



Mackenzie Waldron is president of the New Zealand Secondary Schools' Student Council. PHOTO: Jan Finlayson

Mackenzie Waldron elected NZ Secondary School's Student Council president

Geraldine High School 2025 head student Mackenzie Waldron's student leadership is more than local. She was recently elected president of the New Zealand Secondary Schools' Student Council (NZSSSC).

The council, formed in 2021 to bring a nationwide voice to secondary student advocacy, comprises student representatives from the nation's regions. Mackenzie's presidency comes after apprenticeship in Geraldine primary and secondary school student politics, including representing the Mid and South Canterbury

region on the NZSSSC and managing council communications in 2024.

Speaking on the NZSSSC's regular OAR FM (Otago Access Radio) podcast recently, she said her experience in the council has been "humbling and exciting ... it's given me the chance to connect with so many passionate young leaders across the country who are just as eager as I am to advocate for meaningful change in our schools and the youth of New Zealand."

Mackenzie's vision for her presidency is council growth into regions presently without

representation and the establishment of institutional 'pillars': inclusivity, collaboration, and action. Arenas for action are mental health ("local school counsellors are important for advice on this"), equity in education ("everyone learns differently"), and opportunities for student growth ("giving all students the same opportunities regardless of what their background is").

Along with running the OAR FM podcast, Mackenzie will, with MP Mark Patterson, co-host quarterly youth voice forums for a wide range of stakeholders, from local government

to youth mental health interests. She'll also host monthly national council meetings. Keeping things real at flaxroots level, NZSSSC regional meetings are held fortnightly.

Keen to learn more about the New Zealand Secondary Schools' Student Council? Visit its Instagram page or check out its podcast every fourth Thursday at 5pm on OAR FM at 105.4 FM, 1575 AM, or live-streamed at oar.org.nz or via Spotify or Apple Podcasts.

JAN FINLAYSON



Viking Venus is a passenger (cruise) ship built in 2021, currently sailing under the flag of Norway. Viking does not call its ships "luxury" but the smart inclusions that you find on *Viking Venus*, coupled with intelligent service and the ship's amenities, create a comfortable experience that can compete with cruise lines that embrace the title.

Last Sunday, around 600 passengers from the cruise ship *Viking Venus* rocked into Geraldine for the day, "seeking retail therapy, a bit of history or a bite to eat," according to Geraldine.nz (G.nz)

In the 8 January G.nz Buzz Update, we read that this tour was 'free' for ship passengers and was, unusually, scheduled for a Sunday.

"Given the nature of most businesses in Geraldine, being owner-operated, the idea of giving up your day off may not seem that appealing. However, passengers often use their cruise as a destination sampler, with the intention of returning to those places they enjoyed as independent travellers. They also share their experiences with family and friends, arousing interest in Geraldine through word of mouth. ...

"While passenger visitors are very complimentary about Geraldine, they have also reported disappointment when they find the town closed upon their arrival."

Having ventured into Timaru on Sunday morning, Hugh and I arrived back in Geraldine around lunchtime to find the town awash with visitors. Many businesses, usually closed on Sundays, had their doors wide open. It was a delightful scene and a great welcome for the crowds, who happily enjoyed our wee village. (Note to self: I should have grabbed a photo!)

Anyhoo, well done to the businesses who made the extra effort; the word will surely get around that Geraldine is a great place to visit. Seven more ships are expected before the end of March so keep up the good work.

Enjoy this edition, and the last of the school holidays. Shame about the weather though, maybe it'll improve? xoxo FI

The sea, once it casts its spell, holds one in its net of wonder forever.

JACQUES COUSTEAU



LOUK Clothing's new owner, Dave Keane. PHOTO: Jan Finlayson

New look LOUK opens its doors

LOUK Clothing, purveyor of New Zealand-branded clothing made with New Zealand fibre, has a new owner, a new look in its long-time former Geraldine post office home, and an amped-up array of brands on offer, building on the business' long-standing recipe for success.

