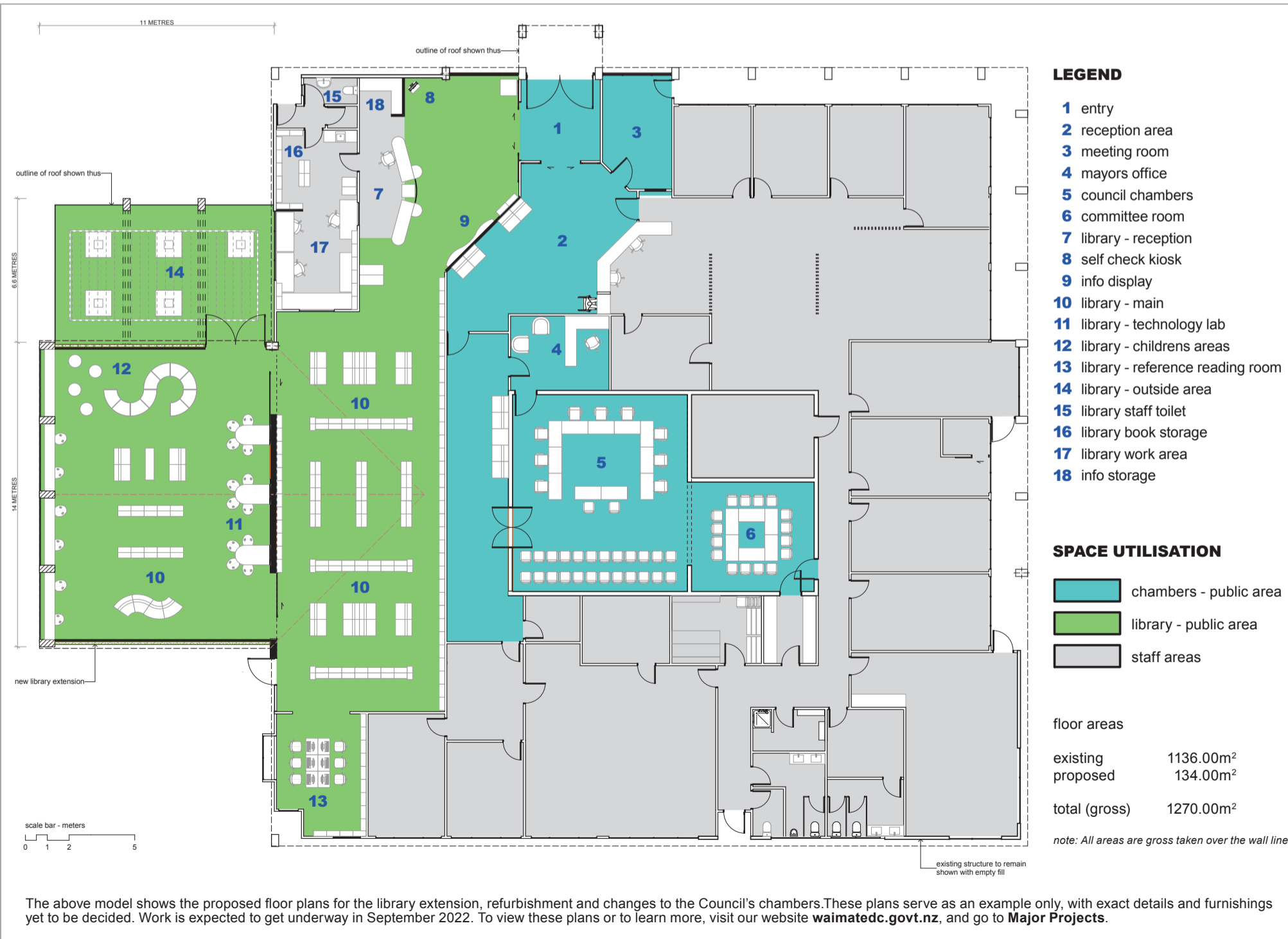
This new space will include an outside area for library users to enjoy the warmer months, soak in the sun and take in some fresh air. Having a fit for purpose library is essential to any community, and after almost twenty years discussing possibilities and new design concepts, Council think it's time to hit the green light.

This extension, alongside the recent refurbishment, will extend the life/usefulness of the library and Local Government Centre for many years to come.

BUDGET

\$1,276,330
(library extension and refurbishment)

Please note the below images are a visual representation only.



CHAMBER CHANGES

As part of the library extension and refurbishment, Council will also explore options to introduce natural light in to the Council Chambers. The extent of this work has not yet been finalised, but Council see this as an important upgrade to the Local Government Centre building.

The Council Chambers serve as an official meeting space for Councillors, and often host meetings with external parties also. Presently, the lighting in this room is poor and the overall airflow could be better. These changes also provide an opportunity

to future-proof the area to meet changing technology demands, including the ability to host Zoom meetings, record meetings and live-stream. The raised platform will be removed, creating more space and a multi-functional area.

