

NEWSLINE

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Waimate
District Council

DRIVER LICENCE PROGRAMME PROVING A HIT



Driver Licence Programme Coordinator Deborah Kibble and trainee Eden Brunt get ready for a lesson.

The Waimate District Council Driver Licence Programme has begun taking driving lessons, and bookings are open for more.

The Mayors Taskforce for Jobs-led programme was set up to assist people to get their Class 1 licence to give them more options for employment.

Driver Licence Programme Coordinator Deborah Kibble said a range of skill levels could be catered for. "Some people have never driven a car before, and others just need to brush up on some minor details before completing their restricted or full licences. Having the ability to drive is something many of us take for granted, and it is very rewarding to be able to help others on their journey," Deborah said.

Waimate High School student Eden Brunt is one of the people taking lessons after getting her learner licence earlier this year. "It's exciting. Having structured lessons makes it easier, and it is helping my confidence with driving," she said.

Before this programme existed, the closest places that offered regular lessons were Timaru and Oamaru. As well as delivering lessons, Deborah is able to assist with the license study, transport to sit theory, and practical tests. She can be contacted on 027 689 0033 or by emailing deborah.kibble@waimatedc.govt.nz.

The programme is a joint effort between the Council, the Mayors Taskforce for Jobs, Local Government New Zealand, and the Ministry of Social Development. Local sponsorship from Fonterra, the Rotary Club of Waimate, and the Waimate Lions Club has enabled a dedicated vehicle to be purchased for conducting driving lessons.

MINISTER INVITED TO DISCUSS WATER CHALLENGES

Waimate District Mayor Craig Rowley has extended an invitation to Local Government Minister Simeon Brown to visit the district for a firsthand look at rural water supply schemes.

In a letter sent to the Minister last month, the Mayor emphasised the importance of these schemes to the local agricultural sector and raised concerns about the financial and operational challenges posed by new water quality regulations.

The Waimate District operates six rural water schemes, supplying water to stock, houses and farm buildings. These schemes, some of which have been in operation since the early 1900s, are largely community-driven and rely heavily on local involvement. Bringing these up to the same standards as urban centres would place a huge financial burden on small rural communities.

Mayor Craig called for differentiated service levels for rural water that would account for the specific needs of these communities, contrasting them with urban centres that often follow a "one-size-fits-all" approach. In his letter, the Mayor also commended the Government's willingness to reconsider water management policies, particularly in relation to rural water governance. He expressed hope for more locally tailored solutions that would ease the regulatory and financial burden on rural schemes.

The full letter is available to view on waimatedc.govt.nz/services/three-waters-reform

CIVIL DEFENCE UPSKILLING

In August and September, some Council staff are attending training sessions run by Emergency Management Canterbury. This training is provided to all councils in Canterbury free of charge. It upskills the participants and helps create connections with other councils which would be prepared to mobilise in the event of an emergency.

In an emergency, the Civil Defence Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) will be activated in Waimate and Council staff redeployed to the EOC.

In July, Mackenzie District Council Emergency Management Officer Joe Rush spoke to EOC staff and elected members about the role Civil Defence played when two tourist buses crashed in icy conditions near Twizel. He provided valuable insights into how Civil Defence helped Police and Fire and Emergency New Zealand respond to the incident. In November, there will be a national exercise where all council EOCs and other agencies simulate a response to an Alpine Fault earthquake.

Council encourages residents to think about their personal preparedness for an emergency. Some useful information and checklists can be found at getready.govt.nz

DOG ACTIVITIES SUMMED UP

Council approved the Dog Control Annual Report 2023/24 at an Ordinary Council Meeting on 23 July.

The report, which is required under the Dog Control Act 1996, provided an overview of the 2,866 dogs in the district. Impressively, for the third year in a row, the district's registration rate was 100% of known dogs.

Council received 242 dog related requests for the year, which was an increase from the 193 last year. The majority of these were for wandering dogs (150 cases), and the next most common complaint was barking dogs (66). Of the 33 dogs impounded, 30 were reclaimed by their owners, and three found new homes. The district's dangerous and menacing dogs are fully compliant with safety requirements.

Additionally, the dog behaviour and safety programme was a success, with "Wolfie," the retired greyhound, continuing to play a vital role in educating the community about dog safety.

The Dog Control Act requires all dogs over three months old to be registered with their local council. The dog registration programme includes forms, printing, tags, maintaining the national dog database and related promotional activities. Wider dog control activities include law enforcement, patrols and complaint investigation, providing pound facilities, signage and promotion of the Council's animal bylaw and dog policy.

The full report is available to view at waimatedc.govt.nz/services/dogs



Senior Animal Control Officer Linda Shefford, and "Wolfie".

SH82 BRIDGES TO BE REPLACED

The Elephant Hill and Waihao River North bridges on State Highway 82 are set to be replaced within the next three years as part of a broader investment plan by NZ Transport Waka Kotahi. These projects aim to improve the efficiency, resilience, and safety of the state highway network over the coming years.

They are two of nine priority replacements. The new bridge at Elephant Hill will add an additional lane and improve the alignment with the tight bend on the southern side. The Waihao River Bridge has had several smaller upgrades, but the piling system has now reached the end of its life cycle.

Mayor Craig Rowley welcomed the news, emphasising the significance of the route for both the district and the wider region. "This is a key route connecting us with the lakes and tourist areas such as Central Otago and the Waimate Lakes Camping, while also serving local traffic and freight from the high-country parts of our district," he said.

"It would have a disastrous impact if either bridge failed, so the more we can future-proof them the better."

The investment is part of a comprehensive strategy to maintain, operate, renew, and enhance New Zealand's state highways, ensuring their reliability for the future.

