



# the Duntroon DIGGER

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**Next issue:** 5th August. Please send your contributions to us at [duntroondigger@gmail.com](mailto:duntroondigger@gmail.com) by 30th July. See 'Digger dates' for this year on the last page of this issue.

## Sexton Shed Upgrade

In the past few weeks, a bit of work has been going on in the Duntroon Cemetery. Plans to upgrade our unique and long abandoned sexton shed are now in motion.

The thinking behind the upgrade is to provide a drop in space for anyone who is interested in exploring the lives and times of the people who came before us. Several members of the DDDA have been working on cleaning the shed, repairing the ceiling, upgrading the guttering and spouting and researching early settler families who are buried in the cemetery.

We are grateful to the council for providing \$1800 for cleaning the Otekaieke limestone from which it is built and to Dooley's Masonry for carrying out the work and doing the pointing (gap filling) for free!

Very soon, a table and notice board will be installed so that visitor displays can be set up inside. Watch this space for further updates.



## Duntroon Sesquicentennial Plans

The DDDA is currently in the throes of making plans for the Duntroon Sesquicentennial which is scheduled for Labour Weekend.

Several events are on the table including the following: a market day, a pot luck lunch or dinner, a commemorative service at St Martin's Church, a historical (horse and cart) guided tour of the township and tree planting at the Duntroon Village Green.

Exact dates and times are yet to be confirmed as there is still much to be done. Some events remain under consideration and will be dependent upon whether people are available to help out.

Anyone who is interested in participating in or supporting any of these events, please contact Gill or Anne at [duntroondigger@gmail.com](mailto:duntroondigger@gmail.com)

# The Duntroon Kaitiaki Kids' Collective.

Another way of learning, is how Lou Tait describes the reason for developing the Duntroon Kaitiaki Kids' Collective initiative at the Duntroon School.

A teacher aide at Duntroon School; Lou was inspired by what she saw at the North Otago Teachers' Conference. There she learned about the trapping programme already operating at Ardgowan School and recognized that a trapping programme would be an ideal way to augment the learning of the pupils at Duntroon School.

According to the Te Ara Encyclopedia of New Zealand, Kaitiaki is a "Māori term that means guardian. It refers to a person or group that acts as a carer, protector, and conservator, especially for natural areas such as lakes or forests". Therefore, the programme is aptly named. The pupils in the club or collective are Year 7 and 8, (which is Form 1 and 2 for us older readers).

First things first, before the trapping was undertaken, the pupils had set about placing tracking pads in places that were likely to have pest traffic. The pads have ink on one panel and the critters walk through the ink and leave footprints.

After a couple of weeks, the pads were checked, and the pupils used footprint cards as reference to identify which pests were about, and thus, which types of traps needed to be used to trap them. When the cards were checked they revealed the presence of stoats, rats, mice and hedgehogs. The program also utilises chew cards. These are used to find out where the possums are located.

Next came the trapping. This is where a school programme has benefited from the generosity of community members. Grant Tremewan stepped up and supplied the timber and other essentials for the trap boxes and cut out the panels ready for the pupils to screw together. On trap building day Grant Tremewan was joined by another good sort, Paul Grant and together they were a good team giving assistance when required. The pupils were determined to get the boxes made and succeeded in creating ten boxes.



Above: Grant Tremewan gives advice.

Left: Boxes being put together

Other supporters of the programme include Otto and Tume Dogterom with a generous donation to the project. Quested Poultry have supplied eggs to put in traps and Paul King has made his property available so that the collective can access his land.

Initially the traps will be placed about the environment, as were the tracking pads, and the animals will become used to them. Then, the metal traps will be installed within the trap boxes. At present the trapping is being undertaken along the side of the Maerewhenua River behind Duntroon

School and a neighbouring property, but in time it is hoped that it will expand into the community so that a larger area of our precious environment will be protected.

