

Mayor's Update – Building Momentum

The past three months have been a busy and productive period for the Mackenzie District Council. While Council meetings often focus on decisions made on the day, much of the real work happens in the weeks and months beforehand through workshops, committee meetings and discussions with our communities.

One of our biggest priorities has been completing the 2026/27 Annual Plan. Councillors and staff worked through several budget workshops, carefully reviewing expenditure, challenging assumptions and looking for savings wherever possible. The result was a lower rates increase than initially forecast while still protecting the essential services and infrastructure our district relies on.



We've also continued strengthening Council's governance by progressing work through the Finance and Water Services Subcommittees, and Property and Forestry working groups. These groups are tackling long-standing issues, improving oversight and ensuring important projects continue to move forward rather than sitting on the shelf.

Housing continues to be one of our biggest challenges. We've made further progress on the proposed St John ambulance station and retirement housing project in Twizel, while also continuing discussions around worker accommodation to support businesses

and essential services throughout the district.

Another important focus has been ensuring fairness across the district. Council's compliance programme around visitor accommodation is encouraging operators to meet planning, building and rating requirements, helping create a level playing field for everyone.

Looking ahead, local government reform will be one of the biggest issues facing councils over the coming years. I have been actively involved in discussions with government and neighbouring councils because I believe Mackenzie should help shape its own future rather than simply respond to decisions made elsewhere. Whatever the final structure looks like, my priority is ensuring our communities continue to have a strong local voice.

There is still plenty of work ahead. We continue to focus on improving financial sustainability, investing in core infrastructure, supporting economic growth and making practical decisions that benefit our residents.

I want to thank my fellow councillors, our Chief Executive and Council staff for their hard work and commitment over recent months. I also thank the many residents who continue to engage with Council. Your ideas, feedback and constructive conversations help us make better decisions, and together we are building a stronger future for the Mackenzie District.

Scott Aronsen

Councils unite behind Head Start proposal to reshape local government

The mayors of the Timaru, Mackenzie, Waimate and Waitaki districts have jointly lodged an ambitious proposal to the Government under the Head Start programme.

The plan, submitted to the Ministry of Cities Environment Regions and Transport on Sunday 9 August, proposes to create a single, stronger unitary authority across one of New Zealand's most economically significant regions.

The proposal is the product of months of intensive work, honest debate and close collaboration between the partner councils, who share strong communities of interest across their economies, river catchments and outlook.

Mackenzie District Mayor Scott Aronsen said the collaboration had been constructive and forward-looking throughout.

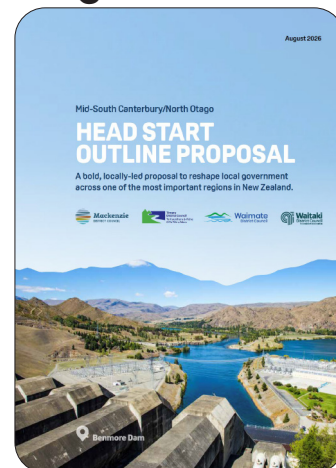
"We've had open, honest conversations around the table, and that's exactly what a decision of this scale deserves," Mayor Aronsen said.

"For our smaller and rural communities, this is about securing better services, stronger representation and real resilience for the future. Working together, we can achieve things none of us could deliver alone."

The new region takes in the five districts of Waitaki, Waimate, Mackenzie, Timaru and Ashburton. It stretches from Aoraki/Mount Cook, the nation's highest peak, down through the region's mighty braided rivers to the Pacific coast.

The mayors describe the region as a genuine powerhouse for the country – home to the Waitaki Valley hydro schemes that help power the North Island through the HVDC link, some of New Zealand's most productive agricultural land and food processing industries, and internationally renowned tourism destinations.

For further information on Headstart, including the whole media release, go to our Lets Talk page at letstalk.mackenzie.govt.nz > **Local Government Reform – Head Start**, or click the QR code to go directly to the plan document.



Make sure all wheelie bins are out on collection day by:

07:00

There are two collection trucks picking up different coloured bins which do not always follow the same route. Therefore bins may be emptied at any time during the day, starting from 7:00am.

Report an issue or problem?

Contact us on 0800 685 8514,
email info@mackenzie.govt.nz
or use MyMDC - mackenzie.govt.nz/mymdc



Visitor Accommodation Compliance

In response to a recent media report regarding short-term visitor accommodation in Lake Tekapo, the Council has acknowledged concerns that have been raised by members of the community and industry.

The issues are already being actively working on with a targeted compliance programme.

Mayor Scott Aronsen said the Council has taken concrete steps to respond.

“We understand that many residents want confidence that the rules around visitor accommodation are being followed consistently across the district.

