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Inside

No Tears on the Field a great watch

The documentary No Tears on the Field attracted a big turnout at Opunake's Everybody's Theatre on Sunday night of Easter weekend, the cinema's projector now repaired following a huge fundraising effort.

The locally produced film was a fascinating insight into women's rugby. The passion, the play, the camaraderie, the community spirit and the fun were all in evidence as we traced the lives of four young women rugby players and their passion for the game. There were also interviews with key people involved in women's rugby,

Also attending at the screening was the award winning director Lisa Burd and several of the female rugby players.

The producer Bernadette Courtney who lives in Wellington said they had been "blown away by the reaction to the film," which has been shown in over 60 cinemas around New Zealand. The documentary which was edited by camera man Sam Scannell is also being released in Australia.

Lisa Burd who lives in New Plymouth said she had the idea for the film when she was told Coastal Rugby was going to Las Vegas.

As it happened the team



From left production assistant Emma Andrews, director Lisa Burd, producer Bernadette Courtney, and guiding hand Janet Fleming and Chair of Coastal Rugby outside Opunake's Everybodys Theatre before the screening of No Tears on the Field.

didn't get to Las Vegas.

"I had already started filming the Southern Rugby Club, Clifton and Tukapa," however said Lisa so she decided to continue with

the filming. No Tears on the Field is her fifth documentary/film.

Lisa said prior to the screening at Everybody's Theatre she was "super excited about being on the coast" which is "where the entire project started and ended."

The film which has been three years in the making was a team effort she said.

It was the enthusiasm and perseverance of Vicky Dombroski, the first female coach of the Black Ferns interviewed in the film who kicked off women's rugby in New Zealand. In the late 1980s, the women's rugby movement was emerging. but recognition and assistance from the New Zealand Rugby Football Union wasn't forthcoming. In frustration, Dombroski wrote a letter to the New Zealand Rugby Football Union in 1988 requesting permission to have a club competition in Taranaki eventually gaining the support of the NZRFU stating they were in favour of women taking an active role in the game.

Cheryth Blyde who grew up in Normanby and played for the Black Ferns, a pivotal figure in Taranaki in Women's

rugby, is also interviewed. A rugby convert she played for Clifton and was later a coach and the first female president of the Taranaki Rugby Football Union. Her daughter Michaela Brake who plays in the Black Ferns Sevens and is a double Olympic gold medallist

was one of the three current rugby players who feature in the film. The others were Kate Thomson, Mereana Anderson and Madison Davidson

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New plans for housing at Cottage Rest home. Page 7



Gold Stars awarded for long service. Page 6.



The loss of a local identity mourned. P 11.



Electric buses for Taranaki Regional Council. Page 18



Candidates in the running for Fonterra Dairy Woman of the Year. Page 22

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From left women's rugby players Shinae Minhinnick, Chenae Lowry and Victoria McCullough who all attended the screening of No Tears on the Field in Opunake,

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EDITORIAL

Rough sleeper situation needs a solution, not heavyhandedness

The coalition Government has recently given notice that the problems of rough sleepers will be dealt with by, ultimately, a possible fine of \$2,000 and/or imprisonment. The legislation will entail an amendment to the Summary Offences Act (1981). In her objection to the proposed legislation Chloe Swarbrick MP, Greens Aotearoa co-leader said it was like, "Trump's America 'punching down' on people."

The question arises that, if the rough sleepers cannot afford accommodation, how can they possibly pay a fine of \$2,000?

Therefore, reading

between the lines, what the government really has in mind is imprisonment for these people who cannot afford housing. Carmel Sepuloni MP, the deputy leader of the Opposition's response was that it was wrong to penalise those people with the least, while failing to address the causes of homelessness.

Specifically, the new legislation gives the New Zealand Police extra powers to "move on" people sleeping rough, or behaving in a disorderly threatening or intimidating manner in town centres. It is directed at persons who are aged 14 and older. The Minister

of Justice Paul Goldsmith said legislative action was needed because business owners and shoppers were likely to be "blighted by disruption and disturbance."

There is no doubt that there is a problem in need of redress, although maybe the negative aspects have been over-stated to some degree. This is anecdotal I admit, but I've never felt threatened or abused by rough sleepers or the like. I have, however, been approached for money, always politely, and always oblige.

However, it is not fair to business owners, who often struggle to balance their budgets, to have the access to their shops impeded in any way or have potential shoppers nervous (with or without due cause) to call by. Evidently, since 2023 the incidence of rough sleeping in Taranaki has increased by 50%.

The problem of poverty and homelessness is complex, long-standing and hardly solely the fault

of the current government. I recall former prime minister Jacinda Ardern, in a television debate with Bill English, decrying the homelessness situation (and citing statistics) under his watch. However, once her government was elected the situation actually worsened.

The grounds for social housing have been tightened up by the current government - surely this is a retrograde step, likely to worsen the situation.

To state the obvious we need more houses, including state housing. We also need rent control, like they have in Vancouver, Canada where landlords are not simply allowed to hike rents whenever they feel like it with no regard to the rate of inflation or renters capacity to pay. Taranaki has had some of the biggest rent increases in New Zealand of late. With the election of Mayor Max Brough in New Plymouth we have some degree of rates 'capping,' something similar is needed

with respect to rental increases in the province.

The New Plymouth District Council and YMCA must be commended for their initiatives regarding the rough sleepers shelter (Whare o te Tapatahi o Taranaki) in Lemon Street, where food, warmth, shelter and secure lockers are provided. Hopefully the two parties can continue supporting this initiative and even increase their financial input. The last NPDC mayor Neil Holdon commented, "I do not believe it is the role of the Council to be funding health, welfare and housing for our most vulnerable, but the reality is if it is not us stepping up, it will not happen." He added a word of caution. "Doing nothing will mean one or two people in our community may well be dead before winter ends." Well, that was referring to last winter, but there is another one just ahead!

The scope of the homeless/poverty problem goes beyond just housing

(too few, too expensive) and poverty to include, in some cases, substance abuse and mental health. What is needed is a Royal Commission to investigate the problem, in all its aspects and implications, to arrive at some workable solutions. Heavy handedness of vulnerable people is not the answer and, anyway, will not provide answers.

Rolland McKellar

Donald McDonald



Roger Morris' from Oeo's satirical depiction of Donald Trump.

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ADELPHOS

Have you ever had a flat car battery? After recently visiting a friend in Taranaki Base Hospital, I returned to the carpark to find my Suzuki Swift's car battery was as dead as a door nail. It's a bit weird because my friend and I were discussing how a pacemaker, with a built-in battery, will keep his heart working at the right rate.

Fortunately, twenty-three minutes after phoning the AA (Automobile Association), a brightly coloured white and yellow van arrived carrying the

hope of resuscitating my car. The technician diagnosed that my 12 volt battery was in its last terminal stage (1.1 volts) and my beloved Swifty needed a new battery transplant. So, I conveniently bought one from his AA van. It resurrected my dead car back onto the road, along with its three-year warranty. Unlike car or pacemaker batteries that wear out and need replacing, Jesus promised us new resurrected bodies that never wear out or become sick. We will have imperishable bodies like Jesus had that first Easter Sunday morning (1 John 3:21; Corinthians 15:42-43). One main purpose of Jesus' resurrection was about opening a pathway for "our" bodily resurrection to eternal

Resurrection

life: That is, God gave each of us the opportunity to repent and believe that Jesus took "our sins" upon Himself on the Good Friday cross. So that through "our" repentance we can finally become His physically resurrected people living together in a sinless new heaven and new earth when Jesus returns from heaven (Revelation 21:1-4; 2 Peter 3:13).

The resurrection also gives believers today hope and confidence to persevere through the political, spiritual and worldly opposition/persecution Jesus said they will inevitably confront because of their belief in Him (John 15:18-20; Matthew 5:10-12). But ultimately, Jesus'

Easter resurrection in 33 A.D. means that there will be a future new heaven and earth. This should not sound phantasmagorical or like science-fiction. Because scientists now predict that by 2030 there will be an AI accelerated biotechnology tool to increase our biological age to 200 years or indefinitely using genetic engineering. This tool also promises to reshape a bright future on our now use-by-dated and aging planet. In whom do we place our faith? Again in 2026, Easter reminds us that God is still offering everyone the free gift of eternal life (John 3:16).

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Town square work under way



Napier Street had been closed off and contractors were busy at work laying the concrete for the town square.

Work has begun on the much-awaited Green Space in the Opunake CBD, now named Te Puna Manawa Ora

(“the Spring of the Heart, Spirit and life, a place of health and wellbeing”). The project sees part of

Napier Street closed off to create a town square taking in Te Whare Kotahi (the former TSB building), the

town’s Library Plus and the Peter Snell statue.

The square is part of the South Taranaki District Council’s small town revitalisation programme which saw the Council work with co-design groups

of local people to develop projects for their towns. The South Taranaki District Council approved the project in 2024.

South Taranaki District Council community development advisor Fran

Levings told the Opunake and Coastal News last year that they would be starting into the new year as they wanted to avoid disrupting people in the December-January busy period.



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Double gold for half a century of service

On 30 October 2000 Colin Andrews joined the Opunake Volunteer Fire Brigade, followed four weeks later on 27 November by Kevin Corrigan. On April 4 this year both men, who are station officers, received their Gold Stars for 25 years with the fire service (now FENZ), Colin becoming Gold Star member 8936 and Kevin number 8937.

The presentations were made at a special ceremony at the Opunake Fire Station, with fellow firefighters

forming a guard of honour for Kevin, and for Colin and his wife Patrice.

This was followed by a number of speeches and presentations, with Ryan Moss acting as MC.

“There were 111 RSVPs for tonight and this is a 111 callout where everyone is happy to be here,” said Lesina Walden, the recently elected United Fire Brigades Association (UFBA) president who presented the Gold Star medals.

Colin is a third-generation



The Opunake Volunteer Fire Brigade form a guard of honour for Colin Andrews and wife Patrice (obscured) and Kevin Corrigan.

fire fighter. His grandfather Jack who had immigrated from England was followed by Colin’s father John who had served in the Te Awamutu Fire Brigade. Among those attending was Colin’s older brother, also called John who made the trip from Te Atatu in Auckland. He had been a firefighter himself but says that his service had not matched that of his younger brother’s 25 years.

“He achieved something none of us others did.”

Their father had died at the age of 39, and John says the funeral was at the time one of the largest to have been held in Te Awamutu.

Opunake chief fire officer Andrew Pentelow recalled his own early days in the brigade and the friendship Colin had shown him.

“Colin was one of the very first people to greet me, and that support has made a lasting impression on me,” he said.

Like Colin, Kevin can claim a family connection with firefighting.

“My brother was in it at the time, and I ended up coming along, but I had been thinking about it for a while.”

He’s been a station officer for some time and enjoyed his time with the brigade.

“It’s been a blast,” he says. When he first joined, he didn’t imagine he’d still be there 25 years later.

Tributes were paid to Colin and Kevin and to family members, including Colin’s wife Patrice.

Lesina Walden noted the Opunake Brigade has 20 Gold Star holders including two who have been honoured for 50 years’ service.

“Twenty-five years of service is a remarkable milestone. It speaks of a commitment to the community and to each other.”

Taranaki Provincial Firefighters Association president Janice Baker paid tribute to Colin and Kevin’s

service. “That’s 25 years’ service in answering calls at short notice in somebody’s darkest hour.”

South Taranaki District mayor Phil Nixon voiced similar sentiments.

“Fifty years of voluntary service is fantastic,” he said. New Plymouth MP David MacLeod paid tribute to the work carried out by volunteer firefighters.

“New Zealand has got 650 fire brigades and 86 of these are manned by professionals,” he said. “That shows we’ve got a

heck of a lot of volunteer fire brigades like the one we have here in Opunake. We’re so lucky as a country,

as a province and even as a community to have so many firefighting volunteers. I ask the question where would we be without you? We would be up Shite Creek without you.”

He addressed the two Gold Star recipients.

“Colin and Kevin, you can both be rightfully proud of the time and service you have committed. You have, I’m sure, placed yourself in harm’s way while others have retreated.”

Fire and Emergency New Zealand (FENZ) district manager David Utumapu encouraged Colin and Kevin to reflect on their years with the Fire Service “and not just the difficult ones.”



Gold Star recipients Colin Andrews and Kevin Corrigan.

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Plans for residential village next to rest home

A building development on the seaward side of Ōpunakē will mean flow-on benefits for both the Cottage Rest Home and the town, according to the chair of the Ōpunakē District Cottage Rest Home Trust.

“It’s a fantastic opportunity to grow the aged care services provided at the Ōpunakē District Cottage Rest Home,” says Bryan Roach who took over as Trust chair in December last year.

The plan will see a residential village of five one-bedroom and seven two-bedroom units, together with a community hall and amenities building set up on a section behind the Ōpunakē Cottage Rest Home.

It’s a plan that has been some time in the making.

“Numerous chairs have worked on this before me” says Bryan. “I understand it’s been 8-10 years in the making.”

The Trust has engaged Steve Corkill and Andrea Rowe as project managers for the new build.

All units will have their own backup power, Wi-Fi connections and heat pumps, and the community hall can be hired out either whole or in part for



Opunake Cottage Rest Home Trust members. From left. Grant McSeveny, Raewyn Cornford, Robyn Davey, Bryan Roach, Bob Clark, Jennifer Jones, Jim Dodunski.

occasions like birthdays or anniversaries.

Bryan says with the blessing of the hapu Ngati Tamarongo, the name Te Kupenga Village has been chosen, a name which embraces both the moana(ocean) and the roto(lake). The Village will be run as its own business separate from the rest home.

“Once they are locked down the plans will be going straight to the funders all around Taranaki and that includes the community as well,” says Bryan.

It is estimated that the units and infrastructure

including roading will cost \$4-5 million. Once the money is raised they hope to go straight into building. Bryan says it would take less than a year from the start of building to occupancy.

The buildings will be built off-site and trucked to Ōpunakē. Bryan says it’s a Trust priority to have electrical, drainage and other infrastructure work carried out by local contractors.

He is keen to get started. “If I had all the money I’d start building tomorrow.”

They plan to do things a bit differently from the way one or two larger outfits carry

out their operations.

“We’re not going down the road of licence to occupy like the big rest homes do,” says Bryan. “There will be no initial layout. We’re just going to do weekly rentals for units. Because we charge weekly, we can move residents in and out very quickly with minimal paperwork. It makes it a very accessible option for people to move into self-contained units.”

The units will be responsible for their own power and water and for a portion of the rates.

Bryan says the Trust are looking at setting criteria for who is and isn’t eligible to go into the units. Anyone coming into the units must be self-sufficient and able look after themselves, but within that there will be differing levels of service available, depending on the needs of the individual. This could include having someone available to carry out tasks like vacuuming and laundry.