Through the trapping programme the pupils are gaining an appreciation of their local environment. They are also learning about the native species and how introduced species can upset the balance of nature. As well as the physical tasks, they are learning the collecting of data and record keeping. They are learning to upload the information to the internet as the trapping program has been registered with online trapping sites, namely:

Give a Trap <https://giveatrap.org.nz/groups/duntroon-kaitiak> and trap.nz. (<https://www.trap.nz/project/28910399/info>) .

It is going to be exciting to follow the programme and learn what the traps catch and how this will impact on the local environment.

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## Duntroon Volunteer Fire Brigade Sky Tower Challenge

A huge congratulations goes to the team from the Duntroon Volunteer Fire Brigade for taking on the Sky Tower Challenge on the 24th of May and succeeding.

The challenge was to climb the tower in full firefighting gear which weighs around 25kg. The climb is a 328 vertical ascent of 1,103 stairs. Team members trained at home as individuals doing what suited them to get fit. For Sarah Todd and Richard Wills, that included climbing Kurow Hill numerous times. Whichever strategy was used it proved to be a successful one.



The team raised \$11,642 for Leukemia and Blood Cancer New Zealand. This sum went towards the final \$1.09 million raised for this year's challenge.

A magnificent effort by all involved; they deserve to be proud of what they achieved. It is comforting to know our local firefighters are so fit and dedicated.

*The team from left to right: Mark Frear, Richard Wills (Captain), Mark Strachan, Sarah Todd, Jamie Deans. Photo credit Tiffany Przewieda.*

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## Sara McCunnie and The Village Architect Ltd

After many years of working from her home at Livingstone, Sara McCunnie has taken the bold step of opening her new business at 16a Tees Street Oamaru. The Village Architect Ltd is located a stone's throw away from the historic precinct which is ironic as Sara's qualifications and interests are in heritage architecture. Another string to her bow is that of age friendly and dementia enabling environment design.

When a committee member of the Duntroon and District Development Assn, Sara's extensive knowledge of design and regulations were utilised and valued.

We wish her every success with her new venture. Karan Lawrence

*Pictured with Sara in her new office is husband Patrick McCunnie.*



# Introducing Some New Residents

A Big Welcome to the Duntroon Community..

There have been several new residents arriving in Duntroon and putting down roots, so here is an introduction from two recent arrivals to the township.

## From Chris and Ian

Hi

We are Chris and Ian from 21 Rees Street. We have been here about 7 months, refugees from near Dunedin. We are naturalised Kiwis, originally from England. We have lived in Australia and most recently Portugal. We chose Duntroon because of its small size, location and relative ease of access to most parts of the South Island.

We are retired, having both of us worked for government departments most of our working lives. We have two older dogs, Rusty and Buddy, who are possibly two of the most travelled dogs you are likely to meet.

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## From Richard and Tina Stewart

We left our home way up North  
For an easy pace and way of life.  
We headed for home in the South,  
Destined for a place called Duntroon .

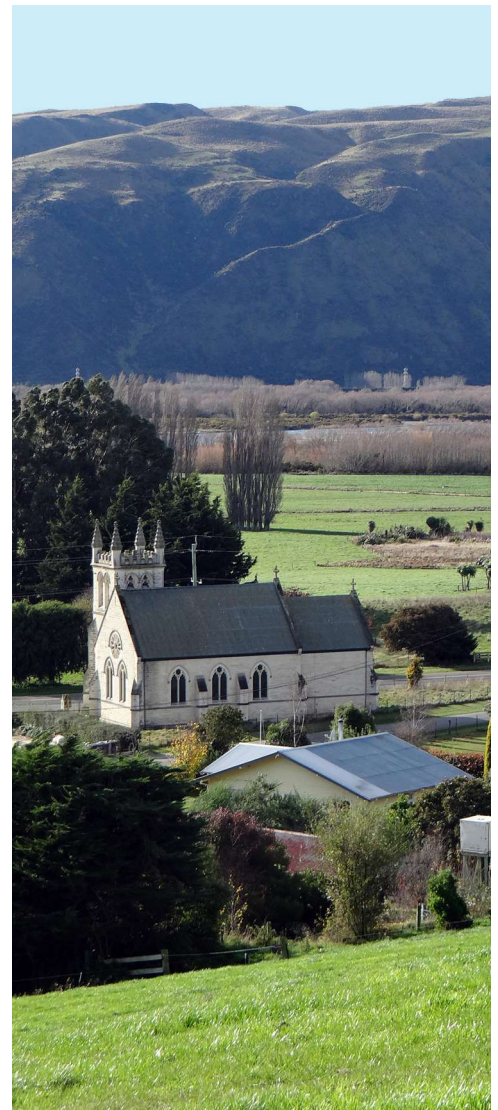
Cross the ferry late at night ,  
Touched the South in early morning light.  
Drove our cars to Timaru for a well earned sleep  
Dreaming of Duntroon in moonlight not sheep.

