

Council News

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New pool and library project on track

Milton's Elsie Stewart Community Library and Pool project is set to become a significant community asset for the Clutha District, bringing recreation and learning together from a purpose-built facility.

The venue will provide long-term benefits for residents and will also be a welcome boost to the local economy through investment, construction and employment.

The project, a partnership between the Clutha District Council and the Bruce Community Facilities Trust, is now well underway, with Calder Stewart leading the build.

Construction officially started following a ceremonial sod turning in February, with Andrew Haulage (2011) Ltd completing demolition of the former library and carrying out the site's groundworks.

The project, named in honour of respected Milton resident the late Elsie Stewart, is expected to take 19 months to complete, with the facility scheduled to open in early 2028.

One of the next major milestones will be the installation of the roof, planned for September or October this year, while the six-lane pool shell will come from Italy.

The project is the result of the Our Place Milton Community Plan, which identified the need for a purpose-built community facility to serve Milton and the surrounding areas.

Home to about 2100 residents, Milton remains one of the Clutha District's key service towns.

Council Infrastructure Strategy and Delivery Group Manager Donna McArthur says combining the library and pool into one development made sense for the rural town.

"We will be providing the community with a new complex that will serve their needs for the long-term. It will provide a way for the community to connect both using [the] library and its services and the pool."

Designed with accessibility and flexibility in mind, the aquatic centre will include a six-lane pool, spa, dedicated toddler pool complete with water toys, accessible changing facilities and a wheelchair ramp into the main pool.

The adjoining library will feature modern offices and a community meeting room available for hire, while separate entrances and acoustic design between the two facilities will allow both spaces to operate independently.

Donna says while much of the Council's infrastructure investment focuses on essential services such as roads, water and streetscapes, this project offers something quite different.

"To create something purpose-built for Milton is rather special."

Like many construction projects across New Zealand, the development has not been immune to global economic pressures.

Rising freight and fuel costs, driven by events in the Middle East, prompted the Council to procure key overseas materials early, helping minimise potential impacts on the project timeline and budget.

Pictured above, from left, Ross Pringle (Calder Stewart), Donna McArthur (Council Infrastructure Strategy and Delivery Group Manager and Damon Clement (Calder Stewart).

There's a lot of change coming



As we approach the final months of the year - how quickly they seem to arrive - it's a fitting time to pause and reflect.

If there's one word that encapsulates this year in local government, it's "confusing." Councils have had to navigate significant changes at every level, and much of that remains in flux as I write this. (This newsletter is distributed quarterly, but production for this issue took place in September).

What we do know is that the Otago Regional Council will cease to exist in 2028 when the new Combined Territories Boards (CTBs) are formed. However, the detail, design and implementation of these new boards are still not fully clarified.

Additionally, the Head Start proposals emerged as part of the Simplifying Local Government process, quickly followed by the Government's preference to introduce a 4% rates cap.

I believe that rates capping is not a straightforward solution to the complex issues councils face in balancing needs and wants.

Throughout this time, we've heard your concerns loud and clear: rising living costs, coupled with increased rates, are placing a significant burden on household budgets.

Will the amalgamation under the Head Start initiative provide immediate cost savings? Unlikely, as savings are likely only for the longer term, so for now, I remain cautious as we observe how the successful proposals for Otago will develop in the future.

Although I am a first-term Mayor, many seasoned local government officials have expressed that the scale and pace of change we are experiencing feels unprecedented.

I campaigned to represent the Clutha District in an open and transparent manner, and I have consistently asked, the "why" do we do things this way, and why can't this be changed?"

At this stage, I don't have many detailed answers regarding the reforms, but I hope to gain clarity in the coming months as the new landscape unfolds.

This doesn't mean we have been idle. Here at the Council, we've been conducting thorough examinations behind the scenes.

We're committed to engaging with the community on levels of service reviews, and the cost and impacts of delivering or not delivering services.

We're looking to receive feedback to inform the Long Term Plan budgets before we then go out for public consultation.

We have undertaken a comprehensive review of the Council's functions to fully understand our delivery capabilities and expectations.

Furthermore, once Southern Waters becomes operational in July 2027, the rating for water will transition out of the Council's operating budgets.

We are actively examining the impact this will have on our services and overheads, and how it will affect you as a ratepayer.

There's a lot happening, and change can be beneficial.