The aim is to get everything completely paid off. Once the 12 units are completely paid off, the rental money will help fund Stage 2, which could see the purchase of the adjoining section and another 12 units. If that is successful, the rentals could be used to upgrade and extend the Cottage Rest Home building.

“If we can get this build

done and the purchase of the land, and another build completed it means the whole viability of the complex is going to be very self-sufficient,” says Bryan. He says the Rest Home currently has 22 staff who inject about a million dollars into the local economy,

and as the project gathers pace, that number can only increase.

Bryan says it is the only operation of its kind along the coast between New Plymouth and Hawera.

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But energy has never stood still, and neither have we.

It is time to shift our focus, and talk about what the real energy for change is in Taranaki.

Right now, the Government is stepping back from its earlier push for an LNG import terminal, saying the "business case needs to stack up." That's not a small shift, and it reflects the rapidly changing reality of the world around us. When the announcement was made a few months ago, many experts warned



AMANDA CLINTON-GOHDDES

it would tie us to volatile international fuel prices. At that time, it seemed like a theoretical risk. Now, it is an all too confronting reality for households and businesses alike.

There are a myriad of other reasons that the LNG terminal doesn't stack up, but ultimately it comes down to this: it's going to cost billions of dollars, potentially never be used, and be paid for by households on their power bills whether they use gas or

not.

There's also been a lot of noise about how we got here, where LNG seemed like the last resort.

It's easy to point to a single policy decision and say 'that's the cause.' But anyone who's worked in this sector knows the reality is more long-term than that. Our largest gas fields have been declining for years, and new finds have been scarce. That challenge didn't start in 2018 - and it won't be solved by looking backwards, or by importing expensive gas from overseas.

So that brings us back to the bigger question - do we want to double down on a system we can't control, or build one we can?

For many in Taranaki, talk of moving beyond oil and gas can feel like turning our backs on the very industry that built us. That concern

is real, especially for the families whose livelihoods depend on it.

However, the choice in front of us isn't between honouring our past and embracing the future - it's about doing both, strategically.

Oil and gas made sense when it was our competitive advantage. Today, our advantage looks different. We have some of the best wind resources in the country, the most sunshine hours, and a highly skilled engineering workforce that already knows how to build and run complex energy systems. We are also home to innovation hubs like Ara Ake, which are focused on exactly this transition.

We are perfectly positioned to chase down the opportunity to remain New Zealand's energy centre, while supporting

local industry and jobs. But this time, we invest in renewables. In doing so, we not only create energy independence, we also provide jobs for people in our region into the future.

Importantly, it's a pathway that aligns with what this community already values. Many locals have stood firmly against seabed mining - not because they oppose development, but because they care about protecting our coast and doing things the right way. That same principle can guide how we approach offshore wind and other renewable opportunities: carefully, responsibly, and with local benefit front and centre.

None of this happens overnight, but we need to be investing now in the future. If we build an LNG terminal, we create pressure to use it - for decades. If we invest

in renewables, we create momentum in a different direction: towards lower costs, greater stability, and more local control.

Taranaki has never been afraid of backing itself. We took a chance on oil and gas when it was new. We built capability, attracted investment, and led the country.

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One that keeps jobs in the region, protects what we value, and gives us more control over our own future.

That's not about ideology, it's about common sense.

The question isn't whether change is coming; it's whether we choose to lead it.

Amanda Clinton-Gohdes.

Oil shock squeezes Kiwi farmers, but we adapt... again

.For New Zealand farmers, the Middle East oil crisis feels a long way from the woolshed or the milking shed - but its impacts are already turning up in monthly accounts. Higher fuel prices hit every part of the rural economy. From running tractors and

irrigators, to trucking stock and carting feed, diesel and petrol are stitched into the cost of almost everything a farmer does.

When the price of oil spikes, it doesn't just show up at the pump. Freight costs rise, fertiliser and farm inputs become more



BARBARA KURIGER MP
TARANAKI-KING COUNTRY

expensive, and contractors have to pass on higher operating costs. For many farmers already squeezed

by soft commodity prices and tighter bank lending, this adds yet another layer of pressure.

It's easy, in this environment, for frustration to turn into anxiety. But it's worth keeping perspective. New Zealand farmers have weathered oil shocks, droughts, disease outbreaks, and market collapses before. Each time, the sector has adapted through efficiency gains, smarter use of technology, and working together at a community level.

There are practical steps farmers can take now: reviewing fuel contracts, coordinating freight with neighbours, cutting non-essential trips, and ensuring machinery runs efficiently. These won't erase the impact of higher prices, but they can soften the blow and buy time.

Government has a role to play too, by providing targeted, temporary support that eases the immediate pressure on working families and rural communities without fuelling inflation

or piling up unsustainable debt. Reckless, untargeted spending today risks even higher interest rates and input costs tomorrow.

We can't control conflict in the Middle East or the global oil market. What we can control is how we respond: staying calm, backing good policy, supporting one another, and trusting that, as we have many times before, New Zealand farming will see this thing through.

Barbara Kuriger
MP for Taranaki/King



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On this month in history: Titanic sunk

On April 15, 1912 the Titanic sunk after hitting an iceberg in the north Atlantic ocean. Of the 2224 people (passengers and crew) 1514

died (68%). Because the ship was considered to be unsinkable, there were only 20 lifeboats which would hold 1178 people. However,

these were only filled to 60% capacity.



The captain was Edward Smith and he went down with his ship.

The White Star line ship was built by Harland and Wolff at the Belfast Shipyard at a cost of 1.5 million pounds.

Amanda Clinton-Gohdes for New Plymouth

amanda.clinton-gohdes@labour.org.nz

[f](#) [@](#) [d](#) /ClintonGohdes

Authorised by Rob Salmund, 2 Gilmer Terrace, Wellington.

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Funded by the Parliamentary Service. Authorised by Barbara Kuriger, Parliament Buildings, Wgtn.

GENERAL ELECTION 2026

Ways to enrol in 2026

Enrolment pop-ups and a community fund are just two of the ways the Electoral Commission will be supporting people to get enrolled in time for this year's election.

A recent law change means voters need to be enrolled before advance voting starts in New Zealand.

"Make sure you're enrolled at the address where you live by 4 October to get an EasyVote card, which will make voting faster," says Karl Le Quesne, Chief Electoral Officer.

The Commission is undertaking a nationwide public information programme to get people enrolled.

"There will be advertising,

mailouts and community engagement to raise awareness about when you need to enrol and how to do it.

"Starting in April, our engagement teams will be on the road providing mobile enrolment 'pop-ups' to reach eligible voters with a focus on regional and rural locations.

"Then in September we'll set up enrolment hubs as part of a final push to enrol people before Sunday 4 October. There will be up to 10 hubs in the main centres, in areas of high population."

The Commission is also launching a Community Education Fund with up to \$690,000 available to provide small grants to

community-led groups focused on increasing enrolment uptake in their communities, especially in areas where the Commission doesn't have a presence.

"We want to continue to work with communities to create as many enrolment opportunities as possible and this Fund will help us to expand our coverage. It makes sense for us to support community groups to help with this mahi as they know their communities best," says Karl Le Quesne.

Another initiative for 2026 is greater use of digital communications to contact voters.

"You'll be seeing more emails and texts from the Commission reminding

you to enrol or update your details. If we have your email address and phone number, it will help us keep in touch with you."

You can enrol, check or update your details online at vote.nz or call freephone 0800 36 76 56 and ask for an enrolment form to be sent to you.

Look out for your Māori Option pack

Enrolment packs are being sent to 562,000 voters of Māori descent about their electoral roll choice for the 2026 General Election.

"If you're Māori you choose the general roll or Māori roll when you first enrol to vote. After that, you can change rolls at any time except in the three months before

an election," says Hone Matthews, Chief Advisor Māori for the Electoral Commission.

"If you would like to change the roll you're on before this year's election, you need to do it by midnight, Thursday 6 August. The roll you are on at that time will be your roll for the election.

"Kei a tātou te mana – our choice has mana. It's an important choice and decides if you vote in a Māori electorate or general electorate. There's no right or wrong, just what's right for you."

Your enrolment pack

Anyone who identified themselves as Māori when they enrolled to vote will be sent a Māori Electoral Option enrolment pack in the next couple of weeks.

"A letter in the pack tells you which roll you're on – Māori

roll or general roll. If you're happy with your roll, you don't need to do anything," says Hone Matthews.

"If you'd like to change rolls, send back the letter in the pack or go online to vote.nz to make your roll choice.

"If you don't receive a pack by 11 April, it means you're not enrolled or we don't have the correct address for you.

"You can enrol, check or update your details online at vote.nz/enrol or call 0800 36 76 56 for free and ask for an enrolment form to be sent to you. Any problems, please call our 0800 number and the team will help you," says Hone Matthews.

On 2 March 2026, 562,069 voters of Māori descent were enrolled to vote, 304,508 (54%) on the Māori roll and 257,561 (46%) on the general roll.

Kids Voting – Te Pōti a Ngā Tamariki re-opens for 2026

The Electoral Commission has opened registrations for the 2026 programme of Kids Voting – Te Pōti a Ngā Tamariki.

Kids Voting – Te Pōti a Ngā Tamariki is a free civics education programme provided by the Electoral Commission during election years. It is available to all schools and kura and is suitable for Years 0 through to 13.

"Kids Voting is a fun and

easy way for students to learn about New Zealand's democracy and explore real-life election issues," says Anusha Guler, Deputy Chief Executive Operations.

Participating schools receive a free kit to help run the programme, which includes teaching resources, posters, and a ballot box.

The programme builds up to a mock election in Term

4, which gives students first-hand experience of the voting process. Students can vote for the same parties and candidates standing for Parliament, and schools can compare their results with the 2026 General Election outcome.

"The Commission has been running the Kids Voting programme for over 15 years and it's great knowing that thousands of tamariki are learning to be civics-savvy.

"I encourage all schools to register for the programme. It's the best way to get a glimpse into how the real general election is delivered and have an authentic voting experience before turning 18."

More information on the Kids Voting – Te Pōti a Ngā Tamariki programme, including how to register, can be found on kidsvoting.nz

On this month in history: Abraham Lincoln died

The sixteenth president of the United States Abraham Lincoln was assassinated on February April 15, 1865 while watching a show at Ford's Theatre in Washington DC. The assailant was John Wilkes Booth, who was angry about his dealings with the southern states.

It was Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation of January 1863 which freed the slaves – many of whom were engaged in picking cotton in the southern states. Many southerners were annoyed



at the measure. The American Civil War of 1861 to 1865 started with a Confederate (southern states) attack on Fort Sumter leading to their surrender. After this Lincoln called for 75,000 volunteers for

an armed retaliation as he was opposed to the southern states attempt to secede from the union.

Lincoln was born on February 12, 1809 in Hardin County, Kentucky. Before becoming president he was member of the Illinois Legislature. As a

lawyer he was involved in the local circuit counts.

In 1858 he lost to Senator Stephen A Douglas in a senate campaign Yet just two years later the Republican Party nominated him as their presidential candidate and he won the top job on March 4, in 1861

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The surprising Importance of staying strong



RICHARD HALL

Around South Taranaki, most of us like practical measures. We are not always dazzled by flashy wellness trends, imported miracle powders, or gym influencers who appear to have never been on a farm, walked into a southerly, or had a real job. So, there is something rather pleasing about a new bit of research suggesting that one of the best clues to healthy ageing may come down to two very ordinary things: how strong your grip is, and how easily you can stand up from a chair.

That is the essence of a 2026 study published in *JAMA Network Open*, which followed 5,472 women aged 63 to 99 for an average of 8.4 years. The researchers looked at two simple measures of muscular strength. First was dominant handgrip strength. Second was how quickly participants could complete five unassisted chair stands.

Women who performed better on those tests had a lower risk of dying over the follow-up period, even after the researchers adjusted for age, health conditions, physical activity, sedentary time, walking speed, and other relevant factors.

In plain language, this does not mean that a fierce handshake makes you immortal, nor that every kitchen chair has suddenly become a medical device. It does mean that muscular strength appears to be a very useful marker of how

well the body is holding up overall. Muscles do not work in isolation. Strength reflects a team effort involving nerves, bones, metabolism, coordination, balance, and the body's general ability to cope with life's demands. When strength starts to drop away, it can signal that several systems are also starting to struggle.

There is also a nice common-sense logic to it. If you have enough leg strength to rise easily from a chair, enough grip to carry the groceries, enough steadiness to climb steps, and enough reserve to keep doing ordinary daily tasks, you are more likely to stay independent and mobile. That matters, because falls, frailty, reduced walking speed, and loss of function are all closely tied to poorer health outcomes in older age. Stronger muscles are not just for looking impressive in a singlet. They are part of what keeps people active, capable, and less vulnerable.

One of the most interesting parts of the study was that the link between strength and lower mortality still showed up even among women who were not meeting recommended exercise levels. That is

important because many people hear public-health advice and think they need to become some sort of silver-haired triathlete. The message here is gentler and more encouraging. Even if someone is not doing the textbook 150 minutes of moderate activity a week, maintaining muscular strength still seems to matter. The goal is not perfection. The goal is to stay usefully strong.

That said, nobody should take this as permission to avoid exercise while heroically opening pickle jars. Current guidance still recommends regular aerobic movement and muscle-strengthening activities at least twice a week. Walking is excellent. Gardening counts for more than some people realise. Carrying shopping, climbing stairs, getting up and down from chairs, using resistance bands, body-weight exercises, light weights, and sensible strength work all have a role. Around here, even a determined stroll into a stiff coastal breeze probably deserves partial credit.

For us 'more mature adults' especially, this research is a useful reminder

that fitness does not have to mean punishing workouts or expensive memberships. It can mean preserving the physical basics that make everyday life easier. Can you stand up from the couch without launching yourself like a rocket? Can you carry bags without feeling as if your forearms have filed a formal complaint? Can you move through the day with a bit of confidence in your body? Those things matter.

There is also a pleasingly democratic aspect to these measures. Grip strength and chair stands are not elite tests. They do not require Lycra, a mirror wall, or a motivational playlist involving someone shouting about beast mode. They are simple, practical, and surprisingly informative. In fact, the study noted that for every 7-kilogram increase in grip strength, there was on average a 12% lower mortality rate. That is a strong return from something most of us have previously associated with opening stubborn marmalade jars or carrying the groceries in one trip to prove a point.