Left Timaru the very next day,  
Stopped in Oamaru for supplies and a bite .  
Leaving midday for our chosen new home,  
And headed up valley for this place called Duntroon.

Down some straights we would soon be there.  
Our first view of Duntroon came into sight,  
Next our home we sighted with glee  
Home in Duntroon was the place to be.

Welcomed by neighbours close and far  
Gifts in mail box brought tears to our eyes.  
A bit of work and job to settle us down  
Makes us very happy we are in Duntroon.  
At last.

Richard and Tina Stewart.



# Historic Duntroon: The Street Names – Rees, McKellar, Livingstone and Beyond

by Anne Phillips-Vira

In the last issue I explored the lives of two of Robert Campbell's run hold managers: Middleton and Orr. Having read about them in some depth, it was no surprise to discover that Rees and McKellar were also employed by Campbell as station managers in the Waitaki District.

## Rees Street

Rees Street Duntroon appears to have been named after William Gilbert Rees who emigrated to New Zealand in 1859. His story is remarkable. He was a runholder, surveyor, explorer, amateur artist and cricketer. Perhaps most importantly, he is highly regarded as the founder of the Queenstown/Wakatipu District (Wikipedia, 2024).

He was born in Pembrokeshire, Wales on April 6 1827 and educated at the Royal Naval School Camberwell, London. According to Thompson (1998) it was there where he learned skills in cricket, boxing and swimming, even earning a medal for saving a life in the Hungerford Canal in Berkshire at the age of 15! Before emigrating, he was an apprentice engineer and then a teacher at Radford School in Exeter.

Returning to Rees' exploits in New Zealand, by 1861 he had explored the "far-distant interior" (Toitu, n.d., portrait section, para. 3) of Central Otago and settled with his wife (and cousin), Frances Gilbert, on the site of what is now Queenstown. Notably, his statue stands on Rees Street, Queenstown. It's also interesting to note that he named Frankton after his wife and Cecil and Walter Peaks after his first son. When his homestead run at Queenstown was declared an official gold field in 1862, he was forced to move with his family to a run at Kawarau (Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga, 2023). He was later appointed by Robert Campbell as station manager (consecutively) at Mesopotamia, Benmore, Otekaieke, Station Peak and Galloway runs (National Library of New Zealand, n.d.). Rees died in 1898. His wife Frances died in Nelson outliving her husband by 28 years (Marryat, 2015). Both are buried in Omaka Cemetery in Blenheim.



*Figure 1 (Left)  
Rees headstone*

*Figure 2 (Right)  
Rees self portrait*

*Figures 1 and 2: (Source: Find a Grave, database and images (<https://findagrave.com>: accessed May 22 2025), memorial ID 242170688, Created and maintained by [Tom])*



