Waimate District Council

# NEWSLINE

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5 November 2026

## Annual Report highlights Council's performance

Waimate District Council has adopted its 2025/26 Annual Report, meeting a range of key targets, adapting to national reforms and investing in infrastructure.

"We're delivering the essentials," says Mayor Craig Rowley. "Serving the community is our duty, and that remains constant amidst a relentless cycle of reform and regulatory change."

Adopted at an Extraordinary Council Meeting on 30 October 2026, the Annual Report 2025/26 supports accountability to the community, outlining how Council performed against its targets under the first year of the Long Term Plan (LTP) 2025-2034.

"There's room for improvement, but I'm pleased with the work we've done, from the delivery of core services to supporting community initiatives and helping young people find employment," says Mayor Rowley.

Council met all its performance targets in roading, stormwater, community facilities and community services, while delivering outcomes in water supply, sewerage, organisation and governance, district planning and regulatory services and waste management.

Drainage improvements remained a priority, with Council installing new culverts, cleaning or reconstructing drains and renewing kerbs and channels. Major infrastructure projects included the refurbishment of two bridges and the restoration of the gym and squash courts at the Waimate Event Centre following a fire in October 2024. More residents used the centre's facilities, thanks to a range of affordable activities utilising the courts and function room.

Recent legislative reforms prompted several initiatives. As part of the Government's Local Water Done Well programme, Council progressed water infrastructure upgrades across the district, with projects at various stages of development. These include two projects for the Lower Waihao Rural Water Scheme: the provision of a new, low nitrate water source and a treatment plant upgrade. End-point treatment devices will also be installed in two other schemes to supply residents with safer drinking water.

Changes to planning and resource management laws also spurred Council to begin developing a regional spatial plan alongside other Canterbury communities.

Increased subdivision and consenting activity and larger subsidies from NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi contributed to an operating surplus of $1.74 million. Capital and operational expenditure was lower than budgeted because of several factors, including project deferrals, finance costs less than anticipated and staff vacancies. Total borrowings reached almost $10 million, about half the forecast amount.

"We're continuing to manage Council's finances carefully and efficiently, while monitoring developments around a possible rates cap," says Mayor Rowley. "We're taking a balanced approach: investing in services, delivering value and keeping rates as manageable as possible."




**The Annual Report 2025/26 and Summary Annual Report 2025/26 are available on waimatedc.govt.nz/annualreport**




L-R: Erwin Ausmolo; Argelyn Ausmolo; Mayor Craig Rowley; Ma. Eliza Munns; Parambir Singh; Jessica Morelli; Stephanie Hughes; Ria Gagarra; Ademar Gagarra; Prasad Nissanka; Thinuli Nissankage; Kumudu Kukule Viyannalaya and Mayon Nissankage.

## Welcome to our new citizens

It was a very special day for 13 locals who became New Zealand citizens on Tuesday 20 October at Te Rūnanga o Waihao (Waihao Marae) in Morven. Six countries were represented: Argentina, India, Italy, Philippines, Sri Lanka and the United Kingdom.

The sun shone as the participants, their friends and family, and members of the Council, were welcomed onto the marae with a pōwhiri. Inside the Centennial Memorial Hall, members of the marae sang a waiata and everyone received a traditional greeting (hongi).

At the start of the official proceedings, Mayor Rowley thanked Te Rūnanga o Waihao for hosting the event. Citizenship ceremonies were among his favourite duties as Mayor, he said, as becoming a New Zealand citizen was a special milestone for people who had chosen to make the district their home.

After each new citizen recited their oath and received their certificate, they were invited to say a few words. Ria Gagarra from the Philippines spoke for herself and her father. "Today we are truly grateful and blessed to become a New Zealand citizen," she said. "We are thankful for the opportunities, kindness and sense of belonging New Zealand has given us." Refreshments were served to round off a memorable occasion.

## Help brighten Christmas for local children

Mayoress Lyn Stringer's initiative Waimate Christmas Child is ten years old this year. The milestone marks a decade of our community showing how much they care that no child misses out on Christmas morning.



A Christmas tree and gifting area has been set up in Council reception where you can leave new, unwrapped gifts for babies, toddlers and children up to the age of 15. The gifts will be distributed by Community Link to families across the district before Christmas.

"When I started Waimate Christmas Child, I had no idea how generous our community would be. It is truly heartwarming to see the gifting area grow day-by-day," says Mayoress Lyn.

"I want to thank everyone who has donated over the last nine years and I'm hoping this tenth year will be the biggest yet. Gifts don't have to be expensive. Every gift brings a smile to a child and their parents."

Last year, more than 100 children woke to a brighter Christmas and 62% of those supported had reached out to Community Link for assistance for the first time.

## New advisor focuses on preparedness

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Council appointed a new emergency management advisor in August, the first time the role has been occupied in a full-time capacity. Jaymie Currie has hopped over from Environment Canterbury where she worked in Hazard Operations.

Jaymie is looking forward to boosting the preparedness of the community so that we are more resilient if disaster strikes. Earthquakes, flooding and tsunamis are all possible, with the biggest risk being the rupture of the Alpine Fault. If this were to happen, the whole of the South Island would experience shaking and some communities may be cut off.

"Preparedness is the key to getting through an emergency situation as smoothly as possible," says Jaymie. "I'm excited to take on the challenge of preparing Council and the community to meet difficulties with calmness and clarity."



On 21 October, staff took part in ShakeOut, a national earthquake drill. As the clock struck 1:30pm, staff practised the Drop, Cover and Hold response.

On 5 November the preparedness training continues, with key staff set to take part in a regional civil defence exercise which explores the impacts of a significant space weather event which could result in prolonged power outages across Canterbury. This scenario presents a good opportunity to learn and practise coordinating a multi-agency response when our usual communication channels are down and infrastructure fails.

Head to getready.govt.nz to get prepared.