Of course, one study does not explain everything. This was an observational study in older women, so

it shows association rather than proving direct cause and effect for everyone everywhere. Men were not included, and nobody is suggesting that strength is the only thing that matters for long life. Although this particular study focused on mature women, it likely reflects broader principles of ageing that are relevant to men as well, even if that still needs to be confirmed directly in similar male samples. But as a practical takeaway, this is hard to ignore: keeping some strength in the tank looks like a very good idea.

So perhaps the next great frontier in healthy ageing is not glamorous at all. It may take shape in your gardens, community classes, kitchen floors, walking groups, and all the ordinary corners of daily life, with the simple determination to keep doing a little more than your recliner chair would prefer. In South Taranaki terms, it is less about chasing peak performance and more about staying sturdy, capable, and able to get on with life. And that may be the most useful kind of fitness of all.

*Richard Hall, Opunake
www.mindsupport.co.nz*

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Taxpayers' Union backs Te Pāti Māori call to freeze Parliament pay

The New Zealand Taxpayers' Union is backing Te Pati Maori's call for a freeze on MP pay rises, saying politicians should not be taking more while many New Zealanders are doing it tough.

Taxpayers' Union Investigations Coordinator, Rhys Hurley, said:

"Te Pāti Māori are right to call this out. While

families are struggling with rising costs, Members of Parliament pocketing over \$17,000 in pay rises this term is completely out of touch."

"This is a simple matter of leadership. If MPs believe the country is struggling, they should reflect that in their own pay packets."

"Too often, politicians are quick to talk about fairness but slow to apply it to

themselves. Te Pāti Māori deserve credit for taking a principled stance on this issue."

"Of course, MPs who don't want to accept unfair pay

rises can pay them straight back to Treasury. We look forward to confirmation that Te Pāti Māori MPs will be paying back any increase they receive."

The next issue of the Opunake and Coastal News comes out on April 23 2026.

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OBITUARY John Graham

30 July 1931-26 March 2026

To many in Manaia he was known as Sharkie, the nickname he picked up from his rugby playing days. John Graham was the town's butcher for 30 years and the public face of the Manaia RSA for ten. In his younger years he made a name for himself on the rugby and cricket fields, and in his later years was involved in a myriad of groups around Manaia.

The high regard he was held in could be seen with the packed-out funeral at the Robert Gibson Memorial Hall on March 30.

Family members spoke of a loving family man whose family extended to 15 great grandchildren.

"He was the life of every party, every 21st, every wedding and every New Years celebration where he would be singing, dancing, and bringing everyone together to join in the fun with him," granddaughter Hayley Parkes said. "Even just last Sunday, sitting in the sun with him, he asked for his favourite music to be put on. And in true Gargie style, he sang along — even though it wasn't easy. That's who he was. Joyful, right to the very end."

John's daughters Lynette Gopperth and Janet Green spoke about their father's life.

John's commitment to the town he loved could be seen in his involvement with the Manaia Business Association and groups like Keep Manaia Beautiful and the Manaia Centenary Committee. He had been a volunteer firefighter and other groups he had been involved with included the Kaupokonui Beach Committee, the Manaia School Committee and the Manaia Bowling Club, of which he was patron.

John was born in Eltham, the fifth of eight children of Ernest and Eileen. The family shifted to Manaia



John Graham planting one of the three seedlings at Lone Pine Grove on 31 July 2015.

when he was eight.

He left school at the age of 13 to work in his father's butcher shop, which he later bought.

Lynette said he would set aside leftover meat from the shop for local families who were going through tough times.

"After 30 years in the butcher shop Dad traded the striped apron and the knives for the rag trade and became the drapery assistant with Mum as the boss," said Janet.

John married Noeline Bell when he was 28 and she was 22. In 1957 they bought the house on South Road for 7000 pounds, which was to be their home for the next 65 years.

"For 68 years he was a most caring and devoted husband to Mum," said Janet.

Sport was a lifelong passion. As a cricketer he was something of an all-rounder, managing the feat of 1000 runs and 126 wickets in the same season.

It was in rugby however

that his sporting prowess is best remembered. A stalwart of Manaia's Waimate Club, a high point was Waimate winning the Taranaki club championship in 1955. He played 31 games for Taranaki, including the 11-9 win over Otago in 1957 which ushered in Taranaki's second Ranfurly Shield era.

John was a longtime member of the Manaia Returned and Services Association, of which he served as president from 2010-2020 and was made a life member in 2017. He did his compulsory military training in 1953 and was on point duty at the Hawera railway station when Queen Elizabeth II and the Duke of Edinburgh came to visit.

Current Manaia RSA president Barry Smith recalls John telling him the job of the RSA is to look after the veterans and not to forget that.

A major achievement of John's time as president was setting up the Lone Pine Grove near the Manaia Golf

course. Lone Pine on the Gallipoli peninsula had been the site of a bloody battle involving Australian troops in 1915. An uncle of John's, Private Alexander Herbert Graham of Whanganui had got mixed up with the Australians and was killed in the heat of battle. The Manaia RSA heard that 12 seedlings descended from the Lone Pine that gave its name to the battle were being made available for RSAs in New Zealand to apply for. In the hope of getting maybe one of these, they applied for three and got three. They were planted in 2015 and have since grown and flourished. As well as being an integral part of the Manaia Walkway the grove has been a venue for several well attended Armistice Day commemorations.

During his time as president the annual ANZAC Day dawn service could attract up to 500 people, the equivalent of half the population of Manaia. His long interest

in, and friendship with, the Māori community saw him making a Māori singing group an integral part of the commemorations, a practice which has continued to this day. The ANZAC dawn service would always end with the singing of the World War II favourite Māori Battalion as everyone dispersed for refreshments.

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MG car owners left in the lurch by closures of Taranaki dealers

The unexpected closure of both MG dealers in Taranaki has left MG car owners in a poor position, exacerbated by the current fuel crisis, as the nearest MG dealers are in Hamilton and Palmerston North. Both local MG

dealers (New Plymouth and Hawera) ceased their operation on March 1. From now on if MG car owners require servicing, parts or repairs they are obliged to visit Cartown

MG, 178 John F Kennedy Drive, Palmerston North or Winger MG, 1 The Boulevard, Te Rapa, Hamilton. MG owners will face unexpected increased costs, with petrol already greatly increased in price, now that they are obliged to drive these considerable distances to visit an MG dealer.

Some MG owners are upset about the lack of notice and, since the closure, as well as an absence of information about the situation, it is frustrating that recorded messages are never answered:

“You can’t get hold of anybody,” complained one owner. The owner also queried, “How come no public notice was made of the impending closure?” The owner concluded, “With millions of dollars of MG cars in Taranaki how can owners just be abandoned like this?”

There does seem to be a conspiracy of silence. One information sheet we have come across, with the name Dean Sheed (MG Motor New Zealand) stated: For any questions please contact the MG Customer Car team at MG Motor New Zealand.



MG owners are upset about losing Taranaki service centres.

Our approach in this suggested manner, proved disappointing.

As a historical note, MG goes back to the 1920s in Great Britain, when Cecil Kimber of Morris Garages (hence MG), is the acknowledged pioneer. The MG Car Company reigned from 1930 to 1972. The result was an affordable, faster, lightweight sports car. In this early era the famous octagon trademark was established, as was the T-series and MGB model.

The MG cars dominated racing in the 1930s and much later (1957) Sir Stirling Moss set a new land speed

record on the Utah Salt Flats (United States) with a speed of 395.3 km per hour driving a mid-engined MG 181 with the name ‘Roaring Raindrop.’

A notable year was 1975 when the millionth MG car was manufactured; it was a LHD MGB roadster painted in Brooklands Green.

The MG brand has changed ownership many times including British Leyland (1968-1986) and Rover (2000-2006). MG is currently owned by the Chinese firm SAIC.

MG have strict requirements for owners to qualify for their seven

year (or five year) warranty and the current situation will make things even more difficult for owners, having to travel so far to comply.

The sheet signed by Dean Sheed (MG Motor New Zealand) concludes: MG Motor New Zealand is reviewing options for a new dealer point for sales and service in the wider Taranaki area and hope to provide you with an update on this shortly.

Let’s hope this assurance is complied with as swiftly as possible, for the sake of the many MG car owners in Taranaki.

Greyhound ban crosses finishing line to become law

Commercial greyhound racing will end on 31 July 2026 after the passing of the Racing Industry (Closure of Greyhound Racing) Amendment Bill.

The Bill passed with overwhelming support in Parliament – 112 votes in favour and only 11 opposed.

“This is a truly historic moment for animal welfare in New Zealand. After years of advocacy, multiple damning reviews, and public concern, the ban has finally been made law,” says Dr Arnja Dale, SPCA Chief Scientific Officer.

For many years, SPCA worked with the greyhound racing industry in an effort to improve welfare outcomes. However, despite attempts at reform, serious harm continued both on

and off the track. SPCA ultimately concluded that the only way to prevent the inherent welfare harms associated with commercial greyhound racing was to end the practice entirely.

The most recent racing season was the deadliest since the industry was placed on notice in 2021, with 16 greyhounds dying or being euthanised due to injuries sustained during racing.

“This marks a new chapter for greyhounds. The end is now in sight. From 1 August 2026, greyhounds will no longer be put at risk for profit,” says Dr Dale.

The Select Committee process provided an important opportunity for industry participants, animal welfare experts, advocacy groups, and the

public to all share their views, and the report recommended legislation to ban commercial greyhound racing be passed.

“This outcome is the result of years of advocacy, evidence, and public support. It shows that sustained focus on animal welfare leads to meaningful change,” Dr Dale says.

“Special recognition is due to Rt. Hon. Winston Peters for his leadership and courage in introducing this legislation. His role has been instrumental in bringing about this historic outcome, and in helping ensure New Zealand takes a decisive step forward for animal welfare,” says Dr Dale.

New Zealand’s 2024 announcement

of the decision to ban greyhound racing catalysed international change, with Scotland and Wales among those who have recently passed a ban into law and the United States and Tasmania continuing to advance plans to phase out their greyhound racing industries.

“We are seeing a clear global shift away from greyhound racing. With this ban, New Zealand is placing itself on the right side of that change,” says Dr Dale.

The SPCA say they support a fair and just transition for people working within the industry and is committed to working collaboratively to ensure the welfare of all impacted greyhounds.

“This is not the end of responsibility - it’s the beginning of a new phase. into a safe and secure future,” says Dr Dale.

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A blue day for Opunake dolphin

Opunake's dolphin has been given a makeover. Opunake artist Chris Fuller was putting the finishing touches to painting the small statue at the top of the road leading to Opunake Beach at midday on Saturday.

He had been working on it for four hours and was inviting passers by to have a guess at what species of dolphin it is. The answer is Maui Dolphin.

He admits to being unsure as to how long the statue has been there or who the original sculptor was.

At some stage it had been spray painted.

"Two young surfers tried to give it some love and they did," says Chris.

He recalls thinking



Chris Fuller with the Dolphin close to the Opunake Cenotaph.

somebody had to do something about it, and then he was invited by "the gardening gurus" who are active in beautifying the

surrounding area to put his talents to work. The result is the new, improved blue dolphin.

"It's at the gateway to the

beach," says Chris. "Two people came and said to me they hadn't noticed the dolphin before, and they were locals."

Taranaki Indoor Bowls team to play in Wellington

The Taranaki Indoor Bowls Rep team for the NWWTH quad weekend to be played in Wellington on April 18-19 is



as follows: Ken Smith, Chris Reed, Brian Hardgrave, Wayne Cameron, Ella Smails, Kim Mahupuku, Jo Corbett, Sue Bourne, Trevor Bourne, Andrea Berry, Jamie Taylor, Paul Midgley, Winnie Finlay, Raewyn Fredrickson, Kian Larson and Rob Larson. Good luck to the team.



Wonder Woman and Mt Taranaki is a recent work from Coastal Taranaki artist Graham Kirk.

Red weather warnings "no joke,"

As another tropical depression batters Northland and moves over the motu, the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) is urging people to take the Metservice warnings extremely seriously.

Parts of Northland have been under a Red Heavy Rain warning recently as a deep sub-tropical low passed over Aotearoa New Zealand. Further Red warnings are considered highly likely, and Whangarei and the Far North regions have declared States of Local Emergency.

"Red weather warnings are real and no joke, and I'm urging people not to put themselves in harm's way, as your life safety is critical," NEMA's director of civil defence emergency management John Price says.

"MetService only issues red warnings for the most extreme weather events. Heavy rain and severe winds can cause flooding and landslides, which can kill or cause serious harm.

"It's tempting to go out and see what is happening, or go out on the water to experience the big waves - but please, trust your danger sense and don't be foolish.

"If you get into trouble and need rescuing, you'll

be holding up emergency services who need to be looking after our most vulnerable."

NEMA advises people in the warning areas not to enter floodwaters and avoid travel. Act quickly to self-evacuate if you feel in danger.

"We're asking people to trust their danger sense, so if you see rising waters or signs that a slope may be unstable, get away immediately," John Price says.

"Your safety is your responsibility.

"Listen to the radio and advice from your local Civil Defence Emergency Management group and emergency services, and call 111 if your life is in danger.

"Stay safe out there."

John Price says NEMA is working with local Civil Defence and emergency services to coordinate resources and support the locally-led response efforts.

More information on what to do before, during and after severe weather can be found on the Get Ready site - www.getready.govt.nz.

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St James Church celebrates their 70th on Palm Sunday

Sunday March 29, 2026 was a special day for the congregation at St James Church, Oakura as they celebrated their 70th anniversary, as well as the significance of Palm Sunday when Jesus rode into the holy city of Jerusalem mounted on a donkey. People near Jesus waved palm branches and shouted, "Hosanna to the son of David. Blessed is he who comes in the way of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest." (Matthew 21:6-7). The service was conducted by the Reverend Joy Dale in a positive manner, which encouraged lively participation, including a

play. "It is important to remember those who came before," Joy said, "and that their vision is upheld." Mr HW Clemance wrote a book at the time of the 75th Jubilee of the parochial district, which has preserved some important historical aspects which are shared here. Many thanks also to lay minister Lesley Dowding for her input. St James was built for Methodist and Anglicans at a cost of 4,362 pounds - aided by considerable labour of a voluntary nature. The church was dedicated on March 25, 1956. The



From left, lay minister Heather Lofthouse, David Thorpe (Property Officer), Rev Joy Dale, Tash Lewis (Congregational leadership team), Rev Peter Barleyman, lay minister Stephanie McKellar, and Mary Bishop (Treasurer).

