



Inside



Bronze medalist now aiming for Gold at the Olympics. Page 6



It's not good out there says Foodbank chair. Page 12.



Taranaki Songmen entertain. Page 15



First baby born in new maternity ward in Taranaki. Page 22



Eltham Cheese big on world stage. Page 25

Local news, Local people, local businesses, local sport, local arts and events.
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Opponents lose in court bid to halt TSB sale

Opponents of the sale of the Taranaki Savings Bank to Heartland Bank have lost their court bid to stop it happening. With trustees of the Toi Foundation due to vote on the sale by the end of the month the Taranaki Community Accountability Society (TCAS) which was formed to oppose the sale were seeking an interim injunction to prevent the vote. They argued that the consultation process was based on misleading and one-sided information and did not meet the requirements of the Foundation's trust deed.

In the High Court at Wellington, Justice Andru Isac dismissed their application for an injunction.

The Conditional Merger Implementation Agreement would see Toi Foundation sell its 100 per cent share in TSB to Heartland Bank for \$620 million to form a new entity known as TSB Heartland Bank.

"We believe this proposal creates a win-win where we can retain a strong TSB presence in Taranaki, grow Toi Foundation's investment returns through a stronger, combined, performing bank investment and take steps towards diversifying our investment portfolio," says Toi Foundation chair Chris Ussher. "Along with regulatory approvals, the proposal is also conditional on Toi Foundation trustees consulting with the Taranaki community, in line with Toi Foundation's Trust Deed. The conditional proposal would see TSB and Heartland Bank merge to form TSB Heartland Bank, which would be a larger New Zealand challenger bank with a continued strong association with the Taranaki region, complementary products and services, and an improved long-term performance outlook."

Kevin Landrigan of TCAS disagrees.

"It's a great deal for Heartland Bank, but it's a terrible deal for Taranaki," he says. A chartered accountant, he says "he has been involved in community groups forever."

"I just believe that if you live in the community you've got to give to the community."

He said the TSB is worth over \$1 billion but Heartland would be getting it for \$620,000.

"They're getting 100 per cent for a bloody good



Kevin Landrigan of TCAS addresses a public meeting in Opunake. To his left are Elaine Gill and Bobbie Matsuda.

business. Who would sell a bloody good business for less than its book value?"

He said he was pleased with the support they had got in their campaign, and they had some strong affidavits supporting them.

"Brent Goldsack, a Fonterra director and Taranaki born and bred boy is appalled with the sale. He's been a managing partner with Price Waterhouse Coopers and has made an affidavit to support our case."

TCAS wanted a restraint on trustees voting to approve the sale or otherwise completing the sale of TSB, an Order requiring trustees to have Court approval for the sale, an order compelling trustees to disclose all documents, a declaration that the consultation process was defective, and orders for costs.

Meanwhile there has been interest from another party. David McLean, who is chair of Kiwi Group Capital chairman has said he wants to discuss a "potential tie-up" between Kiwibank and the TSB.

He said the group believed in building a stronger New Zealand-owned banking alternative and wanted to explore what it could do together with Toi Foundation.

On August 17, Bobbie Matsuda, Elaine Gill and Kevin Landrigan from TCAS spoke to a public meeting at the Sinclair Electrical & Refrigeration Event Centre in Opunake.

"The TSB is 176 years old this year," said Bobbie. "It's a really iconic part of our history. Once the bank is sold it's gone. It's never coming back, and we'll lose that source of income for our community."

Elaine, who was a director of the TSB from 1986-2013 and board chair from 1998-2013 said many of the arguments used to justify the sale had been used back in 1986 when TSB refused to join the other regional trust banks in the Trust Bank merger.

"We were told that the bank was too small, that it wouldn't keep pace with changing technology. That it would have to diversify. Trust Bank was gobbled up in four years but TSB has grown and prospered."

Concerns were raised at the meeting about the differences between the two banks. Kevin Landrigan said Heartland is an online bank with a focus on reverse

mortgages. Heartland had also said house mortgages are not their core business. Currently 42% of the mortgages in the New Plymouth District, 29% of those in Stratford and 26% of those in South Taranaki were issued by TSB.

Elaine said there was no guarantee jobs would remain in Taranaki.

"Opunake you've lost your bank. If the merger goes through, so will Bell Block, Waitara and Stratford lose their branches."

Kevin voiced similar sentiments.

"The TSB employ 700 staff. My expectation is that they would be lucky to have 100 staff in five years," he said.

Also at the meeting was local businessman Steve Corkill who had once been on the TSB Community Trust, and was opposed to the sale.

"My biggest concern is that they haven't told us what

they are going to do with the money," he said. "There's no indication of what's going to happen to the funds. Is the money going to fritter away?"

In a press release on June 2 announcing the signing of the conditional merger implementation agreement, Heartland Bank said the two banks "each have long histories and a deep connection to regional New Zealand."

"Reflecting each bank's community roots, TSB Heartland Bank will have a continued regional focus and nationwide presence in New Zealand. It is intended that TSB Heartland Bank will retain Heartland Bank's existing nationwide presence, with Taranaki as a key operational hub for customer-based banking services – including maintaining a local branch network and customer-facing roles in Taranaki,"

Too much screen time for parents could be affecting child's language development

Children may develop their language skills more slowly if their parents are on their phones too much or if they own their own device at a young age, according to international research. The team asked parents of around 750 children to report on their child's and their own

screen time, and whether the kids had their own devices, and monitored the child's language development during their early school years. The more time parents spent on screens, the slower their child appeared to grow their vocabulary throughout the study. Children who

owned a device at age 4-5 were also likely to have a smaller vocabulary, they say.

The researchers say their study shows how the whole family's screen use is worth considering when it comes to child development



Letters to the Editor

Send your your views to:Letters to the Editor
23 Napier Street, Opunake.
email: editorial@opunakecoastalnews.co.nz
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David Seymour and education

In the August 13 issue of Opunake & Coastal News an article by Free Press lauded the accomplishments of the ACT Party. It didn't say, but Free Press is a newsletter published by David Seymour, ACT.

In the article, Seymour says he has concerns for the education of our kids. He wants our kids to achieve their highest potential. As do we all. He tells us that media, the unions, and "failed" principals disagree with his solutions. That makes him the sole judge of merit.

So, let's see what David has done to improve education for our kids. School lunches best exemplify Seymour's approach. He cancelled 2,000 local jobs providing lunches to local schools in favour of a contract with a sub-par overseas provider. He cut the funding of lunches, so kids currently dine on slop with no nutritious value. We've all heard the stories. Amidst all the kerfuffle about spoiled lunches, did he prioritize the children? No, he did not. We want to ensure all our kids are getting nutritious lunches, so they can learn, so they can progress, so they have a good future.

While we welcome free speech, the views expressed in the Letters to the Editor do not necessarily reflect those of the Opunake & Coastal News. Please limit letters to 350 words as we sometimes struggle for space to fit them all in.

David initiated charter schools. He transferred \$10 million into charter schools that only have 215 students enrolled. That equates to about \$46,500 per student compared to about \$9000 per student in a state school. Charter schools are run independently from the school system. They are free to set their own curriculum, daily timetables, school terms, and teaching methods. They set their own pay and employment conditions, and they are permitted to hire unregistered or unqualified teachers. They may or may not be profit-making. Untrained teachers, independence from the New Zealand curriculum. It's got quality written all over it.

It was the ACT party that cancelled the pay equity agreements under which teachers and teacher's aides would have gained an increase in salaries. If we want to have professional teachers, we must pay them a decent salary. David prioritized tax breaks for big corporations.

And finally, although schools currently have effective processes for managing classroom disruptions, he will empower teachers and principals to have the legal right to remove disruptive students from the class and to restrain them, without the stupid, unnecessary need for paperwork. Instead of a collaborative approach to managing classrooms, Seymour prefers an authoritarian, punitive approach, including physical restraints, removal of the student, and fines for parents. Principals could use more resources in the classroom, but what do they know?

David doesn't like criticism. All these policies, and much more have been opposed by ordinary Kiwi, as well as experts, but David does not consult, nor does he bother with truth. His policies are not meant to benefit ordinary Kiwi. He is deeply connected to Atlas Network which endorses policies that suit corporate interests, including public services cuts, denying climate change, slashing corporate regulations, eroding workers' rights, privatisation, supporting landlords over tenants, and more.

Vote for the party that will ensure a positive future for Kiwi kids. Vote ACT out. Vote.

