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# A word from the Chamber



## **T**here's a good chance that if you're reading this, Cambridge already means something to you.

You may live here, run a business here, visit regularly, or perhaps you're discovering the town for the first time through these pages. Wherever you sit, you are part of the story of Cambridge. It's a town that continues to grow while holding tightly to the community spirit that makes it so special.

Cambridge has long been known as the Home of Champions, and while sport is proudly part of our identity, it's the people behind the place that truly define it. Walk down Victoria Street on any given morning and you'll see that sense of connection everywhere; locals catching up over coffee, visitors browsing boutique stores, cyclists heading out along the river paths, and businesses welcoming familiar faces.

It's this blend of energy and authenticity that makes Cambridge unique.

At the Cambridge Business Chamber, we feel incredibly privileged to work alongside the businesses, organisations, and individuals who help shape the town every day. One of our important roles is helping to share the Cambridge story, not just locally, but across the region and beyond.

That's where the three platforms we steward come together.

Love Cambridge, the magazine you are holding, is our storytelling platform. It celebrates the people, experiences, and places that give Cambridge its character. Many of the businesses and stories featured here may be familiar to you, and hopefully you'll discover a few new favourites along the way.

Alongside this sits [cambridge.co.nz](http://cambridge.co.nz), our digital front door. Recently rebuilt to strengthen Cambridge's presence in an increasingly digital and AI-driven world, the website helps connect visitors with everything our town has to offer, from boutique shopping and hospitality to events and day-trip adventures.

Together, these platforms sit alongside the work of the Cambridge Business Chamber, which continues to support and advocate for our local business community, helping to create the environment where people and businesses can thrive.

What makes Cambridge particularly special is the way the whole town participates in its success. Our events fill the streets with life, our businesses deliver outstanding hospitality, and our community welcomes visitors in a way that keeps them coming back.

So, whether you're a long-time local, a weekend visitor, or someone discovering Cambridge for the first time, thank you for being part of the journey.

We hope this edition of Love Cambridge inspires you to explore a little further, support local businesses, and continue enjoying everything that makes this town such a remarkable place.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kelly'.

Kelly Bouzaid  
Chief Executive  
Cambridge Business Chamber





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*In honour and memory of Tony Bouzaid, who created Glenfern Sanctuary on Great Barrier Island.*

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The stories presented in this publication represent the diverse and vibrant community in Cambridge. They provide a snapshot of Cambridge's businesses, organisations, and activities, but may not encompass all entities or activities within the area. Stories were developed based on the information available at the time of creation and may be subject to change. We have made reasonable efforts to ensure the accuracy and relevance of the content; however, we cannot guarantee its completeness or currency. We encourage readers to conduct further research and engage with relevant sources for the most up-to-date and comprehensive information.



MAYOR MIKE PETTIT

# What I love about Cambridge

**I've lived and worked in Cambridge for a long time, always connected to the education field.**

For many years, my world was the playground, the classroom, the morning drop-off and the quiet conversations at the school gate. Being part of Cambridge Primary School for 17 years meant watching children grow, learn, and find their feet, while getting to know families across generations. That stays with you.

What I love about Cambridge is that sense of continuity. People don't just pass through each other's lives. They stay connected. You see it when former students stop to say hello, when parents remember your name years later, or when young people come back as adults and choose to raise their own families here.

That feeling is truly comforting.

Cambridge is a town where people care, often quietly, without fuss. It's in the volunteers who give their time week after week, the local philanthropists who give often without expecting recognition or something in return, the coaches on muddy sidelines, the organisers behind the scenes, and the neighbours who look out for one another without being asked.

Living and raising my own kids in Cambridge, I love how much pride people take in this place. Not in a boastful way, but in how they look after it. Our streets, our awa,



Mike and Nic Pettit

our schools, our sports grounds and our community spaces matter because they're part of everyday life. They're where memories are made, laughter is heard, and friendships develop.

What's always stood out to me is how supportive this town can be. Through good times and hard ones, people step up. They show kindness, lend a hand, check in, and make sure no one is left behind. That feeling of community has been established, nurtured, and handed down through generations. No matter where our town is in 20 years, I hope that sense remains unchanged.

Cambridge has grown, but it hasn't lost its heart. There's room here for long time locals and for those who are newer to town. New stories keep being added, while the old ones are still respected.

For me, loving Cambridge comes back to the people, especially our young people. Seeing them grow in confidence, knowing they feel supported, and believing they belong here are things I'll always care deeply about.

**This town has given my family and me a great deal over the years. I'm proud to call it home.**



# A life shaped by land, water and community spaces

**L**iz Stolwyk's life has been shaped not in council chambers, but out on the land, beside the water, and in the community spaces that bring people together.

These days, Liz and her husband, Andrew Reymer, farm in Ōhaupō, but rural life has always been part of her story, having grown up in rural New Zealand. It's where she learned firsthand the care required to look after land, and how decisions made on paper can play out very differently on the ground.

Farming sits at the centre of her life, alongside decades spent managing Lake Karāpiro domain, one of Waipā's most heavily used and deeply loved major event spaces.

Between paddocks and riverbanks, she has seen how decisions ripple widely, shaping environments, livelihoods and communities long after the immediate work is done.

Together with Andrew, Liz has managed the Karāpiro domain and its major facilities for more than 20 years, balancing sport, events, tourism, environmental care and public access.

"It's work that's equal parts practical and people-focused, with a constant balancing act between access, safety, the environment, and the many different ways the lake is used," she says. "It's taught me that no decision is ever in isolation. Everything connects."

Before local government, Liz worked in tourism and events, including Mystery Creek, managing the Cambridge i-SITE, Chamber of Commerce, and working overseas with Contiki. Across all of it, the common thread was people; bringing them together, managing complexity, and focusing on the detail needed for strong communities.



**"I love being the person keeping things ticking over behind the scenes," Liz says. "I'm always thinking ahead so others can simply turn up and enjoy themselves."**

When Liz first stood for the Waipā District Council in 2013, it was driven by a desire to represent the communities and landscapes she knew best. Over four terms, including two as Deputy Mayor, she became known for bridging together rural and urban perspectives, and ensuring the voices of farmers, families and small communities were part of decision-making across Cambridge, Karāpiro, Waipā and the wider Waikato region.

More recently, her work has expanded at a regional level through the Waikato Regional Council, where she chairs the Regional Transport Committee.

“Looking after public transport across the Waikato can feel daunting at times,” she says. “There are so many moving parts, and the decisions you make affect how people connect to work, school, and each other every day.”

Her environmental focus has also deepened through hands-on work responding to issues such as the spread of gold clams in local waterways, reinforcing how fragile and connected the region’s ecosystems are.

What continues to drive Liz is a connection to people, place and community. She maintains close ties with Cambridge and is also involved in philanthropic work that supports local initiatives to strengthen community wellbeing.

At heart, Liz’s story isn’t a political one. First and foremost, she is a mother to her three boys, Josh, Curtis, and Nathan, and she says being a mum to them is the most enormous privilege. The boys are now young adults forging their own paths, and she hopes her work ethic has helped shape them, alongside her husband Andrew and many close friends who have supported her along the way.



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BLAIR AND  
TAYLER PATERSON

# The heart of Homebrew

**H**omebrew was always meant to exist. Blair and Tayler Paterson were just waiting for the right moment and the right site to bring it to life.

Before they ever had a café, they had a plan. They wanted a drive-through coffee bar. Fast, energetic, and built for connection. And they were bold enough to chase it. They drove around Hamilton, spotting potential sites, knocking on landowners' doors and pitching a dream with optimism.

They were young, running on determination, and "a bit delusional in a good way," Tayler laughs. Their son, Mason, was a baby at the time, strapped into the back seat as they searched for a car park big enough to make the numbers work. And then Cambridge appeared, not as the original plan, but as the first real "yes".

In late 2019, an opportunity came to establish a café adjacent to a Waitomo fuel stop. There'd been a sudden change, and a small building needed a new leaseholder quickly. Blair and Tayler had about 72 hours to decide. It wasn't a drive through. It wasn't Hamilton. But it was worth a shot.

What happened next is part business origin story, part community effort. With almost no budget, they built the first Homebrew themselves with help from family and friends - floors, paint, benches, whatever they could do to get the doors open. By the end, there was no money left.

"One night we were so close to opening and had zero money left over," Tayler says. "We just said, 'we have to open tomorrow, somebody has to come and buy coffee!'"

Cambridge did. From the beginning, Homebrew's point of difference wasn't a secret blend or a complicated concept. It was a deliberate decision to make coffee culture feel welcoming.

A big part of the menu design came from that mindset: make great coffee, make it approachable,



and make the experience feel like someone's glad you walked in. That philosophy shaped everything, from the bright, energetic branding to the way staff are trained to connect. Homebrew feels fast and fun, but never rushed. The pace is high, the vibe is friendly, and the welcome is consistent.

And that's where Blair and Tayler's partnership becomes the real story. They both recognise their strengths are different, but perfectly matched. Tayler leads with heart and relationships. Blair leans into coffee craft, systems and business building.

"Tayler is the people person. She really loves that side of the business," Blair says. "I care about that too, but I'm really passionate about the coffee itself, including the taste, the process, refining the blends, building systems, automation, and making the business scalable."

Over time, Homebrew has become a front row seat to the milestones of its customers' lives.

**"We hear about pregnancies, we hear about loss... we see people on their first date here, and then they end up engaged and married," she says. "It never stops feeling special. It's all because of coffee, but it's really not about the coffee."**

If you read Homebrew's reviews, she says, you'll often see that truth spelled out: the people were amazing... and the coffee was good too. The "vehicle" is coffee, but the outcome is community.

"We can teach coffee," Tayler says. "What you can't teach is someone who's genuine, fun, and kind."

Over the years, they've watched shy team members grow into confident leaders, including staff who have become minor local celebrities in Cambridge, recognised in supermarkets by families who know them by name. Tayler gets emotional talking about it, because for them, the business isn't just about serving customers; it's about developing people.

"We want our team to leave better than when they started," she says. "To know you can run a business and be kind to your team, and still hold your values."

Blair says they set business goals early, intending to open four shops in four years. They positioned the business from day one to enable expansion. That meant getting off the tools earlier than most owners can afford, hiring sooner, and focusing on leases, systems, team development and product consistency.

The pandemic disrupted timelines and supply chains, but they still reached four stores in five years, and today Homebrew sits at six locations, with around 25 staff.

The latest brings the story back to Cambridge. Their newest Cambridge café evolved from a shipping container set up into a full café, and opening it has felt like both a milestone and a moment to breathe.

"It's the first time we're not laser focused on opening stores," Blair says. "It's been full gas until now."

There's still a drive-through dream in the background, too. But whatever comes next, the heart of Homebrew stays the same: a business built on care, made for community, serving neighbours, and led by a partnership that knows exactly what it's trying to create.



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## Roots before foundations

**H**ow Ngāti Koroki Kahukura kaumātua Harry Wilson tends the history beneath Cambridge's newest developments, and why he says the land must be acknowledged before the building can begin.

Long before Cambridge was Cambridge, it was Horotiu Pa, built by the infamous ancestor Koroki. It was the central hub to the Kingitanga, with gardens as far as the eyes could see. And long before the roads, the roundabouts and the retirement villages, there were people who knew every bend of the Waikato River, and every story carried on the wind from Maungatautari.

Harry Wilson knows those stories. As a kaumātua for Ngāti Koroki Kahukura, he is the living thread between that world and this one; 26 generations deep in a rohe that most people drive through without knowing its history.

"My role in blessing an area and being able to pass it on to developers or to people is to offer them historically what used to be on the land there," Harry says. "The narrative around that particular place is pretty important when we are building infrastructure. We need to address the history first."

What most people don't realise, he says, is just how

central this area was to Māoridom. The land around Cambridge and Lake Te Koo Utu was a central hub, a place of plentiful crops and abundant fish, where people came to rest, to gather, and to resolve their differences. Around 20,000 people once called it home.

History is not always easy. Cambridge's Museum now stands on what was once the site of the country's first Native Land Court. From 1866 to the early 1900s, the court processed the fate of Māori land titles here, a system widely understood to have been stacked against Māori. When people came out of those hearings broken-hearted, it was the second Māori King, Tāwhiao, who would take them to the shores of Lake Te Koo Utu. Unable to change the outcome of the court, he offered the only thing he could, a blessing with the water, to relieve their sorrows.

Harry carries that weight with him whenever he performs a karakia. Among many, he has blessed Cambridge Resthaven, Ryman's new Patrick Hogan Village on Cambridge Road, and led the ceremony for the start of the new expressway section from Cambridge to Piarere, where a kārearea, the New Zealand falcon, now stands as an installation. "The Bird of Peace - Ngāi te Uru Manu," Harry calls it.



In Te Ao Māori, blessings work across two worlds, the physical and the spiritual. A karakia clears residual energy from land that has been built on, lived on, grieved on. "It's basically asking permission to use the space again," Harry explains. The night before the blessing, he receives tohu (signs) associated with the area to make sure it is culturally safe.

Harry's mother and grandparents instilled in him a simple truth: You can't change what happened in the past but you can help build what comes next. Telling these stories helps with the healing for Ngāti Koroki Kahukura.

What does he hope that the next generation inherits?

"Unity," says Harry without hesitation.

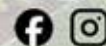
It is, both ancient and quietly progressive, an invitation to build something new on our grounds while acknowledging the past.