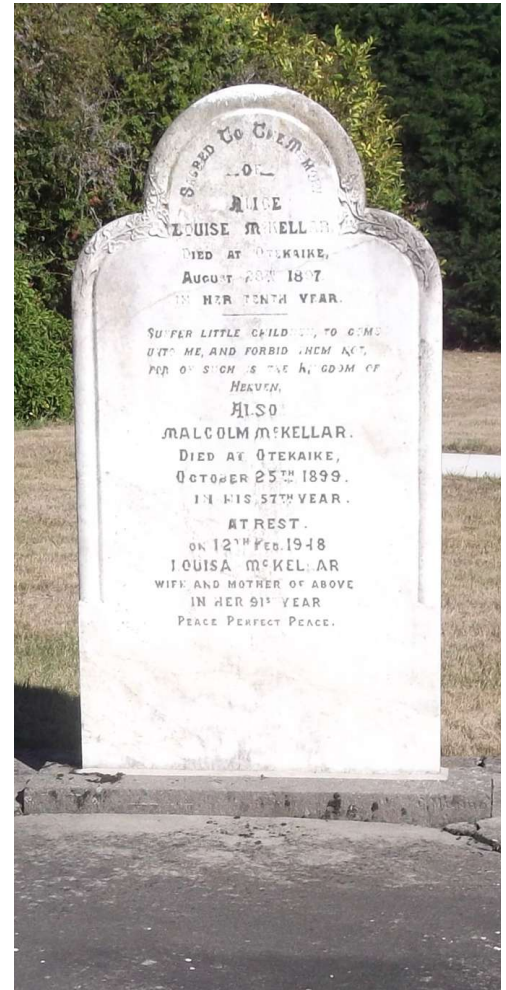
## McKellar Street

Malcolm McKellar was born in 1842 in the Parish of Kilmorich, Argyll, Scotland. He arrived in New Zealand in 1863 and according to Pinney (1981), had several cousins who had interests in other stations in New Zealand.

McKellar became manager of Otekaieke Station in 1871 and finding it "a convenient ride over the Waitaki" (Pinney, 1981, p.169) he married Louisa, the second daughter of Robert Roe Orr, at Station Peak in 1876 (The "North Otago Times", 1899).

Orr and McKellar managed the two stations successfully for many years and worked together closely, often sharing blacksmiths and other tradesmen in the district. McKellar was seemingly particularly skilled at raising show merinos. The New Zealand Mail (1899) describes his knowledge of stock as "unsurpassed" (p.36).

McKellar died in 1899 at Otekaieke Station, just six months before Robert Orr. The death certificate (1899) states that he was aged 56. He, his wife Louisa and infant daughter Alice are buried in Duntroon Cemetery. The couple had four surviving sons.