Mary Moore
Manaia

Community helps out

If anyone has any complaints about Opunake's Everybody Theatre's movie projector which has been showing movies for 105 years starting in 1921, shouldn't do at all as your town of Opunake is extremely lucky to still have its own movie theatre.

Now I don't know where this movie projector actually came from but it was made to last for a very long time and now it seems a repair costing \$20,000 is badly needed.

I do agree with Mrs Macadam that the only time that this theatre was closed when we had a world wide Covid 19 virus pandemic where upon millions and millions of people lost their lives and when earthquake strengthening was needed so thanks to the community of Opunake they stepped in to help out.

My suggestion to this theatre's committee is if there's any more repairs badly needed for this projector I'd be seriously looking for a brand new projector, plus there's many funding organisations now

ADELPHOS

Editorials are meant to disturb the peace. There's an air of expectancy when I read them on page two in The Opunake and Coastal News. By their very nature editorials are not objective news reports on two sides of an issue. Whereas traditional news reporting aims at informing us with just verifiable facts,

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Editorial comments

not the reporter's opinion, editorials try to persuade us to adopt a perspective by mixing verifiable facts with opinions. Yes, good editorial writing consists of personal opinion. But there needs to be a balance of verifiable hard facts and persuasive argument, which may contain personal opinion. Sometimes poorly written editorials rely on "scare quotation marks" for emphasis, emotive name calling or a gushing Facebook-style flood of emotionally charged adverbs and adjectives to mask opinions as facts: more of a rant really. Thinking people usually see this as over the top. But this is a small price for our free speech.

Countries like Russia, China, North Korea and Iran prevent free speech through pervasive digital surveillance, censorship laws and government-controlled media. Over half of the world's countries criminalise free-speech. Families of activists are punished, beaten and imprisoned for lengthy terms. Some simply disappear. We in New Zealand are truly blessed with the freedom to dissent.

Yes, editorials are meant to disturb the peace. But the most thoughtful editorials, or even articles, lead the readers to think and evaluate for themselves, unlike the above-mentioned name-bashing style that creates ill feelings, division and cuts off meaningful dialogue. Remember that our brains produce stress-induced cortisol if you disagree with a viewpoint or feel-good dopamine and endorphin chemicals if you enjoyed the editorial. Call it an editorial chemical downer or upper.

Verifiable hard facts are becoming a difficult and challenging area for good writing these days. Mass media disinformation is viral, making fact verification more difficult. That includes AI as well. But unless we are willing to take the time and energy to verify when we write editorials, we could be taking our readers down a fake convoluted rabbit hole or helping them find a reading off switch. What is the best way to verify? Cross-reference, cross-reference and cross-reference: look at multiple sources.

Through advances in the sciences and technology we live in a globally unprecedented age of media misinformation and deception. So, is there any source of truth? I'll leave you with the sinless life and words of Jesus the Son of God to evaluate: "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the father except through me" (John 14:6, NIV).

Te Rangimarie,
Adelphos

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Registered office: 23 Napier Street, PO Box 74, Opunake
Phone: Office (06) 761-7016, A/h (06) 761-8206
For advertising, email: ads@opunakecoastalnews.co.nz
For editorial, email: editorial@opunakecoastalnews.co.nz
For accounts, email: accounts@opunakecoastalnews.co.nz
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Letters to the Editor

Continued from page 2.

around to help out. So I'm wondering how many community movie theatres still have their own original projectors.

Tom Stephens
New Plymouth

Hawera Library parking

In response to STDC community services manager Rob Haveswood response to Heather's letter about library parking in your Opunake & Coastal

News issue Vol 35 No 15, have you tried to find a car parking spot at the Hawera library? The library opens at 9am and 99% of the time the carpark is already full with cars even before 9am with the same cars parked there all day every day. N
Now I know none of these people are visiting the library because it hasn't opened, but its pretty obvious that they are parking there and going to work elsewhere in Hawera so while you think its ok and dandy to go park in another street its not always that easy to do especially for the elderly or mobility impaired to park miles away and expect them to walk.
How about you actually do

your job and get a parking warden to issue tickets for those who are parking there and work elsewhere because truth be told in 2 years I've never ever once seen a parking warden there checking cars for time breaches.
Go take photos for the week and I guarantee 99% of them are there everyday, same cars.

Ty Rix
Hawera

Maturity called for

In a broad sense, man's computations relating to energy were distilled out of the impetus of the steam engine, invented in the eighteenth century. Sadi Carnot, James Joule and many other scholars came and went. The concept of proof was absorbing the two-lined arrow of implication ("logical" implication) with its universe of applicability instances. It was being distinguished from the material implication that would be all that Peano's arithmetic could admit.
By 1889, the industrial revolution had made some scholars disdainful. After Giuseppe Peano, and the Peano axioms of 1889, there would arise a whole international school of thinkers who would deny the advantages of the fuller calculus. Eventually there would come an ersatz functional calculus but plums would be left out and concessions made to the constructivist thought. Possibly the disdain was added to by the invention of nuclear weapons.
Now it falls to oppose the development of AI data centres in New Zealand on the grounds that the business proposition for them is morally corrupt: it represents compulsive pursuit of the

heights in constructivist thought (no clear end in mind).
A recent article in the Opunake & Coastal News obliquely referred to advantages in the offing from generative AI applications in medical research. The researchers already have what they need however.

Russell Christensen
Eltham.

Dawson Falls

Facts are facts, I received OIA information from the Department of Conservation regarding the demolition of the original part of the Department of Conservation's Dawson Falls Accommodation House/lodge which was built in 1928 by James Murray and demolished in 2021. The information stated that the staff under the leadership of Mr Garth Hopkins, could not determine the original house property boundaries.
Funny that, as at the time while at the Department of Conservation Dawson Falls Visitors Centre, Baz Dowman showed me an old plan and picture of the building, dated 1930, and he showed me the exterior walls of the original building and doorway.
The question remains, why Mr Hopkins and/or the department's heritage and cultural sites didn't talk to their own staff members, especially Baz Dowman who was a proprietor of the accommodation lodge for some time? At least visitors to the park up there then had somewhere to go!

Ian McAlpine
New Plymouth.

Gaza

Far from ever being 'free', Palestinians are required to die at the hand of Israel's "right to exist" and God's will. And while it is obvious who's will this God belongs to, Gaza is firstly not a matter of God; but a matter of conduct towards people; whether or not you find it acceptable a gunman can

come to your door, bulldoze your house, arrest your child and rape or kill them in prison.

To claim these as 'a right', for whatever reason, and resistance to it "terrorism", proves again, the big lie told often enough becomes an abomination.
International law is very clear on this. UN Charter 1948; the 1970 UN General Assembly [UNGA] resolution 2625; Protocol 1 amendment to the 1949 Geneva Convention; UNGA Resolution 37/43, 1982; UNGA Resolution 38/17, 1983; establish inalienable rights of Palestine to resist the occupation, apartheid and genocide they are currently undergoing and recognise the legitimacy of their struggle for independence, including armed struggle. Under these same laws and statutes, Israel, as the occupying power, has no legal right to self-defence.
International law is very clear on this. So our Government should be, but is not. So our Churches should be, but are not.
So our Media are designed to contextualise, balance and report, but do not. Zionism has evolved a method of neutering International law and all concerns running with it, by propagandising us to accept Israels 'right' to live outside of it.
Arguing "Jewish people always lived here" - the God clause - misses the point that so did everybody else, before the Epstein Zionists invented their exceptionalist claim to it. Justifying genocide "because the Palestinian wants to destroy Israel," ignores the savagery against Native Palestine begun in 1947 by the European Zionist colonisers, beginning this cycle.
We cannot blame Palestine for resisting. To do so reverses the very reality of things, and proves the absolute need to prosecute the International law Israel so crudely violates.

Roger Morris
Oeo.

Israel and Palestine

I read with interest the recent letter concerning the Israeli - Palestinian conflict.
I respect the writer's right to express their views but believe some of the statements reflect a very one-sided understanding of a tragedy which has affected two peoples for the last 70 years.
If we genuinely want peace, we must first be willing to look at the history of the conflict.
The Palestinian catastrophe did not begin on October 7, 2023.
Nor can the history of the conflict be reduced to Palestinian rejection of peace in 1948, with hundreds of thousands driven from their homes and hundreds of their towns and villages destroyed or taken over by Jewish immigrants from many countries in Europe. Descendants of those refugees remain refugees today.
Palestinian society was profoundly disrupted; and that trauma remains at the heart of Palestinian national consciousness.
The writer of the recent letter also refers to the expression: "From the river to the sea" assuming it means the destruction of Israel.
This phrase was first used by Benyamin Netanyahu; and is used now to express Palestinian aspirations for freedom, equality and self-determination throughout the land.
It is true, some Israelis hear the phrase as threatening and such fear should not be dismissed. However, asserting that peace was offered by Israel and that Palestinians refused it, is not an adequate description of the long history of negotiations, proposals, agreements and disagreements, missed opportunities and failures on both sides.
For centuries, Moslems, Christians and Jews [all Palestinians] lived alongside

Continued on page 5.