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## The Tavern

**S**ince premiering at the Tivoli Cinema in May 2025, **The Tavern** has become one of New Zealand's biggest independent film success stories, and it all began in Cambridge.

Written and produced by local filmmaker Matt Hicks, **The Tavern** is a raunchy R16 comedy about five small-town guys racing to save their rundown pub from an Auckland property developer.

Packed with humour, heart, and unapologetically wild Kiwi energy, one critic described it as "if *Flight of the Conchords* and *South Park* had a Waikato lovechild."

Filmed largely at Cambridge's historic Masonic Hotel, the movie was a true community effort, with locals volunteering as extras and helping behind the scenes. That

local support helped launch the film into a three-month sold-out run at the Tivoli Cinema, creating momentum that carried it to 40 cinemas nationwide.

The film has since drawn crowds from Tauranga to Christchurch, building a cult following with audiences dancing to "Bliss" by Th' Dudes and enjoying the unique pub-style atmosphere at screenings.

Featuring music from Cambridge rock band The Datsuns, **The Tavern** proudly celebrates its local roots.

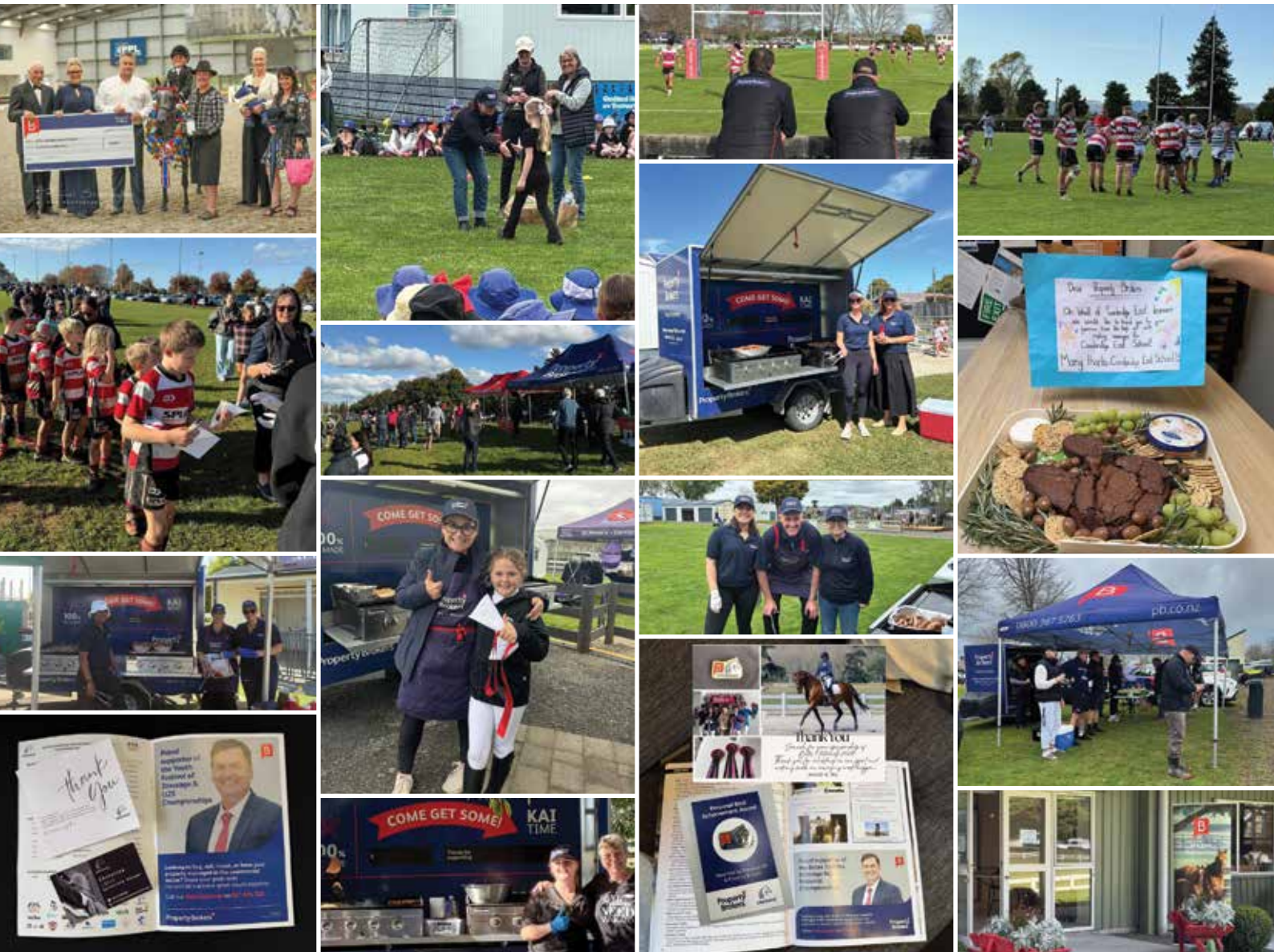
Now recognised as New Zealand's highest-grossing independent film of 2025, **The Tavern** stands as a true Cambridge success story.



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# Quietly world-class

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**T**ucked down a quiet street in Cambridge's Aotearoa Park industrial area, there's no neon sign or fanfare. But inside Fiasco's workshop, road cases are being built that will soon roll across the stages of the world's biggest music tours, packed with the gear of legends.

Universal Studios, Disney, Red Hot Chili Peppers. Linkin Park. Fox Sports' Super Bowl and FIFA World Cup broadcast. These are just some of the names trusting the equipment designed and engineered right here in Cambridge.

"Even though we get to live and breathe what we do, it's humbling that world-renowned acts trust what we create," says Joe Bradford, Fiasco's CEO. "It's a quiet pride, knowing global quality can start right here in our community."

Born from lived experience, several of Fiasco's staff, including co-founders Matt Waterhouse and Joe Bradford did time on the road, working touring productions and imagined a more systemic approach to how expensive equipment was transported.

At inception in 2013, it was a New Zealand-focused side hustle, and then in 2016 the decision was made

to take on the USA market. Matt, an engineer who led an automation department for Cirque du Soleil, brought the precision. Joe, an event manager with a global mindset, brought the hustle. Together, they set out to solve a real problem for touring professionals everywhere.

Fiasco designs and manufactures road cases, the often overlooked backbone of live event production. Their modular system means cases stack and pack together like Tetris blocks, saving touring crews precious time on load-ins and load-outs.

In an industry slow to innovate, Fiasco has made efficiency their competitive edge. Around 80% of their sales go to the United States, with cases shipping to productions internationally, all conceived in Cambridge, with a USA workshop in Los Angeles.

**"Cambridge is our creative hub, where design, marketing, and leadership thrive," says Joe. "Cambridge's calm gives us clarity, while technology ensures we deliver seamlessly for our global customers."**



Matt (left) and Joe (right), co-founders of Fiasco



That calm was tested abruptly in 2020. When the live events industry collapsed overnight, Fiasco redesigned their entire product line in under two weeks to manufacture Work From Home Desks. Tens of thousands of those desks are now in use worldwide. "When the pandemic hit and live events vanished overnight, our 'the show must go on' attitude kicked into full gear," says Joe. "Adapting quickly is part of Fiasco's DNA."

The next chapter for the company is already in motion. A second USA workshop is set to open within the year to better service East Coast customers - proof, as Joe puts it, that world-class ideas come from the standards you set and the way you work, not geography.

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ELLESSE ANDREWS

# Where world champions train and stay

**C**ambridge is no stranger to excellence, but even by its high standards, Ellesse Andrews stands apart.

An Olympic champion. A world champion (in 2023). One of the globe's most dominant sprint cyclists of her generation, Ellesse Andrews is not just a successful athlete living in Cambridge; she's a product of the high-performance environment that the town has intentionally built.

And she's choosing to stay.

Ellesse's rise through international cycling has been rapid and emphatic. She began track cycling competitively at just 14, favouring mountain biking as a kid before turning her focus to the velodrome. Almost immediately, her talent was unmistakable. At the world junior track championships in 2016 and 2017, she claimed four medals across multiple events, signalling the arrival of a rare all-around talent.

By the age of 18, Ellesse was representing New Zealand at the 2018 Commonwealth Games on the Gold Coast, competing against the world's best while still very much at the beginning of her career. Three years later, at the Tokyo Olympics, she confirmed her world-class status, winning silver in the keirin after navigating a demanding repechage path to reach the final.

But it was Paris that elevated her into the upper echelon of New Zealand sporting history.

At the 2024 Olympic Games, Ellesse was virtually untouchable. She claimed gold in the individual sprint, overpowering some of the most decorated riders in the world, before backing it up with gold in the keirin and silver in the team sprint. Three medals at a single games placed her alongside a select group of New Zealanders to achieve that feat, and firmly

established her as one of the defining athletes of the Paris Olympics.

Her dominance has continued beyond the Games. Ellesse is a world champion in the keirin, a consistent podium finisher across sprint disciplines, and in early 2025 she broke the world record in the women's 1km time trial, becoming the first woman in history to ride the distance in under one minute five seconds.

This level of success does not happen by chance.

Sprint cycling is among the most physically and mentally demanding sports in the world, requiring explosive power, tactical intelligence, precision and resilience. Ellesse has all of it, and the results speak loudly.

Behind those results sits a high-performance network, and Cambridge has been central to it.

Ellesse moved to Cambridge in 2016 to attend St Peter's School, relocating from Wānaka with her family after receiving a scholarship. It was here that she committed fully to cycling, training daily in an environment designed for elite performance. Cambridge's emergence as New Zealand's high-performance sport capital, anchored by Cycling New Zealand's national training facility and the Grassroots Trust Velodrome, provided the structure, expertise and competitive culture required to convert talent into sustained international success.

**“Cambridge is known for high-performance,” Ellesse says. “Being surrounded by people who are all pushing themselves at the highest level really matters.”**

Despite a demanding international racing schedule and long periods overseas, Cambridge remains her base. Recently, Ellesse and her partner built a home in one of the town's newer subdivisions, a decision that reflects long-term commitment, not just convenience.

"Cambridge makes sense," she says. "It's close to the Cycling New Zealand training facility, it's easy to get around, and everything I need to train at the highest level is here."

Her partner works locally, and when Ellesse is home, Cambridge is where she recovers, reconnects and resets. Many of her closest friends are also elite athletes, including champion cyclists and rowers, who train together, go to the gym together and understand the demands of high-performance sport without explanation.

But what keeps her grounded isn't just the infrastructure.



"I love the small town, village feel," she says. "It's a beautiful place. And the people make it even more beautiful."

The combination of world-class performance supported by a genuine community is what makes Cambridge distinctive for Ellesse. It's a town where Olympic champions can train, be supported without being in the spotlight, and build a life beyond their sport.

Ellesse Andrews' decision to put down roots here is a powerful endorsement of Cambridge's role on the world stage. It is not just a place where champions are developed, but where they choose to live, belong and build their future.

Cambridge doesn't just produce and nurture champions. It keeps them.



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# The remarkable legacy of the Cambridge Fire Brigade

**F**ire Chief Dennis Hunt, who has served 38 years with the Cambridge Fire Brigade, has lost count of how many times he's left his wife, Tricia, sitting at dinner alone to attend a callout. It's a reality she's lived with over the years and one shared by dozens of families across Cambridge.

When you volunteer for the Cambridge Fire Brigade, your whole family, friends and workplace volunteers with you. They just don't get the uniform.

"We try to make it very family-oriented," Dennis explains, reflecting on his four years as Chief Fire Officer.

"We involve partners and kids. Families are welcome to come down to our events. But at the end of the day, someone's got to take the kids to sports and cricket while the other one's responding to a call."

It's a sacrifice that 27 volunteer firefighters and their families make for Cambridge. In 2025 alone, the Cambridge Fire Brigade attended 508 callouts, making it the eighth busiest volunteer station in New Zealand. When that siren sounds at 2am, it's your neighbour, the local glazier, a paramedic, a property manager, a pilot, a cop, a farm worker, everyday Cambridge people who respond.

"We have three to five minutes to get trucks out the door," Dennis says. "We might only have 10 members

available from our 27, so we need an officer, a driver, and at least a crew of two in the back. If it's major, we take two vehicles and if necessary, we call on brigades from surrounding towns."

Walk through the Cambridge Fire Station, and you'll find stories that span generations, living proof that service runs in families.

Dennis's predecessor, Don Gerrand, served 53 years. His father-in-law, who held the rank of deputy chief back in the day, told Don when he married his daughter that he had to join the brigade. Don did as he was told. Then Don's son Richie joined and has since become a senior station officer. Now Richie's son is also a firefighter, an incredible four generations answering Cambridge's call.

The Steen family has similar roots. Two brothers served alongside their father, Tom Steen. Winston Steen held the role of deputy chief for some time. Between the three of them, there was over 100 years of service dedicated to our town.

Glenn, the current deputy chief, works at Cambridge Glass, the business once owned by Peter Sutton, who was also deputy chief once upon a time.

"It's really just one big family here," Dennis says.

## Building tomorrow's firefighters

Recognising that volunteer firefighters don't appear overnight, station officer Phil Johnston has started a new cadetship programme. Already, eight local teenagers gather every Monday night to learn what it means to serve.

"The kids are absolutely loving it," Dennis says. "They get hands-on with running hoses and squirting water, learning some discipline. Phil and six of our crew run it, and the feedback is fantastic. There are a couple of shy kids who are really coming out of their shells."

