



Media Release
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Te Ara Ātea celebrates hugely popular first year

As it approaches its first birthday Te Ara Ātea is already showing itself to be one of the most popular community facilities in the district.

The award-winning multi-use facility on Tennyson Street in Rolleston has been a hive of activity, with hundreds of visitors a day enjoying, art exhibitions, workshops, the library collection, community events and live music since it opened on 2 December 2021.

Over the year more than 164,000 visits have been made to the arts, culture, learning and community space, including 15,000 people who attended more than 900 workshops and programmes ranging from live music, language learning, heritage and cultural activities, to JP clinics, LEGO clubs, craft workshops and even reading aloud to dogs.

It also includes a popular café and Selwyn's largest library collection with 41,000 physical collection items. By mid-November Te Ara Ātea had seen 310,546 items checked out and signed up 4,335 new Selwyn Libraries users.

It has been special to see the huge numbers that have embraced the building and enjoyed everything it offers, Council Arts Culture and Lifelong Learning Manager Nicki Moen says.

"It's been a fantastic first year of operation, and business has far exceeded what we expected. We're thrilled to have so many people regularly visit us from across Selwyn district. It's been a real delight to our team over the year to see so many older people visiting with their children and grandchildren.

"Te Ara Ātea is a treasure for our community. Right now, if you visited you'd see people upstairs studying for exams, people in the café and enjoying the *Pahū* art exhibition, the books, exploring the heritage displays and kids playing with the craft and technology kits. The other day it was so full there wasn't a free seat to be found upstairs."

Te Ara Ātea hosts a fully integrated public gallery and museum cultural experiences over two floors, including 22 heritage exhibition cases displaying over 50 taonga telling stories of the district and Rolleston town, permanent public artworks and integrated exhibitions.

The manawa/anchor building of the new Rolleston Town Centre, it won both a Canterbury Architecture Awards winner and the Creative New Zealand Award for Cultural Wellbeing at the Local Government New Zealand (LGNZ) Excellence Awards during the year.

A celebration of the first year will be held at the facility on Sunday 4 December, 10am–4pm.

ENDS

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