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Opinion

Don't reshape Taranaki without ratepayer sign-off

Taranaki ratepayers could soon face the biggest shake-up of local government in a generation.

Councils could disappear, boundaries could change, assets could be divided, and decisions already made by voters on representation could be reopened.

Whatever the merits of amalgamation, one principle should be non-negotiable: Taranaki ratepayers must get the final sign off.

Last weekend, South Taranaki and Stratford decided to propose a new rural unitary authority, while New Plymouth and the Taranaki Regional Council opted to keep examining their options.

As the Prime Minister said regional councils were already on the chopping block under the Government's new spatial and environmental planning rules, but after some mayors pushed for amalgamation, the Government opened its HeadStart pathway.

Councils were given three months to put forward reorganisation proposals or face a compulsory government backstop.

What that backstop will look like remains unclear, although regional unitary councils have long appeared to be the Government's destination.

When South Taranaki and Stratford consulted ratepayers, 94.25% of South Taranaki respondents and 83.3% of Stratford respondents favoured a two-council option.

Those are strong numbers, but it comes with a catch. The Government's backstop was not one of them, and neither was the detailed structure ratepayers could ultimately be asked to live under.

That consultation cannot become a substitute for a public mandate once the final option is known. There is simply too much still unresolved and at stake.

Take the assets and services Taranaki ratepayers have paid for together. Across the region there is public transport, stadium facilities, the port, buildings and other shared services.

Who will own what under new council boundaries and those boundaries still make sense for them, rather than having a map drawn around them.

The economic case also deserves scrutiny before anyone claims amalgamation will automatically save money.

TBD Advisory used to recommend a population benchmark of around 80,000, while the proposed rural unitary authority would serve only about 40,000 people compared with roughly 90,000 in New Plymouth.

Not that bigger necessarily means cheaper. Auckland showed amalgamations can create more inefficiency, with staff numbers increasing by 2,513 and household rates up 85% since the 2010 merger.

Ratepayers deserve more than vague promises about economies of scale. Before any model is signed off, they should know what it will cost to establish, where the promised savings will come from, and whether those savings will actually outweigh the disruption.

Even if the numbers stack up, that still leaves a decision councils cannot make for ratepayers: how they are represented.

Voters across Taranaki rejected Māori wards in last year's referendums. Yet, the southern proposal raises the prospect of this being legislated into a new entity.

Whatever your view on Māori wards, if ratepayers have voted on how they are to be represented, creating a new council should not become a way of ignoring voters.

The same applies to wards, community boards and the powers devolved to them.

Add in extra questions about water services, investment funds, debt, rates, different council policies, and the scale of what remains undecided becomes obvious.

None of this means amalgamation is necessarily wrong. There may be a better structure for Taranaki than the current model. South Taranaki and Stratford may develop a better model. New Plymouth and the Regional Council may develop another. The Government may put forward something different again.

But Head Starts deadline doesn't mean Taranaki has to lock itself into the first plan on the table. Nor should it.

As Ngāti Ruanui warned in its HeadStart submission: *"A process that is too rushed may undermine public confidence in decisions that will have long-term consequences for local representation, partnership, and governance across Taranaki."*

Those decisions are too important to be settled by anyone but ratepayers.

Rhys Hurley

Letters to the Editor

Continued from page 4.

one another in peace. This should remind us that coexistence in the land is not an impossible dream.

If we ask: "What can we do now? there are possibilities worth serious discussion eg: two states living side by side with international guarantees for security for both, in which Palestinians and Israelis retain national identities. Or: ultimately a single democratic state with equal rights for all, regardless of religion.

Neither side is going to disappear; and neither can build a secure future by denying the humanity or rights of the other.

The most important education we can give ourselves may be to read widely and remain wary of those writing from only one perspective.

New scholarship is appearing, some of which puts the history of Israel and Palestine in a global context. It is anticipated that a new book, to be released in September by Naomi Klein and Astra Taylor: "End Times Fascism" may prove helpful in understanding this.

As suggested in an earlier letter: seek out Jewish authors who have much to say, despite intense disapproval from their opponents. Along with Klein, the physician Gabor Mate writes especially compassionately about

trauma, in "The Myth of Normal." [2022]

Rob Ritchie
Opunake.

Coastal Rugby getting better

As a former Okato rugby player it was really pleasing to see the Coastal Premier rugby side making this year's Premier Rugby club finals, coming up against an extremely strong Clifton side. They lost 40-24, but what I can see happening is that sooner or later this Coastal Rugby Premier team will win this Premier Rugby title. I remember when playing for Okato there was talk of Okato, Rahotu and Opunake coming together as one rugby club. Some did agree, while some didn't think it would be feasible, especially the old timers. Now, since the merger this mighty club has gone from

strength to strength in a short time.

I've no doubt some rugby players are still recuperating over some injuries. So maybe once summer returns, and daylight saving, maybe they can have get togethers, including the rest of the family all meeting at the club rooms or at Opunake Beach, having parties and games, nothing serious, as by doing this it will keep everyone fit, as this will no doubt help when the rugby season begins. Like I stated before I can really see the Coastal Rugby Club doing extremely well in the years to come.

Tom Stephens
New Plymouth.

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Eva Langton wins bronze medal at Commonwealth Games

Eva Langton of Opunake is a member of the 3 x 3 basketball team that has won a bronze medal at the Glasgow Commonwealth Games. The New Zealand team placed third of the 12 teams. Their final game was in the semifinal against Jamaica where they prevailed 18-13 after their opponents led early on in the ten minute frenetic game.

Eva's reaction? "Shock, probably relief, excitement and overwhelming joy." She adds, "I didn't think I'd get that emotional. I think when you've been so focused and working towards a goal for so long and to medal at the end of it, is so amazing and a special experience in a team environment. It was cool feeling as the team had put so much work in."

The team included Azure Anderson, Ella Fotu and Sharne Pupuke-Robati, as well as Eva herself.



Eva celebrating with her team mates.

There was also some disappointment when they lost (their only match) to Uganda 9-21. Uganda went to win a silver medal, with Australia taking out the gold. "We were very

disappointed. I felt we didn't play to our best."

The tournament (from July 24 to July 29) was divided into two pools of six teams each. In their pool New Zealand beat Singapore 22-

16, Scotland 21-12, England 21-12, Tonga 21-8 and Papua New Guinea 22-6.

Eva wants to thank all the team's supporters including the coach Cat Jones, "Who is really cool. She's a great human, super positive and encouraging."

She also pays tribute to Mum and Dad and my siblings, as well as all my relatives." Also important was the financial support, to the team, of the New Zealand Olympic Committee and Basketball New Zealand.

She adds, "Thanks for all the support from the local community."

As to the games themselves, "There was so much cheering, it was quite a foreign feeling."

Eva intends to compete "as long as I can," but admits, "It's a demanding lifestyle and you have to sacrifice a lot," but concludes, "The rewards are so cool and I wouldn't have it any other way."

Hopefully, Eva will find some time for her interests such as enjoying the

outdoors including beaches, generally exploring nature, hiking with friends, baking and reading. One book which recently inspired her was Will It Make the Boat Go Faster by Ben Hunt, who was a member of the British rowing team which won a gold medal at the 2000 Sydney Olympics.

"The ultimate goal is to perform well at the Los Angeles Olympics in 2028 and for the team to win the gold medal. In the meantime there are competitions to focus on in many places on the globe, such as Australia, China, Mongolia, America – starting with one in Thailand this month."

"I think every athlete's ultimate goal is to win a gold medal, but my focus right now is on the journey, wanting to improve and become a better athlete. It is also about being part of a team, inspiring others and helping to grow the sport in New Zealand and wanting to strengthen our position in the 3 x 3 space."



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From left, Joe Owen, Kendra Langton (Eva's cousin), Eva Langton and her parents Aaron and Stephenie Langton.

