



Spring has sprung in Marlborough's premier parks

It's a wonderful time to be out and about in Marlborough.

Mayor Nadine Taylor said the region was blessed with some of the highest sunshine hours in the country, good soils and excellent growing conditions for a wide variety of trees, shrubs and flowers. "Council's gardens team do an excellent job looking after our parks and reserves. Pollard Park in Blenheim looks particularly magnificent right now - the annual beds are stunning with the tulips flowering. The rose gardens have been weeded, fertilised and mulched. The camellia gardens, cottage garden and perennial border are all looking great too with spring growth," she said.

In Seymour Square, staff have just finished working through the annual beds weeding and dead heading. The border and rose gardens have also been given a tidy up and a layer of mulch added to help retain moisture over summer. A recent visitor to the province wrote to Council to say the annual beds at both Seymour Square and Pollard Park were nothing short of magnificent. "Best I've ever seen and I have been involved in parks and horticulture for a couple of decades," the visitor said. "Your gardeners are doing an amazing job! Please pass on my thanks." This bodes well as both gardens are the



📍 Blenheim's Pollard Park is primed and ready for the influx of visitors for Garden Marlborough

backdrop to one of Marlborough's biggest events in early November - Garden Marlborough. "Now in its 31st year, it brings in thousands of visitors and generates over \$1 million in economic benefit. Last year more than 6,000 people attended the Garden Fête in Pollard Park and 4,000 tickets were sold for events and workshops," Mayor Taylor said. She thanked the Garden Marlborough committee and major sponsors Bayleys and extended a special acknowledgement to the original committee members for their vision all those years ago: Carolyn

Ferraby, Jeremy Jones, David Robinson, Keren Mitchell, Tim Crawford, Puddi Shields, Richard MacFarlane and Ralph Ballinger. "They had an idea for a garden show like no other - a long weekend of tours and workshops culminating in a fête, showing off everything and anything to do with gardening." "I am particularly proud of the support Council provides to Garden Marlborough, primarily by our garden team who ensure our parks look their absolute best. My thanks to that team for their professional gardening excellence - here's to another successful Garden Marlborough," she said.

Welcoming Week 2024 creates opportunities for connection

Establishing connections was a key theme during Marlborough's 2024 Welcoming Week, with eight events attracting people hailing from all over the world.



📍 Paz Herrera, Cinthya Iguaran, Susana Iguaran, Shaylen Iguaran and Wendy Iguaran perform at the Welcoming Week Community Expo.

Welcoming Communities Coordinator Heather Barnes said the week was a great opportunity to celebrate the diversity of cultures in Marlborough and focus on creating connections between newcomers and long-term residents. "We had such a variety of events, with everything from an international story time for preschoolers to a Marlborough Business Trust 'Biz Breakfast', focusing on the Red Cross Pathways to Employment Programme and how it helps employers connect with refugee-background job-seekers," she said. "We have so many gifted musicians, dancers and performers in Marlborough, some born here and many others who have joined our community from around the world. We were lucky to enjoy their talents at some of the events." It was the second year Marlborough had put on celebrations for Welcoming Week, a national

initiative which ran from 6 to 15 September. "This year, we added a Welcoming Week Community Expo designed to showcase the variety of support organisations that exist in Marlborough. We really appreciated the support from more than 30 local organisations who took up the opportunity to host a stall," Heather said. "Many of our events were back for a second year and it was wonderful to see them attract even more people this year. Maataa Waka had more than 50 people attend their waiata practice and morning tea, which was a great opportunity for newcomers to learn some Te Reo Māori and practice waiata in a comfortable environment." A youth sports day, hosted by the Marlborough Youth Council, was also added to the lineup this year, and attracted 70 people for an afternoon of games, sport and food at Pollard Park.

Marlborough's Significant Natural Areas in good shape



📍 Volunteers helping plant Marlborough's east coast

Thirteen new Significant Natural Area (SNA) sites were added to the programme during the past year bringing the Marlborough total to 782.

The SNA project began in 2000 and involves Council collecting information about natural areas on private land and working in partnership with landowners to help protect them. Sites in Marlborough include notable trees, tracts of indigenous forest and areas home to endangered or protected flora or fauna. Biodiversity coordinator Mike Aviss outlined to Council's Environment and Planning Committee the importance of the programme in controlling weeds and pests. He noted 30,000 seedlings had been planted on the East Coast in the past three years to restore indigenous biodiversity along the coast. "We've got to a situation on the coast where ngaio are poking their heads above the marram grass which will eventually be shaded out by forest,"

he said. "The spinifex plantings we did are now starting to help build a sand dune. It's very encouraging." Mike's visits to SNAs this year have resulted in some surprising sights including green geckos in the Marlborough Sounds. Council's landowner assistance programme helped landowners to protect and restore SNA sites and there are currently 32 projects active with \$232,550 of Council funding spent on managing them during 2023/24. The programme visited 38 sites, 24 managed and 14 unmanaged. "As expected, managed sites were in better condition - the most obvious threat to sites in the north are possums while in the south, old man's beard is a real issue," Mike said.