Dave Keane bought LOUK from the previous owner in late 2024. The local agronomist-turned-retailer (now part-time agronomist) says, "It worked well for the previous owner: its location, the building itself, and the brands that sell themselves. They're iconic New Zealand brands; high-quality clothing."

He says, "We've freshened everything up, painted, and put in new furniture and fixtures. We have brands that were previously here. We've still got Swazi, Norsewear, and MKM. And we've got some other New Zealand brands: Mons Royale and Swannndri. We wanted to retain the older demographic while bringing in brands to appeal to a younger age group."

Dave says a single clothing item from LOUK can be right for many contexts. "We lean toward outdoor adventure clothes - hunting, biking, trekking - but it's really cool clothing, modern, and can be worn out and about, casually, or on

a night out."

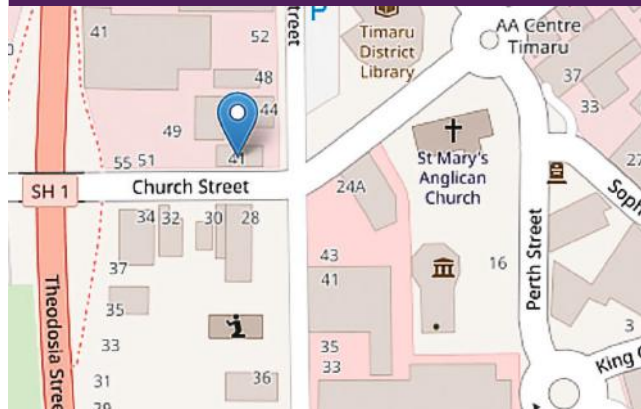
A range of accessories is a flourish to the business' primary focus on clothing. "We've got dog jackets, bags, and New Zealand-branded sunglasses, as well as things like tops, shorts, pants, hunting gear, and waterproof leggings."

LOUK Clothing is at 47 Talbot Street. Hours are 9am-5pm Monday-Friday and 10am-4pm weekends and public holidays. To learn more, visit Louk's Facebook page or call 03 693 9070.

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Anna Clubb and Deana Averill. Dean says, "I'll still be around to support Anna as she settles into her new role." PHOTO: Quyen Tran

New children's social worker to support Geraldine's young families

Geraldine welcomes new children's social worker, Anna Clubb, who is taking over from Deana Averill. Anna brings seven years of experience as a teacher aide at local primary schools to her new role.

"I'm excited to continue supporting our local families and to build on the strong foundation Deana has established," says Anna, who moved with her husband to Geraldine from the UK in 2016. They now have a two-year-old daughter.

The transition comes as Deana retires after dedicating 42 years to social work, 15 years of those to service in the Geraldine community. "The relationships we've built with families and various agencies over the years are invaluable,"

says Deana. "I'm confident Anna will bring fresh perspectives while maintaining these crucial connections."

In her new position, Anna will work across Geraldine's early childhood centres and primary schools. Her education and behaviour management background, combined with her volunteering experience in the UK, positions her well for the role.

"Working as a teacher aide at both Woodbury and Geraldine primary schools has given me deep insights into our community's needs," says Anna.

The position, funded by the Geraldine Children Social Work Trust through grants and fundraising, involves collaboration with numerous local

organisations. "We work closely with the Geraldine Resource Centre, Benevolent Trust, Temuka-Geraldine Rotary Club, Family Works, and other organisations," says Anna.

As for Deana's retirement plans? "I'm looking forward to spending more time with my pottery," she says. "But I'll still be around to support Anna as she settles into her new role."