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A fair go means having a chance to get ahead

No matter where people start, I believe they deserve the opportunity to build a safe, healthy and happy life. That has always been my starting point. In Opunake recently, I had conversations that highlighted just how many things can get in the way of that for many people in our communities. For some families, it's the cost of keeping the lights on and the groceries in the fridge. For others, it's trying to get an appointment with a GP. And for young people, it can be getting that first proper job when every employer seems to want



Amanda Clinton-Gohdes

For New Plymouth

Contact me:
amanda.clinton-gohdes@labour.org.nz
   /ClintonGohdes

Authorised by Rob Salmond, 2 Gilmer Terrace, Wellington

someone with experience already. These are the things that determine whether someone feels like they're getting ahead or simply trying to keep their head above water. And I am hearing from many in our community that it all seems to be getting harder. Take healthcare. It doesn't matter how good our hospitals are if you can't get through the front door of the health system when you need to. Access to a local GP can make a huge difference, particularly in smaller communities. Labour's plan includes three free GP visits a year for New Zealanders, as well as a loan scheme to help GPs establish practices in places that don't currently have enough access to primary care. That's the sort of practical investment I want to see: making it easier to get help before a problem becomes a crisis. The same principle applies to household energy costs. We know solar can reduce power bills, but the upfront cost can put it out of reach for families who could benefit from it most. Labour's SolarSaver policy would allow households to pay for solar over time through their rates or electricity bill, rather than needing thousands of dollars upfront. For low- and middle-income households, including renters, there would also be support of up to \$3,000 to help get started. The point isn't solar for solar's sake. It's about finding practical ways to reduce the bills that families have to pay every week, for years to come. And then there are our young people. I have spoken to businesses who really want to take on apprentices, but find the cost difficult to manage. At the



Amanda pictured at Sugar Juice Cafe in Opunake.

same time, young people are desperate for that first opportunity to learn a trade and get a foot in the door. Labour is proposing to extend Apprenticeship Boost - supporting businesses to take on apprentices, providing apprentices with up to \$1,000 towards

local economy. These things might seem like separate issues: healthcare, power bills, apprenticeships. But to me they are all part of the same question: can people get a fair shot at getting ahead? Speaking to many people in our community, they don't feel that National have delivered. In fact things have been getting worse - for small businesses trying to build a future, for young people trying to find a job, for households trying to make ends meet. And certainly for our health system. We cannot afford another three years of National; and we cannot cut our way to growth. I don't think government can solve every problem in our lives. But it can make good decisions about where to invest, remove barriers that shouldn't be there, and make it easier for people to build a good life. That's what I want to fight for - not politics for politics' sake, but practical changes that make a difference around kitchen tables and in communities like ours. *Amanda Clinton-Gohdes, Labour Party candidate for the New Plymouth electorate*

Issues on voters minds as the election draws closer

One voter was forthright: "I think the parties are all a load of rubbish. The all have similar policies and they merge what they stand for so they can sit and look attractive compared to the other parties." Asked if a change of government was likely the voter replied, "There will probably be a change and it sits on Luxon's shoulders. I think there has been a challenge three times in the National Party caucus to possibility change the leader." Another voter, who has a business, says, "higher prices, are impacting in a retail sense." Someone was concerned about young people getting into trouble. "There's so much trouble in the street - and no consequences. Someone was upset about what was described as "he LNG (Liquified Natural Gas) bulls**t." she added, "It will cost billions (to set

up the facility) ; the money could be spent on solar panels in the roofs of buildings." She concluded, "Why are they not subsidising solar installations." Another person nearby piped up, "I hate politics." However, the person did not elaborate. The heightened cost of living was another issue of concern, which has been linked to the war in the middle east.

continued on next page

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Barbara Kuriger MP for Taranaki-King Country

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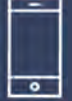
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Change is imminent

Change is imminent. During the 2023 election campaign, National committed to repealing and replacing the Resource Management Act (RMA). This week we continue to work towards this as Parliament debates the next stage of the Planning Bill and the Natural Environments Bill, the two pieces of legislation replacing the RMA.

These bills replace complexity with clarity. At the heart of the changes is the requirement for fewer consents for farmers, growers and property owners. This is because in low-risk activities consents may be unnecessary. If an activity has a less than minor impact on others or the environment, it will not need a consent.

Targeted changes as part of the new planning system will create a more practical system for food and fibre production. The changes will better reflect real-world farming and horticultural practices and provide greater certainty for investment and day-to-day operations.

Budget 2026 made significant investments into farming, horticulture and rural New Zealand. \$50 million was allocated to improving the resilience



From left, Carl Bates MP, Phil Nixon, Mayor of South Taranaki and Cindy Koen, Environmental manager of STDC. They are pictured at the Resource Recovery Centre.

of State Highway 3 via the Awakino Gorge, a vital accessway for Taranaki to the northern North Island.

\$40.5 million will be invested over the next four years to support farmer-led catchment groups on the ground. This was welcome news to catchment groups in South Taranaki and throughout the Whanganui

electorate where catchment groups have been doing outstanding work.

The Government has limited full farm-to-forestry conversions, disbanded He Waka Eke Noa and removed agriculture from the Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS). We back our farmers and are focusing on practical scientific and

technological solutions to reduce emissions.

We are backing rural communities, making it easier to hire seasonal workers by expanding the Regional Seasonal Employer (RSE) Scheme. We have boosted investment into Rural Support Trusts who do such an amazing job on the ground in rural areas throughout New Zealand.

National has been proactive on the world stage to open doors for New Zealand

farmers, growers and businesses. We are boosting exports, creating jobs and lifting incomes to help all kiwis get ahead. Under this government, export revenue has increased by \$17 billion as the world looks to our premium food and fibre products.

National is backing our farmers to be the best in the world. We have met with farmers throughout South Taranaki, listened to farmers' and growers'

concerns, and developed policies to address these concerns.

When the Planning Bill and the Natural Environment Bill pass into law before Parliament concludes its term, we will have completed significant reforms designed, as we promised in 2023, to get farmers back to farming

Carl Bates MP for Whanganui, including South Taranaki and Stratford.

Issues on voters minds as the election draws closer

are American because of Trump."

One voter said, "I really feel Donald Trump is an absolute twat. He wants to throw his weight around. He's like a five-year-old having a tantrum, because someone stole his toys. When he started that war against Iran

and caused oil prices to go sky high he said it would be all over in a few weeks." However, it has dragged on much longer with no end in sight.

A business person said the war had an impact on his stock buying. "It's gone up 12-15%. What was around

\$12 is now \$16-\$17. Also implicated is the cost of shipping." He added, "I don't like that war – he (Trump) should not have gone in there. He's now bombing all the bridges in Iran. The ordering of people killed should be taken to The Hague, it's a war crime."

AI app can help blind people navigate outdoors

An artificial intelligence (AI) smartphone app called Mobilio may help blind or visually impaired people navigate outdoors, according to US scientists. Mobilio uses the phone's camera, movement sensors, GPS, and light detection and

ranging (LiDAR), together with headphones and a white cane. In tests, it reduced navigation time and required fewer verbal corrections, compared with using Google Maps and a white cane. In an obstacle course, it reduced the number of collisions, but

meant completing the course took longer. With further refinement, the team hopes Mobilio will be a relatively cheap and accessible travel aid for blind and visually impaired people.

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New Zealand has a new 10-Year Mental Health Plan. What is it?

Earlier this month, the Government launched New Zealand's new 'Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2026-2036', setting out how it intends to improve the mental health of New Zealanders over the next decade.

Importantly, the legislation requiring New Zealand to have a long-term mental health strategy was passed unanimously by Parliament in 2024, giving the plan a degree of protection from the usual three-year political cycle.

Ten years is a long time. By 2036, some of us will have changed jobs, changed



RICHARD HALL

houses, changed partners, or at the very least finally got around to fixing that thing in the shed we have been walking past since 2024.

But mental health is one area where taking the long view makes sense. For decades, New Zealand's mental health

system has been under increasing pressure. Demand has grown, waiting lists have lengthened and services have often struggled to provide help early enough.

The new strategy is designed to shift some of that emphasis.

At its heart are four broad priorities: 1) Prevention and early intervention, 2) Better access to support, 3) Strengthening the mental health workforce, and 4) Improving the quality and effectiveness of care.

The first of these may ultimately be the most important.

Our mental health system has traditionally been much better at responding once somebody is already in significant distress than it has been at intervening earlier.

It is a little like waiting until the tractor has gone through the hedge before deciding it might have been worth checking the steering.

Early intervention means recognising difficulties sooner and giving people practical support before anxiety, depression, stress, addiction or other problems become deeply established.