“The Mayor and Councillors recognise the significant contribution accommodation providers make to the district’s economy and tourism sector. They also acknowledge the concerns raised by residents. Council’s role is to balance these interests by ensuring that applicable rules are followed.”

The full article can be read on Council’s website at mackenzie.govt.nz > [Mac News](#) > 2026 > [Visitor Accommodation Compliance](#)



Council welcomes Government investment in visitor infrastructure

Mackenzie District Council has welcomed the Government’s announcement of \$2.5 million from the International Visitor Levy (IVL) to support improvements to public toilet infrastructure across the district.

Read more at mackenzie.govt.nz > [Mac News](#) > [Mackenzie District Council welcomes Government investment in visitor infrastructure](#)



Are you ready?

Emergencies can happen any time, be it earthquakes, floods, fire or weather.

Last month’s earthquake near Te Anau is a useful reminder to check that our households are ready and we can look after ourselves and our families if an event happens.

Check out the advice on the Civil Defence Get Ready page for useful tips and resources at getready.govt.nz/prepared



What is MTFJ?

The Mayors Taskforce for Jobs (MTFJ) is a nationwide partnership that works to support all young people 16–25 into employment, education, or training.

WHAT DO WE DO?

MTFJ works to remove barriers for youth and adults. We offer support with:

- Drivers Licensing from Learners - Class 2
- Job seeking and job placement
- Pastoral care during and after job placement
- CV and cover letter building
- Apprenticeship and paperwork evenings
- Access and support with MSD Job Seeker Services
- Career pathway guidance
- Wage subsidies and training / tool allowances for employers and more



We want help build pathways for all our rangitahi and adults into successful, sustainable employment or education.

TALK TO US

If you’re an employer, job seeker or young person wondering how we can help, please reach out to your local facilitator.

Fairlie MTFJ facilitator

Mary McCambridge
027 216 8045
mary.mccambridge@mackenzie.govt.nz

Twizel MTFJ facilitator

Hannah Beer
027 465 8854
hannah.beer@mackenzie.govt.nz



Connect with us

If you’re looking for new career opportunities surrounded by wide-open spaces and stunning landscapes, connect with us at careers.mackenzie.govt.nz.

Tips for Winter Driving

Mackenzie often experiences some of the worst winter driving conditions in the country, and they can be life threatening.

Modern cars come with a myriad of safety features, however the most critical is the driver behind the wheel. A number of these safety features lose their effectiveness in snow, ice and driving rain. Note that having a 4WD vehicle does not exempt you from following these basis rules as although they may provide better traction they are still susceptible to black ice, fog, snow and other hazardous winter driving conditions.

Ideally, you should avoid driving in bad weather. If you must drive check the weather forecast – if you are heading out and the weather might turn on you, always choose the safer route over the quicker one. Be prepared, have your phone fully charged, stock your car for an emergency with items like blankets, gloves, hats, torches, first aid kit, tools, and always carry a plastic window ice scraper.

Other winter precautions include:

- Not travelling unless you really need to
- Drive more slowly than usual
- Watch out for maintenance vehicles, road information signs
- Being prepared for delays
- Respect of other drivers on the road to ensure we all arrive safely at our destination
- Maintain a greater following distance than you would in fine weather.
- Avoid sudden braking or sharp turns – these can cause skids.
- Dip your headlights on foggy, snowy, or very cloudy days.
- Use the lowest reasonable gear when travelling downhill, and the highest going uphill.
- Watch out for shady areas of the road on cold days, as ice will form faster and linger in these cooler spots.
- Be aware of black ice, which is particularly slippery – it can appear as a glossy sheen on the road but is sometimes impossible to spot. Black ice is most common on quiet roads.
- Slow down on bridges, flyovers, in tunnels, and shady patches on the road
- If you're travelling at dawn, be wary of frost.
- Accelerate smoothly and brake gently.
- On stormy and windy days, take corners slowly as trees or debris may have been blown onto the road.
- If you are involved in a crash, tell the police even if no one is injured. This type of information helps us to make improvements to the road where necessary
- If you get stuck stay with your vehicle and keep everyone warm until help arrives
- In the event of an emergency call 111



Avoid closed roads

Top reasons to avoid closed roads in the Mackenzie District:

- **It is against the law:** Disregarding road closed signs is a traffic offense.
- **Hidden dangers:** Roads under snow and flood can hide several dangers: damage to the road (washouts, missing bridges, damaged culverts), hidden slips, debris (rocks, trees, animals, abandoned vehicles), or strong currents that will sweep a car away.
- **Operational staff:** Mountain passes and rural highways frequently suffer from heavy snow and black ice. These roads require heavy machinery to clear before they can be safely reopened. Other vehicles traveling on these roads risk impeding the clearing operations and delaying everyone's travel.
- **Voided insurance:** Driving on a closed road violates the terms of most rental car and personal vehicle insurance policies. You will pay out of pocket for any damage to your vehicle, or any towing/rescue costs you incur.
- **Lack of service:** Cellular reception and access to help are very limited in rural and alpine areas of New Zealand. It may be difficult to get help if you run into trouble on a closed rural road.
- **Risk to emergency responders:** If you need help on a closed road, you may find that all the available responders are already dealing with the emergency elsewhere. You could be taking them away from the situation they are already responding to, and you may have to wait for an extended time until they are free.