The trust continues to fund two social workers who work in schools and early childhood centres in the Geraldine district, ensuring consistent support for local families. To connect with Anna Clubb, please contact your local primary school or early childhood centre. QUYÊN TRẦN

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gnews IN BRIEF



CONSTRUCTION OF THE GERALDINE SCULPTURE TRAIL BOARDWALK, alongside the Waihi River, is well underway. While pictures of the new pathway have received a mixed reception on social media, for the most part it seems the community are appreciative that the trail is now more accessible. PHOTOS: Craig Matheson

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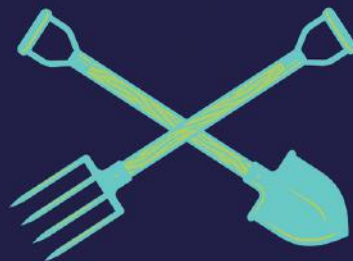
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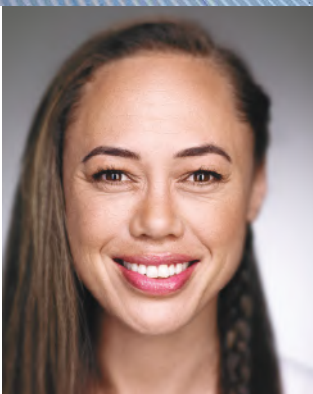
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FROM LEFT: Waihi River Trail volunteers Gavin Oliver, Arlene Waite, David Attwood, Des Nolan, and Ken Jordan. PHOTO: Jan Finlayson

Waihi River trail rhododendron collection second-largest in New Zealand

Receiving donated noteworthy rhododendrons from local growers Jenny and Ken Jordan and from Taranaki specialists was a flourish to a "busy" 2024 for the Waihi River Trail Volunteer Group, says group spokesperson David Attwood.

"Ken and Jenny gave us mainly large leaf species, grown from collected seed and not released, and eight hybrids from imported seed, grown and released by Ken. And, from Pukeiti [Rhododendron Trust] and the Taranaki Regional Council, rare and endangered New Zealand hybrids and species."

The group's vision for the woodland and its

record of stewardship makes it a magnet for gifts from rhododendron conservationists. David says, "We were selected as a place to grow them. We're about the second-largest rhododendron collection outside of Pukeiti." Over 800 varieties grow in the sprawling area of roughly 1,100 rhododendrons.

Among donations in 2024 were "around half a dozen special new releases from Bill Robinson from Tikitere Gardens in Rotorua. They're from his imported stock, mostly American; probably exclusive to Tikitere and us."

If last year kept the Waihi volunteers creative

and active, 2025 looks like a redux. David says, "We're investigating furthering the area with track improvement and putting in another area specifically for large-leaf rhododendrons and specimen trees."

The Waihi River Trail Volunteer Group works to beautify the urban Waihi riverside and create and maintain recreation trails in the area under a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Timaru District Council. Council, in turn, has MOUs with the land's administrators, the Department of Conservation and Land Information New Zealand. **JAN FINLAYSON**



Geraldine Multi Challenge is set for 23 March. PHOTO: Facebook/Geraldine Multi Challenge

Active in Geraldine in 2025

New Year, New You' sentiments are common this time of year, and many involve an increased focus on health and movement. Luckily there is a wide range of options for staying active around Geraldine this summer!

The trails through town and Talbot Forest provide opportunities to enjoy nature whether you choose to walk at a leisurely tempo while enjoying the art installations or pick up the pace with others from Run Geraldine on one of their regular meet-ups. Or download the Timaru Trails app and check out the Geraldine and Peel Forest options.

The outdoor pool complex is a great place to cool off on a hot day with a playground and picnic area right next door in the Geraldine Domain.

Slightly further afield opportunities abound for those seeking more of a thrill, with rafting, canyoning with Big Rock Adventures, or guided tours in the Peel Forest/Mesopotamia areas with Alps2Ocean.

If you're looking to expend some energy and support local organisations at the same time, why not get involved in one of two upcoming events - the Amazing Race Geraldine on 6 February, organised by St Andrew's Church, or the Geraldine Multi Challenge event on 23 March, hosted by Geraldine Lions and Bike Geraldine.

And then there's the multitude of sports clubs in town offering something for everyone.