That sounds obvious, but achieving it requires a considerable change in how services are organised and

funded.

The strategy also places considerable emphasis on improving access.

That matters particularly in rural communities.

Living in places such as Ōpunakē, Manaia or Pātea should not mean that getting mental health support requires a half-day expedition, three phone calls, and Google Maps suggesting the nearest place for assistance is Hamilton.

People living outside the major centres can face fewer treatment choices, longer travelling distances and shortages of specialist services.

Online therapy and tele-health have helped enormously, but they are not the complete answer. Some people need face-to-face support, and communities still need properly resourced local services.

Then there is the workforce.

You can announce as many mental health initiatives as you like, but ultimately somebody has to deliver them.

Psychologists, counsellors, psychiatrists, mental health nurses, social workers, peer-support workers and others working across the sector are already carrying considerable workloads.

Building the workforce therefore means more than simply recruiting additional people. It also means retraining experienced clinicians, improving training pathways and making sure people are working in systems that allow them enough time to actually help the person sitting in front of them.

Young people are another major focus.

Around 23% of 15-24 year-olds are experiencing high or very high levels of psychological distress, according to figures highlighted around the strategy. It was 12% in 2016/17. That is a 94% rise in only 8 years.

There are many possible reasons.

Social media, academic pressure, housing uncertainty, family difficulties, loneliness, financial worries and the lingering effects of the pandemic all form part of the picture.

But whatever the causes, intervening early during adolescence and early adulthood can potentially alter the course of an entire life.

Perhaps the biggest question, however, is accountability.

Mental health strategies are not new.

New Zealand has produced reviews, reports, inquiries and plans before. Some have led to meaningful improvements. Others have produced impressive documents that eventually found themselves occupying a quiet corner of a government website.

The real test of this strategy will therefore not be how good it sounds in 2026.

It will be what people actually experience in 2027, 2028 and beyond.

Can somebody experiencing anxiety get help before they reach crisis point?

Can a parent find timely support for a struggling teenager?

Can somebody in rural Taranaki access the same quality of care as somebody

living in a major city?

Can clinicians spend more time helping people and less time navigating systems?

And can we become better at teaching people how their minds and bodies work before things go badly wrong?

That last point matters.

Mental health is not simply about diagnosing disorders. It is also about helping people understand stress, emotion, relationships, behaviour, sleep, trauma and the extraordinarily complicated organ sitting between their ears.

Understanding why we think, feel, act and react as we do is in itself an important part of change.

The Government's new strategy contains plenty of promising ideas.

Now comes the considerably harder part: turning a ten-year document into something we can actually feel is working in our everyday lives.

If, ten years from now, the answer to those questions is more often yes, then this strategy will have achieved something genuinely worthwhile.

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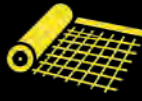
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New supermarket owner enjoying small town life

The new owner of the Rahotu Super Mart says he's loving the transition of living in a small community after ten years in Wellington.

Since buying the supermarket two months ago Santhosh Sheela has widened the variety of takeaway and counter food.

He's also extended the opening hours which means the supermarket is open later till 6:30pm on weekdays Monday to Friday and in weekends from 7am till 6pm on Saturday and 8am till 6:00pm on Sunday.

He's enjoying being in a small country town after ten years in Wellington.

"I love it and especially the community," says Santhosh who said the locals have been very welcoming.

He owned a similar type of shop in Wellington and says he wanted to do "something new," and liked the idea of being in a small community.

And he's enjoying it.

It's different to Wellington



Santhosh Sheela, the new owner of the Rahotu Super Mart.

he says amused at how farming people take off their boots at the door.

People have said they're pleased with the service and that the shelves are well

stacked which has been another focus.

He has retained the

previous owner's staff.

Santhosh is also living locally and enjoying becoming part of the community.

His wife has been living in Palmerston North for a year studying business is doing the books. They have two children aged five and nine.

Santhosh who came to New Zealand 12 years ago from "a little town" Jagtial in the state of Telangana in southern India. Famous for its beautiful old fort that dates back to the seventeenth century, it has a population

of 103,000. There's no pollution in New Zealand says Santhosh commenting on "the clean air" here.

His interests include cricket which he plays and "sports generally".

At the time of interview there was a steady trail of customers, one every couple of minutes.

In the two months he's owned the business he says it's been getting busier. People like the extended hours and the fact that the shelves are always fully stocked.

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Worth a look at

There is a little house/building which could be a house on the prairie but no, it's a little building on the Taranaki Maunga slopes.

This building is situated at the top of Manaia Road at Dawson Falls. It was built in April, 1939 through the efforts of the Egmont Alpine Club members to house equipment of the club for the nearby Hooker Ski field, and then as the Search and Rescue Headquarters building storing their equipment. At some point this building became unneeded for the requirements of the club and was given to the Lands and Survey Department and then in 1987 to the Department of Conservation. This building has a long history and sits in a prime location looking up on our beautiful maunga, and is one of the oldest remaining buildings in what now is the Te Papa-Kura-o-Taranaki.

Sadly, this building despite

it being kitted out with facilities to house/sleep several people along with cooking, sleeping and toilets has had very limited use for many years and I personally lived there during my track vegetation clearing contracts in the early 2000s.

Since this time the building has slowly become rundown and for some time now has had signs on it warning park users of the fact it contains asbestos, which of course is a hazard to humans.

Questions should be directed to the Department

of Conservation Chief Conservator, Garth Hopkins as towthether this 1939 historic building remains and is restored or, like many other of our old park buildings, demolished and removed.

Ian McAlpine
Former Mountain Guide



The rather cute little cottage/hut.

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Foodbank chair steps down

Gary Rodgers says he has always had “a real heart for the needy.” This led to his involvement with the Eltham Food Bank of which he has been chair for the last 20 years, a position from which he is stepping down.

“I got to the stage where it’s time to leave it to the younger ones,” he says.

Last week there was a lunch held at the Food Bank to thank him for his many years of service.

“We used to think nine or ten people coming in was a big day,” he recalled. “Now we get 19-20. If it wasn’t for foodbanks, I don’t know how families would cope. It’s not good out there. There are a lot of people not in good situations, and petrol going up again is not



Gary Rodgers with Eltham Food bank volunteers Kath Jeffrey and Maureen O’Keeffe.

this up 36 years ago,” he says of the Eltham Food Bank. His wife Judith was the first foodbank co-ordinator.

Gary had to retire at the age of 49, he has experienced unemployment and knows something about what it’s like to struggle to make ends meet.

“I had been myself in an unfortunate situation many years ago where I had no income for five months. In those days there were no food banks, or if there were we didn’t know about them.”

He recalls when the Food bank was based at the Presbyterian Church and food parcels were being made up at the Services Centre in Stanners Street. At one time he was doing these himself, but later had Alex Ballantyne helping him.

Gary says they now only do deliveries in exceptional circumstances.

Among its other services, the Foodbank also helps out with budget advice and recipes. During his time as chair the E-Kai Community Garden on Bridge Street was set up to grow fresh vegetables for those in need with the Eltham Lions Club helping to get things going. He says they had a couple approach the Food Bank and offer to look after the garden.

He says unlike some foodbanks they don’t need to pay rent as their building is owned by Eltham Community Care, with proceeds from the Op Shop next door helping to pay for costs like rates and insurance.

Kmart NZ ordered to reimburse Christchurch family for asbestos in play sand

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A Disputes Tribunal decision ordering Kmart New Zealand to reimburse a Christchurch family exposes serious gaps in New Zealand’s product safety system.

A Christchurch couple has won a nine-month battle with Kmart after play sand they purchased for their twins was found to contain tremolite asbestos.

The Disputes Tribunal has ordered Kmart NZ Holdings Ltd to reimburse Elle Chrisp and David Dingwall just over \$15,000 for a range of costs associated with the contaminated sand, including asbestos testing, urgent relocation costs, replacement of household items, property remediation and loss of amenity.

Consumer NZ understands this is the first Disputes Tribunal ruling in New Zealand concerning the recalled children’s sand.

“This case shows just how difficult it can be to get redress when a product safety failure occurs,” says Gemma Rasmussen, head of research and advocacy at Consumer NZ.

“Elle and David spent nine months gathering evidence, forking out thousands of dollars and taking Kmart to the Disputes Tribunal. It is reassuring to see them finally receive acknowledgement that the steps they took to protect their children were reasonable and justified after testing, which they commissioned themselves, confirmed asbestos in the sand.”