Phil says the idea behind the programme was to interact with the community more and give some local kids a chance to do something they wouldn't normally get to, while taking them out of their comfort zone.

"Long term, you never know, we might also get a few new volunteer firefighters out of the programme too," he says.



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## A community that gives back

While Fire and Emergency New Zealand (FENZ) funds the two front-line trucks and operational costs, Cambridge's generosity enables the brigade to go further. The community has funded three additional vehicles: a water tanker, a medical response vehicle, and a rural unit for countryside fires.

"We get thousands of dollars each year from this community," Dennis says. "It is unbelievable how kind this town is to us. People walking past will often just pop in and give us \$100."

The support we receive funds equipment that Fire and Emergency doesn't cover such as extra defibrillators, and our most recent purchase, a new \$25,000 generator so the station can be a one-stop emergency hub when power fails.

The contribution extends beyond fires and accidents. The brigade's 1938 vintage fire engine, Flick, rebuilt from the chassis up by volunteers, appears at special occasions, Christmas parades, honouring retiring firefighters, and attending funerals. She's a rolling reminder of Cambridge's commitment to its own.



## The challenge ahead

As Cambridge grows, so do the callouts. Yet the brigade faces a persistent challenge: daytime weekday coverage.

"I worry about attracting enough volunteers to service our calls moving forward," Dennis admits.

"The town has looked after us so well, we don't want to let them down."

They need people available during business hours: self-employed workers, shift workers, retirees, and those who work from home or locally. The training is manageable, and the brigade provides all equipment with costs covered.

In the meantime, 27 volunteers and their families keep showing up. They miss dinners, birthday parties, sleep,

and precious family moments. But they also get a huge amount in return.

"You ask any volunteer here, and they'll tell you they joined because they wanted to do something for their community, something to contribute," Dennis reflects. "What they gain are some great skills, friends and family for life in our crew."

**The Cambridge Fire Brigade is actively seeking new volunteers, particularly those available during weekday daytime hours who can respond to the station within minutes. To learn more about volunteering or the cadetship programme, please email us at [cambridgesecretary@fireandemergency.nz](mailto:cambridgesecretary@fireandemergency.nz).**

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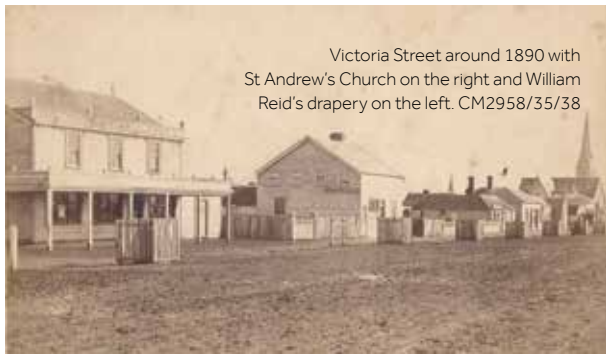
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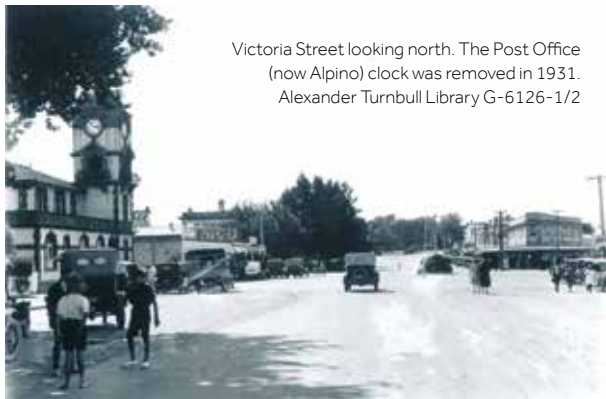
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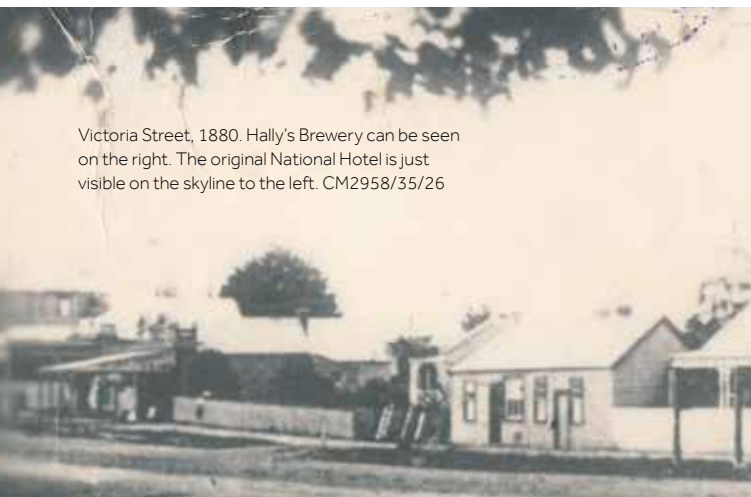
Duke Street in the 1970s. CM2958/9/Buck



Victoria Street around 1890 with St Andrew's Church on the right and William Reid's drapery on the left. CM2958/35/38



Victoria Street looking north. The Post Office (now Alpiro) clock was removed in 1931. Alexander Turnbull Library G-6126-1/2



Victoria Street, 1880. Hally's Brewery can be seen on the right. The original National Hotel is just visible on the skyline to the left. CM2958/35/26

# Cambridge's streets then and now

**T**ake a slow walk along Victoria and Duke Streets in Cambridge, and Shakespeare Street in Leamington, and look closely. You'll notice small clues everywhere that point back to how these streets first came together more than 150 years ago.

The towns we know today were laid out by surveyors in the 1860s, following the New Zealand Wars. But long before streets were formed and shops were built, this was already a place of movement and trade.

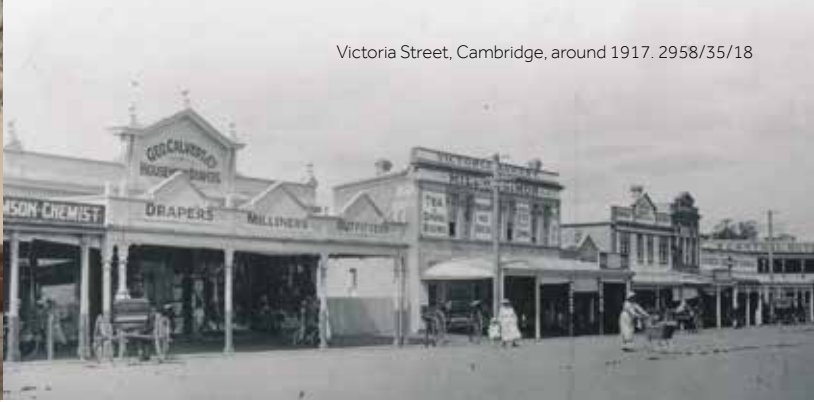
Mana whenua, Ngāti Koroki Kahukura and Ngāti Hauā, travelled by waka along the Waikato River, moving goods to markets in Auckland and beyond. The river was the first route, shaping how people lived, worked and connected.

Change arrived steadily. Rail arrived in 1884, opening up new ways to move people and products. Roads improved from the 1940s, and with each shift came new businesses, new buildings, and new ways for the town to function.

Duke Street in 1904 looking toward the original Masonic Hotel which burnt down on 13 November 1911. A faulty chimney spark was blamed. CM2958/9



Victoria Street, Cambridge, around 1917. 2958/35/18



## Cambridge's history is still visible

The shops you see today follow these earlier patterns. Some sites have served the same purpose for generations. What has changed are the details, including materials, signage, and the vehicles parked outside, rather than the town's underlying pattern.

The historic photographs shown here capture everyday scenes from the 1880s through to the 1970s. Victoria Street with its early hotels, drapers and chemists. Duke Street as it evolved into a busy commercial spine. Leamington, once a separate town known as Cambridge West, had its own hall and identity.

Compare them with the streets around you now. What's changed? What has stayed the same? Notice building shapes, street layouts and how people used these spaces.

The past is still present. You just need to look for it.

If this glimpse sparks your curiosity, the Cambridge Museum holds many more stories, objects and photographs that bring the town's history to life.



Leamington Town Hall stood on the corner of Thompson and Shakespeare Streets. Originally known as Cambridge West, Leamington was a separate town from 1907 to 1958. The hall was demolished in 1976. CM2958/19\_4793



Duke Street in the 1920s, with the Central Hotel on the left. The Legal Chambers and the new Masonic Hotel (now The Clements) are visible. CM2958/9/19/22

Want to explore more? Visit the Cambridge Museum at 24 Victoria Street or [www.cambridgemuseum.org.nz](http://www.cambridgemuseum.org.nz) to discover stories, objects and photographs from the town's past.

Pick up a walking tour pamphlet and follow the route for yourself. With fresh eyes and a new perspective, you will uncover the layers of history that surround us.



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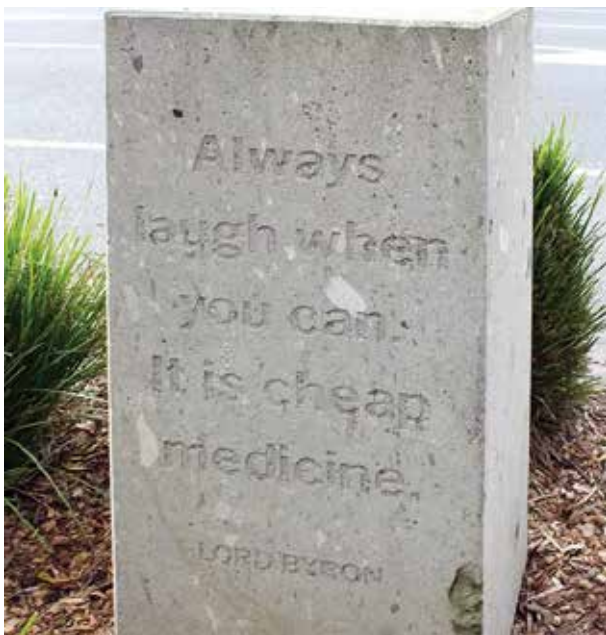
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Eel: Found on the Te Awa River Ride, this longfin eel sculpture honours one of Aotearoa's oldest and most important freshwater species.



ART, NATURE AND DISCOVERY

# A creative escape to Cambridge

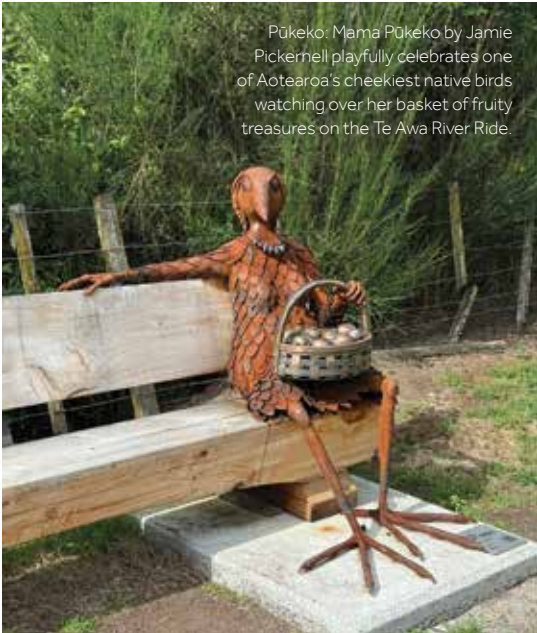


Lord Byron Pillar: Found on Shakespeare Street in Leamington, the Poet Pillars feature six Hinuera stone sculptures inscribed with quotes from Shakespeare.

**N**estled in the heart of the Waikato and just moments off the expressway, Cambridge invites you to slow down, explore, and stay a while. Whether you're visiting for a weekend or lucky enough to call it home, you'll find a vibrant blend of art, nature, and community spirit woven through its streets and river paths.

At the centre of it all is the Te Awa River Ride, where an ever-evolving outdoor gallery brings creativity to life. Designed as a series of curated precincts, the trail can be explored on foot or by bike, revealing striking sculptures that celebrate the connection between people, place, and the natural world. From towering native bird forms rising above wetlands to playful installations that honour everyday companions, each piece tells a uniquely local story.

Beyond the river, art continues to surprise and delight. Around town, colourful murals and painted telecommunications cabinets add personality to everyday corners, turning a simple stroll into a treasure hunt of creativity. These works reflect Cambridge's character: welcoming, imaginative, and proud of its identity.

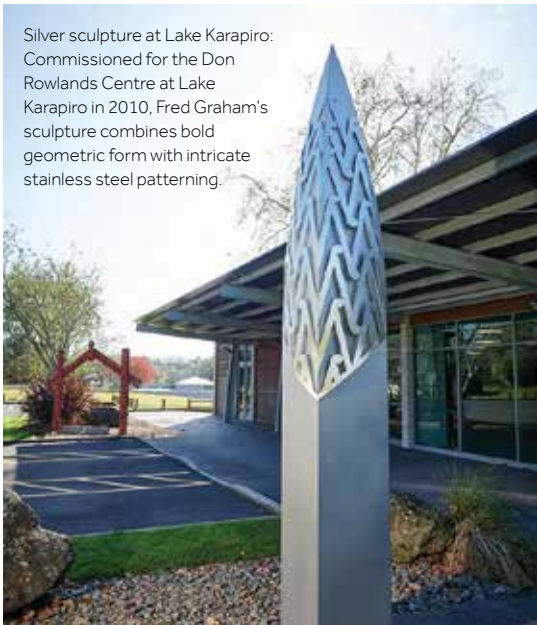


Pukeko: Mama Pukeko by Jamie Pickernell playfully celebrates one of Aotearoa's cheekiest native birds watching over her basket of fruity treasures on the Te Awa River Ride.