My hope is that the Clutha District is fairly represented in all these developments, ensuring our rural voices, along with those of business, tourism, and industry, are not lost.

In closing, with Christmas approaching, I trust you will get time with those close to you, whānau and friends.

Your Mayor,
Jason (Jock) Martin

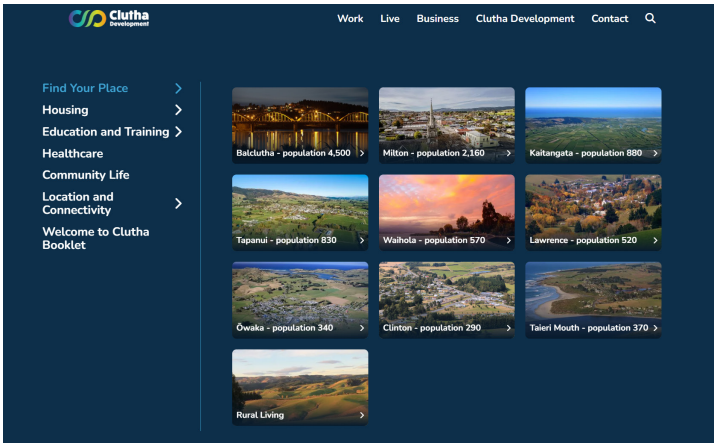
Clutha Development

Providing support for residents, businesses and visitors

Looking for information about living, working or visiting the Clutha District?
Whether you have lived in the Clutha District for years, have recently arrived, are considering a move, or have friends, family or employees settling into the area, Clutha Development has a range of information and resources available.

Living, working and doing business in Clutha
At **www.cluthadevelopment.nz** you can find practical information about living and working across the district, including our towns and communities, housing, schools and education, healthcare, employment and local services.
Looking for work?
Our Clutha Jobs Portal brings together job opportunities from employers across the district, making it easier to see what is available locally.
For businesses, there is information on business support, workforce attraction and retention, investment opportunities, and access to local economic data and insights.
Our Welcome to Clutha booklet is also available online and in print, providing a handy introduction to living and settling in the district.

Exploring the District
Looking for things to see and do, places to stay, local events or inspiration for exploring more of your own backyard? Visitor information continues to be available at **CluthaNZ.com**, showcasing experiences, attractions, accommodation and communities throughout the Clutha District. Whether you are here to live, work, do business or visit, there is plenty of information available to help you make the most of Clutha.



Are you ready for some summer camping fun?

Taylor Park Camping Ground is now fully automated, making it easier for visitors to book, pay, and access the campground at a time that suits them.
The automation system has been done in two stages.
In 2025, council installed a barrier arm along with the online booking system provided by the company Penny.
In July 2026, the automated system was extended to include card readers to access the facilities onsite.
While the park has a number of long-term users, casual visitor numbers generally peak in December and during public holidays like Easter (April) and Matariki (July).
The Milton campground is also making a return to profitability. In 2025 it had a deficit of $12,000, but for 2026 it is projected to have a profit of $15,000.
Council Community Services Group Manager Mike Goldsmith says the move to have the campground fully automated makes it an easier facility for the council to run.
Penny handles all transactions and also provides online promotion of the campground, with council paying them a commission from income generated.
Please remember to bring your own pots, pans, utensils, and dishwashing liquid to ensure a comfortable cooking experience.



How to book

- Please book through the Penny app or go-penny.com.
- You need a booking to enter the camping ground.
- For more information, visit go-penny.com
- Help - Please call 0800 140 047 or contact us via our app.
- For camp-related queries please call Council on 0800 801 350.

Resident Satisfaction Survey Results

Our annual Resident Satisfaction Survey gives us valuable feedback on what's working well and where we need to keep improving.
The 2026 Survey, carried out by The Curiosity Company in June, asked 300 residents about a range of Council services.
There were some strong results, including high satisfaction with wastewater systems, wheelie bins, Mt Cooee Landfill and community libraries. Also, 97% were satisfied with the Clutha isite Visitor Information Centre.
Residents also told us they want to see more focus on roads and footpaths, careful financial management, rates, value for money, and more opportunities to have a say in Council decisions.
Mayor Jason (Jock) Martin says the annual survey is important but it's not the only tool we use to engage with our communities, and I encourage people to keep participating in local government discussion, particularly when it comes to the forthcoming Long Term Plan.
"We want to hear from our residents, and all feedback is worthy to receive so we can keep working harder for the District."
Thanks to everyone who took part - your feedback helps shape the services an decisions that matter to our communities.