Kmart had insisted that the sand presented a “low risk,” but this assessment relied on a supplier-commissioned report relating to a different product. That information was subsequently used in a recall notice published by

MBIE.

The Tribunal found that the play sand purchased by the family was unsafe, not fit for purpose and not of acceptable quality under the Consumer Guarantees Act.

Referee Cynthia Hawes said the sand should not have been offered for sale to consumers. “I do not think that any reasonable parent, acquainted with the fact that the moulding sand contained asbestos, and regardless of the quantity or proportion in the sand, would purchase it for his or her child to play with.”

Kmart challenged some of the family’s actions as unnecessary or excessive. Referee Hawes rejected those arguments, finding the family’s response reasonable and justified and noting in one instance that they “had no choice”.

Chrisp and Dingwall sought to engage constructively with Kmart, but were resolved not to settle confidentially. The couple maintained that

the safety of New Zealand children was a matter of public interest and sought a public Disputes Tribunal ruling.

“We just wanted it on the record,” says Elle Chrisp.

Chrisp says the ruling was important because the family had repeatedly been made to feel they were overreacting.

“If you’ve been told by Kmart that recalled play sand was low risk, if you were made to feel like you were blowing things out of proportion, a Tribunal has now said otherwise. “We took on Kmart at the Tribunal because they should have accountability for selling an unsafe product. It is important to us that other families see this ruling and feel encouraged to persevere in seeking acknowledgment and compensation. If Kmart dismissed your claims, that doesn’t have to be the end of it.”

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Building a future to smile about in Taranaki schools

It was a special day at Tawhiti Primary School, Galt Street, Hawera on Wednesday August 19 when Dr Julie Martin and Dr Belinda Martin (of Hawera Dental Surgery) paid a visit. They are leading a campaign by the Taranaki Dental Association (of which Julie is president) to distribute toothbrushes, fluoridated toothpaste and appropriate oral information to ensure students' teeth and gums are kept in optimal health. Building a future to smile about is the message. To date these dedicated professionals have visited about a dozen schools over the last 20 months or so. "We just love to give back to the community," explained Belinda with a smile. Some of the fortunate schools have included West End (New Plymouth), Normanby, Hawera, Ramanui and Kakaramea – to mention just a few. The Taranaki Dental



Dr Julie Martin (left) and Dr Belinda Martin of Hawera Dental Surgery speaking to the students and staff of Tawhiti Primary School. Ashleigh Potts, a teacher, looks on approvingly.

excited students. Building a future to smile about was the package's legend, A question and answer

with the correct answers: Two minutes twice daily is recommended. Another question was What should we drink instead of too much fizzy drink? Water was the optimal answer. How about sweets? Instead choose a piece of fruit, vegetable stick or crackers with cheese. The dentists also introduced a colouring in contest (Spot the Sugar) with some implied healthy messages. Look closely at the picture and find the hidden sugars, it requests. Students can register on register@nzda.org.nz and the deadline is August 31, 2026. Spot it, swap it and replace it is the message.

This is National Oral Health Month, incidentally. The idea of the campaign is to promote oral health in Taranaki with the emphasis on every school which especially needs it. Julie and Belinda hope that every student takes the healthy message from the school to the home to spread the message further. Well done Julie and Belinda and all the best as you continue the healthy smile campaign on behalf of the Taranaki Dental Health Association.



From left, front, are Emma Hinton (Hawera Dental Surgery), Devina Zahradiva, Scarlett Staples, Maddoc Parry, Grayson Murray, Serena Kahupukoro, and Devika Nath (Hawera Dental Surgery). At the back, from left are Quinn Pick, Hazel Dawson, Johnnie Prestidge, Julie, Belinda, Archie McCallum and Mason Clark.



Many fortunate school students, many holding up their dental treasures. In the middle are Belinda (left) and Julie looking very happy.

On this month in history Dame Joy Cowley born

On August 7 Joy Cowley was born in Levin. Although now best known as a million-selling author of children's books (over 40,000,000 books sold) she was initially a short story writer. She was persistent and kept sending short stories to The Listener, despite over 100 rejections before her ability was recognised (and her stories published). Although (eventually) a three time winner of the Best Children's book of the year a similar scenario

involved The Silent One, which was turned down by many publishers over about 8 years. Once finally published (2001) and selected as New Zealand's Best Children's Book of the Year, it was eventually made into a film. She is best known for her Mrs Wishy Washy series, which has sold in the millions. Her sales in the United States also number in the millions. She is patron and trustee of Storylines, the Children's

Literacy Foundation of New Zealand (CLFNZ). She wrote Navigation: A Memoir, which related a life that was not always tranquil, including growing up with a psychiatrically ill mother. Joy still writes despite suffering from macular

degeneration. She wrote It is All About Vision Beyond Seeing (2022). She is the only woman writer who is a member of our highest honour, The Order of New Zealand (it is higher than a damehood or knighthood).



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Septicworks will get the stuff done for you



From one truck and an idea to a growing specialist operation.

Thomas Annabel has always liked doing the jobs other people don't want to do. Five years ago, that attitude led him to start Septicworks, a family-owned and operated business based in Hawera.

"I came up with an idea that I could see potential in. I was looking for a business where there was a need, and I felt this was the right fit for me. I've always liked doing things that other people don't like doing. I saw this as an opportunity to grow something from nothing and a way to financially support

my family."

The business began with a single 4WD Mercedes truck, with Thomas doing everything himself — from cleaning septic tanks to unblocking drains and blocked dairy shed pipes. Today, Septicworks has grown to service South Taranaki, Stratford and the wider Taranaki region, as well as working for South Taranaki District Council and other main contractors.

Thomas grew up on a sheep and beef farm in the Makino Valley. After seven years working as a carpenter

in rural areas, he returned to farming, including leasing a 700-hectare dry-stock farm at Ararata and later sharemilking for his parents-in-law.

His building and farming backgrounds gave him a practical foundation in drainage, machinery and

inspection equipment and a ute fitted with a camera for inspecting and locating faults in pipes up to 200 metres long.

A recent addition is a four-axle Volvo truck with a 10,000-litre stainless-steel tank. Its powerful vacuum system and specialist air-

provides septic tank cleaning, drain unblocking, high-pressure water jetting, pipe and drain inspections, underground service locating, sump, sand trap and culvert cleaning, grease trap

situation."

He says the support of people such as Sid from Taranaki Drain Cleaning, along with the local community, was crucial to establishing the business.



A recent addition is this four-axle Volvo truck with a 10,000-litre stainless-steel tank.

cleaning, deep well cleaning and portaloo servicing.

Thomas says he started with only a basic knowledge of drainage but was never afraid to ask for help when faced with a problem.

"We became good friends and I valued his advice with any problem I came across. The support that people like Sid have given me, and from the local community who have given us their work has been crucial to our success as a small business."

Today, Thomas has a full-time employee, while his wife Andrea manages the bookkeeping, finance and administration alongside raising their three young boys.

For Thomas, customer service remains at the heart of Septicworks.

"A positive customer experience is my main focus. You have to have happy customers if you want return business, so I structure my business to the clients' needs."

He says the aim is simple: be there when customers need help, do the job properly and leave the site tidy.

From one truck and an idea to a growing specialist operation, Septicworks has been built on hard work, practical problem-solving and strong local support — with a willingness to take on the jobs others would rather leave alone.

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The Septicworks team get to work.

problem-solving.

The business has now grown to include two vacuum trucks, a drain-cleaning unit, underground

injection nozzles allow Septicworks to tackle everything from septic tanks to sand and sludge removal, sumps, culverts and deep wells.

Today, the business

"If I had a problem I couldn't work out, I would ring somebody out of the region who I was no competition to, to explain my problem and ask advice on how to address the

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Taranaki Songmen deliver a real treat



The Taranaki Songmen performing at Okato on August 15.

The Taranaki Songmen gave a lovely rendition of favourites at Okato’s Hempton Hall on Saturday afternoon August 15. Numbering 15 in total their leader Julian Raphael accompanying on piano and sometimes guitar also gave an interesting commentary on each song before it was performed. They began with the iconic Imagine written by John Lennon with its

inspiring perennial message. Next was another inspirational song, Lean on Me which was followed by the Lou Reed classic Such a Perfect Day. The latter stirred memories of several years ago when, on a perfect hot summer’s day in January, several of us were walking through Cornwall Park in Auckland. Responding to the beautiful day I began quietly singing to myself It’s a

Perfect Day. Eventually one of our number asked what I was singing. I told him and he managed to get the song on his cell phone. Thus we continued our preamble to the words of A Perfect Day. It was a magical day. Several other numbers I wasn’t familiar followed then, the first British single to sell 2 million copies and which “sounds like a folk song but it’s not” said

their leader came a spirited version of Paul McCartney’s Mull of Kintyre. Keep your Children Well was next, then some typical sea shanty songs in which the audience divided in halves were invited to join in. The final song Country Road with verses alternating in Te Reo and English concluded their diverse repertoire which ended

with the audience audibly demanding an encore. The song 100 miles was the final treat. Afterwards Julian again addressed the enthusiastic audience saying they were “a happy bunch of guys who meet every week to sing.” One of the choir then stood up to pay tribute to their leader Julian Raphael as “one of the best” . In all a lovely way to while away a Saturday afternoon with funds raised going to Okato plunket.