A wander around Lake Te Koo Utu offers another layer of discovery, where sculpture and landscape meet in thoughtful harmony. Nearby, iconic works such as the much-loved Mare & Foal pay tribute to Cambridge's deep equine roots, while other installations honour history, culture, and connection.

Even the smallest details invite attention, from mosaic tiles underfoot to carved pou and poetic inscriptions tucked into local precincts. Cambridge is a place to meander, camera in hand, where art isn't confined to galleries but lives out in the open.

**Come for a day, or plan a weekend. Cambridge offers a creative journey that's as relaxed or as rich as you choose to make it.**



Silver sculpture at Lake Karapiro: Commissioned for the Don Rowlands Centre at Lake Karapiro in 2010, Fred Graham's sculpture combines bold geometric form with intricate stainless steel patterning.



Museum Wall: Hamilton muralist Jeremy Shirley created this vibrant mural beside Cambridge Museum, with more of his artwork at Bridleways Playground

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# A creative highlight at Fieldays



An exciting new creative initiative for Fieldays 2026 begins at the Heritage Barn. Representing the David Henshaw Family Art Trust and working in collaboration with New Zealand National Fieldays Society, Caroline Peacocke of Copper Mesh Creatives presents David Henshaw's Rural NZ: Jock, Landscapes & More.

Featuring the much-loved Jock cartoons, published in NZ Farmer magazine for more than 34 years, Henshaw captured the realities, humour and heart of rural life and became a familiar voice within farming communities nationwide. Alongside the cartoons, Henshaw produced expressive landscape and botanical watercolours, as well as ink and pencil drawings and quality reproductions, that reflect his close attention to rural life and place.

Selected works will be available for sale at Fieldays and will remain available for purchase after the event via [davidhenshawart.co.nz](http://davidhenshawart.co.nz), Copper Mesh Creatives ([caroline@coppermesh.co.nz](mailto:caroline@coppermesh.co.nz)), and Artspost Gallery, Hamilton.

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HOME OF CHAMPIONS

# Cambridge welcomes the Sports Hall of Fame

**The relocation of the New Zealand Sports Hall of Fame to Cambridge marks a fundamental shift in how the country tells its sporting story. Long housed in Dunedin, the Hall of Fame is now stepping into a new era at the Grassroots Trust Velodrome, where history, technology and participation will converge in a way New Zealand sport has not seen before.**

Established in 1990 to celebrate the nation's greatest sporting figures, the Hall of Fame has always been about preserving legacy. But its move north transforms it from a largely static museum into a living, breathing experience embedded within one of the country's most active high-performance and community environments.

The Hall of Fame will be integrated within the Velodrome on its upper level and will be a modern, interactive exhibit designed not just to honour champions, but to inspire future ones. The positioning on the concourse allows visitors to engage with New Zealand's sporting heritage while remaining connected to live activity on the track and infield.

Technology plays a central role in bringing that vision to life.

Alongside the Hall of Fame will sit the "PlayLAB", situated in the Velodrome infield. Scheduled to open in September 2026, PlayLAB is designed to inspire movement through 10 gamified sports activities. It's aimed particularly at youth, the experience builds rhythm, balance, mental focus and reaction speed, giving tamariki and rangatahi transferable foundations to thrive in sport.

Visitors can try a range of activities, test their skills, and explore the biomechanics behind how the body moves. Most importantly, they'll have fun being active with friends, whānau, and colleagues - and may even discover a new sport to pursue.

The PlayLAB development has been heavily influenced by Sport Waikato and the University of Waikato – ensuring it is appealing to youth and achieves movement and learning outcomes.

A large-format LED screen (11x6m) will also be installed on the concourse and viewable from the infield, stands and meeting rooms. It will be utilised for corporate and community events and enable the sharing of content from the Hall of Fame and PlayLAB.

This pairing of Hall of Fame and PlayLAB is intentional.





One looks back, preserving the stories of those who defined New Zealand sporting success; the other looks forward, encouraging participation and discovery. Together, they create a full-circle experience, inspiration leading directly to action. The goal is simple: get more people, especially youth, off the sidelines and into sport.

To mark the reinvigoration of the Hall of Fame, sporting icons Richie McCaw and Dame Valerie Adams were inducted at the Halberg Awards in February 2026, the first inductees in over five years. Their inclusion underscores the Hall of Fame's ongoing relevance, bridging generations of achievement.

Importantly, this is not just a facility upgrade; it is a repositioning of the Velodrome itself. With the broader rebranding to a multi-use arena, the site is evolving beyond cycling into a destination that combines sport, education, community and entertainment. The addition of the Hall of Fame, PlayLAB, and advanced digital infrastructure reinforces that ambition, creating a space that serves elite athletes, school groups, families and visitors alike.

Cambridge's status as a high-performance sport hub makes it a natural home for this next chapter. Already recognised as a base for elite athletes and national programmes, the town provides both credibility and accessibility. Embedding the Hall of Fame here ensures it is not just a repository of history, but is also an active part of New Zealand's sporting ecosystem.

Ultimately, what is being built is not simply a museum or an attraction. It is an experience designed to connect story with movement, legacy with participation, and inspiration with opportunity.

The Hall of Fame is scheduled to open at the Grassroots Trust Velodrome in late 2026.

The PlayLAB and LED screen are being built in August for a September opening. This staged rollout reflects the scale of the development, with different elements of the precinct coming online as they are completed.

Visitors will be able to experience the Hall of Fame as part of a wider day out alongside track cycling, community programmes, events, and the PlayLAB activation.





General enquiries and future bookings will be handled through the Velodrome's reception, website, and events team, with spaces also available for group visits, school programmes, and corporate functions.

The Hall of Fame will sit within a broader ecosystem of bookable experiences, from school visits aligned to curriculum learning, to hosted events, to interactive sessions in PlayLAB. Schools in particular are expected to be a major audience, with the ability to book full-day experiences that combine education, physical activity and exposure to elite sport.

In the lead-up to opening, the Velodrome is encouraging people to stay connected for updates, with announcements around ticketing, programming and launch events expected closer to completion.

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Amanda and Hamish Wright

# Pages, people and a purpose

## THE WRIGHT'S STORY

**There's a particular kind of Cambridge business that doesn't advertise itself as such. It's simply there, year after year, decade after decade, so woven into the fabric of daily life that you'd struggle to imagine the town without it. Paper Plus Cambridge (Wright's, as generations of locals still think of it) is exactly that place.**

The story begins not in Cambridge but in Masterton, in 1907, when Hamish's great-grandfather founded Hedleys Bookshop. Four generations of booksellers followed, each one passing the love of the written word to the next. Hamish's mother Margaret took that legacy to extraordinary heights. She worked at Hatchards bookshop in London, where she became the book adviser to the Queen for her children's Christmas selections, choosing titles for the young princes and corresponding with the palace. She assisted the King of Jordan and King Olaf of Norway with their book buying. It is the kind of backstory that belongs in a novel.

Margaret eventually married Richard, a sheep farmer, and the family settled into rural Wairarapa life. Hamish grew up on a sheep and beef farm, went overseas, and built a career in supply chain consulting, working for the likes of KPMG, Australian Post, and the US Air Force. In 1998, with his wife Amanda expecting their first daughter, the couple returned to New Zealand. His parents had just bought a bookshop in Cambridge.

"They said to me, 'Look, we're putting in a computer software system, can you help?'" Hamish recalls with a laugh. "That was in 1998, and I've been here ever since."

He bought the business from his parents in 2007, right

in the teeth of the global financial crisis. The timing was, to put it gently, adventurous. But Hamish had a clear philosophy about what kind of shop he wanted to run.

In 2014, Wright's transitioned to the Paper Plus franchise model, unlocking significant benefits such as increased buying power, access to nationwide TV advertising, and enhanced loyalty scheme support. But Hamish struck a deal with himself from the outset.

**"I had an internal resolution to keep as much of the independent flavour and freedom as possible," he says. "I don't do uniforms, I don't do anything like that. They always promised that the independent style I was used to would not be compromised, and that has rung true for the most part."**

That independence has shaped everything, including the decision in 2019 to absorb Cambridge's postal services into the store when NZ Post sought a community partner. Hamish didn't hesitate. "I felt it was incredibly important to the community, for people to have a place to pay bills and send parcels."

It's that instinct, the sense that a local business is answerable to its community, that Hamish credits for surviving what many retailers haven't. Amazon, online shopping, COVID: the headwinds have been fierce. Yet Wright's not only endured; it expanded, with Hamish and Amanda recently purchasing Cambridge Office Products on Alpha Street, extending that paper-and-people focus into the commercial space.



"I think if you came in with a very corporate approach in a small town, it's not going to be as successful. I've always tried to get to know people in the community, get to know their names. It's old-fashioned, very small town, but I think it works," he says.

"People come in with things that are quite sensitive: a friend with depression, a family member with cancer. It's nice they trust us with those things."

Cambridge is changing fast, and Hamish watches the transformation with genuine excitement.

"The growth we've been experiencing is phenomenal. It's bringing so many amazing people into town from all different cultures and backgrounds." Amid the growth, he hopes the town holds onto its essential character, the kind that makes a shopkeeper remember your name and your reading tastes.

Hamish's children now work in the business, making them the fifth generation of booksellers in a family line stretching back to 1907. Were his parents to walk back through the door today, what would they recognise?

"They would be thrilled that we still greet people as friends, that they are more than just customers, and that we are, at the heart, a community-based family that still operates in that space."



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# A new era for iconic Fieldays

**F**ieldays isn't just a feel-good fixture on the rural calendar. It's big business. It's a national showroom where New Zealand agribusiness is commercialised, exported, and scaled.

With new CEO Richard Lindroos now at the helm, he says expect less nostalgia and more execution: a harder-edged strategy, clearer commercial partnerships, and a push to turn Mystery Creek into a venue that can win bigger events and bigger dollars, year-round.

Stepping into the role, what surprised Richard most wasn't the size of Fieldays, despite attracting more than 100,000 visitors, 1,000 exhibitors, and delegations from India, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, and beyond. The scale is undeniable, but it's the reach that makes Fieldays truly stand out.

"The impact in the business-to-business, business-to-government, and international relations space is significant," Richard reflects. "We generate over \$500 million in economic impact to the New Zealand economy each year. That absolutely trumps any other mega event here."

While Fieldays is steeped in tradition, owned by a society with 58 years of history and core values of bringing town and country together, Richard recognises the need to adapt.



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## ■ WHERE

**Mystery Creek  
Events Centre**

## ■ WHEN

**10 - 13 June 2026**

## ■ HISTORY

**Running since 1969  
(58 years in 2026)**

## ■ SCALE

**1,000+ exhibitors  
110,000+ visitors  
114-hectare site**

## ■ REACH

**66 international exhibitors  
43 international  
delegations  
23 embassies (2025)**

## ■ IMPACT

**\$500+ million annual  
economic contribution to  
New Zealand economy**

## ■ WAIKATO IMPACT

**\$210 million annual  
expenditure in the Waikato**

(figures from the 2024 event)

"There's so much opportunity here beyond Fieldays. We're sitting on 114 hectares of strategic real estate," says Richard.

"We have the potential to be the best venue in the southern hemisphere for mega events."

He's leading a structured plan to achieve this, which includes water security, energy resilience, green alternatives that are both environmentally sustainable and set up the site for civil defence emergencies, as well as fit-for-purpose buildings, and an improved venue footprint with upgraded roads, lighting, and landscaping.

"If you want to continue delivering world-class events, you need a world-class venue. That requires significant investment," he says.

With Fieldays just a short drive from Cambridge, it's no surprise that half the staff are based in Cambridge, and hundreds of local volunteers power the event each year.

The event plays a hugely important role in the local Waikato economy, contributing around \$210 million of annual expenditure from the 2024 event, supporting local employment, bringing business to suppliers, and fostering new business connections. "This impact and legacy is something the local community can be immensely proud of," says Richard.

The pride extends to Waipā District Council, which Lindroos credits for removing barriers and engaging in short and long-term planning conversations.

The opportunity to extend Hamilton Airport's runway, just across the road from Mystery Creek Events Centre, is another game-changer.

"There's a strong relationship, and as the airport expands, there'll be huge advantages for international patronage and mega-event hosting, with the sheer capacity we have here to host huge numbers."

While Fieldays excels at innovation and increasingly at globalisation, Lindroos sees education as the area with the most growth potential.



"To double the value of our exports by 2034, aside from the government's target, we need a skilled workforce," he says. "That starts with making agribusiness education clear at the high school level and offering practical tertiary options.

"It's not just on-farm roles, it's the tech required to service farming, the innovation, the business side. We're a platform to showcase what those careers could look like in the future."

The Society is establishing a philanthropic arm to facilitate gifts for capital projects, educational scholarships, and innovation prizes, which will help to build financial resilience and support infrastructure upgrades and new initiative.

Asked about the future, Richard's timeline extends to 2040, which marks New Zealand's 200th anniversary.

"The world's attention will be on New Zealand. We want Fieldays to be a month-long celebration of everything agribusiness," he envisions. "Bring the world's largest agribusiness conferences here under the Fieldays banner."