Home energy toolkits

Alpine Energy and Mackenzie District Council have launched Home Energy Toolkits.

These toolkits can be used to identify key issues in a home that waste energy including: dampness, heat loss, and power-hungry appliances, giving you the tools to create a drier, more efficient home.

The kits can be borrowed from Mackenzie District Libraries at Fairlie and Twizel and staff can show you how to use them.

There will be future public sessions held at the libraries from Alpine Energy and Mackenzie District Council staff to demonstrate the advantages of the kit.



DID YOU KNOW ...

Batteries can cause fires

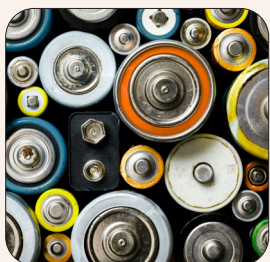
Please do not put batteries in your kerbside bins.

There is a risk they will cause fires when rubbish is compacted.

Old batteries can be dropped off for FREE at any of our Resource Recovery Parks at Fairlie, Tekapo and Twizel.

Batteries accepted are:

- Household batteries – AAA, AA, 9V, C, D
- Button cell batteries – i.e. watch and hearing aid batteries
- Re-chargeable batteries from hand held tools
- Automotive batteries



Find out more about our Resource Recovery Parks at mackenzie.govt.nz > Services > Rubbish and Recycling > Resource Recovery Parks



Did you know?

If you intend to keep more than two dogs that are over 3 months old, you will need to let Council know.

Register your dogs today at mackenzie.govt.nz > Services > Dogs and Animals > Owning a Dog > Registering your dog



The Mackenzie Grant Finder

Mackenzie District Council has teamed up with GrantGuru to develop the Mackenzie Grant Finder.

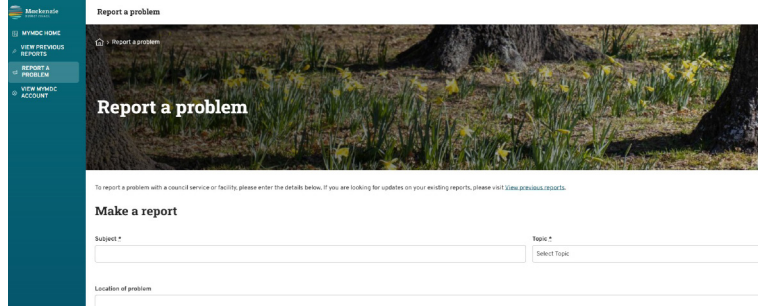
The Mackenzie Grant Finder brings together available grants and funding options specific to local community groups, not-for-profits, businesses and individuals.

Organisations and individuals can use the search engine and filter grants by industry, sector, or project type, as well as benefit from expert advice and tips to strengthen their grant applications.

This free resource is a comprehensive and up-to-date list of funding options for our community. It is an easy way to check out what grants are available.

You can also register for alerts about funding programs that are relevant to you when they become available, so that businesses and community groups can prepare funding applications well in advance of the closing date.

Discover more at mackenzie.govt.nz/grantfinder



MyMDC

MyMDC is the online portal for Council services.

A MyMDC account will let you report a problem with a council service or facility directly from your device. We will also then be able to update you with the progress of your request.

All you need for a MyMDC account is an email address and password.

Sign up to MyMDC at mackenzie.govt.nz/mymdc



Booking Facilities

Are you planning an event, and would like to see if a community centre or public open space within the Mackenzie District is available? Booking schedules are available on our website.

Schedules for hall and event venues at Albury, Fairlie, Tekapo and Twizel are under mackenzie.govt.nz > Services > Parks, Venues and Recreation > Halls & Event Venues

To book a facility, contact Council on 0800 685 8514 or email info@mackenzie.govt.nz



Information request responses are now available online

One of the important functions of any council is to respond to requests for information under the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (LGOIMA).

The questions that are asked cover a wide range of topics and the responses are now being proactively published on the council website. However, for privacy reasons, information that would identify an individual are not published.

New responses are published at the end of each month, at mackenzie.govt.nz > Council > Information Requests



Did you know?

You can now watch Mackenzie District Council meetings live online.

If you miss the livestream, you can find the videos and catch up on our website. Look for the meeting details on our Meetings and Agendas section of the website at mackenzie.govt.nz > Council > Meetings and Agendas