Bernice McKellar

Flu causes surge in winter illness

Severe respiratory illness rates are now the highest they’ve been in the last decade, mostly due to very high rates of flu.

This comes as ambulance services struggle to meet demand, and Health NZ urges people to save emergency departments for emergencies.

Professor Michael Baker, Department of Public Health, University of Otago, Wellington, comments: “Aotearoa New Zealand is experiencing a late season surge in influenza, which is well documented by a range of surveillance systems. As well as its direct effects on public health, this increase is also putting a large strain on health services.

“Clinicians are reported to be drawing on some Covid era measures in responding to the current surge, including separating patients with respiratory symptoms in general practice and taking additional infection control precautions in hospitals. While there is understandably little appetite for returning to

the extraordinary measures used during the pandemic, there is value in considering what we learned from that experience and applying those insights to seasonal respiratory infections.

“One important lesson was the value of a clearly understood, graduated system for assessing the level of risk, identifying the responses appropriate at different levels, and communicating that risk consistently to the public and health services. The Covid-19 alert-level system was, of course, developed for a very different situation, but the underlying principle of linking changing levels of risk to progressively stronger measures still has value.

“At a baseline level, this approach could mean the usual measures of vaccination and staying home when unwell. As respiratory infection activity increases, additional measures could be considered, for example, mask use in healthcare and other higher-risk settings such as waiting rooms and public transport, and additional protections for

particularly vulnerable groups, including people in aged residential care.

“Importantly, such a framework would not need to be limited to influenza. It could provide a routine way of communicating the combined risk from influenza, Covid-19, RSV and other significant respiratory infections, with the response scaled according to the level of activity and risk rather than requiring a pandemic before coordinated public communication begins.

“Aotearoa New Zealand already uses graduated systems to communicate changing risks from weather, fire danger and other hazards. The current influenza surge raises an important question: should we also have an ongoing, nationally understood respiratory-infection risk framework that tells people when the risk is low, when it is increasing, and what they can do to reduce transmission and protect themselves and those who are most vulnerable?”

The next issue of the Opunake & Coastal News is on September 10.

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Editorial: MMP is best but needs a few tweaks

Mr Luxon’s expressed interest in calling a referendum (on voting systems) is more a reflection, it would seem, of his difficulties working cohesively with his coalition partners than anything else. He obviously would like a system other than MMP (Mixed Member Proportional). However, getting on at least passably with coalition partners is ‘part and parcel’ of the MMP system.

No system is perfect. The First Past the Post system we used to have led to two governments elected to power with the second greatest number of votes (Labour had the greatest number of votes nationwide). I am referring to Sir Robert Muldoon’s second and third ministries.

However, we need to look back to the Electoral Commission of 2012, which indicated some changes needed to be made, but the National-led Government elected to disregard their recommendations.

One recommendation was that the threshold should be reduced to 4% (from 5%) for a party (without any electorate seats) to secure MPs in parliament. The Commission also stated that the number of MPs should be set at 120, with no overhang MPs, as can be the case.

However, the most vital recommendation was the abolition of the one electorate seat threshold which is patently undemocratic. Specifically, if a party wins an electorate seat they do not need to reach 5% to have MPs in the house.

This was especially unfair to the New Zealand Party in the 2008 General Election. The New Zealand Party accumulated just over 4% of the total vote, but had no MPs elected in any of the electorates. They therefore gained zero MPs. However, National voters were urged to vote for an ACT candidate Rodney Hide and with less than 4% of the vote nationwide ended up with five MPs in parliament.

Hardly democratic.

This anomaly is absolutely crying out to be corrected for everyone who believes in democracy and the recommendation of the 2012 Electoral Commission heeded, with respect to the forthcoming November 7 General Election.

Rolland McKellar

Why the ‘conservative’ Maori should come out from the shadows

A politics of grievance can explain yesterday, but it cannot build tomorrow.

Today, Māori politics is consumed by grievance, division and theatre.

Te Pāti Māori increasingly presents itself as the political voice of Māori. It’s not. There’s no doubt the party can organise a descent protest and knows how to create a good headline but beneath all that noise, what has it achieved for Māori? Māori don’t need another performance, we need practical leadership that delivers opportunities to get ahead.



Harete Hipango-Brownlie, NZ First candidate.

The party’s president, John Tamihere, helped Te Pāti Māori back into Parliament, but his leadership has squandered much of the momentum he helped create. Tamihere had an opportunity to put the party ahead of himself and step aside and give his party an opportunity to recover – instead, he’s held on. Tamihere is one of many so-called Māori leaders financially benefiting from a culture of victimhood.

Our history gives us plenty of examples of real Māori leaders that deserve our respect. Leaders that made a difference and helped shape our values and our country.

The legacies of Sir Apirana Ngata, Sir James Carroll, Sir Peter Buck, Sir Maui Pomare, Sir Hemi Henare, Dame Whina Cooper, Sir Jerry Mateparae remind us that Māori leadership does not have to be about injustices of the past, division or political theatre. It can be confident, moderate, pragmatic and united - firmly grounded in whakapapa and culture while looking forward.

Their Māori identity was strengthened by their commitment to their country and their people. That is the

Māori leadership I recognise.

Our politics shouldn’t be determined by who shouts the loudest. It should be guided by the enduring values that shaped us in the traditions of family, kinship, faith, community, service and duty.

These are the conservative values I was raised with and values I believe are worth conserving. For too long us conservative Māori have been made to feel ashamed by the left-wing Māori rhetoric dominating the media.

No Māori should feel pressured to hide traditional, moderate or conservative values simply because contemporary politics has become so much more confrontational.

To conserve is to protect what matters, use what we have wisely, preserve what works and pass something worthwhile on to the next generation.

You don’t stop being Māori because you vote differently. You don’t lose your whakapapa because you believe in personal responsibility, nor do you become less Māori because you believe in one New

Zealand.

At the heart of this is our New Zealand citizenship.

The equal citizenship we share was secured at great cost. The many Māori men of the 28th Māori Battalion who fought and died alongside their fellow New Zealanders for our freedom and nationhood. Their sacrifice must remind us that democracy is both a privilege and a responsibility.

That’s why New Zealand First wants to restore pride in citizenship. Immigrants shouldn’t be able to use their New Zealand citizenship as a stepping stone to Australia. We want immigrants to seek citizenship because they value our country, want to make it their home and want all the rights and privileges associated with becoming a New Zealander.

The challenge facing our country is bigger than any single political argument. It is about whether we can remain a country confident enough to respect difference while staying united by our patriotism. We must honour our past but be prepared to embrace the future. That means being realistic enough to put our whanau/

family ahead of political ideologies.

This election is one of the most important of our lifetime. New Zealand stands at a crossroads, not only over the cost of living and pressure it puts on our communities, but over the kind of country we choose to become.

So, this is my karanga, my call, to the many Māori who recognise themselves in these values.. Now is the time to reclaim the power of that moderate, ‘conservative’ voice.

Do not allow yourself to be subdued or shamed into silence!

I stand with NZ First as a progressive moderate ‘conservative’ Māori woman who votes not only with my hand, but also my head and heart.

Let’s stop dwelling on our past and recognise the potential of our future.

Harete Hipango-Brownlie
NZ First Whanganui Candidate

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On this month in history Ralph Hotere born

Famous artist Ralph Hotere was born on August 11, 1931 in Mitimiti, Northland. He was one of 15 children in the family.

It was while training to be teacher he first studied art at Auckland Teacher College, although he later studied in the United Kingdom.

He is strongly associated with the Dunedin area and studied art at the Dunedin School of Art, living in Careys Bay (near Port Chalmers) from 1969.

Much of his art is political as he expressed his opposition to the proposed Aramoana Smelter, the

Springbok Tour and the Middle East situation (Jerusalem, Jerusalem).