It's an ambitious vision, but with investment in infrastructure, Lindroos believes Mystery Creek can become the southern hemisphere's premier large-scale event venue. If successful, attracting



Fieldays CEO  
Richard Lindroos

more large-scale mega events could boost Cambridge's economy further, support local businesses, and enhance the community's profile.

**"We've punched above our weight for 58 years, now we're building the infrastructure to punch even harder."**



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# In it for the long game

KEVIN BURGESS - LOCAL PHILANTHROPIST,  
COMMUNITY MAN AND HIS VISION FOR CAMBRIDGE

**W**hen Kevin Burgess arrived in Cambridge in 1981, he came looking for a place to plant himself, to contribute, and to belong. What Cambridge gave him back exceeded anything he might have hoped for.

"I fell in love with the Cambridge community," he says, without a trace of hesitation. "It's got to be one of the coolest places in New Zealand."

Together with his wife Jane, Kevin devoted 42 years to the pharmacy profession in Cambridge, steadily building a career and business that eventually expanded to owning three local pharmacies. In 2023, the couple retired after selling their Cambridge businesses, marking the end of a remarkable chapter of service to the community.

More than four decades on, he has become one of Cambridge's most prominent champions, a connector, a builder, and a giver. He's someone whose fingerprints are on community life in ways both visible and quietly invisible. That contribution was formally recognised when he was named a Member of the New Zealand Order of Merit in the 2025 New Year's Honours, for services to governance, community and sport.

## In his genes

Three broad threads run through Kevin's contribution to Cambridge. In sport, he laced up his boots for Hautapu Rugby Club in his early years, has supported athletes at four Olympic Games and multiple All Black tours, co-founded the Perago Sports Trust and the Adastra Foundation to back aspiring young athletes, and spent 15 years involved with the Waipā and Waikato Secondary Sports Awards.

In governance, he has served as a Grassroots Trust trustee for 20 years, a Cambridge Resthaven Trust trustee since 2016, and was instrumental in establishing the Cambridge Information Centre and the Cambridge Retailers Association, and he won the Leader of the Year Award at the 2018 Waipā Business Awards along the way. And in the community, he has given generously and continuously, guided since his earliest years by the example of his grandmother, Mary Burgess, who dedicated her life to helping those in need.

Giving back, he'll tell you, is simply in his genes. His philosophy is rooted in something so simple: when you put a little bit in, you get a lot out.

## Inspiration and a vision for the future

Part of what shaped Kevin's approach to public life was the influence of a great friend, the late Alan Livingston, former Waipā mayor, Waikato Regional Council chair and QEII National Trust Board of Directors chair, who passed away in April 2026 after a distinguished career in local governance. Kevin found in Alan a model of leadership he deeply admired: steady, principled, and fundamentally people-focused.

"He was an inspiration to me from the outset," Kevin says. "A statesman, a gentleman, never ruffled, always polite. A mentor to many and I always appreciated his advice. He was interested in people, which meant he really cared. He was so well respected."

Kevin's vision for Cambridge's future is, by his own description, a bullish one. He wants to see new blood and new families arrive, drawn by what this town offers. He wants a melting pot of diversity, an egalitarian Cambridge where people from all walks of life feel they belong. He's not precious about growth; he welcomes it, because he believes a bigger Cambridge, done well, is a better Cambridge.

## Cambridge Community Fund

Now, he's channelling that conviction into his most ambitious act of community investment yet. Together with Cambridge businessman David Cooney and Momentum Waikato, Kevin has established the Cambridge Community Fund, a permanent philanthropic endowment designed to grow charitable giving in the town for generations to come.

The Fund is built on the principle that Cambridge's prosperity should be shared, and that a thriving town needs structural support for those within it. It's the kind of long-view thinking that characterises everything Kevin does: not just responding to today's needs but building something that outlasts any individual effort.

More on the fund: [momentumwaikato.nz/cambridgecommunityfund](https://momentumwaikato.nz/cambridgecommunityfund)



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# Cruising for a cause

**W**hen the rumble of hot rods and classic American muscle fills the streets, you know the Stragglers are at work.

It's not just a show of chrome and horsepower. It's also the sound of a local club raising tens of thousands of dollars for local community causes every year.

What began as a small gathering of car enthusiasts in 2006 has grown into one of New Zealand's most celebrated automotive clubs, and one of its most generous. Through regular cruises and an annual charity car show, the Stragglers have raised significant funds for local children and community organisations.

The club, capped at 50 members, is devoted to American-origin vehicles built before 1972. From immaculate hot rods to gleaming muscle cars, the Stragglers attract members from all walks of life, united by a shared passion for classic machinery and good company.

On the first Wednesday of each month, they cruise through the Cambridge township before heading to a local restaurant for dinner.

But it's the annual Cambridge Charity Car Show that truly puts the Stragglers on the map. Held every November, it has grown from a single-day display of around 300 cars at Lake Te Koo Utu into the largest one-day car show in New Zealand, drawing in excess of 1,400 vehicles and thousands of spectators to the Mighty River Domain at Lake Karāpiro. The car show has also expanded into a three-day celebration, incorporating a mystery run and a lively social evening.

The event has become the club's primary fundraising effort, with all proceeds going back into the community.



Over the years, the club has rotated its charitable support among local causes, including Riding for the Disabled, Cambridge Lifeskills Trust, and Kids in Need Waikato.

"We're incredibly proud of the amount of money we've been able to give back to local children and community organisations over the last two decades," says founding member Dale Gerrard.

"The generosity of the hot rod community never fails to amaze me. People come for the cars, but they have a huge impact collectively."

For a club built on horsepower and heart, the Stragglers have turned a shared passion for cars into a driving force for community good in the Cambridge.



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*“You don't need a room key to enjoy a seat at the bar or a table at the restaurant.”*



# Cambridge's love affair with gardening

**In Cambridge, gardening is part of how people express pride in their homes, care for their neighbourhoods, and mark the passing of the seasons. From traditional cottage gardens and productive backyard plots to modern, compact spaces blending food, structure and natives, gardens here reflect patience, creativity, and a deep connection to place.**

One of the people who has shaped that culture is Robert Clancy.

Robert is the second-generation director of Amber Garden Centre, a family run business that has grown alongside Cambridge for more than 45 years. Having worked in the nursery industry for nearly four decades, he has watched not only how people garden has changed, but also how the town itself has expanded around the nursery.

"We always thought we'd be on the outskirts," he says. "When we bought the land for the existing garden centre, the expressway wasn't here. Now the town has grown right up to us."

## A life spent growing

Robert grew up around plants, eventually joining his parents full-time and helping reshape the business. Under his leadership, Amber Nurseries, as it was known back then, shifted from a largely wholesale operation to a fully retail garden centre - Amber Garden Centre - a move that allowed the focus to land

firmly on local gardeners and long term relationships.

"If you didn't love what you do, you wouldn't do it," he says. "I've been doing this for more than 35 years, and I still wake up every day wanting to be here," he adds proudly.

That commitment runs deep. Robert lives on site, starts work well before dawn during peak seasons, and knows many customers by name.

"Seeing people leave happy and feeling like they've got value for money, that's what keeps me going."

## What's changing in the garden

Robert has watched gardening habits evolve steadily over time. While flowers and tidy borders still have their place, many Cambridge gardeners now want gardens that work harder for them.

"People still want beautiful spaces," he says, "but they also want gardens that fit their lives, whether that's producing food, encouraging birds, or simply being manageable."

Smaller sections have driven a move toward structure, with clipped forms, espaliered fruit trees and planting along fences becoming increasingly popular. Vegetable gardens have also seen renewed interest, driven in part by household budgets and a desire for greater self-sufficiency.



## Growing locally, for local conditions

"About 98 per cent of what we sell is grown here," says Robert. "Seedlings, punnets and shrubs. They're raised in local conditions, so when they go into people's gardens, they're already used to the climate."

That local knowledge extends to Amber's long-serving staff, some of whom have been advising Cambridge gardeners for decades. Passing that experience on to customers and younger staff alike is essential to the nursery's future, Robert believes.

"There's no label on a pot that can replace a real conversation with someone who knows plants."

## Growing for a cause

Amber Garden Centre's role extends well beyond its gates. The business is a long-time supporter of the Rotary Cambridge Garden Festival, which opens private gardens to the public for inspiration. Proceeds from ticket sales go to the Cambridge Rotary Charitable Trust, which donates to local causes. The festival highlights the diversity of gardens across the town and the creativity of those who care for them.

Robert has also been involved in supporting Garden to Table at Cambridge Primary School, established as a specialist programme in 2022. Students from years 0-6 have the opportunity to grow, harvest and prepare food, while learning about watering, weeding, pest control, soil health and composting.

"Gardening knowledge used to be handed down naturally. These days, if we don't make a point of sharing it, it just disappears," he explains.

"If kids learn early where food comes from and how to grow it, that stays with them far longer than anything

they read online. It's not about turning every child into a gardener; it's about giving them the basics so they're not afraid to give it a go."

There have been numerous other quiet acts of community support over the decades, including donating plants to public spaces and helping community groups establish their gardens.

## Still growing

As Cambridge continues to change, Robert is realistic about the challenges ahead, from rising land values to succession planning. But his passion for the business remains undimmed.

"In the end, this place is about people," he says. "Gardening brings connection. If Amber Garden Centre can keep helping people feel confident in their gardens and proud of where they live, then we're doing something right."

## What grows well in Cambridge?

With warm summers, cool winters and generally good soil, Cambridge is well-suited to a wide range of plants. Vegetable gardens continue to thrive, with tomatoes, beans, courgettes and leafy greens among the most popular choices. Citrus trees, particularly lemons and limes, do well here, while feijoas remain a backyard favourite.

Ornamental gardens are just as strong. Roses, camellias and hydrangeas perform reliably, and natives such as kōwhai, hebes and pittosporum are increasingly popular for both structure and wildlife value.



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# The Maunga that sings

**W**hen you sit quietly within Sanctuary Mountain Maungatautari, the forest begins to speak. The undergrowth rustles, the kōkako call, and kererū drop onto tawa branches. You'll also hear the steady call of a kiwi, claiming its place in the night.

This is a maunga (mountain) that remembers Aotearoa New Zealand as it once was: alive, loud, thriving, singing. And today, it's finding its voice again because our community chose to protect it.

Sanctuary Mountain Maungatautari sits within a 47-kilometre predator-proof fence and is one of the most ambitious conservation projects in the world. It hugs the contours of an ancient volcano, a safe haven where over 730 native species, such as kiwi, kākāpō, takahē, wētāpunga, tuatara, and other taonga, can live without the constant threat of stoats, possums, rats, ferrets, or cats.

The fence represents more than just engineering; it signifies a dedication to restoring what has been lost, safeguarding what remains, and ensuring future generations inherit and experience a thriving natural environment rather than just memories.



## Kākāpō, Kiwi, and comeback stories that define us

Imagine walking along a sun-dappled track, and hearing something you'd expect only on remote islands: the low, resonant boom of a kākāpō. Three kākāpō now live within the 3,363 hectare sanctuary, the only place on the mainland of New Zealand.

Kiwi are thriving on the maunga, too. With a resident population of 3,000, the sanctuary is a stronghold for the Western North Island Brown species. The long term vision is to breed more kiwi, release juveniles outside the sanctuary and fill the Waipā district's green corridors with kiwi call.

More than that, Maungatautari is home to many other species hanging on by the thinnest of threads. The survival of critically endangered birds, reptiles, and insects would be impossible without places like this.

Every fence check, every trap, every biosecurity alert answered at 3 am by a dedicated ranger team is for them.

## Guardians of the maunga

Ngāti Korokī Kahukura, Raukawa, Ngāti Hauā and Waikato Tainui have cared for Maungatautari for centuries, and that role continues today. Their ancestral relationships and whakapapa are central to the identity of the maunga.

Today, iwi leadership remains at the heart of the sanctuary. The kaupapa of kaitiakitanga guides decisions, partnerships, and aspirations. It reminds everyone that conservation is more than science. It's cultural, spiritual, and intergenerational.

Visitors to Sanctuary Mountain Maungatautari often say they come for the wildlife, but leave with a deep sense of connection to the place itself.



## A place where people make the difference

Sanctuary Mountain thrives because of locals, volunteers, staff, schools, families, and businesses who choose to get involved.

Staff and volunteers walk traplines, maintain the predator-proof fence, guide visitors, plant trees, count kiwi, and support species translocations. Community groups steward sections of the fence. School students become future kaitiaki (guardians).

Families bring visiting friends and relatives to explore. And others contribute through donations, memberships, sponsorships, or nature credits.

It's conservation, but it's also community.



## GET INVOLVED

### Visit the maunga (bring your binoculars)

Explore well maintained tracks through the Jurassic-like forest, join a guided eco or cultural tour, discover interactive displays, and climb the 16 metre canopy viewing tower for a bird's eye view.

Every visit supports the sanctuary's vital mahi (work), and every ticket helps species survive.

### Annual advocates

Annual memberships are one of the simplest ways to support the sanctuary. Each membership helps fund fence maintenance, pest surveillance, species monitoring, education, research, and future translocations. Members become part of the sanctuary's whānau, returning often, noticing changes, and seeing the impact of their support, and the barista coffee discount is a welcome bonus too.

### Nature credits to fund the future

As global interest in nature-based solutions grows, Sanctuary Mountain Maungatautari is leading the way nationally with the biodiversity credits programme, Nature Credits. Unlike carbon credits, which measure emissions reductions, Nature Credits recognise and reward real, measurable ecological gains: more birds, healthier forests, restored habitats.

