

Preparation and prompt action keeps roads moving as bitter winter weather sets in

5 June 2019 - ADC - Winter made an impressive arrival in the Ashburton District at the weekend, with heavy rain and snow sending residents for their winter woolies, but the plummeting temperatures haven't brought the district to a standstill, thanks to some specialist efforts on the roads.

While many people were set to go about their plans for the Queen's Birthday long weekend on Saturday 1 June, the Council's roading contractors armed their graders with snow ploughs and took to the district's high country roads to clear paths for motorists.

Before sundown, grit was also spread across a number of these roads to help give tyres more traction on ice that may have formed later that night.

Severe weather events like this are routinely planned for in the days and hours before they hit to help prepare the district as best as possible.

When forecasts show a deluge of rain on the way, street sweepers head out in urban areas to clear the gutters, and a crew check on vulnerable sumps and soak holes.

Sucker trucks clear clogged drains to stop water pooling across the roads and footpaths, and continue to work throughout the weather event to ensure the stormwater systems aren't overwhelmed by the downpour.

Snowfall predictions are often an exciting announcement for avid skiers and residents who enjoy the novelty of snow falling in their neighbourhood, but they are also an indicator for the Council to have snow ploughs on standby.

There are three graders tasked with clearing the district's primary roads in snow events using plough attachments, but more can be added to the fleet from other local contractors as required.

The contractors also apply grit to the roads and footpaths in preparation for icy temperatures that are likely to promote black ice forming.

In fact, from June through until the end of August, ice gritting is a routine activity around the district. Grit helps to provide traction on road surfaces to stop vehicles slipping on the ice.

Due to their location and topography, some roads regularly feature on the Council's ice gritting list, and they are frequently monitored throughout winter and into spring.

Efforts between the Council and property owners in the last three years has also seen a number of shelter belts along roadsides trimmed or removed to help get sunlight onto road surfaces and melt ice. Shelter belts are lines of trees commonly planted along fence lines to create shelter for stock and crops, however if they get too high, they can block sunlight from reaching the road.

To be alerted when roads or other local infrastructure is affected during adverse weather events in your area, or to receive other important Council notifications in the Ashburton District, simply text your postcode to '4196'.

You can learn more about the work happening on Ashburton District roads on the Council website .