BUDGET

\$396,600
(Chambers and meeting room upgrade)

OVERALL PROJECT BUDGET

\$1,672,930

RATEABLE IMPACT

The rateable impact for these projects is approximately \$86,000 per annum respectively, based on an interest rate of 3.15% and

depreciation of 2%. This cost will be spread among the 4000+ rating properties within the Waimate District. Please note, your own rates charge will differ depending on a number of factors like where you are located within the district and the capital value of your property.

The above model shows the proposed floor plans for the library extension, refurbishment and changes to the Council's chambers. These plans serve as an example only, with exact details and furnishings yet to be decided. Work is expected to get underway in September 2022. To view these plans or to learn more, visit our website waimatedc.govt.nz, and go to **Major Projects**.

INSTALLATION OF NEW PUBLIC TOILETS



Please note this image is a visual representation only.

THE HISTORY

Perhaps not discussed as widely as the library extension, this project has also been on the Council's books for quite some time.

By anyone's standards, it's less than ideal to have a toilet block directly adjacent to the clock tower war memorial and this is an opportunity to change that. The new toilet block facility will be located on the external perimeter of Seddon Square.

THE BENEFITS

The new toilet block will comprise six cubicles, which includes an accessible toilet, baby-changing facilities and a storage cupboard.

This investment will better meet the needs of a growing town, accommodating for the high profile events held within the area and the increasing number of visitors annually. In addition to the toilet block, funds have been put aside for landscaping and there is early discussion around the possibility of mural art also being a feature.

With the existing toilet block nearing the end of its useful life, doing nothing is simply not an option. Council believe it's time for progress and have budgeted for this in the upcoming financial year.

BUDGET

\$445,100

RATEABLE IMPACT

The rateable impact of this project will be \$23,000 per annum respectively, based on an interest rate of 3.15% and depreciation of 2%. This cost will be spread among the 4000+ rating properties within the Waimate District. Please note, your own rates charge will differ depending on a number of factors like where you are located within the district and the capital value of your property.

TIMEFRAME

Work is scheduled to commence in March 2023.

WHITE HORSE REDEVELOPMENT OFFICIALLY OPEN

Following 18-months of hard graft and community input, Waimate's White Horse redevelopment was officially unveiled to the public last month.

The redevelopment proved a huge success with those in attendance, with Mayor Craig Rowley and Department of Internal Affairs Manager for Community Advisory Services Garry Lay leading the praise and accolades.

Spearheaded by Waimate2gether project manager Jo Sutherland, the redevelopment was the result of a mammoth team effort that included Council, Rotary, Lions, local contractors and schools throughout the district – collectively enhancing the area as a must-see place to visit.

A feature of the area is the vibrant and colourful Pous (Pou Kuras), an artistic collaboration between schools and members of the Waihao Marae – with each Pou carrying a special meaning.

The viewing platforms have also been largely popular, with the welcome addition providing a tranquil spot to take in the rolling landscape and views across the Waimate District.

Concluding the memorable opening, school students filled the air with their own rendition of the Waimate Song – sung to the tune of the John Denver classic Country Roads, albeit with the amended lyrics crafted by Waihao Downs School teacher Louise Stringer.



Waimate2gether chairman Rob Smith congratulates project manager Jo Sutherland.



Waimate High School prefects Sophia Cho and Alisha Roberts address the crowd.



Arowhenua Marae ūpoko (head) Te Wera King heaps praise on the redevelopment.



School children throughout the district belt out their own rendition of the Waimate Song, filmed by television programme Seven Sharp.



An aerial photograph of the White Horse redevelopment.

TWO-MINUTE AGENDA

24 May 2022

SMOKE AND VAPE FREE POLICY ADOPTED

Council has adopted a revised smokefree policy, which now incorporates vaping. The policy is now aligned with the overall objective of Smokefree Aotearoa 2025, with the Government's lofty vision of New Zealand becoming smokefree by 2025.

CRICKET CLUB SIGNAGE APPROVED

The Waimate Cricket Club have approval to install sponsorship panels at their ground in Knottingley Park. In a move to raise funds for the club's operations, the club approached Council for permission to erect the signage on the west side of the field in a bid to minimise the environment's outlook within the park setting. Councillors agreed to the concept and approved 12 small sponsorship panels and four large panels. The panels will only be in place during the cricket season.

PROPERTY REVALUATIONS UNDERWAY SOON

As part of a three-yearly process, properties throughout the Waimate District will be revalued. The process is carried out by Quotable Value (commencing in July), with valuations reported back to Council in mid-September. Following the revaluations, property owners will have a window of time to object to QV, before the final values are documented late October. With the new information to hand, Council will then apply the values to rates from the 2023/24 financial year.



Waimate
District Council