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land, on which St James is situated, had been donated by Mrs ED Sampson in the memory of her father. The organ was donated by Mrs AJ Fox of Okato and her grand-daughter Mrs Nona Heydon was the regular organist for many years, occasionally helped by Mrs Kay and Mr Harper. The beautiful stained-glass window above the altar is a memorial to the late Mr and Mrs Elwin. Rod Smith, a former leader of the church, replaced some of the pulpit altar area from the closed Rahotu Church and set it up in St James Church to his usual high standards. In pioneering times the Rev Henry Brown rode around his parish on a horse to visit parishioners and give services. He also held services at Koru and Oakura Schools. As Rev Joy concluded, "We pray for another wonderful 70 years."



From left: Zena Smith, Jude Brown, Margaret Patterson.



The exterior of St James Church, Oakura.

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Movies now showing for everybody

Everybody's, the iconic Opunake cinema is back, up and running and able to show movies again.

As reported in the Opunake and Coastal News (March 26), the money needed to fix the theatre projector had been raised, but the Everybody's Theatre Trust were still waiting on parts for the projector, and it was believed one of these could take up to 12 weeks to arrive. It arrived on Thursday (April 2).

"We're lucky it arrived in the country sooner than we anticipated," says Trust chair Kim Gatenby. With the help of Corkill Systems they had been able to source the part and get the projector fixed up.

"We've taken it through test runs to make sure it's doing what it should, and it

does," says Kim.

Everybody's was open for screenings on Easter Sunday.

The theatre had been unable to show movies for the last seven weeks after the projector had broken down. Among the casualties had been a special screening and Q & A session of No Tears on the Field, a documentary about women's rugby in Taranaki. Kim said the director and some of the movie's stars had said they were able to make it, so the special screening which had originally been slotted for March 7 could be held at Everybody's on Sunday.

Kim said the Trust wanted to thank the general public and everyone who had assisted with fund raising.

"Everyone's been fantastic. The public, the volunteers

and businesses have all got behind us."

Kim was speaking to the Opunake and Coastal News on Saturday morning during the fund raising garage sale at the theatre, and says fund raising will continue. The doors had opened at 9am and two hours later they were still busy.

"Everybody's been happy to donate as well as purchase," she said.

Theatre goers will have something more to look forward to, three Saturday screenings, with the addition of a 10.30am slot. The Saturday afternoon and evening screenings will continue, although the times for the Saturday and Sunday afternoon showings will move from 1pm to 2pm.



Everybody's Theatre Trust chair Kim Gatenby.

Good Friday Easter Walk sending a message

The Good Friday Easter walk started at Our Lady Star of the Sea Catholic Church in Opunake visiting the three other churches in Opunake pausing at each for a short address before returning to the Catholic Church for a period of reflection followed by some social time and refreshments.

The annual Good Friday walk open to all symbolises the unity of the four churches in Opunake and commemorates the journey which Christ did 2000 years ago.

The largely silent and solemn procession began at 9am and, weaving its way around the Opunake streets, it was a time to reflect on the meaning of Easter.

It was a time of great joy but also a reminder of sadness and suffering all mixed together said Cobus Blom speaking at St Pauls Co-operating Church. "It's not about me but about Christ being crucified."

As the procession moved



Lifting high the cross through Opunake.

onto The Wave Church Leader Belinda Philp said "let us be a light in our town" before leading those gathered in song.

As they approached St Barnabas Church in Opunake's main street the tolling of the church bell which heralded their arrival was followed by a short address from Reverend Ian Sargeant.

Returning to Our Lady Star of the Sea Catholic Church the crowd entered the church where Ruth Hornblow addressed those gathered referring all present to the 14 carved images around the walls of the interior, each of which spoke to a part of the journey of Jesus' final walk.

As the congregation followed Ruth, she visited each image in turn beginning with Jesus being condemned to death.

As those present made their way round the carvings they were asked to reflect on each stage of his journey noting the example he set

and relating it to their own life.

The arduous journey included three falls in succession as he carried the cross.

As Jesus is finally stripped at his journey's end we were invited to reflect on our quest to be stripped of selfishness, the need for approval, vanity, pretences, false securities.

As we got to the most moving carving depicting Christ being nailed to the cross and Christ dies all present were asked to kneel. It was a memorable and graphic way of bringing the Easter message home.

A true walk of witness. This year perhaps it had a special significance with the war in the Middle East showing no sign of abating.

The head of the Catholic Church Pope Leo XIV, provoked by the attempt to invoke scripture to defend the instigators of the Middle East war commented: "God rejects the prayers of those who wage war."

Vertical building soon to be underway

Since our last article on the Taranaki Iwi Holdings Limited Partnership project (TIHLP) on Okato, considerable progress has been made.

Readers will recall the old site of the Okato Primary School, which became redundant when Coastal Taranaki School was established while the Hon Trevor Mallard was Minister of Education.

Graham Harris Ltd, the property development contractors are undertaking the project on behalf of TIHLP. The main access point is Carthew Street.

Joe England of Graham

Harris Ltd, New Plymouth said that vertical building is just about to start to complement the roading and kerbing that are now established.

Also closely involved with the project is Egmont Dixon, the experts in property management. The firm is dealing with such aspects as quantity surveying, property advisory and consultations as well as resource planning.

We look forward to this project's completion to provide quality housing for many Okato residents.



One view showing newly laid bitumen roading.



Tuia Taitonga Southlink

He karere tā te Kaunihera o Taranaki ki te Tonga News from the South Taranaki District Council

\$5.92 million Pātea Water Treatment Plant Upgrade Underway

Work is now underway on a major upgrade of the Pātea Water Treatment Plant, following the award of a \$5.92 million construction contract to improve the town's drinking water quality and treatment capacity.

Preconstruction activities have begun on site, with contractors currently locating underground services. Following Easter, work will move into bulk excavation for the main building, before foundations, drainage and pipe installation begin. The project remains on track for completion by the end of 2026.

The site was formally blessed on Friday 27 March, marking an important milestone for the project and the Pātea community. The upgrade is required to ensure the treatment plant meets the current Drinking Water Standards and Water Quality Assurance Rules set by Taumata

Arowai – New Zealand's Water Services Authority. After a successful pilot trial earlier this year, Council opted for a modern biological filtration system because it reduces naturally occurring ammonia in the groundwater source and helps deliver consistently high-quality drinking water.

The project includes the installation of several new treatment

components, including biologically activated carbon filters, copper and carbon dioxide dosing systems, ultraviolet (UV) disinfection, chlorine gas disinfection and storage, and improved filter cleaning and monitoring systems. Together, these upgrades will reduce ammonia in the source water, making it easier to maintain effective chlorine levels right across the water network and helping ensure the supply meets drinking water requirements. In December 2025 the Council approved a revised project budget of up to \$5.92 million, including an additional \$2.64 million, to allow the



project to move into the construction phase without delay.

Mayor Phil Nixon says the upgrade is a critical investment in the future of Pātea.

"This project is about making sure our community continues to have access to safe, high-quality drinking water," says Mayor Nixon.

"By investing now, we're

meeting today's drinking water standards while building a more reliable and resilient water supply for the future."

The Pātea Water Treatment Plant upgrade is a key part of Council's ongoing programme to improve water infrastructure across the district and ensure compliance with national drinking water requirements.

Upcoming Meetings

Extraordinary Council
To hear submissions on the Speed Management Plan
Wednesday 15 April, 1.30pm

Ordinary Council
Wednesday 15 April, 4pm

Pātea Harbour Endowment Sub-Committee
Wednesday 22 April, 1.30pm
Hunter Shaw Building, Egmont Street, Pātea

Eltham-Kaponga Community Board
Tuesday 28 April, 10.30am
Taumata Recreation Centre
Preston Street, Eltham

Te Hāwera Community Board
Tuesday 28 April, 4pm
Hāwera Senior Citizens Association, 81 Victoria Street, Hāwera

Taranaki Coastal Community Board
Wednesday 29 April, 10.30am
Ōpunakē Town Hall, Domett Street, Ōpunakē

Pātea Community Board
Wednesday 29 April, 4pm
Aotea Utanganui, 127 Egmont Street, Pātea

Extraordinary Council
To deliberate and adopt the Speed Management Plan
Monday 11 May, 3pm

Unless otherwise specified, meetings are held in the Council Chamber, Administration Building, Albion Street, Hāwera.



Finishing Touches Complete on Eltham's 3x3 Basketball Court

The final stage of Eltham's new 3x3 basketball court at Te Wā'iawa'umārie o Mangaw'araw'ara (Soldier's Park) is now complete, with contractors applying a striking purple and grey acrylic surface just in time for Easter.

The court is now officially open and ready for play, perfect timing with the NBA playoffs adding to the excitement.

This milestone marks the completion of a project led by the Eltham Town Revitalisation Co-design Group, shaped by strong youth input and supported by Basketball New Zealand, who generously donated the hoop, along with the Eltham Lions. What started as a key priority in Eltham's Town Revitalisation Roadmap has been transformed into a vibrant and high-quality recreational space for the community.

With the fresh surface now in place, the court is set to host everything from casual pick-up games to local tournaments. It's a fantastic addition to Eltham and a great example of what can be achieved through community collaboration.



Waverley Campground Amenities Refurbishment Complete



Work on the refurbishment of the Waverley Campground amenity building was completed in time for campers to enjoy over the Easter weekend.

Hāwera construction firm ABC Ltd were successful in tendering for the work which began in February. The shower and toilet block was completely gutted and internal walls relined, with new toilet and shower partitions and new fittings installed. The outside of the building was also reclad and repainted. A new, larger hot water cylinder has been installed together with a water pressure booster pump for the comfort of the campers and timed showers installed so users don't get too comfortable and use all the hot water!

COMMUNITY GARDEN WORKSHOP

Series

Autumn Propagation Workshop:
Autumn is the perfect season to get stuck into some propagation - now's the time to give your plants a head start!

Saturday 11 April, 10am - 12noon
at **Manaia Maara Kai, 30 South Road, Manaia.**

Visit www.southtaranaki.com/gardenseries for more details.

Te Pahi hits the road as TRC launches bus network

April 7 marks the start of revamped services with Te Pahi buses now sporting their distinctive green livery and new routes and timetables operational.

Taranaki Regional Council Chair Craig Williamson says the excitement has been building for the launch with staff, drivers, councillors and bus users eagerly awaiting the launch and seeing Te Pahi buses hit the road across the region.

“The launch marks a major milestone on our journey to improve public transport in our region,” says Mr Williamson.

“The network has been designed by the people, for the people and we think it’s going to strengthen connectivity in Taranaki, allowing users to easily travel by bus to get to work, school, college, the hospital or to the shops.

“All the improvements come at the same time that there has been a shift away from funding public transport by the government, so it’s been a balancing act to provide an updated network within severe funding constraints.

“Having said that, the list of upgrades is impressive. We think Te Pahi is a great first



Eleven new electric buses are among the improvements in store for bus users.

step on the road to creating a modern, fit-for-purpose and easy-to-use public transport service.”

Key improvements include better Saturday coverage with new trips between Hāwera–New Plymouth and Waitara–New Plymouth and 11 new electric buses added to the urban New Plymouth fleet.

Other boosts to the network include:

- Streamlined urban routes – more direct, faster and efficient services.
- Improved hospital access through Westown

and Hurdon via Tukapa and David streets.

- The launch of a new dedicated website – tepahi.govt.nz – with improved real-time tracking and a new way to plan your journey.

- The new unified Te Pahi brand replaces the old Citylink, Southlink and Connector brands.

The launch follows extensive consultation on what the network should look like with feedback shaping the development of services based on the aspirations of the public.

“We’re particularly pleased

to see 11 new electric buses now on our roads, meaning our New Plymouth urban fleet is now fully electric. These clean, green vehicles match the green livery of Te Pahi and will be instrumental in helping the Council achieve our goal of zero public transport emissions by 2035,” added Mr Williamson.

“With the new website providing lots of user-friendly features like journey planning and real-time tracking and a recognisable and striking brand, the new network has a strong

Taranaki identity we can be proud of.”

Other improvements include a trial Waitara morning loop operating on weekday mornings during school terms to support access to Waitara schools. The service will be available to all passengers. Accessibility in Omata is also being boosted by new bus stops.

There have been a number of service reductions or changes from the old network, mainly driven by low patronage which made the services uneconomical

and unsustainable within the current funding environment for public transport. These include:

- The Ōpunake–New Plymouth middle of the day trips reduced from five to two days a week.

- Hāwera to Pātea once a week (no longer extending to Waverley).

- Removal of some early morning (7am) services due to low patronage; some 7am trips will continue on select routes. Evening services from Monday–Wednesday (6:20pm) will be removed, with Thursday and Friday evening services remaining.

- Minor updates to South Taranaki fare zones to align with the wider network.

- The Ōpunake–Hāwera route will no longer travel via Kaponga due to low demand.

- Removal of 6am southbound and 5.20pm northbound trips on the service between Hāwera and New Plymouth.

For information about the routes and timetables, head to tepahi.govt.nz

Heads-up Ōpunake! Your bus service is changing

From 7 April, there will be a 2pm bus to New Plymouth on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Morning departure and evening return continues every week day.



Check updated routes and timetables at:
tepahi.govt.nz



A fond farewell for Bryan Morris

Bryan Morris's final midweek run turned out to be a classic Taranaki VCC outing: full of character, mechanical stubbornness, and a navigational "scenic detour" that Bryan himself would have found hilarious.

At 94 years young, Bryan was a cornerstone of the vintage car community, but his beloved machines clearly weren't ready to let him go without a fight. The plan was for his "trusty" Vauxhall utility to lead the way, but in true vintage fashion, it staged a sit-down strike and broke down on the way to the funeral.

Inside the service, the human element far outshone the machinery. Bryan's two daughters delivered superb

eulogies that captured the essence of a long life well-lived, while his grandchildren stepped up with readings that did their granddad proud.

The music played on, even as the funeral director—a woman facing a series of logistical "challenges" that would have tested a saint—battled with a complete lack of internet. While the digital world failed, the stories and tributes kept the engine running.

As the VCC members formed a guard of honour, it was time for the backup plan: Bryan's other pride and joy, his Bedford truck. But the Bedford was clearly in a foul mood.



Bryan Morris.Stuff

First, it refused to come out of gear, locked in a mechanical stalemate. Once the gearbox was finally coaxed into submission, the

old girl promptly stalled and refused to fire back up. It was a classic "vintage moment" that had the gathered car enthusiasts nodding in sympathetic recognition.

With the Bedford's protest noted, the decision was made to transfer the coffin to a modern hearse. It lacked the 1930s soul, but it had the one thing the classics were lacking that day—a working starter motor.

The cortege finally set off toward Okaiawa, passing by Bryan's old farm for one last look at the home paddock. It was a sentimental journey—until the funeral director, perhaps distracted by the convoy of vintage iron in her rear-view mirror, missed the turning.