Grants and funding

Are you looking for funding options?

Council has partnered with Strategic Grants to provide community groups with free access to GEM Local (Grants Expertise Management system).

This helps you with relevant grant opportunities, grant preparation tools and training.

To access the scheme, community groups must meet an eligibility criteria.

For more information and to register your interest, go to **www.cluthadc.govt.nz/gem-local**

Citizenship ceremonies

Welcoming new citizens to the Clutha District

Attending a ceremony is an important step in the process of becoming a New Zealand citizen.

Part of the ceremony includes taking an oath of Affirmation before receiving a certificate and Kowhai tree.

The citizenship ceremonies are held at Te Pou Ō Mata-Au, the Clutha District War Memorial Centre.

The New Zealand Citizenship Office organises the citizenship meeting dates.

The next date is: Monday 16 November at 5.15pm.

Recycle Right to help our stunning District

In early September we renewed our mission to help communities become more aware of how to Recycling Right. We've kicked off two initiatives:

Bin audits: The Waste Team peeked inside recycling bins, to check that we're making the effort to Recycle Right. Remember to keep those plastic bags, soft plastics, lids and household waste, green waste, glass etc, out of the recycling bins.

Glass Recycling: A new glass recycling service began in September and is being trialled for six months as the Milton Transfer Station, in Bruce Street.

The trial is looking to divert glass from landfill, and to help develop and support better recycling processes for the district. Collected glass will be transported to Dunedin before being sent on for reprocessing with New Zealand's only glass manufacturer Visy in Auckland.

Council Waste and Greenspace Team Leader Scott Martin **(pictured)** says the trial will collect data that is required by the Ministry of Environment as the council keeps working on a District-wide process to stop glass going into landfills.

"The Clutha District is home to stunning beaches, special native places and stunning rural landscapes. I'm really passionate about recycling and we run a lot of education programmes to keep the Recyle Right message prominent.



"We're listening to residents who want options for glass recycling, and it's important that they know Council is working to progress this," he says.

For now the trial is will only be run through the Milton Transfer Station but it will help us understand how much glass recycling is needed in the District, and how well the system works for the community, Scott says.

To make the trial a success please give bottles and jars a quick rinse, remove the lids and sort the glass by colour.

New contract is set to help our rangatahi

Council has been awarded a new contract from the Ministry of Social Development to deliver a 26-week He Poutama Rangatahi programme. The contract is valued at $600,000 for three years.

The programme is designed to help rangatahi aged between 15-18 who are disengaged from school, not in employment, education or training.

Council Community Development Team Leader Lilly Paterson says the new programme is an adaptation and extension of the established Jobbortunities model, with a stronger emphasis on holistic wellbeing, structured weekly engagement, practical life skills and supported transition into employment.

There is also the potential for a two-year extension.

Dark Skies

Plans to create a special status in the Catlins

Council will write a letter of support for the Catlins Dark Sky Reserve initiative, a community-led project seeking International Dark Sky Park status for an area centred around Purakaunui Recreation Reserve in the Catlins.

This status will help protect the night sky from light pollution while celebrating the area's cultural, scientific, natural and educational values. At its 20 August meeting, Council heard more about the project.

First past the post

Electoral system news

Notice is given under section 28 of the Local Electoral Act 2001, that the Clutha District Council resolved on 25 August 2026 to retain the First Past the Post electoral system for the next triennial election in 2028.

Electors of the Clutha District Council have a right to demand a poll at any time to countermand the use of the First Past the Post electoral system. To find out what is needed for a valid demand go visitwww.cluthadc.govt.nz/news and search for "Demand a poll".

Direct debit processing changes

We have changed the way we process direct debits for rates this financial year.

You can now choose which working day you would like your direct debits to come out of your bank account. If you want to sign up for direct debit, simply complete our online form or contact us to request an emailed form.When you submit your form, let us know which day of the week you would like this to start.

If you are already on a direct debit schedule, please give us a call on 0800 801 350 to change your day.

Check out our What's On Guide

Scan the QR code to find loads of exciting events and activities happening throughout the district. We produce the guides to keep our communities updated and connected. If you have an event you would like included email **events@cluthadc.govt.nz**.