By supporting biodiversity credits, businesses, philanthropists, and donors can invest directly in outcomes they can see, hear, and experience. It's the next frontier of conservation funding, and Sanctuary Mountain Maungatautari is perfectly positioned to show the world what it looks like when you invest in life, not just offsets.

### 1% for the planet

As part of the 1% for the Planet network, the sanctuary is connected to thousands of businesses worldwide that commit at least one per cent of their annual revenue to environmental causes.

When companies choose Sanctuary Mountain as their partner, they're standing behind a project that produces measurable ecological results, uplifts iwi leadership, enhances community wellbeing, and inspires visitors from around the world.

### Donations equal legacy

If you've ever wondered whether donations actually make a difference, come stand within the sanctuary. The forest is louder today because people believe in it. Your support helps create a legacy your mokopuna (grandchildren) will be proud of.

Visit [sanctuarymountain.co.nz](https://sanctuarymountain.co.nz)



# Reimagined Cambridge Town Hall

**T**here are buildings across New Zealand that quietly hold a town's memories. Cambridge Town Hall is one of these.

Since 1908, it has been the backdrop to moments that matter. Meetings that shaped decisions. Performances that brought people together. Conversations that sparked new ideas. It has long been a place where the community gathers and, following the first stage of its revitalisation, it continues to play that role in a way that feels both familiar and refreshed.

Reimagined for today, the Cambridge Town Hall is more vibrant than ever. While much has been thoughtfully updated, the heart of the building remains unchanged. It is still a welcoming hub at the heart of the town, now better suited for how people live, work and come together today.

The Town Hall is quietly becoming a popular choice for business meetings, workshops, conferences, community events, alongside cultural and social gatherings, weddings, anniversaries and other milestone celebrations. Its seasonal programme also brings national and international performers to Cambridge, attracting a steady stream of concerts

and shows and drawing audiences from across the region and beyond.

Rather than reinventing itself, Town Hall general manager Simon Brew says the focus has been on evolution.

**“Our spaces are flexible and practical, designed to support everything from boardroom discussions to public forums and creative events,” he says. “The upgrades are thoughtful rather than showy, focused on usability, comfort and reliability. It’s the kind of venue that lets the purpose of the gathering take centre stage.”**

For local organisations and businesses, the Town Hall offers something increasingly valued: a central, recognisable place to meet. There is a sense of ease that comes with hosting an event in a building people know, trust and feel comfortable walking into. That familiarity matters, especially when bringing people together for learning, collaboration, or decision-making.

Behind the scenes, Simon says the team has also been working to make the venue easier to engage with.

"We've been focusing on making information about events and spaces clearer and more accessible, and the website provides a simple way to see what's on or make an enquiry. It reflects our overall focus on being open and connected, rather than simply a space that is hired out and locked up."

The Town Hall's front façade remains one of Cambridge's most recognisable images, frequently appearing across local communications and marketing material. For Simon, it is a visual reminder of the building's role in Waipā.

"This isn't a hidden venue or a private facility. It's a shared community asset that people feel a genuine connection to, and it continues to serve Cambridge and the region in practical, everyday ways," he says.

"Rooted in a rich history and now activated for the present, the Cambridge Town Hall remains a place of warmth and inspiration, where people come together for work, culture and connection, celebrate life's moments and create new memories."



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**WHARE TAPERE OO TE OKO HOROI**



A CONVERSATION WITH MATT SMITH

# Building neighbourhoods that work for Cambridge life



**A**s Cambridge grows, the difference between housing and a neighbourhood becomes ever clearer. In this conversation, local developer Matt Smith reflects on planning, infrastructure investment, and what it takes to build places that support everyday Cambridge life, now and into the future.

Cambridge has learned a few things about growth.

We've learned that adding houses is easy, but building a neighbourhood that actually works takes longer. We've learned that traffic doesn't resolve itself, that infrastructure left too late becomes expensive, and that the feel of a place, including how it connects, how people move through it, and how daily life unfolds, matters.

When neighbourhoods are done well, they're used well. Outcomes like that don't happen by accident. They come from early decisions and a willingness to plan for the long term.

That's the lens local developer Matt Smith brings to his latest development, Bridleways, a neighbourhood taking shape on the northern edge of Cambridge, where growth, infrastructure and daily life meet in very real ways.

Matt has been developing in Cambridge for more than 30 years. It's where he grew up, where his children have gone to school, and where he still lives today.

"This is my home, my town," he says. "Because of that, there's a huge responsibility on us to get the development of our town right."

Bridleways sits at one of Cambridge's key entry points, helping shape first impressions of the town.

"It's one of the first parts of Cambridge people experience," Matt says. "You can see the care that's gone into the way homes have been built, and the pride people take in where they live."

Matt believes the edges of town matter as much as the centre. New neighbourhoods quickly become part of the town's identity, shaping how people feel about where they live and how the town is growing. That's why early investment in infrastructure is so important to him.

"We've invested heavily in the basics at Bridleways," he explains. "Roads, walking and cycling ways, tree networks through the subdivision. You can walk into town, you can cycle into town."

It's a deliberately practical approach. Matt isn't interested in buzzwords or trends. He talks instead about movement and how people actually live, travel and connect in their day to day lives.

**“A lot of people talk about growth as if it’s abstract,” he says. “But growth is lived. It’s school runs. It’s sport. It’s trying to get across town at the wrong time of day.”**

For him, transport is the pressure point Cambridge can’t afford to ignore.

“If there’s one thing that’s really going to hold Cambridge back, it’s that.”

That reality sits at the heart of how Bridleways is being developed. The focus isn’t just on houses, but on the systems that support daily life: collector roads, formed streets, and integrated walking and cycling connections that reflect where people actually need to go from day to day.

“It’s not just roads,” Matt says. “It’s how those roads work together, and how people can move safely without needing to jump in the car for everything.”

That thinking extends to how homes are built. Bridleways is designed to be flexible, allowing buyers to work with the development’s main build partners or their own architect, designer or local builder.

“There’s an opportunity here to support local builders and suppliers,” Matt says. “People who care about their homes, and who often build to a baseline that’s higher than what the building code requires.”

“We’re also very conscious that things are getting more expensive, including power, fresh water and running costs,” he adds.

Homes at Bridleways must include solar generation and rainwater harvesting to reduce long-term costs for families.

“Over time, these homes will be cheaper to run, and that matters,” Matt says.

There’s also a strong emphasis on shared spaces and safety. A large neighbourhood playground is already well



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used, while connected paths and footpaths link key destinations, including the Te Awa cycleway, the town, and a future school site. Planned local amenities will support daily needs closer to home.

All of it comes back to one underlying idea: building where you live changes how you approach development.

"Cambridge is a relatively big town," Matt says. "But you can't hide. You're judged on what you build and how you behave. You've got to be able to walk down the street and front what you've done."

That accountability shapes his long term perspective.

"We're very much focused on legacy," he says. "We know we're going to be here today, tomorrow, and into the future."

Importantly, Bridleways isn't framed as a finished product. It's part of Cambridge's ongoing growth story, unfolding in real time, with real constraints on infrastructure costs, transport pressures, and the challenge of making decisions early enough to avoid bigger problems later on.

**"We've got stock here, ready for people to build on," Matt says. "The focus should be on finishing what's been started, and making sure the investment that's been made actually delivers value for the whole community."**

It's a pragmatic stance rather than an ideological one. Growth itself isn't the issue. Unmanaged growth is.

Bridleways aims to apply that lesson in today's growth reality, where the cost of getting it wrong lasts far longer.

A stunning Cambridge neighbourhood, Matt believes, isn't defined by how it looks on opening day. It's defined by how it works - how easily people move, how comfortable homes are, how neighbours interact, and whether the place still feels unmistakably like Cambridge as it settles.



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# Change for a Cambridge Icon

## A NEW CHAPTER FOR A CAMBRIDGE FAVOURITE

In December 2024, Onyx Restaurant entered an exciting new chapter, with local couple Brendan and Emily taking ownership of one of Cambridge's most loved dining spots.

For many in town, Onyx has long been a go-to, whether for a relaxed midweek dinner, a special occasion, or simply a great glass of wine. For Brendan and Emily, it was no different. Over the years, the restaurant became a regular part of their lives, with date nights slowly turning into something more.

"Brendan always joked with the general manager about buying the place one day," Emily says. "Eventually those dinners became less about what we were ordering... and more about conversations around whether we could actually make it work."

Brendan, originally from Ireland, has called Cambridge home for the past 15 years and is well known from his time as a jockey, riding over 100 winners across New Zealand. Emily, originally from the UK, has been part of the local community for the past seven years and works as an equine veterinarian.

Horses remain a big part of their lives, with their two-year-old daughter, Annie already



"They already know our customers, their table, their drink, their order."

following in their footsteps with her pony 'Nicholas'.

While the ownership may be new, much of what makes Onyx special remains unchanged, and that's exactly the point.

A huge part of the restaurant's success lies in its people. Familiar faces continue to greet guests at the door, creating the warm, welcoming atmosphere that locals know and love.

General Manager Neeraj has been with Onyx for 14 years, Assistant General Manager Rocky for twelve, and Head Chef Brent has been part of the kitchen for an impressive 20 years.

"Our team is everything," Brendan says. "They were our biggest investment when we purchased the restaurant. Having those key people in place, the ones who already know our customers, their favourite table, what they like to drink, what they order before they've even opened the menu, that's something you simply can't replace."

At its core, Onyx is about quality food, done well, and a dining experience that feels both polished and comfortable, whether you're celebrating, meeting, or simply enjoying a great meal. The recently renovated upstairs function room adds another dimension, offering a stylish, versatile space for corporate events, meetings, and private celebrations.

Looking ahead, Brendan and Emily are focused on building on what's already there, including introducing more of a farm-to-fork element over time. With cattle and sheep at home, there's a natural opportunity to strengthen that connection between land and plate.

They're also mindful of the times people are living in. With rising costs, dining out can feel more considered than it once was. For the team at Onyx, that makes it even more important that when people do choose to go out, they feel it's worth it.

"We want people to feel like they're getting real value when they come in," says Neeraj. "That's not just the food, it's genuine service and feeling comfortable, cared for, and able to relax."

It's an approach Brendan and Emily are proud to stand behind.

"We don't want to change what people already love," Emily says. "We just want to keep raising the standard and make sure every guest has a great experience."

In a town built on community, Onyx remains a place where people come together, now with a new family behind it who already feel part of the place we're proud to call home.

**Onyx, 70 Alpha Street, Cambridge**  
[onyxcambridge.co.nz](http://onyxcambridge.co.nz) | 07 827 7740





# Two decades of delicious

**N**ot many catering companies can say they've fed a future King and Queen, supported New Zealand at three Olympic Games, and still have their roots firmly planted in a small New Zealand town. Gourmet Delicious can. Twenty years on from their modest beginning as a two-person operation, they have built something that quietly defies expectation at every turn.

## Where it all began

In 2006, Kim Moodie and her business partner Noeleen Christenson looked around at the catering landscape in Cambridge and spotted a gap. The town needed a caterer who could deliver quality, consistently. So they started one, just the two of them.

"We felt there was a need in Cambridge for a reliable, high-end caterer," says Kim. It sounds straightforward enough. What followed was anything but.

When Ali Foers joined in those early days, something shifted. "That is when our business started to grow," says Kim. "Ali thrives on challenges and new opportunities, and still does to this day, 20 years later." Today, Kim and Ali co-own the business together, and that spirit has carried them from a two-person operation to a company employing 25 regular staff and up to 60 people for larger events. Along the way, they've earned multiple industry awards, including the Supreme Winner of the Waipā Networks Business Awards, recognition that confirmed what Cambridge already knew.

## Whatever it takes

The Gourmet Delicious motto is "whatever it takes," and that's certainly not just words on a wall. The duo can recount no end of jobs where they've had to dig deep, think outside the box and go that extra mile to get the delicious results.

"We have had many jobs testing our 'whatever it takes' philosophy," says Kim. Cooking at a beach wedding with no running water or facilities. Catering in London, Rio and Singapore. Sending equipment months in advance to Biwa, Japan. Feeding guests from a footpath in Devonport, Auckland. "We take everything we need, and try to troubleshoot anything that might play out. We love a challenge."

That word, challenge, keeps popping up. Where others might reach for easier jobs, Ali and Kim see opportunities in all corners. And it's that classic, go-for-it attitude, more than any single event or accolade, that explains how they ended up at three Olympic Games.

## Guest lists like no other

The full roll call of what Gourmet Delicious has delivered over twenty years is the kind of thing that stops you mid-sentence.

Olympic athletes at London 2012, Rio 2016 and the New Zealand Rowing Team at Lake Biwa in Japan. The New Zealand Swim Team in Singapore. The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, William and Catherine, during their visit to Cambridge. Most of New Zealand's Prime Ministers. The Kaimai Crash Memorial. Crankworx. Maadi Rowing Cup. Louise Upston's wedding.

What's striking about the list is its range. It moves from the grandest international stages to the most intimate local moments without missing a beat. It takes a particular kind of business to be trusted such a range of events. And it takes a particular kind of team to show up for both with the same standard of care.

Even with a billing list like this, Ali says it's all the locals that have trusted them to cater for their special functions over the last two decades that are among the most special jobs to them. "We've been lucky to be part of some incredible events, but it's the locals who keep coming back to us for their own celebrations that really mean the most," Ali says.