In a scene straight out of a club rally, the entire funeral procession had to perform a synchronised U-turn in the middle of the road. Bryan

was finally heading to the cemetery, but he was taking the "we're not lost, we're exploring" route.

Eventually, the convoy reached its destination, and Bryan Morris was laid to rest at the Okaiawa Cemetery.

It wasn't the polished, seamless event the brochures promise, but for a man who spent 94 years navigating the quirks and charms of old engines, it was a perfectly "on-brand" send-off. It was an eventful mid-week run that Bryan would have thoroughly enjoyed—even if he'd have been the first one out of the car with a pair of pliers trying to find that missing gear.

Graeme Kempton.

Batteries and vapes do not belong in the rubbish bin

South Taranaki District Council is urging residents to take extra care when disposing of batteries, vapes, and any items containing batteries, following two recent fires at the Hāwera Transfer Station.

Council's Environment and Sustainability Manager Cindy Koen says both fires were caused by vapes containing batteries being placed in kerbside rubbish bins.

"While our crews were able to contain the fires quickly, they highlight just how dangerous these items can be when they're thrown out with general rubbish," says Cindy. "Batteries are found in everyday portable, rechargeable devices, which is why they so often end up in household rubbish by mistake."

Drop off batteries, battery embedded or small devices at Battery Collection

Stations at the Hāwera Administration Building or at the Eltham/Ōpunakē/Pātea LibraryPlus.

Small quantities (up to 500g) of household batteries can be taken to the Hāwera Transfer Station for free.

Return used vapes to participating stores that offer a take-back programme.

Dispose of larger volumes of batteries, vapes, and battery embedded devices at the Hāwera Transfer Station

for a small fee.

If you're unsure how to dispose of any item, visit www.southtaranaki.com/recyclingsearch to find the correct disposal method.

Cindy says by using the correct disposal options available, we can prevent fires, protect our facilities and make South Taranaki a safer and more sustainable place for everyone.

Most common items that contain batteries:





- Mobile phones and smartphones
- Laptops and tablets
- Power banks/portable chargers
- Wireless earbuds and headphones
- E-readers (Kindles)
- Digital cameras and camcorders
- Electric toothbrushes
- Rechargeable shavers and hair trimmers
- Handheld vacuum

- Cleaners
- Cordless power tools (drills, sanders, hedge trimmers, etc.)
- Vapes / e-cigarettes
- Electric scooters, bikes, and skateboards
- Drones and remote-control toys
- Camping lanterns and rechargeable torches
- Bluetooth speakers
- Smartwatches and fitness trackers
- Car key fobs

Safely dispose of batteries and vapes

Batteries and battery-powered devices (including vapes and rechargeable toothbrushes) do NOT belong in any rubbish bin — they can cause fires in our trucks and transfer stations.

Safe disposal options:

-  Drop off batteries, battery embedded or small devices at Battery Collection Stations (Hāwera Administration Building, Eltham/Ōpunakē/Pātea LibraryPlus centres).
-  Take small quantities (up to 500g) of vapes or devices with built-in batteries to the Hāwera Transfer Station for free.
-  Return used vapes to participating stores that offer a take – back programme.
-  Dispose of larger volumes of batteries, vapes and devices at the Hāwera Transfer Station (fee applies).



Do not put batteries, vapes or devices in any bins.

Check proper disposal methods online at www.southtaranaki.com/recyclingsearch





Find us at 56 Whitcombe Road, Opunake

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SEASONAL PLANTING AND SEED SHARING

At Kindy, we are currently learning and exploring seasonal planting and seed sharing, which connects tamariki with nature, food systems, and community while supporting children's learning around sustainability practice.

Seasonal planting with tamariki has become a meaningful way for us to nurture an appreciation for the natural world. Through sowing seeds, watering seedlings, and watching plants grow, children begin to understand the cycles of nature and their place within it. These simple acts invite curiosity, patience, and a sense of responsibility.

Seed sharing has also strengthened our sense of community. When tamariki and whānau bring seeds from home or exchange them with others, the garden becomes a shared space of generosity and connection. Each seed carries a story, linking families, cultures, and experiences.

These moments in the garden support children to develop a sense of kaitiakitanga, learning that they can care for Papatūānuku through small everyday actions. Harvesting vegetables, returning food scraps to the compost, and saving seeds all help tamariki see that sustainability is not a single activity but a way of living and relating to the environment.

Sustainability learning grows best when it is hands-on, relational, and embedded in daily experiences. The garden becomes more than a place to grow food; it becomes a living classroom where children explore, collaborate, and develop respect for the natural world. This practice aligns with the aspirations of Te Whāriki, particularly Mana Aotūroa (Exploration) as children investigate the natural environment, and Mana Whenua (Belonging) as they develop a connection to the land and their community.

We have seedlings to share with whānau and whānau, do you have any spare seeds or seedlings from your māra | garden? Feel free to grab some or share some of your own with us! Whakatō kākano tupu ake | Plant a seed and watch it grow!



Above Left: Poster; Above Centre left: Harvesting rīwai | potatoes and packing for whānau; Above Centre Right: Collecting harakeke and sunflower seeds; Above Right: Gathering and potting seedlings for plant sharing shelf.

BUILDING A POSITIVE LEARNING COMMUNITY

Building connections with our local primary schools and wider community has been an important part of strengthening a positive learning community for our tamariki. Through transition visits to the schools, children have opportunities to become familiar with the new environment, meet teachers, and interact with older students. These experiences help build confidence and a sense of belonging as they begin to see themselves as capable learners moving into the next stage of their education.

Engaging with community members such as librarians has also enriched our learning environment. Storytelling and book-sharing sessions spark curiosity and nurture children's love for literacy while strengthening the link between our kindergarten and community learning spaces. These experiences show tamariki that learning happens beyond the walls of the centre and that many people in the community contribute to their learning journey.



Above: Visit to St Joseph's and Ōpunakē Primary



Above Left: Quisandra our beloved Librarian, reading, singing and dancing with tamariki
Above Right: Oeo Marae visit

Our visit to Oeo marae was another meaningful opportunity to deepen children's understanding of tikanga Māori and strengthen our connection to the whenua and community. Participating in shared cultural experiences fosters respect, identity, and a sense of collective belonging for both children and teachers.

These connections reflect the aspirations of Te Whāriki, particularly within the strands of Mana Whenua (Belonging) and Mana Tangata (Contribution). By nurturing partnerships with schools, community organisations, and cultural spaces, we support continuity of learning and help tamariki transition with confidence, knowing they are part of a wider learning community that values and supports them.

Feds propose major shake-up of local government

New Zealand's local government structure has become an increasingly messy patchwork, and Federated Farmers says it's time to clean it up.

"The way councils are currently organised is a major factor in how effectively they serve their communities," Federated Farmers local government spokesperson Sandra Faulkner says.

"The number and type of councils - and the logic behind their boundaries - can really make or break their ability to deliver quality services at a reasonable cost.

"With dedicated water organisations being formed because of three waters reform, things are even more complicated and messy and the structure is failing ratepayers.

"We think the time is ripe to streamline and modernise the sector."

Federated Farmers has just laid out its blueprint for local government reform in a white paper.

"Preserving a strong local say on council matters while driving better efficiency is at the heart of our proposal. "Our model will likely also halve the current number of councils."

Late last year the Government proposed abolishing the country's 11 regional councils.

Mayors would take over the work of regional councillors and be tasked with putting together reorganisation plans in each region.

Federated Farmers, which has a long history of engaging with councils on rates, infrastructure investment and district plan red tape, stepped up with a simpler and less disruptive way forward, Faulkner says.

"City and provincial areas have different priorities, infrastructure and land use.

"We're saying the most effective way to streamline local government is by separating provincial governance from

governance of urban areas with populations of around 50,000-plus."

The country already has six unitary authorities, which perform the functions of both district or city and regional councils.

"We'd like to see that model expanded across New Zealand," Sandra Faulkner says.

Under Federated Farmers' proposal, councils would take on responsibilities currently held by regional councils, which would no longer exist as separate entities.

Many district councils would amalgamate but to maintain strong local input, a second tier of properly empowered community boards and catchment committees could help bring decision-making closer to residents and draw on local knowledge.

"Councils consolidated along regional and city lines would be better able to focus on local, place-based decisions.

"It would also simplify relationships with central government on issues like roading, public transport, environmental management, and emergency management."

Attracting and retaining high-quality elected councillors and paid council staff can be challenging under current settings, especially for smaller councils.

"We think the increased scale and clearer core responsibilities with our model could help tackle this."

Sandra Faulkner says environmental and natural hazard workloads benefit from scale, with unitary authorities better able to plan and deliver flood management, drainage, and environmental infrastructure more consistently.

"Exposure to climate-driven extreme weather highlights the fragility of the current system," she says.

The provincial/city-separated unitary council

structure also makes sense in terms of geography, predominant land use, and the types of services residents and businesses want.

"It fits well with the 'communities of interest' concept that drives Local Government Commission (LGC) reorganisation decisions.

"Instead of substantial upheaval, re-writing legislation, and mayors taking over regional council responsibilities during a lengthy transition, our approach fits with the LGC's existing way of managing and investigating amalgamations," Faulkner says.

"During that tried and tested process, issues such as the service relationships between metropolitan and provincial councils, treatment of debt and assets, and crossover matters can be addressed."

Fewer, more logically aligned councils would also make government co-funding arrangements for roads, bridges, public transport and urban growth simpler, with lower compliance costs.

City and regional deals with central government could be easily negotiated.

With new water organisations taking over storm, drinking and wastewater services, many district councils are left with local roads as their only major infrastructure task.

"That's risky. Councils will have fewer cost centres to allocate overheads, and balance sheet downsizing as water assets are taken out may cause other disruptions," Sandra Faulkner says.

"There's a clear case for consolidation to achieve economies of scale and prevent local roads from deteriorating."

Federated Farmers' white paper also suggests shifting compliance and enforcement, and state-of-the-environment monitoring, from councils to government or centralised science and regulatory agencies.

"That would ensure consistency, objectivity and efficiency," Faulkner says.

"Regulatory enforcement should not be political once policy is set.

"Its role is to enforce the rules and standards fairly, consistently and predictably."

While the debate may unsettle current councils, Faulkner is struck by the broad agreement that reorganisation is now essential.

Sandra Faulkner



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Finalists announced for the 2026 Fonterra Dairy Woman of the Year

Opunake farmer Rachel Short and LeAnne Blakelock of Inglewood are among the three finalists for this year's Fonterra Dairy Woman of the Year award. The other is Hinehou Timutimu from the Bay of Plenty

The Fonterra Dairy Woman of the Year award recognises an outstanding woman who has contributed to the dairy sector with passion, drive, innovation and leadership. Jenna Smith, DWN

Trustee and Head Judge, says the calibre of this year's finalists reflects the depth of leadership emerging across the sector.

"Each finalist brings a distinct perspective and a clear commitment to shaping the future of dairying in Aotearoa.

What stood out this year wasn't just capability, it was clarity. These women are clear on what matters, clear on the role they can play,

and they're already getting on with leading," she says.

Finalists will be assessed on a range of factors including commitment, drive and passion for the dairy sector. They will need to be a positive role model for women in dairying and a strong performer, who is recognised by her peers as a potential leader, demonstrating leadership within her community, and with a wider circle of influence than her local community, holding or having previously held leadership positions on regional or national dairy organisations.

The Fonterra Dairy Woman of the Year award will be announced on 5 May at the DWN Conference in Christchurch.

Rachel Short is a born-and-bred Coastal Taranaki dairy farmer who, alongside her husband and parents, owns two certified organic dairy farms near Opunake. Rachel led the conversion of both farms to organic certification from 2015 and has since become one of New Zealand's leading voices in organic and regenerative dairy farming.

Rachel is a member of the Fonterra Organic Farmer Advisory Group, chairs the Taranaki Dairy Environment Leaders, and sits on the DairyNZ Dairy Environment Leaders National Advisory Committee. Her farm has been a DairyNZ budget case study for over a decade. She has also held roles with the NZ Dairy Industry Awards National Executive, Organic Dairy & Pastoral Group, Organics Aotearoa NZ and Quorum Sense, and judged the 2026 Taranaki Share Farmer of the Year.

Rachel is an increasingly sought-after speaker and farmer representative, having participated in webinars



Hinehou Timutimu.



LeAnne Blakelock.



Rachel Short.

and panel discussions for DWN, AsureQuality and Fonterra on the growth of organic dairy, most recently speaking at the Underground Festival in Canterbury on the financial case for regenerative agriculture. She is passionate about healthy ecosystems as the foundation for human nutrition, animal welfare and farm profitability.

LeAnne Blakelock is a dairy farmer, sharemilker and chartered accountant based in Inglewood, Taranaki. Not your typical accountant, she shrugs off the usual stereotype and brings a deeply human lens to her work combining practical farming experience with financial expertise to see the whole dairy industry from the paddock to the boardroom.

LeAnne is the founder of Calf Chronicles, a

farmer-to-farmer platform with over 5,800 followers across New Zealand and internationally. What began as a space to share practical, evidence-based insights on calf welfare, nutrition and performance has grown into a wider conversation about the future of the industry. Through honest storytelling, on-farm data and science, she brings people on the journey connecting animal welfare, human wellbeing and system performance in a way that resonates both on-farm and beyond it.

She is also the creator of the Rose Gold Veal brand, championing ethical veal production and elevating conversations around calf utilisation, welfare and whole-of-system sustainability.

LeAnne has completed the Fonterra Governance Development Programme, the AgriWomen's Development Trust Escalator programme, and is a Chartered Member of the Institute of Directors. She is an active member of the DWN Taranaki Business Group and regularly speaks at conferences and industry events across New Zealand and internationally.

Deeply committed to community wellbeing, she has spent over a decade volunteering in suicide prevention and community wellbeing projects and holds

governance roles across multiple community trusts. She believes the future of the industry lies not just in better systems, but in better connection, between people, animals and the decisions that shape both.

Hinehou Timutimu (Tuhoē, Whakatohea, Te Atiawa) is the General Manager of Te Tawa Kaiti Lands Trust in the Bay of Plenty, where she leads a dual-enterprise model combining dairy farming and maize. Her leadership philosophy — guided by the whakataukī 'Ka ora ai te whenua, Ka ora ai te tangata' (When the Land thrives, the People thrive) — is woven through every initiative she leads.

Hinehou brings together mātauranga Māori and western science to deliver climate resilience, biodiversity restoration, and dairy performance improvements. Her work includes Project Te Aroha, which accelerates dairy productivity and emissions reduction through herd genomics and regenerative farming; He Whāriki mō Paekoau, a catchment restoration programme engaging schools and hapū; and Kua Āmio ki Tōna Timatanga, which creates bilingual resources embedding cultural knowledge into environmental action.