Further information about these activities, groups and businesses can be found on our website Geraldine.nz, through a Facebook search or friendly chat with the teams at the Information Centre or Community Resource Centre.

Which option will you choose to meet your movement goals for 2025?

gnews LETTER TO THE EDITOR



Arts council's 2025 season kicks off with a full house

Phew, what a fabulous night with Half Light! [The article in] GNews certainly helped in getting new audience members along from Ashburton and Methven ...

Wonderful feedback from the audience about how much they enjoyed not only the incredible show but also the smiley interaction with us. Huge thanks to the remarkable Pauline and Jane who served 43 cuppas at last [Thursday's] sold out concert.

After costs, we will have a nice profit of

\$113.78. Whoop whoop!! Well done to Richard for the quick flick-lighting prank when the audience was invited to sing along; great laugh.

Rennie and Bob genuinely love Geraldine and all we do for them, and yes, they are hoping to return next year. Congratulations to everyone for giving 100 people such a great night!

ELAINE TAYLOR GERALDINE COMMUNITY ARTS COUNCIL

Half Light perform at the Lodge Theatre. PHOTO: Hugh McCafferty

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Four Peaks Seido Karate

Four Peaks Seido Karate welcomes back all members and former members to its 2025 classes.

Classes start back on **TUESDAY, 14 JANUARY**

Beach training is on **SUNDAY, 26 JANUARY AT CAROLINE BAY**

Classes start back on **THURSDAY, 13 FEBRUARY**

Venue:

Geraldine Bowling Club Rooms
45 Wright Street, Geraldine 7930

Training Days & Times:

- Tuesday 6pm-7.30 pm**
General Grade class with Sensei Gisell
- Thursday 5pm-5.50pm**
General Grade class with Sensei Peter
- 5.50pm-6.50pm**
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gnewsRESULTS

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GERALDINE DISTRICT GOLF CLUB 11.1.25 Mens Net Medal: D Goodwin 70 (NET), M Shepherd 71, I Smith 72, I MacDonald 72, G Leslie 73, R Cosgrove 73, D Sheldon 73, G Gallichan 73, M MacDonald 73. **Womens Net Medal:** J Gallichan 79 (NET), N Hume 79, S Dwyer 85. **9.1.25 Twilight Stableford:** D Amos 21, J Robinson 19, G Gallichan 19, H Sheed 19. **8.1.25 Mixed Stableford:** I MacDonald 38 PTS, M Oldfield 38, H Oldfield 37, M Bensemann 37, M MacDonald 36, S Robertson 37, D Sheldon 36, D Law 36, B Waller 36. **7.1.25 Summer Stableford - Liz Lewis Trophy:** D Dewe 39 PTS, S Bensemann 36, R Hobbs 36, M Gregan 33, H Sheldon 33. **9H Stableford:** B Bendsen 18 PTS.

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SUNDAY 1PM

COMING SOON: MARIA (30/1)
BRIDGET JONES: MAD ABOUT THE BOY (13/2) TINA (27/2)

KINDLY NOTE: FROM 1 FEBRUARY THERE WILL BE NO EFTPOS AVAILABLE. ALL SALES WILL BE CASH ONLY.

THE AMAZING RACE GERALDINE

12pm Thursday 6 February 2025

Grab your family, friends and neighbours
and join in this awesome community event

Entry fee: \$30 per team/car*

ROAD LEGAL VEHICLE/DRIVER

12pm: Sausage Sizzle

ST ANDREW'S CARPARK, 10 COX STREET

4.30pm-ish: Prizegiving

HOSTED BY ST ANDREW'S CHURCH

*REGISTRATION IS NON-REFUNDABLE AND MUST BE RECEIVED BY 2 FEBRUARY

PRE-REGISTER YOUR TEAM NOW

AMAZINGRACEGERALDINE@GMAIL.COM OR FACEBOOK: AMAZING RACE GERALDINE