## From kitchen to cafés

None of the three cafés that Gourmet Delicious now run were planned. Not a single one. "No, it wasn't the plan to open cafés, it just evolved," says Kim.

Suburban Kitchen on Robinson Street came first, in 2015, born out of a business course. "Ali and I had to do a business plan for a new venture in 16 weeks," Kim explains. "We made the plan a reality. We saw it as a great opportunity, and the location was brilliant." The deadline of an academic exercise became reality as a real-world venue.

Podium Café followed in 2017, when the team was asked to build and open a café at Lake Karāpiro, home to some of New Zealand's most iconic rowing events. Then came Clementine in 2020, at the Amber Garden Centre on Peake Road. "We were only open three weeks before the first lockdown," Kim says. The fact that Clementine not only survived but thrives today says a great deal about the resilience baked into this business.

Alongside these they are also incredibly proud of their specialist bakery, Foers & Co. "Everything is made fresh by our wonderful pastry chef Asif and sold through our cafés," says Kim. The bakery has become a true highlight for our regulars, offering a range of delicious pastries and baked treats that showcase Asif's talent and passion.

The three cafés are deliberately kept distinct, with different menus, different atmospheres and different clientele. But there is one non-negotiable common thread. "All with the same Vivace coffee, though," says Kim, with the certainty of someone who has never once considered compromising on that particular point. Alongside the cafés, the team also runs GD Eats, a food truck deployed for events and site catering. Another gap spotted and another opportunity taken.

## Reading the room (and the menu)

Twenty years in hospitality gives you an education that no course can fully replicate. Kim and Ali have watched food culture in Cambridge evolve in real time, and what they describe is a customer base that has grown more discerning and more diverse in its needs.

"Customers like fresh, light, tasty meals. They like that we make everything ourselves, baking, chutneys and sauces," says Ali. "Our house-made ethos has become a genuine point of difference, particularly in an era when so much in the hospitality industry is bought-in and reheated," she adds.

Dietary requirements have evolved from a minor consideration into a central one. "There is more and more need for special dietary requirements, especially in our catering," Ali notes. The range of what people need has expanded dramatically and continues to surprise. The latest might indeed surprise people – the carnivore diet and the pollotarian diet. Pollotarians are semi-vegetarians who eat poultry and plant-based food, but avoid red meat, pork and often, fish. Twenty years ago, neither of those terms existed in the average caterer's vocabulary.



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## A source of pride

Ask them what they are the most proud of, and neither reach for the name-dropping guest lists or the awards.

"We are proud of our awesome team, many of whom have been with us for a long time. They are amazing," says Kim. In an industry notorious for high turnover and burnout, the fact that people stay and stay for years is itself a measure of something important about how this business is run.

"We are also proud to have been in business for 20 years, thanks to the support from Cambridge," Ali adds.

"Cambridge is an amazing place to live. I wouldn't want to live anywhere else. It's growing and it's really neat to be a part of that." Many clients and customers have become good friends over the years, which is part of the charm of small town business.

## What comes next

So what does a business do after twenty years, three cafés, a food truck, and a client list that spans royalty to rowing champions?

"We carry on trying to do our best at all that we do," says Kim.

It might sound modest, but Gourmet Delicious got to where they are today by showing up consistently, doing the work, caring about the detail, and trusting that if you always do your best, whether on a beach with no running water, in a café that opened three weeks before a national lockdown, or at an Olympic Games on the other side of the world, the rest takes care of itself.

**Gourmet Delicious Ltd operates Suburban Kitchen on Robinson Street, Podium Café at Lake Karapiro, and Clementine at Amber Garden Centre, Peake Road. For catering enquiries visit [gourmetdelicious.co.nz](http://gourmetdelicious.co.nz)**



## Persian Sausage rolls

1kg Sausage Meat  
1 Onion - Diced  
90g of Dried Cranberries  
50g Chopped Pistachios  
1 tsp Sumac  
1 tsp Cumin  
1 tsp Cinnamon  
Salt and Pepper  
1c Tomato Relish ( We use Clementines Relish- available to purchase)  
Flaky pastry  
1x egg

- Preheat your oven to 180c fan bake
- Mix all ingredients in a bowl together, save a small amount of chopped pistachios to sprinkle on top
- Lay out flat the flaky pastry sheet
- Spread some sausage mix from end to end
- Roll into a cylinder
- Cut to your desired length
- Spread egg on top and sprinkle with pistachios
- Cook until golden

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# How Cambridge became the Town of Trees



**C**ambridge's leafy beauty didn't happen by chance. Long before Waipā was known as the Home of Champions, Cambridge was quietly earning another title, the Town of Trees.

In the early to mid-1900s, civic leaders and passionate local gardeners made a deliberate effort to beautify the town through extensive tree planting. Wide streets and generous berms provided the perfect canvas, while ornamental species such as cherry trees were chosen for their seasonal beauty, soft blossom in spring and rich colour in autumn.

Thanks to fertile Waikato soil and a mild climate, the trees flourished, transforming Cambridge into one of New Zealand's most picturesque towns. Tree-lined streets offer shade in summer, blossom in spring, and spectacular golden and crimson hues in autumn.

These streets have become iconic, creating postcard-perfect scenes loved by locals and admired by visitors.

Former Cambridge Borough Councillor and Deputy Mayor Rosemary Hill is credited with adding "and Champions" to the town's long-standing identity around 2003, creating "Town of Trees and Champions." Waipā later adopted "Home of Champions" as a district-wide brand.

Rosemary was a passionate advocate for Cambridge and played a key role in shaping the narrative that still defines the town today.

The Cambridge Tree Trust continues to play an important role, with a core mission to plant trees in and around Cambridge, enhance the town's approaches, protect the environment, and keep Cambridge's image alive as the Town of Trees.



Today, Town of Trees is more than a nickname, it is part of Cambridge's identity.



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# Discover your own backyard

**It's funny how it sometimes takes visitors to remind us what's right on our doorstep.**

Recently, I have had friends and family in town, and like many of us do, I slipped into host mode. Planning where to go, what to see, where to eat. And in doing so, I found myself rediscovering Cambridge and the wider Waikato all over again.

We often talk about Cambridge as a destination, and it is, but it's also home. And sometimes, it takes a fresh set of eyes to see it that way again.

## Fall in love with Cambridge again

Hosting is the perfect excuse to slow down and enjoy the best of our town.

We started with the simple pleasures, coffee in town, a relaxed brunch and a wander down Duke and Empire Streets. The kind of morning you might usually rush through, but this time we lingered. We explored antique stores and op shops and took the time to appreciate just how special our local offering really is.

Our hospitality scene continues to evolve, showcasing the very best of local produce and creativity. It's refined yet relaxed and when you're showing it off to others, you realise just how proud you are of it.

And then there's the charm, the heritage buildings, leafy streets, and that unmistakable sense of welcome. It doesn't go unnoticed.

## Just beyond the familiar

Of course, part of hosting is showing off what lies just beyond.

Within easy reach, we explored Lake Karāpiro, cycled the Te Awa river ride, wandered through Sanctuary Mountain Maungatautari, had an exhilarating ride with Camjet and took in the peacefulness of a walk through the Tree Church gardens.

These aren't far-flung adventures, they're part of our everyday landscape, offering experiences people travel across the world to find.

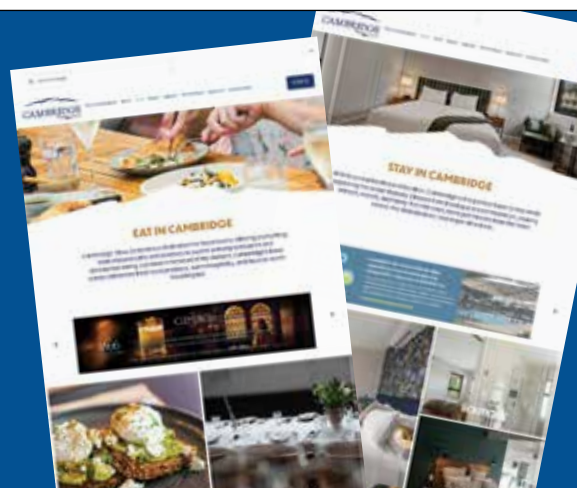


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## Go a little further

We also took the opportunity to venture a little further, and it reminded me just how well positioned Cambridge really is.

A day in Raglan delivered laid-back surf vibes and a west coast sunset.

We discovered the clarity of Te Waihou Walkway (Blue Springs), and introduced our visitors to the magic of the Ōtorohanga Kiwi House.

And for something a little different, a scenic drive to Kāwhia never disappoints.

Each experience felt like a true getaway, yet all within easy reach finished off back in Cambridge with the depth of culinary options.



## The joy of rediscovery

What struck me most was just how much there is to do, right here in our own backyard.

We don't need to go far. We don't need to over-plan. Sometimes it's simply about saying yes, to hosting, to exploring, to seeing our own backyard with fresh eyes.

And at the centre of it all, Cambridge. A place we're proud to share, and even prouder to call home.



## Your backyard, reimagined

So next time friends or family come to stay, lean into it.

Be the host. Take the day trip. Book the lunch. Wander the streets.

Because in showing others what makes this place special, you will rediscover it for yourself.

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## EVENTS IN CAMBRIDGE & THE WAIPĀ DISTRICT

# A town that comes alive

### Barkfest

Barkfest is back in Cambridge for 2026, delivering the ultimate doggy day out and bringing with it a whole lot of wagging tails, big smiles from all the family! Held at the beautiful Lake Te Koo Utu, this free, family-friendly event celebrates the “everyday dog” and the special bond we share with our four-legged friends. Following a hugely successful debut, Barkfest returns on Sunday 1 November with even more to see and do, from vibrant stalls and delicious food to face painting, photo booths, master classes and of course the popular competitions and races!

Crowd favourites like the Doggy Dash, Waggiest Tail, Look-a-Like, Bark Off and Best Trick competitions will be back to get everyone and every dog involved.



**T**here’s something special about a town that knows how to gather.

In Cambridge and across the Waipā district, events are more than just dates on a calendar. They are the rhythm of our community and across the year, our district punches well above its weight.

At the heart of it all is Fieldays at Mystery Creek Events Centre (read more on page 31), the Southern Hemisphere’s largest agricultural event. It’s a powerhouse for the regional economy, drawing tens of thousands of visitors and showcasing innovation, enterprise, and the deep rural roots that shape our district.

Equally iconic in a very different way is the Rotary Cambridge Garden Festival, a celebration of creativity, design, and the natural beauty of our town. Each year, visitors are invited behind the gates of some of the most stunning private gardens, paired with workshops, events, and experiences that reflect the region’s lifestyle and love of the outdoors. It’s a standout on the calendar and a perfect fit for Cambridge’s sense of place.

Sport is another defining pillar. At Lake Karāpiro, national and international rowing regattas bring a buzz of competition and camaraderie, while the Grassroots Trust Velodrome reinforces our reputation as the Home of Champions. Add to that, equestrian events at Takapoto Estate and The Night of Champions at Cambridge Raceway and you have a district where performance and passion are part of everyday life.

But it’s not all high performance. It’s also high connection.



The Rotary Cambridge Garden Festival invites visitors to wander through some of Cambridge’s most beautiful private gardens, celebrating creativity, colour, and inspiration



## Good reason to head to Maungatautari

Tucked along three kilometres of Lake Karāpiro waterfront, Takapoto Estate is one of the Waikato's most remarkable properties - 600 acres of thriving eco-sanctuary, world-class equestrian facilities, and boutique accommodation, all built on a foundation of deep environmental care.

Every Saturday, The Cabana at Takapoto Estate opens its doors for wine tastings from 11am to 4pm. Head winemaker Alex Coldicutt's boutique line-up spans flagship Central Otago Pinot Noirs and the estate-grown Crossing Point range, a Waikato Chardonnay, Rosé, and Red Blend. Don't miss the Forager's Gin, crafted with kawakawa, manuka, horopito, and pohutukawa foraged from the estate's own native bush. Tastings start from \$20 per person, redeemable on a three-bottle purchase, with cheese platters and homemade pizza to match.

Or, make a day of it with a guided Takapoto Tour. Explore native trees and pest control techniques on foot, by car, or on your own e-bike. Check the event calendar for more.

Events like the Cambridge Autumn Festival see the town in full colour, with markets, music, and community celebration drawing people into the heart of the CBD. The Cambridge Farmers' Market has become a much-loved weekly ritual, while the Lions Trash 'N' Treasure Market and the Empire Street Markets are special offerings to be enjoyed.

There are too many to mention here, but if you are after more information on key events and local colour visit [www.cambridge.co.nz/events/](http://www.cambridge.co.nz/events/) for what's on in Cambridge.

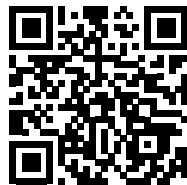
These are the connectors that build the fabric of our community.

What makes events in Cambridge truly special is the setting. Within minutes, you can move from a buzzing event precinct to riverside calm along the Waikato River, or out to the rolling countryside that defines our landscape.

In Cambridge, events are just the beginning.

They're the invitation to experience a place that's vibrant, connected, and proudly alive.

For What's On in Cambridge this week scan the QR code or visit [www.cambridge.co.nz/events](http://www.cambridge.co.nz/events)







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## FAMILY CAMPING IN CAMBRIDGE

# Pitch, play, explore

**C**amping is about getting back to basics, not going backwards. The days of heavy canvas tents and uncomfortable stretchers are long gone. What remains is the good part: space, freedom, and time together.