Jenna Smith, DWN Trustee and Head Judge.

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Remembering the Country Girls

The New Zealand Young Farmers are planning a reunion in Stratford on July 3 to coincide with New Plymouth and Stratford hosting the New Zealand Young Farmers Grand Final on July 2-3. It will also commemorate a century since the first Young Farmers meeting. They are wanting to hear from anybody who had been involved in Young Farmers or the New Zealand Federation of Country Girls' Clubs.

Country Girls clubs existed alongside what were then all-male Young Farmers Clubs from 1945 to 1973 when the two groups merged to form the New Zealand Federation of Young Farmers Clubs. During World War II with men serving overseas on military service, women had filled the gaps on the country's farms, and many were keen to be part of the Young Farmers Clubs after the war. Rather than allowing them to join, the Young Farmers preferred to set up a sister organisation for them instead.

Nancy Riddick (nee Nairn) has fond memories of her time in Country Girls. The Eltham Country Girls Club had been formed in 1955, and Nancy was helping on her parents' farm near Eltham, when she was picked up and taken to meetings in 1957. A year later she was President of the South Taranaki District committee.

"After the meeting and the guest speakers had given their talk, supper was served and then we went on our merry way home," recalls Nancy. Members excelled in the baking competitions at the Egmont A & P shows. Other activities included stock judges and debates, which "gave confidence in public speaking for the future."

Other activities included attending dances organised by the Young Farmers at the Eltham, Te Roti, Kaponga and Alton Halls. It was there that many, including Nancy met their life partners.

Another highlight of her time in Country Girls was the five-week trip to Australia, where she was one of a party of 26. A high point was visiting a "Rotolacter,"

ELTHAM COUNTRY GIRLS' CLUB, 1957



Back Row: J. DOMBROSKI, A. CLEMENT, B. JENKINS, N. CLEMENTS.
 Middle Row: E. CLEMENT, E. DOMBROSKI, E. TAYLOR, L. TRIM, G. CAMPBELL, Mrs. WARD.
 Front Row: M. WHITING, H. ALEXANDER, N. NAIRN, S. CAMPBELL, P. CLEMENT.

The Eltham Country Girls Club 1957. Nancy sitting middle front row.

an early rotary cow shed. "It was a wonderful trip for a country bumpkin like me," she says. "This was my first and only trip overseas. I hadn't even been on an aeroplane which turned out to be a spectacular flight. We travelled far and wide, visiting cities and beaches, and I loved it. We met up with a lot of Australian

Country Girls and Young Farmers."

Former Eltham Country Girls Club members continued to meet for the occasional reunion after the club finished, and proceeds from one reunion went towards the Eltham Young Farmers for a trophy for the female member involved in the most activities.

Nancy and her husband Arthur farmed a 40-hectare dairy farm at Taikatu Road, Auroa until, with Arthur's health not the best they decided to shift to Hawera. In 1990 Arthur passed away, aged 58.

After being in Country Girls, Nancy joined the Hawera Women's Club, of which she is a life member,



Nancy Riddick.

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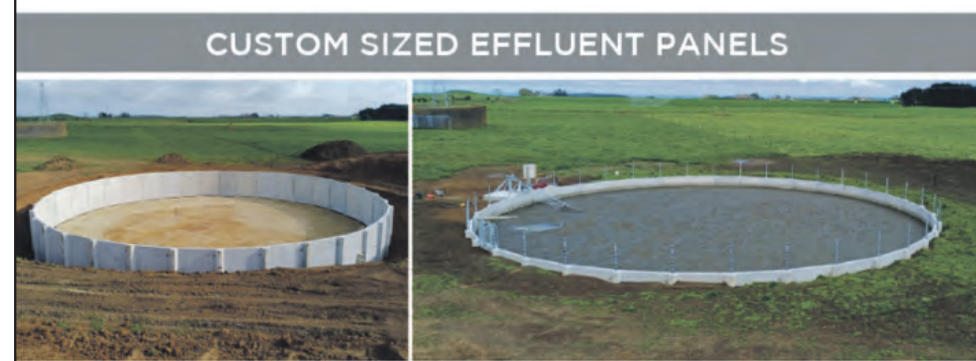
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Kaponga WI

There was an error in the last report, it should have read Joy Eliason gained 3rd place in the Miscellaneous Cup.

Kaponga WI gathered together on Tuesday 10 March at the home of Dorothy Hughes. Dorothy

and Joy Eliason were our hostesses for the day.

Our role call for the meeting was that we were to sing or say something or we were to default at a fee of 50c. We had 2 members recite nursery rhymes, Dorothy Hughes and Dene Lines did

a reading and Joy Eliason sung a song. The rest of the members defaulted and \$2.50 was banked.

Our secret friends were revealed for 2025 with surprises of finding out who we had and thanks were given. Our 2026 programme was handed out with new secret friends attached.

Dorothy Hughes won the raffle of the day. Gillian Frandsen finally remembered to bring the silver dish and she awarded it to Sharyn Hurley,

Sharyn's mother the late Joan Thurston initiated the dish for Kaponga's CWI 70th Jubilee in 2001.

Our competitions for the day were
 - 3 slices of uncooked slice
 - 1st Jo Ellis, 2nd Dene Lines.
 - a small picture - 1st Dorothy Hughes, 2nd Dene Lines, 3rd Joy Eliason
 - a garden item/plant starting with 'P' - 1st Dorothy Hughes, 2nd Dene Lines, 3rd Joy Eliason.

After a delicious finger food shared lunch we got busy doing crafts.

Dorothy and Joy invited Sue Wilson to show us some crafts she had entered into a recent competition. Sue then

got us busy doing card art with stencils she had die cut out of card board and then taught us how to make a

little gift box. Another great day was had.

Jo Ellis.



Members showing off crafts they had made.

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In 1925 during a Farmers Union Conference in Wellington, sixteen women were moved to form a rural women's organisation to first support the aims of the Farmers Union and secondly, "To better the conditions of women and children living on the land." Today this is still to the forefront of our organisation's mission

(now known as Rural Women New Zealand). The first Branch in New Zealand (then known as Women's Division of Farmers Union) was formed in Oakura, Taranaki in September 1925. Hawera established a branch in 1926 with Mrs F.J. Carter being the first President. Over the following 8 years 18 more branches were established in

South Taranaki. Yesteryear and today our organisation still advocates for challenges that arise in rural health, in rural education, in rural connectivity, and in rural community aspects - which are very important for our grass roots farming communities who provide much for our New Zealand exports and economy.



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Neil Barnes named All Blacks Assistant Coach

Taranaki Bulls Head Coach Neil Barnes has been appointed as Assistant Coach of the All Blacks under new Head Coach Dave Rennie.

In 2021 Barnes led his side to an undefeated NPC season, two years later he delivered the province their second ever NPC title in front of a sold-out home crowd and in 2024 he led his team to Ranfurly Shield success.

Across 57 matches as Head Coach, Barnes achieved a 68.4% win record.

Taranaki Rugby CEO Jimmy Fastier acknowledged Barnes and his outstanding contribution to Taranaki Rugby over the last five years.

“Barnesy bleeds Amber & Black. He returned home in 2021 with a clear vision of the Yarrows Taranaki Bulls making Taranaki proud on and off the field. He has gone over and above in achieving that with the energy, innovation and



New All Black Assistant Coach Neil Barnes.

culture that he has brought to all levels of the game here in Taranaki.”

“Neil finishes as the most successful Amber & Black Head Coach on record, he has set up a clear template for how to grow local players and achieve NPC success

from the provinces. He is a Taranaki Rugby legend and his appointment to the All Blacks programme is thoroughly deserved.”

“To say I’m proud to be included in an All Blacks coaching team, would be an understatement,”

says Barnes. “When first asked, I challenged Renns, whether at my age, I was the right person for the job, and secondly, then I challenged myself, whether I was capable of having a positive impact on the All Blacks. I’ve got through that initial self-doubt, and am now really excited about the challenge, and I am very motivated to make

a difference. I’m under no illusions at the size of the challenge, and the responsibly and pressure that comes with it.”

“Along with the buzz of making it to All Blacks level, comes a level of sadness that I can’t carry on coaching the Yarrows Taranaki Bulls and trying every day to make our province proud. I’ve had a huge amount of pleasure, watching a large group of our players and management, grow and make it to the next level. Feeling the level of support, I’ve felt, in good and tough times has been humbling. The level of excitement and joy created in our province with the Ranfurly Sheild and NPC successes sits very highly with me. I consider myself, very fortunate, to have been allowed the privilege of coaching our province over this period, a task I’ve given my all to, and hopefully leaving in a position of strength.”

“I would like to acknowledge an unbelievably selfless person in my life, Megan. 48 years of marriage. Megan has

made plenty of sacrifices in her own life, to keep the family and farm together, while I head off, following my passion and burying myself in another challenge. One of these days, she really needs to put her foot down, but hopefully not for a few more years, till I’ve had a chance to help make our country proud.”

New Zealand Rugby Interim Chief Executive Officer Steve Lancaster on Barnes appointment: “Neil’s is a real story of provincial pride and an example of the strength of our system. He is a true icon in this region and his leadership and passion for the game will leave Taranaki Rugby in good shape. As sad as they will be to lose Neil as Head Coach, I know that nobody will be more proud of him than this rugby community. We are excited to see Neil take this next step with the All Blacks, and we know he will bring the same dedication and excellence to the national environment.”

A recruitment process for a new Yarrows Taranaki Bulls Head Coach will commence immediately.

Win for Nik at Arthur Ross Tournament



Nik Budd Clement.

Nik Budd-Clement represented Croquet South Taranaki in the CNZ Arthur Ross Memorial National Association Croquet at Pukekohe CC over 3 days.

She was one of ten players representing their respective Associations from around NZ. Nik started on a 22 handicap after winning all her games. Her handicap has now dropped to 16.

Each game is three hours long. Bisque/extra turns are available to those on a higher handicap. It was a great achievement for Nik as she hasn’t been playing Association Croquet for that long.

Nik won the Arthur Ross Championship Cup and CNZ Bronze Medal award.

Stefan Horrer the president of Croquet NZ presented the trophies.

Lois Smith
Park Croquet Club

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Opunake Boat & Underwater Club Annual Boat & Surfcasting Tournament



From left. Jacob Foley, Jess Sayer and Dan O'Leary.



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Another very successful competition with 39 boats and 130 anglers plus nine under the age of 12, several surfcasters and kayakers and many good fish were caught and donated to the local community.

“A huge thanks to all our entrants, without you getting out on the water and getting stuck in, we simply wouldn't have a competition,” says

Commodore Jess. “We've been pretty lucky with the weather and plenty of great fish have been caught. A big shout out to our sponsors, without you this wouldn't happen and we are incredibly grateful, make sure you support our sponsors the next time you see them. Behind the scenes, thanks to our committee, tractor drivers keeping the bay flowing and Dion for filleting fish for our sponsors and community. All in all, its been a great competition.”

Results and prizes were presented on Easter Monday evening at Sinclair Events Centre as follows:

EarlyBird Entries were Garry Northcott and Stephen Coltart.

Lucky 4-6kg snapper of which there were 61 weighed in, the drawn winner Rob Gay.

King Fish. 1. Tony Moir on EFishnC with 19.48. 2. Dan O'Leary on Summer Wine with 17.92kg. 3. Paps Klaassen on Savage with 17.90kg. 4. Jess Sayer on

Summer Wine with 16.44kg

Corkill Systems Hapuka. 1.Jacob Foley on Summer Wine with 29.20kg. 2.Jess Sayer on Summer Wine

Continued page 27.

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Opunake Boat & Underwater Club Annual Boat & Surfcasting Tournament

Continued from page 26.

with 22.40kg. 3.Garry Northcott on EfishnC with 21.86kg. 4. Dan O'Leary on Summer Wine with 16.56kg

Tarakihi. 1.Stephen Coltart on Ann Sirah with 1.38kg. 2. Dan O'Leary on Summer Wine with 1.12kg. 3. Abby Croad on Chasa with 1.11kg. 4. Tony Campbell on Chasa with 1.06kg

Trevally. 1. Garry Northcott on EFishnC with 4.57kg. 2. Paul Mundt on Tin Can with 3.07kg. 3. Jess Sayer on Summer Wine with 2.95kg. 4. Helen Woolford on Buglee with 2.89kg

Gurnard. 1. Shane Stevenson on Summer Wine with 0.86kg. 2. Corey Laing surf casting 0.83kg. 3. Abby Croad on Chasa with 0.80kg. 4. Brent Clement on Wild Cat and Tony Campbell on Chasa with 0.78kg

Blue Cod. 1. Dion Kahukaka on Bounty Hunter and Luke Sinclair Allegria with 2.14kg. 2. Gareth Robinson on Bounty Hunter with 2.11kg. 3. Brenae Evans on Waka with 2.07kg.

Kahawai. 1. Jarod Hall and Caleb Tait surf casting 2.98kg. 2. Willis Luttrell on Ranger with 2.89kg. Paddy Walsh surfcasting 2.80kg.

John Dory. 1. Gordon Beekman on EFishnC with 2.70kg. 2. Kyle Farquhar on Chasa with 2.66kg. 3. Tony Campbell on Chasa with 2.60kg. 4.Steve Corkill on Valkyrie with 2.43kg.

Snapper. 1. Terry Sullivan on Old Buoys with 10.12kg. 2. Jon Arden on Red Barron with 10.00kg. 3. Paps Klaassen on Savage with 9.80kg. 4. Simon Foley on Summer Wine with 9.68kg. 5. Shane Stevenson on False Hope with 9.61kg. 6. Dave Wakeling on False Hope with 9.59kg. 7. Abby Croad on Chasa with 9.34kg. 8. Bevan Schuler on Red Barron and Paul Brook on Waka with 9.20kg. 9. Shaun Neal on Real Pleasure II



Simon Foley.

with 9.09 kg

Mikey Corkill. 2. Liam Kalin. 3. Willis Luttrell. 4.Simon Foley

Payne, Billie Wakeling and Ashdyn Laing.

Top Boat. 1. Summer Wine. 2. Chasa.

Under 12 years spot draw - Darcie Wakeling, Jordan

Rod and Reel Raffle . 1.

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Your support is sincerely appreciated and we look forward to seeing you in 2027!
Opunake Boat & Underwater Club Inc Committee and Members.

Team work makes for dream work for Taranaki Dio equestrian team

The re-establishment of a Taranaki school's equestrian team has students, and their horses, jumping for joy.

It's been several years since Taranaki Diocesan School has had an equestrian team, but a group of determined Year Nines have got one going again, says principal Maria Taylor.