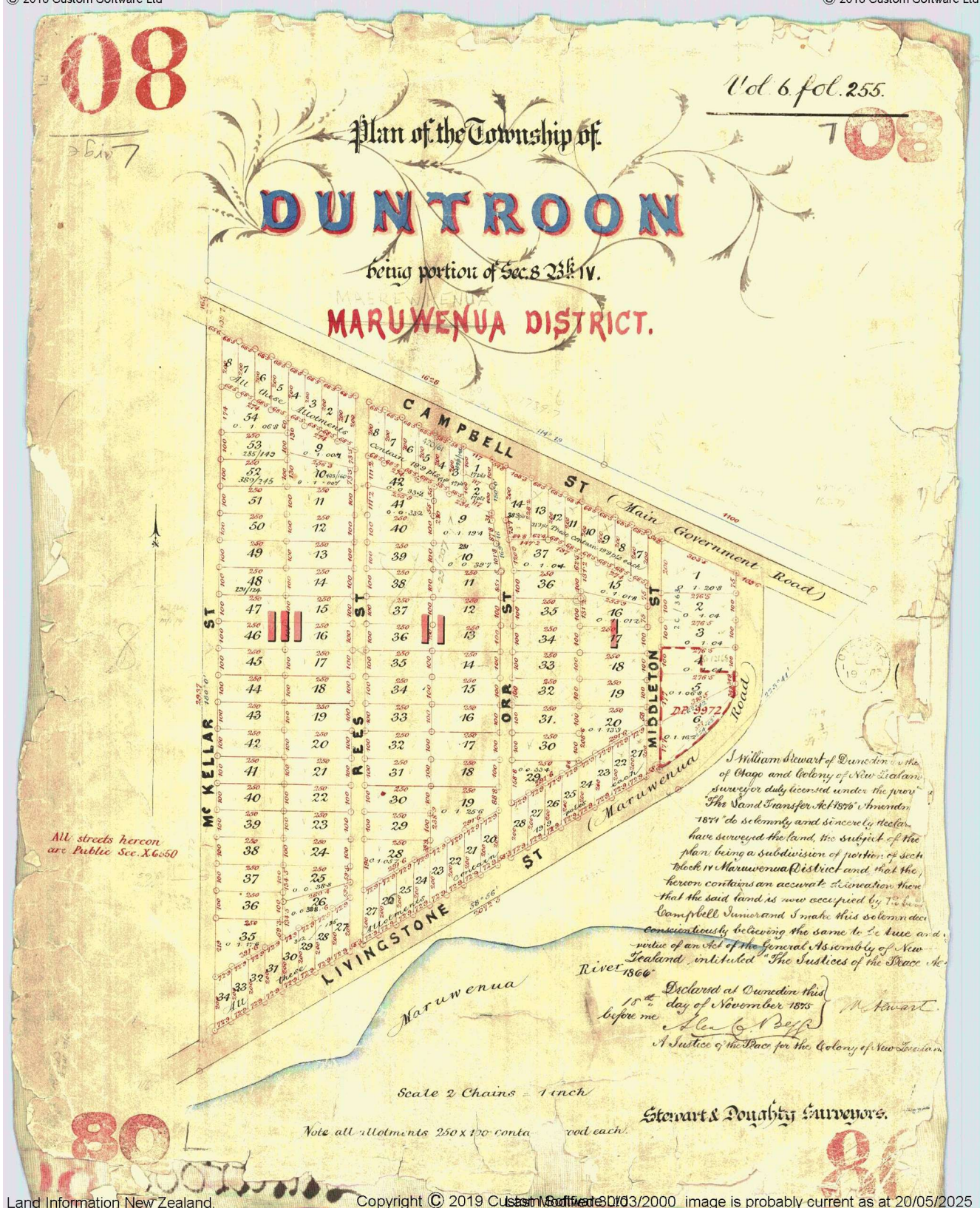
*Figure 3 (Right): McKellar headstone*  
(Source: Find a Grave, database and images  
(<https://findagrave.com>: accessed May 22 2025), memorial  
ID 192930722, Created and maintained by [Helen])

## Livingstone Street and Maruwenua Road

Livingstone Street was probably named after the Scottish explorer, David Livingstone. However, prior to this acknowledgment of his fame, the section of the street that passes beside the school and around the back of Duntroon appears to have been named Maruwenua Road (Plan of Extension, 1875).

It's interesting to note that, over time, there have been a range of different spellings for the Maerewhenua that we now know. According to Adkin (1951), the spelling of our river comes in "no fewer than six variant forms" (p. 37) the first of which was Maraewhenua as used by James Hector in 1878. Adkin states that this was later followed by Marawhenua (1905, 1910 & 1911), Marewhenua and Maruwhenua (1939). He obviously hadn't seen the 1875 survey map where Maruwenua appears. Stevenson (1947) suggests that the name should be Maru whenua given that this name denotes the meaning sheltered (maru) and land (whenua).

Adkin also explores the possibility that early Waitaha and Ngāi Māmoë peoples may have named the landscape in connection to their relationship with the rock shelters. He further suggests that Ngāi Tahu may have later named the place Maero whenua – Maero meaning supernatural or strange and that this name could be attributed to the first people that Ngāi Tahu came across when they arrived in the area. Reed (1986) agrees with Stevenson that 'maere' possibly should be 'maero' and provides the meaning 'original inhabitants'. Like Stevenson he goes on to suggest that Maerowhenua might therefore mean 'land of the strange folk'. He also mentions the alternative spelling of 'maruwhenua' which he concludes might be associated with the rock shelters near Duntroon.