For kids, it's a chance to step away from devices and into the real world. To explore, get dirty, make friends, and figure things out for themselves, all in a safe, open environment where adventure still feels natural.

Cambridge makes that easy.

Set up a tent, park the caravan, or book a cabin, whatever works. It's not about roughing it. It's about the moments that matter: bikes skidding to a stop, marshmallows over the fire, and laughter carrying across the campsite.

Along the Waikato River, the pace slows down. Mornings start with birdsong, days unfold without a schedule, and kids have the kind of freedom that's hard to come by elsewhere: room to roam, build, and explore.

When it's time to get moving, there's plenty nearby. Ride the Te Awa River Trail, take a stroll at Sanctuary Mountain (see page 40), loop the lake boardwalk, or head to the aquatic centre for a swim.

Camping with kids isn't complicated. It's the simple rituals that make it: setting up together, card games by torchlight, early nights, and full days.

And when you want a break from camp life, Cambridge is right there. Good coffee, easy dining, and local markets, all within a short drive.

Get back to what matters. Fresh air. Freedom. Time together.

For more on where to camp in Waipā, visit:  
[www.cambridge.co.nz/guide--camping-in-our-district/](http://www.cambridge.co.nz/guide--camping-in-our-district/)

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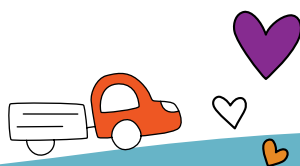


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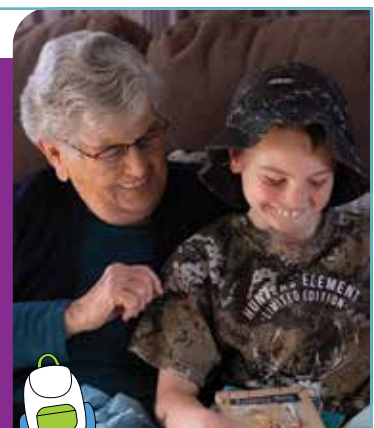
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# 20 years of Cambridge Park

**O**n a quiet afternoon, Cambridge Park reveals itself best on foot.

The edges are soft. Streets feel scaled for people, not just cars. There's a sense that the neighbourhood knows where it sits in the wider fabric of Cambridge, edging naturally alongside the Town Belt, within easy walking distance of Cambridge township and Leamington, and open rather than turned inward.

That feeling was intentional.

Twenty years ago, as Cambridge began to grow beyond its traditional boundaries, the land that would become Cambridge Park was still zoned rural, earmarked for future residential use, but requiring a plan change before development could proceed.

Rather than treating subdivision design as something to apply at the end, the developers brought architects and landscapers to the table early, asking PAUA Architects a central question: how could Cambridge grow while still feeling like Cambridge?

From the beginning, Antanas Procuta, director and principal architect at PAUA Architects, says the focus was not only on people, but also on the existing Cambridge townscape pattern.

"Streets were conceived as shared spaces rather than vehicle corridors. Public spaces weren't left over; they were central to the design," Antanas explains.

"The intent was to reclaim streets as places to live, not just pass through."

One of the defining ideas, he says, was the use of a natural boundary with a clear edge, respecting the relationship with the Cambridge Town Belt while creating a neighbourhood that felt anchored rather than sprawling.

"At both a micro and macro level, it was about placemaking," Antanas says. "That is, how individual homes relate to streets, and how the whole area connects back to the town."

At the heart of Cambridge Park sits The Oval, a shared green that was always intended as a social centre, not a feature to admire from afar. Higher-density housing, a cafe and communal open space were planned together, reinforcing the idea that neighbourhoods work best when people have a public space and reasons to meet.

That commitment to walkability and connected design was formally recognised in 2009, when Cambridge Park and PAUA Architects received the Living Streets Aotearoa Golden Foot Walking Award.

"At that time, we were incredibly proud to have the project acknowledged for reclaiming streets for people and prioritising safe, accessible walking environments," he recalls.

"Two decades on, what's striking is how the Cambridge Park neighbourhood feels treasured. On an afternoon walk, you see residents biking and scootering, children playing together outside, neighbours catching up at The Oval, and people stopping to chat while walking their dogs. The original design intent, to support everyday life rather than impose a trend, has quietly held up."

**As Cambridge continues to grow and change, Cambridge Park stands as a reminder that good development respects where it is, starts with people, and leaves space for a community to form over time.**

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# Bringing business to Hautapu

**W**aipā District Council is backing Hautapu's transformation into Cambridge's main industrial hub through targeted infrastructure investment.

Hautapu is drawing businesses that mean business.

Comins Plumbing and Gas relocated its 24-vehicle operation to Hautapu Road from Leamington in 2023 and hasn't looked back.

The Bale café opened on Parakiwai Road two years later, creating a dozen jobs to serve the growing industrial community around them.

Both businesses made a deliberate choice to be in Hautapu. Both are growing and say Hautapu is only getting started.

"We are averaging growth of eight to ten per cent a year," says Comins' general manager Stuart Peden.

He has also seen a 30 per cent rise in walk-in business since moving to Cambridge's primary industrial hub.

Proximity to State Highway One was a key factor in the move.

"State Highway One is three minutes from our door," Stuart says.

The move has enabled Comins to future proof its operations in the golden triangle formed by the Auckland, Bay of Plenty and Waikato regions for the next 25 years.



Comins Plumbing and Gas is growing after moving to Cambridge's primary industrial hub at Hautapu.

"We didn't have to move, but we chose to move because Hautapu was looking like the best place to be. It was a good decision."

Waipā District Council is delivering an infrastructure programme in Hautapu to support that growth. The programme consists of six co-ordinated projects covering road improvements, stormwater and water supply upgrades, and a new wastewater network. The first, a large soakage basin to capture and manage stormwater from existing and new developments, is expected to begin shortly.

The Comins Plumbing and Gas team operate under a buy local policy and enjoy proximity to other businesses that have recently established in the Hautapu industrial hub.

"As much as possible, we buy local," Stuart adds. "We try really hard to support Hautapu and Cambridge businesses."

Country Co catering director Sam Amundsen and her partner Justin Howard established The Bale with encouragement from the Cambridge Business Chamber.

"We took off with an absolute hiss and a roar," says Sam.

She describes the experience as epic.

**"We saw the growth potential in Hautapu with so much more development to keep happening in the years to come," Sam says.**

She and Howard are also dairy farmers.


"We enjoy relationships that form with businesses and the ability to become a destination café. The community that has formed out here is pretty neat. Our customer base is very loyal. We truly love doing business in Hautapu."



Country Co Catering director Sam Amundsen sees Hautapu is an area of endless growth potential after opening The Bale café in Parakiwai Road in June.





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# Lights on, Cambridge keeps moving

**W**hen electricity works as it should, most of us don't give it much thought.

The lights turn on. The jug boils. Shops open, schools run, and homes tick along as they should. Behind the scenes, a community-owned network is working around the clock to keep power flowing to homes and businesses across Cambridge.

That's how Waipā Networks views its role.

With Cambridge growing faster than ever, local energy infrastructure is playing an increasingly important role in shaping the town's future. It's about meeting today's needs, while preparing for what comes next.

## Powering a growing town

In recent years, Waipā Networks has been making some of its most significant investments in and around Cambridge, with a focus on supporting growth and strengthening the local network for the long term.

One of the biggest investments is the newly commissioned 33kV zone substation alongside

Transpower's Grid Exit Point (GXP) in Hautapu. While it's not something most people will ever see, it plays a key role in supplying electricity across Cambridge and the surrounding area.



In practical terms, it gives the town more capacity and resilience. As new homes are built, businesses expand, and the Hautapu industrial area continues to develop, demand on the network increases. The Hautapu zone substation helps ensure that growth can happen without putting pressure on the system.

Around Cambridge and Leamington, Waipā Networks has also continued undergrounding and cable upgrades, replacing ageing assets and strengthening parts of the network where growth is happening fastest. Recent works on Vogel Street, for example, have helped enable development at Cambridge Resthaven, ensuring residents, staff and neighbouring properties have a reliable power supply.

Waipā Networks general manager for the network, Mat O'Neill, says these projects are about setting Cambridge up properly, rather than reacting after the fact.

"Although much of our work happens out of sight, the benefits are felt every day," says Mat.

"For households, it means fewer outages and faster restoration when issues do occur," he explains.

"For local businesses, it means confidence that the power supply can support operations, growth and new technology. For the wider community, it helps ensure Cambridge can keep growing without the growing pains that come from an overstretched network."

As energy use changes, with more electric vehicles, heat pumps, greater power consumption, and evolving technologies becoming part of daily life, planning ahead is essential.

"Strengthening the network now helps ensure Cambridge is ready for those changes."

## Cambridge isn't standing still, and neither is the network that supports it

Planned projects across the town include a 33kV cable upgrade and feeder augmentation in Leamington, 11kV cable upgrades in central Cambridge, including the Alpha and Bryce Street areas, and other infrastructure improvements to enable future energy needs. Mat says these projects don't always grab attention, but they're vital to maintaining reliability and protecting the network for the long term.

"Much of this work is about replacing infrastructure before it fails, strengthening connections and improving resilience across neighbourhoods. It's



**"Good infrastructure is the kind you never have to think about. It just works."**

- Mat O'Neill

careful, staged investment that's guided by growth forecasts and community needs," he says.

As a community-owned organisation, Waipā Networks plans its investments with the long term in mind. The focus is on maintaining a reliable network while keeping costs manageable for customers.

Projects are prioritised based on where they deliver the greatest benefit, and value is returned to the community through customer discounts and the Waipā Networks Trust model. It's a practical approach that balances affordability with reliability.

Beyond the network itself, Waipā Networks is part of Cambridge life. Its staff live locally, and the business supports local organisations and is involved in community initiatives, from partnering with Cambridge Community House to sponsoring local sports teams and clubs.

Those connections matter. They ensure decisions are grounded in the community's real needs, not made from a distance.

When the lights turn on, Cambridge keeps moving

As Cambridge continues to grow, Mat says the best infrastructure will remain the kind most people never notice.

"Reliable. Resilient. Ready for what's ahead. That's where we're focusing," he says confidently.

"Through steady investment and a strong connection to the community we serve, we're helping Cambridge remain a great place to live, work and do business now and into the future."



## Built with a focus on quality, functionality, and long-term value.

For the past decade, Progressive Property has been quietly shaping the Cambridge landscape, delivering thoughtfully designed homes and developments that reflect the way people want to live today.

What started as a small subdivide on a personal home; our driven operation has grown into a trusted local developer known for quality, smart design, and getting projects delivered the right way. Ten years on, that same hands-on approach and attention to detail continues to drive everything we do.

We're proud Cambridge locals, having grown up and been educated here before travelling and returning home. It's now where we're raising our families, and it's a privilege to be actively involved in both the local business community and wider community through sport and events.

For us it's about helping form Cambridge's growth the right way. Creating homes that not only look great, but function well, hold their value, and stand the test of time.

### What we do

We specialise in delivering:

- Architecturally designed townhouse developments
- Turnkey homes ready for modern living
- Well-located, thoughtfully planned communities
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## Cambridge Mews

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Discover Cambridge with Cambridge Mews – the perfect place to stay. Ideal for weekend escapes, business travel, or exploring the region. Stay central and relax, where comfort and warm Kiwi hospitality come together. Find us at 20 Hamilton Road, Cambridge.



## Construction Advantage

Commercial Construction - [constructionadvantage.co.nz](http://constructionadvantage.co.nz)

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## EWSpaces

Interior Design – [ewspaces.co.nz](http://ewspaces.co.nz)

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## LJ Hooker

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Connection,  
Safety and Resilience



## Safer Cambridge Trust

Community Safety – [safercambridge.co.nz](http://safercambridge.co.nz)

Safer Cambridge boosts connection, drives safety and builds resilience through Neighbourhood Support and Community Patrol. We stop harm so Cambridge thrives. Step up and help keep Cambridge safe every day. Advert sponsored by LJ Hooker Cambridge.



## Alys Antiques and Fine Art

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CAMBRIDGE BUSINESS  
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# The art of living well

At Te Awa Lifecare, life is centred around connection, nature, and the warmth of feeling truly at home. As a proudly 100% New Zealand family-owned community, we're grounded in care, tradition, and a genuine commitment to enhancing everyday living.

Nestled in the heart of Cambridge alongside the serene Waikato River, Te Awa Lifecare offers the perfect balance of peaceful rural charm and easy access to town. Our thoughtfully designed villas and beautifully landscaped grounds reflect the rich history of the land, creating inviting spaces to relax, unwind, and enjoy.

Whether you're embracing independent living in a villa or serviced cottage, or need additional support with 24-hour Registered Nursing care in our care centre or dementia homestead, Te Awa Lifecare is more than just somewhere to live—it's a place to flourish.

Family is at the heart of everything we do. Our residents enjoy sharing their lives with loved ones, whether hosting visits at home or making the most of our welcoming village facilities. With a variety of activities and amenities on offer, there's always something to be part of.

**Come and discover what makes Te Awa Lifecare special. Call us to arrange your personal tour.**



**TE AWA**  
*Lifecare Village*

1866 Cambridge Road, Cambridge  
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**P:** 027 255 7922

**E:** [cohen.burkhart@craigsip.com](mailto:cohen.burkhart@craigsip.com)

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