While the team has only just got started, the students and their trusty steeds have already enjoyed success, with some great placings at their most recent event.

A team of three students represented Taranaki Dio at the Pegasus Cup event – the premium Secondary schools show jumping competition in Aotearoa - which took place at the Takapoto Estate in Waikato in March this year.

Bella Maindonald, 14, Tessa Savage, 13 and Abbey Clapison, 13, all enjoyed the opportunity to compete as part of a school team and are already planning to enter more events over the year, says Bella.

While the three girls only started at Taranaki Dio this year, they already knew each other through various equestrian events over the years, says Tessa.

"We've seen each other at events, and talked, so once we were all here we started talking about events for secondary schools like the Pegasus Cup."

Abbey says the group then spoke to Leighton Deardon, the school's sports co-ordinator and asked if they could enter a team.

She says the first event in their sights was the



Bella Maindonald (14), Tessa Savage (13) and Abbey Clapison (14).

Nga Tawa Interschools Equestrian event in early March, something she and Tessa were keen to enter.

"He said yes, but he also said it would be one and done for the year, so just one event."

That, says Tessa, "wasn't enough for us, so we have done two, so far."

Bella says she joined the group for the Pegasus Cup and now all three are hoping to enter more events and sign more girls up to join their team.

While being part of a team adds pressure at times, it also comes with a sense of support from the others, says Tessa.

"If you are riding as an individual you are only letting yourself down, but in a team you can put more pressure on yourself as you don't want to let the team down."

There was no letting the team down at the Pegasus

Cup however, as the team ended up in second place across all Taranaki teams

entered and in 22nd place (out of 51 teams) overall.

While they compete as part of a team, each rider is also competing individually at the event, with Tessa placing 22nd overall out of 198 riders.

Tessa, who rode her 12-year-old stationbred pony Sailor Boy, known as Sailor, says she is particularly proud of her result as she has only been riding Sailor for about three months.

"He has just recovered from colic surgery, so I haven't been riding him for long."

As well as their overall placement, Tessa and Sailor also got 3rd place in their accumulator and 4th in their equitation.

Bella's highest individual

placing was in her two-phase, in which she and her eight-year-old pony Altin's Murphy placed 10th

"My family bred Murphy, he is a Pinto Clydesdale Cross."

Abbey rode her 10-year-old stationbred horse Autumn Bling, known as Freya, in the event and says since getting Freya just over a year ago, "we do everything together."

"It wasn't Freya's day however," she says of the Pegasus Cup, with lower rankings than she had hoped for overall.

"She will be doing some strength work to get her back to her best."

While the scores weren't as high as Abbey would have liked, they still were high enough to help shift

the team's overall placement into that final 22nd position, says Maria.

"We are so proud of the girls, not just for their placings but for the resilience, positivity and teamwork they displayed even when under pressure."

The students say they hope to continue to compete as a team, with the North Island Secondary Schools Equestrian Championship in Taupo in their sights for August this year.

Maria says all of the school community will be cheering the girls on as they continue chasing their dreams.

"This could be the start of something big – for the school, for the team and for these girls as individuals."

CTI (South) Golf Croquet level singles



Millie Howatson

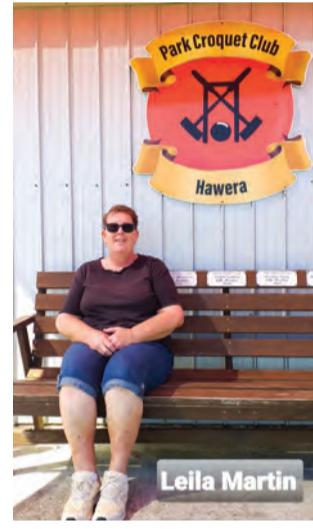
Croquet Taranaki Inc (CTI) South consists of members from the Park, Hawera and Stratford Croquet Clubs. The games were played on Sunday March 22 at the Park and Hawera Croquet Clubs. Conditions couldn't have been better for the players.

Bennett and Sutton Cup Handicap -6 to 2. Winner Leila Martin. McL'Dowie Cup Handicap 3-5. Winner Sue Williams. Lee's Cup Handicap 6-9. Winner Millie Howatson. Black Cup Handicap 10 onwards. Winner Gerald Carver

Lois Smith



Sue Williams



Leila Martin

Sandfords Manaia Golf results

March 8 Ambrose. Baylis Boys 35. Golf Time 44. The 4 Ls 44. March 29. Girls. 1. Lucy Gopperth. 2. Edie Lynskey. Junior Boys. 1. Carter Ardern and Joseph Baylis. 2. Elliott Baylis. Intermediate Boys. 1. Micah Gut. 2. Lennox Finnigan. Senior Boys. 1. Liam Lynskey and Harry Gopperth. 2. Romyn Tupuse.



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A destination to discover, connect and get inspired



The 2026 Taranaki Home & Garden Show is this weekend.

Doors to the Taranaki Home and Garden Show open this Friday and it's all go at TSB Stadium as a record number of exhibitors are preparing to welcome thousands of visitors through the doors over the three days. Now in its fourth year, the Show features more than 150 exhibitors showcasing a variety of products and services, making it the perfect place to explore ideas for your

home, garden, or lifestyle, or simply enjoy a fun day out with a good browse, delicious food, and coffee. Once again, the Taranaki Art Show will be a highlight of the event, a curated boutique exhibition presented by The Collaboration. Visitors can discover a talented lineup of established and emerging artists from across Aotearoa showcasing contemporary New Zealand

creativity. This uniquely local art experience, where inspiration and community come together, is open to all visitors during Show hours on the mezzanine floor of TSB Stadium. Families are well catered for these school holidays with the Resene Paint a Pot and Paint a House activation running Saturday and Sunday from 11am to 2pm. Visitors can get creative with Resene paints, enjoy

giveaways, and one lucky participant will take home a \$250 Resene voucher for the best painted house. The Show keeps things fresh every year with a fabulous range of new exhibitors. Modex Kitchens will be there offering modern, custom kitchen design and installation. Steel to Love, a Manawatu-based family business, will showcase unique indoor and outdoor steel art. Lee-thal Latte will bring healthy, easy-to-enjoy latte concentrates, and first-time exhibitor Mon's Flavors will present authentic, handcrafted spice



The TSB Stadium in New Plymouth will host the show. Garden Show is the ultimate destination to discover, connect, and get inspired, lock it in your diary today.

Time and Place Solo Exhibition

Time and Place Solo Exhibition by Margaret Rogerson 9th April - 28th May. at 'from out of the blue studio gallery 18 Halse Place, Ōpunakē. 4616 Open Thursdays through Mondays 1-5 pm or by appointment - phone 021 407 424

Time and Place is an exhibition of textile works exploring the intersections of memory, tradition, and storytelling through fabric. This includes works that respond to the sights, sounds, and textures of the Birchville dam bush walk, a beautiful area of native trees and ferns near where Margaret lives in Upper Hutt. Margaret has also been inspired by the memory of vases of flowers lovingly grown by her mother, on the dining room mantelpiece and the bookcase in the lounge. Drawing from natural landscapes, weathered textures and memories of childhood, these works explore the connections between land and memory through the use of a range of techniques such as embroidery, layering, eco dyeing, rusting, weathering, painting and waxing. Viewers are invited to pause and reflect on the images and memories that shape their everyday lives. The exhibited works include wall pieces, framed art, suspended panels, and plinth and shelf-based items. They incorporate new and reclaimed textiles – linens, doilies, laces, napkins, remnants and scraps, giving these textiles a new purpose. There is no charge to visit



this exhibition. The upstairs handwaving and other fibre working studio space is also open to visitors to experience works. All welcome

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Back where it all began: Theatre Trust Singers return to Hawera Memorial Theatre stage

There's something special about being back where it all began, and for the Hawera Theatre Trust Singers, a rehearsal on the Hawera Memorial Theatre stage feels like coming home. The accompanying photograph captures a rare and evocative moment: the choir spread across the theatre stage, voices



Hawera Theatre Trust Singers.

lifting into the auditorium, surrounded by the history and atmosphere of one of South Taranaki's most treasured cultural spaces. It's a sight that connects

past, present and future — and one that the choir hopes will inspire new singers to join them.

The Hawera Theatre Trust Singers was formed in 2018 under the guardianship of the Hawera Memorial Theatre Trust, with a simple but meaningful aim: to bring people together through song while supporting and celebrating the theatre. Fittingly, that very first rehearsal also took place on the theatre stage, marking the start of a close relationship between the choir and the building itself.

While the choir normally rehearses in the community centre lounge, circumstances have brought them temporarily back to their roots. With the Hawera Repertory Society currently using the community centre space for rehearsals until the end of March, the choir has been welcomed once again onto the theatre stage — a move that has been met with enthusiasm by members.

"There's a different energy when you sing on a stage like this," says musical director Evon Willmott Bradshaw. "You feel the history of performances past, and it reminds us why we sing — to share music with others."

The choir currently has around 20 active singers,

but there is plenty of room for more. New members are warmly welcomed, and no audition is required. Whether you're an experienced chorister or someone who simply enjoys singing in the shower, the Theatre Trust Singers offers a supportive, friendly environment where voices of all types can grow in confidence and blend together.

Rehearsals are held every Tuesday evening from 7-9pm, making it easy for people to fit singing into their week. Alongside the joy of music-making, members enjoy the social connection that comes from being part of a creative community — something that feels more important than ever.

As the choir stands once again on the Hawera Memorial Theatre stage, they are reminded that this is not just where they started, but where they belong. With new voices, fresh energy and the continued support of the Theatre Trust, the future sounds bright.

Anyone interested in joining or learning more is encouraged to get in touch by emailing haweratts@gmail.com. All singers are welcome — and your place on the stage might be waiting.

Anita Scott



Maketawa Museum
Eight years ago Barry Bishop started the Maketawa John Deere Museum. Barry's Museum is full of vintage classic John Deere Machinery. He now has a collection of 40 green and yellow beauties. The oldest tractor Barry currently owns is a 1928 John Deere BN, imported from the states.

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Activate & Celebrate for Protecting Our Moana

Ōpunakē, Saturday 18 April

The wider community of ocean lovers & protectors will be gathering again to mark another significant milestone, this time, celebrating fending off seabed mining with it's official decline from Fast Track Panel - and to look ahead at the work still to be done for our ocean.

This April marks a full year since Ōpunakē welcomed around 500 people to the first of what became an incredible series of Paddle Out Activations - peaceful, joyful gatherings in and around the water that rippled out locally, nationally, and inspired synched up events globally and also worked to strengthen a regional response and engagement. This coming weekend of 18th April, community will gather again: this time to celebrate, reconnect, and activate for the journey ahead.

The occasion is a significant one. Earlier this year the Fast Track Approvals panel declined Trans-Tasman Resources' (TTR's) application to mine the iron sands of our South Taranaki Bight - ruling that is would likely cause irreversible harm to threatened species and ocean life and that the economic benefits didn't outweigh the risks. This outcome was thanks to both the due diligence of the panel and through extraordinary community effort, legal battles, deputations, petitions, and the enduring mana of those who refused to give up on our moana. In particular our acknowledgements to Ngati Ruanui who've been at the fore with this directly aimed at mining in their rohe,



Photo credit: Tania Niwa Photography, April 26th, 2025. Photo from first Paddle Out Activation at Ōpunakē Beach.

along with Ngaruahine, groups like KASM (Kiwi's Against Seabed Mining) and many others, along with all 8 Iwi of Taranaki, NPDC, STDC, Whanganui District Council and all who gathered and supported the Protect Our Moana activations and more, including all the great media coverage. It's been a huge effort and many years of endurance and sacrifice towards this good result.

"Let's celebrate protecting the wellbeing of our moana and power to the people for again putting a stop to this."

The celebrations are not a full stop. TTR - under the ownership of Manuka Resources - and others will regroup. The same day TTR officially pulled out of the Fast Track process, due to the draft decline decision that could not be overturned, was also the day the Minister of Mining Shane Jones, officially announced an \$80 million dollar Critical Minerals slush fund. Seabed mining remains an active

threat to our local West Coast and also Pacific Ocean waters. With an election year November 7th this year, now is the time to ensure protecting our ocean becomes a defining issue at the ballot box and we are asking for support to encourage and help BAN Seabed mining. This 'Activate & Celebrate' event is both a moment of joy and a call to action.

Friday 17 April — Ocean Films Night

7pm - 9pm | Ōpunakē Town Hall | Koha (donation) entry | Everyone welcome

Join us on Friday evening for an inspiring night of ocean films at the Ōpunakē Town Hall. Featuring 'Oceans with David Attenborough' an extraordinary film for all ages that everyone ought to see, and two short films from local South Taranaki film maker Rebecca Pratt, with great reviews, 'Reef Life' an intimate look at the biodiversity of our

South Taranaki Bight reef ecosystems, and 'Manta Watch' following the extraordinary world of manta rays and the people working to protect these endangered taonga.

Rebecca will also be present for Q & A. Doors will open at 6:30pm.

Saturday 18 April - Full Draft Programme

Our event will be an inspiring, nourishing, informative, proactive and joyful occasion with something for all ages and abilities.

From 1:30pm: Gather and enjoy being at Ōpunakē

Beach. Come early, soak it in, and reconnect with the community.

Around 2:00pm Opening kōrero, guest speakers and community forum. Hear updates on where things stand, and where political parties and candidates stand on seabed mining and ocean health ahead of the election, along with other guest speakers (follow our facebook page to get the latest).

~3:00pm We welcome all ages to join us in spelling out a message on the beach, followed by a Paddle Out for the protection and wellbeing of our moana.

Around 5:30pm/6pm Kai / dinner up at the Ōpunakē Town Hall. Community kai - food donations towards the shared meal are warmly welcomed, along with support in the kitchen.

Evening Live music — an epic musical line-up to celebrate and dance until late! Featuring Legendary Whanganui Reggae band 'Roots Provider', the incredible local duo of Moemoea who'll be fresh from dropping their new release, "Hey", up and coming locals Johnny Wright and Tihikura Hohaia in a new collaboration and the well loved DJ tobetones. It's guaranteed good times with all this talent!

A Grassroots Community Event

This event is entirely

community-organised. Tickets for Saturday are available via Humanatix, our facebook page or tiakimoana8@gmail.com — early bird ticket purchases are hugely appreciated and help back this event. Donations above and beyond, offers of support, and food contributions toward the community kai and koha are all warmly welcomed.

A big thank you to the Ōpunakē Beach Holiday Park and Ōpunakē Motel for offering up to 20% discount for people coming to our Protect Our Moana event. This support is deeply appreciated to lower costs for people travelling from a far.