I decided to investigate further at the Te Ana Māori Rock Art Centre in Timaru. Staff at the centre referred me to a fascinating site online called Kā Huru Manu. However, although the name Maerewhenua comes up on the site, no specific meaning or source is provided. The origin of the name therefore remains something of a mystery. To me, either of the above translations seems entirely possible and I love the fact that the road past the school was once named Maruw(h)enua

Road as this brings to mind the limestone shelters that are such remarkable features of the Duntroon landscape.

Reflecting on this article, it's been a pleasure to connect the names of the streets in the town where I once lived, to the names of the people behind them. It feels almost as if I know them personally. I hope that those of us who have been touched by this place might share similar feelings of connection to the people who came before us.

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## Dates to remember:

The next Duntroon wetlands Working Bee will be on June the 7th. Because of the dark mornings and cold temperatures we will start at 11.30 and finish about 12.30

Next DDDA meeting is 9th June.

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## Duntroon Digger Dates 2025

Please send your content, such as letters, articles and advertisements, to us by the 'Pre-Digger' Deadline dates shown.

Month	Pre-Digger Deadline	Publishing Date
August	30/07/2025	05/08/2025
October	01/10/2025	07/10/2025
December	26/11/2025	02/12/2025



## Adult Buddies Needed Now!

Providing positive support for a young person

**We need Adult Buddies to support local children  
in the Oamaru/Waitaki area.**

**If you have 2 hours a week or fortnight, please  
consider volunteering as an Adult Buddy.**

**This is a very rewarding way to know you are  
making a difference! Contact us today!**



**Christine Moffat**  
**Buddy Coordinator North Otago**  
**Phone: 021 1916 327**  
**Email: [buddyno@psotago.org.nz](mailto:buddyno@psotago.org.nz)**

Wednesday 28 May 2025

## **Mayor and Councillors set rates for 2025-34 Long Term Plan**

At today's full meeting of the Waitaki District Council, the Mayor and Councillors approved the ratings for 2025/26 and beyond as part of the Long Term Plan process.

The average rating increase for the next rateable year will be 9.79%.

Council also agreed a reduction of \$100,000 in the budget which will have a further small reduction of around one or two tenths of a percent.

The Long Term Plan also sets out a 6.51% rate rise for 2026/27, including one of -16.11% in 2027/28 to account for water charges being separated from ratings.

Following that, rate rises remain below 4% for the following seven years.

Waitaki District Mayor Gary Kircher says, "This has been an extremely difficult process as we juggled with many conflicting priorities, against a background of affordability challenges for our community. We've been working on this Long Term Plan for around 20 months, and a lot of work has gone in to reducing cost for the ratepayer.

We started in late 2023 with a rates rise of 26% and pulled it down to 13.73%. Even then, cost pressures saw the draft budget increase to 16%. We've managed to get it down to 9.79% which is still more than anyone would like.

However, the decisions today set the course for declining rates over this decade, bringing much needed relief to the community."

Council will also receive a report later this year with detailed costings for Council to consider about Beach Road, which will include an option to reopen it - subject to costings and funding.

**ENDS**

Wednesday 28 May 2025

### **Dog registration fees set to rise for 2025/26**

At yesterday's full meeting of the Waitaki District Council, the Mayor and Councillors approved an increase in dog registration and related fees for dog owners in the Waitaki District.

Council has set Animal Management's cost structure at 100% user pays, to ensure ratepayers do not subsidise these services.

This will apply for all dog owners in the District.

Dog Category	2025/26 Fee
Non-working dog, urban	\$130.50
Neutered non-working dog	\$105.00
Selected Owner Status	\$61.25
Farm pet dog	\$39.00
Working Dog	\$39.00

Dog owners holding selected owner status may, on a case by case or random selection, be reassessed against the the selected owner criteria. This can occur once within a three year period.

This is to address issues where Animal Management Officers have found selected owners unaware of their responsibilities, and to promote responsible ownership.

Selected owners found in breach of the Dog Control Bylaw may find their selected owner status revoked.

There will also be an increase in the First Offence impounding of a dog, to \$100.

These changes will take effect from 1 July 2025. Late payment of fees, after 1 July 2025, will result In the loss of Selected Owner status.

**ENDS**