We appreciate any donations or offers of support to help cover costs and keep things going. Bank transfer donations to: Protect Our Moana - Taranaki : 15-3943-0043659-00. Thanks to help spread the word, bring your family, bring your neighbours, rideshare and save the costs - we'll help facilitate as much as we can. Let's come together — stronger and better together — for our moana, our community, and the generations to come.

Contact & Details

Facebook: Protect Our Moana Taranaki, tiakimoan8@gmail.com

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EVENING

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FOR MORE INFO: Protect Our Moana - Taranaki

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- stroke symptoms
- choking
- loss of consciousness
- clearly broken or dislocated bones

website for anyone looking for free, easy to understand information and tips on treating common health conditions. Or call Healthline for free on 0800 611 116 where nurses, paramedics, and doctors are available 24/7 for free medical advice.

Community pharmacies are another great option for health advice on common health issues and medications. Your general practitioner (GP) or Māori healthcare provider is the best option for your non-urgent, long-term health issues as they can provide

ongoing care appropriate to your specific needs.

Children under 14 receive free healthcare and there are low-cost GP clinics in New Plymouth, Stratford, Ōpunakē, Hāwera and Pātea. A Community Services Card can lower the cost of some health services and prescriptions.

For out of hours or urgent treatment when your GP isn't available, there are a number of urgent care clinics in Taranaki. These include Medicross and Carefirst (Westown) in New Plymouth, and South Taranaki Rural Health General Practice (the Practice) in Hāwera.

To find pharmacies, GPs and urgent care clinics open near you, visit healthpoint.co.nz. This website also provides information on practices in the region currently enrolling new patients

Protect your children from whooping cough



It's also free for all children under 18 years old and adults are eligible for one free booster from age 45 (if they have not had four previous tetanus doses) and can also get one free dose from age 65.

For more information, or help to book your vaccination, call the Vaccination Helpline free on 0800 28 29 26 (8.30am - 5.00pm Monday to Friday) or visit info.health.nz/bookavaccine

For more information on whooping cough visit info.health.nz/whooping-cough

Whooping cough is highly contagious and causes breathing difficulties and severe coughing fits. It can be spread easily between people, usually by coughing and sneezing, so clusters of infection within households are common.

It is particularly serious for babies (pēpi) - especially those who are too young to be vaccinated - as well as tamariki (children) and older adults, and in some cases, can also be fatal.

The best protection for people and their whānau is immunisation - particularly during pregnancy and for those who are at higher risk such as pēpi, tamariki and older adults.

The whooping cough immunisation is free and is best given from 16 weeks of pregnancy. The vaccine should be given with each pregnancy to protect the baby until it is able to have their own immunisation at 6-weeks of age.



Choose the right healthcare for you and your whānau



Care at home

Info.health.nz
Advice and information on general wellness, colds, flu and Covid, minor injuries and skin issues.



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Taranaki National Art Awards 2026



Sponsors Rosie and Steve Corkill admire the artwork.

The TNAA committee recently held the AGM in March, taking time to reflect on last year's epic event! We're all re-energised and ready for action as we once again embark on the planning process for our 24th Annual Art Awards and Exhibition. In 2025 we stepped into a 'Whimsical Wonderland' - a dazzling display of creative expressions and exceptional talent!

Healthy entry numbers were achieved across all 7 categories; Painting, Taranaki Artists, 3D, Fibre, Photography, Works On Paper, Tō Taranakitanga. We received a total of 274 art works from 182 artists - 74% of whom reside within the Taranaki region, 26% nationwide - coming from over 40 locations throughout New Zealand. The overall prize pool totalled \$14,550 awarded to 17 amazing

artists. We recorded over 80 volunteer contributions in excess of 3000 hours, welcomed a whopping 1500 visitors through the door to view and appreciate the exhibition, and enjoyed a steady number of art sales throughout the 9 day exhibition period. We would once again like to extend our immense gratitude to all the artists who enter, our awesome committee and dedicated

team of volunteers, all the local community groups and businesses who support the TNAA, our many loyal sponsors and essential funders. Your positive and creative energy, inspiration and mahi, guidance and advice, funds and time, contribute to the vibrancy and success of this event year after year. The TNAA is a prime example of cross-sector collaboration, epitomising the spirit of collective energy in action to enrich and uplift our communities.

The TNAA aims to provide an exceptional and sustainable visual arts experience, encouraging and enabling access to participation across a diverse range of creative mediums. The TNAA offers a platform for artists to express their unique vision and voice, showcasing themselves to an appreciative public audience. In doing so we foster positive relationships, strengthen creative networks and acknowledge cultural diversity, that in turn provides vital recognition, artistic exposure and a fabulous exhibition opportunity. Our friendly

team welcomes fresh faces to help with the planning process and delivery of this vibrant arts experience, so feel free to join us and make the magic happen!

Key dates for 2026 are: Entries open 1st June and close 28th August; Opening Night and Art Awards Ceremony on Friday 30th October; Exhibition runs from Saturday 31st October to Sunday 8th November.

The next TNAA committee meeting: Tuesday 23 April, 10.30 am in Ōpunakē. There's a variety of ways to support and contribute

to The Taranaki National Art Awards and we're always curious to hear new ideas and receive feedback that can help to improve and enhance our creative showcase. We are seeking people who have skills and interest in sponsorship and funding areas, so please come along and share.

Contact Megan (0275007722) or Rosemarie (0211322483) for more information.

Nga mihi nui, Megan Symons



Renee Casserly (Creative New Zealand advisor) with Committee's Choice winner "Chip Thief" by Logan Burns.

Village Gallery Four artists

"Turning Point" 7 April - 2 May by Heidi Turner, Lisa Lister, Taelor Andreas Jazz Palmer, Janine Frost-Jones
Four Artists, Four Turning Points
This exhibition brings together four artists whose practices were born from moments of change - quiet invitations, personal healing, grief, and physical limitation. Though their mediums differ, each story

is rooted in the courage to begin. Janine came to art when life gently asked for more colour and breath. New to art and new to exhibiting, she said yes to her first exhibition before doubt could speak. Her work reflects openness, courage, and the energy of stepping into something new. Heidi, a mixed-media artist, creates under the banner Expressions of

Infinity. After years living with epilepsy and creative stagnation, her art became part of a personal healing journey. Through paintings, coded healing works, and crystal jewellery, she offers comfort, harmony, and balance. Lisa's practice emerged from stillness after loss. Formerly working in spiritual and frequency healing, she was intuitively guided to paint. Her work

fuses colour therapy, energy, and emotional freedom, translating years of unseen practice onto the canvas. Taelor found carving while recovering from injury. What began as an escape became a passion for shaping stone. Currently creating jewellery, his work is grounded, patient, and evolving toward larger sculptural forms.

FOUR ARTISTS

TURNING POINT
7 APRIL - 2 MAY
TUESDAY - SATURDAY
10.00 AM - 3.00 PM

FOUR TURNING POINTS

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LISA KEEN AUDIOLOGY
Every 2nd Wednesday

ACTIVE + PHYSIOTHERAPY
Monday, Tuesday & Thursday

TARANAKI CHIROPRACTIC
Every Wednesday

COUNSELLORS
Karen Anderson 021 213 8513

MATTHEWS OPTOMETRISTS
1st Thursday of every month

TARANAKI PODIATRY
2nd Wednesday of every month

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Via an appointment from the Opuake Medical Centre

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11.30am-12.30pm

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Facility Manager on 06 761 8488

What's On Listings

ONGOING

Movies at Everybodys Theatre in Opunake:
Playing several days and nights each week. Refer

CHURCH NOTICES



Church Services - Manaia, Kaponga, Opunake, Pungarehu, Okata, Oakura

Opunake Co-operating Parish

Havelock Street, Opunake - St Pauls - every Sunday
9am: Coffee prior to service
9.30am: Service
Rahotu - Wesley - 11am first Sunday of the month

Okato Co-operating Parish

St. James, Oakura - Sunday Service every Sunday, 10.00am
St. Paul's, Okato - 1st and 2nd Sundays - Worship Service; 3rd Sunday - Communion Service and 4th Sunday at 7.00pm
St. Paul's, Okato - Open church for silent reflection, Pew for You, every 3rd Wednesday of each month, 4.30pm-5.30pm

Opunake Catholic Church

St Martins, Pungarehu: Temporarily closed - no Masses
Our Lady Star of the Sea, Opunake: 10am every Sunday

Other areas

Sacred Heart, Manaia - Temporarily closed - No Masses
St Joseph's, Hawera - Every Sat at 5pm; Every Sun at 9am
St Patrick's, Patea - 4th Sunday of month; 11.00am
St Francis de Sales, Waverley - 2nd Sunday of month; 11.00am

St Patricks Catholic Church, Kaponga
Sunday Mass 8.45am.
Thursday Mass 10.00am (subject to change).

St Patricks Catholic Church, Okato
Saturday Vigil 6.00pm - weekly

The Wave

Pentecostal Church 64 Domett St, Opunake
Sunday Services 10.30am
Women's Group 10am Tuesday
Men's Group 7pm Wednesday
Come along or contact
Belinda Philp
027 935 6191

St. Barnabas Anglican Church
141 Tasman St, Opunake
Sunday Services 9am
Communion 1st, 2nd, & 3rd Sunday
Prayer & Praise 4th Sunday
Every 5th Sunday all 4 churches gather for a Combined Service

Okato Community Church

Meets 10.30am Sunday at Hempton Hall.
Everyone welcome

St John's Community Church. Kaponga
Cnr West and Egmont Streets.
Sunday Services 10.30am followed by morning tea

Manaia Union Fellowship

Terou St. Manaia.

Meet 10am every 3rd Sunday of the month with communion

Friend & Fellowship Group

Thursdays @ Manaia
Support our Faith and support each other with Prayer and Bible study
Encouraging interactive discussion and Praise
All are welcome
We would love it if you could come
Rodney & Val 274 8550 or 0272384187

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church

90 Regan St., Stratford,
9:00am Sunday: Breakfast and Study
10:30am: Breakfast is followed by "Coming Together Worship Service"
Thursday: Study Group at 2 pm at 96b Brecon Rd., Stratford.
Contact Rev. John Mattock 027 2039799

Methodist Church Hawera

Regent Street 10am, 2nd and 4th Sundays each month

Manaia Community Church part of the Global Anglicans

Robert Gibson Hall, Manaia
1st, 2nd, 4th, 5th Sundays at 10 am
3rd Sunday Family Service at 4pm with shared meal to follow
Contact: Rev Phil Woodmass 027 424 8318

timetable in newspaper.

MONDAYS: The Barnabas Centre Exercise and Social Morning: St. Barnabas Church Hall, 141 Tasman

Street Opunake: Each Monday 10 am - 12:30 pm.
Information call Jenny 027 379 6844 or Ian 027 622 4878.

Beginners Social Dance Classes: Central School Hall, New Plymouth, 7pm.

TUESDAYS

Opunake Walking Group: Every Tuesday 10am.
Meet outside Club Hotel on Havelock St. Phone Margaret 027 477 5600 for more info if needed, or just turn up.

Pungarehu Golf Club Twilight: Tee-off between 4.30 & 6.30pm.

Brazilian Jiu Jitsu: Adult classes, 7pm, Sinclair Events Centre, Opunake.

Opunake District RSA: Meet 1st Tuesday of every month at 5.30pm at the Opunake Fire Station. Financial Members are welcome to attend.

WEDNESDAYS

Coastal Young Farmers: Meet 2nd Wednesday of every month at 7pm at Butlers Reef Bar & Cafe, Oakura.

Lisa Keen Audiology at Coastal Care, Opunake: Wednesdays 9am - 5pm, for an appointment call 027 591 4222 - 0800 555 676

Okato & District Historical Society open every Wednesday: At the Okato Community Trust Hall, 47 Cumming St, Okato. phone Meg on 06 752 4566.

Opunake Embroiders Guild: Meet 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of the month, 10.30am-3pm at the Opunake Business Centre, Napier St, Opunake. Just come along or phone Sheryl 06 761 8769.

Toi Foundation drop-in sessions: Opunake Library, 11am-3pm.

Okato Community Market: In Hempton Hall, Okato 4pm to 5.30pm.

Free singing experience with Taranaki Sober and Drug Support Group: Coastal Care Meeting Room, 7pm.

Harmony Chorus: Meet every Wednesday at Inglewood Mamaku Centre, 7-9.30 pm Phone Helen 021 296 0700.

THURSDAYS

Egmont Euchre Club: Every Thursday 1pm at the Opunake Bowling Club. Inquiries, 06 761 8337 or 06 761 8607.

Brazilian Jiu Jitsu: Adult classes, 7pm, Sinclair Events Centre, Opunake

Taranaki Country Music Hall of Fame, Manaia: Running every Thursday night from 7.30pm, 11 Surf Highway, South Road, Manaia.

FRIDAYS

Eltham Business Association Friday Markets: 9:30am to 1pm, Carpark of Touch Point, High Street, Eltham.

Beginners Social Dance Classes: Oakura Hall, 6.15pm..

Hawera Country & Variety Music Club: Held every 2nd & 4th Friday monthly. Held at Hawera Pipe Band Hall, 89 Collins Street, Hawera @ 7pm. All welcome. Supper provided. Ph 021 2622 166.

MARCH 18 TO APRIL 28

Pink Hammer: A production by Hawera Repertory Societ.y. At Repertory House.

APRIL 7 TO MAY 2

Turning Point Exhibition: At the Village Gallery, Eltham.

APRIL 10 TO 12

Taranaki Home & Garden Show: TSB Stadium, New Plymouth.

APRIL 11

Community Garden Workhop: Manaia Maara Kai. 10am-2pm.

An evening with Don & Christine Simpson: Baptist Church Hall, Stratford, 7pm.

APRIL 17

Sealands Farms Machinery Sale: 109 Harvey Rd, Opunake. 11am.

APRIL 17 & 18

Protect our Moana: Various events at Opunake. See ad for details.

APRIL 18

Opunake District RSA AGM: Opunake Fire Station, 1pm.

APRIL 24

79th Annual Incalf Heifer Sale: 923 Oeo Rd, Awatuna, 12 noon.

JUNE 13

Community Garden Workhop: St Marys Community Garden, Hawera. 10am-2pm.

Tui Ora Heartlands Hub
Napier Street, Opunake
10am - 1.30pm

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Next Meeting is on
Monday April 13, 2026
at 5.30pm

Hughsons & Associates Boardroom at the
Opunake Business Centre, 23 Napier St, Opunake
(opposite the Coastal Care Medical Centre)

BRAZILIAN JIU JITSU,
Adults, Tuesday & Thursday
7pm at Sinclair Events
Centre.

The next issue of the
Opunake & Coastal News
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Contact us on 06 761 7016
to be part of it.

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