His Black Phoenix Series (1984-1988) is now situated at Te Papa Tongarewa, in Wellington. At the Vero Centre, Auckland can be seen his Black Stump (1999) exhibit.

He has had many honours including being appointed the Francis Hodgkins Fellow (Otago University). He was

made a member of the Order of New Zealand, our very highest honour reserved for 20 living New Zealanders.

A film was made entitled Hotere (2001, Paradise Films), directed by the great Mera Mita. It had overseas exposure at the 2002 Sundance Film Festival.

Ralph Hotere died in Dunedin on February 24, 2013.

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

Additional government funding boosts resource recovery centre

South Taranaki District Mayor Phil Nixon has welcomed the announcement that Council will receive an additional \$260,000 from the Government’s national Waste Minimisation Fund to support the development of a new resource recovery centre in Hāwera.

The funding was announced on 11 August and will help accelerate a project that has long been identified as a key part of Council’s waste minimisation strategy.

The resource recovery centre will accept and sort materials that can be reused, repaired, recycled, and repurposed, including construction and demolition materials, household goods, timber, pipes, e-waste, and other reusable resources. By recovering valuable materials before they reach landfill, the facility will support a more circular economy and help reduce waste across South Taranaki.

Mayor Nixon says Council had already accessed \$312,000 towards the project from its waste disposal levy fund and was pleased to receive additional Government support for an initiative that would deliver both environmental and community benefits.

“The resource recovery centre is much more than a waste facility.



It’s a practical investment in reducing waste and making better use of the resources our community already has,” says Mayor Phil.

“By supporting resource recovery, reuse, repair, and recycling, the centre will help extend the life of products and materials, reduce the environmental impacts associated with waste disposal, and create new opportunities for people to access affordable, reusable goods.”

Mayor Nixon says the funding announcement was an important milestone for a project that aligns strongly with Council’s long-term vision for waste reduction and environmental sustainability.

“We’re grateful for the Government’s support and we’re excited to move this project forward. The resource recovery centre will play an important role in helping South Taranaki reduce the amount of waste sent to landfill while encouraging smarter use of valuable resources.”

With the funding now confirmed, Council will move ahead finalising the facility’s design for construction next to the Hāwera Transfer Station on Scott Street, with construction expected to be complete by the end of 2026.

Sport NZ Rural Travel Fund Applications



Applications for financial assistance under the Sport NZ Rural Travel Fund open on 3 September 2026 and close on 2 October 2026.

The fund is open to sports clubs and school teams in South Taranaki with young people aged between 5-19 years who require assistance with transport expenses to regular, local sporting competitions.

Further information and application forms can be found online at www.southtaranaki.com/funding, at Te Ramanui o Ruapūtahanga (121 High Street Hāwera), from your local LibraryPlus or by emailing funding@stdc.govt.nz. Applications close Friday 2 October at 5pm. For further information please contact: Governance Officer

Phone: 0800 111 323 or (06) 278 0555

Email: funding@stdc.govt.nz

Creative Communities Funding Applications Open



Do you have a community arts project that needs some funding support? Applications for Creative Communities funding are now open and will close at 5pm on Friday 11 September 2026. The South Taranaki Creative Communities Scheme provides funding assistance for community-based arts activities in South

Taranaki that take place between 12 October 2026 – 12 October 2027 and meet one or more of the following funding criteria:

- Broad community involvement - a project that will create opportunities for local communities to engage with and participate in arts activities.
- Diversity - a project that will support the diverse arts and cultural traditions of local communities, enriching and promoting their uniqueness and cultural diversity.
- Young people - a project that will enable and encourage young people (under 18 years) to engage with and actively participate in the arts.

Application forms are now available online at www.southtaranaki.com/funding or at your local LibraryPlus. For further information, email funding@stdc.govt.nz or phone (06) 278 0555 or 0800 111 323.

Upcoming Meetings

- Ordinary Council**
Wednesday 9 September, 4pm
- Eltham-Kaponga Community Board**
Monday 14 September, 10.30am
Mangamingi Community Hall, 1662 Rāwhitiroa Road, Mangamingi
- Te Hāwera Community Board**
Monday 14 September, 4pm
Normanby School, Hunter Street, Normanby
- Taranaki Coastal Community Board**
Wednesday 16 September, 4pm
Warea Public Hall, Main South Road, StateHighway 45, Warea
- Pātea Community Board**
Wednesday 16 September, 4pm
Waverley Community Centre, Chester Street, Waverley
- Eltham Drainage Committee**
Monday 21 September, 10am
Taumata Recreation Centre, Preston Street, Eltham
- Te Kāhui Matauraura**
Wednesday 23 September, 10am
- Environment and Hearings Committee**
Wednesday 23 September, 1pm
- Policy and Strategy Committee**
Monday 28 September, 1pm
- Workshop - Liability Management and Investment Policy**
Monday 5 October, 11.30am
- Risk and Assurance Committee**
Monday 5 October, 1pm
- Water Services Committee**
Wednesday 7 October, 1pm



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

Grazing land for tender in Manaia

Grazing Land for tender in Manaia opened 10th August 2026. Please find tender information at www.southtaranaki.com/grazingtender

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Help Me IT a new hub for expert friendly tech support

Hawera’s High Street has welcomed a fresh new face to its business strip. Help Me IT, which opened its doors on July 13, sits at number 224 — right next door to T&H Betta Electrical — and brings with it a breadth of experience that is already making waves across the region.

The man behind the venture is John Fullerton, an IT professional whose decision to branch out on his own came after eight and a half years with a local computer firm. “It was time for a change,” he says simply. “I saw a gap in the market and thought I’d be able to help.”

That help extends well beyond Hawera’s town centre. John is catering to clients as far south as Waverley and north to New Plymouth, offering a refreshingly broad range of services: from computer repairs and upgrades to networking and Wi-Fi, IT and data security, hardware procurement, printer support, Microsoft 365 guidance, and even smart television troubleshooting.

What sets John apart, however, is not just his technical know-how — it is his approach. With 27 years



Owner John Fullerton at your service.

in New Zealand, including 21 spent in Taranaki, he has an intimate understanding of the region and its people. Born and raised in Northern Ireland, he brings the straightforward warmth of his roots to every customer interaction. He speaks clearly, keeps jargon to a minimum, and offers a free initial consultation to discuss the problem and scope out a solution. Only then does he

provide a transparent, fixed quote — and payment is due only if the issue is resolved. It is a “no fix, no fee” promise that removes the anxiety so often associated with tech troubles.

John is equally at home working with residential customers and local businesses, and his commitment to the community runs deeper than his shopfront. He has teamed up with the Hapori Hub, located just down the road at 202 High Street, where he will co-host a computer laboratory and spearhead IT improvements from September 11 onwards. The Hub, which also offers a community space, well-being café, support services, courses, and an activity area, provides a natural home for John’s mission to make technology accessible to everyone.

His working week runs Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm, with Saturday mornings open until midday for those who need a weekend touchpoint.

For all his professional busyness, John manages to keep a full life outside

the office. A recent finisher of the Cape Egmont half marathon, he describes the gym as his “happy place” — though he also finds time for reading, baking, and music. It is perhaps this balance that fuels the friendly, unhurried energy he brings to his work.

Looking ahead, John is focused on embedding his community-first, quality-driven service into the fabric of the district. But there are broader plans on the

horizon too: drop-in digital clinics at various locations around the region are under consideration, which would bring his expertise directly to those who need it most.

The message on the wall at 224 High Street says it plainly: Expert technician. Fast and friendly service. Quality you can trust. Local people and local support. It is a promise John Fullerton is living by, one satisfied customer at a time.

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SAFE launches national campaign to end factory farming in Aotearoa

SAFE has launched a major new campaign calling for an end to factory farming in Aotearoa, backed by a public petition and a nationwide advertising campaign exposing the reality of intensive animal farming.

At least 128 million land animals are factory farmed in New Zealand each year, confined in systems that severely restrict movement, limit essential behaviours, and expose animals to injury, disease, chronic stress, and deprivation. Many are selectively bred for rapid growth or high production at the expense of their health, while painful procedures are used to manage the welfare problems that intensive systems create.

SAFE Campaign Manager Emma Brodie says factory farming is a systemic problem that demands a systemic solution.

“Factory farming treats extraordinary levels of suffering as business as usual.”

“In 2026, we should be asking whether cages, crates, and crowded sheds really belong in the future of

Aotearoa.”

Verian research commissioned by SAFE in 2025 shows 78% of New Zealanders are concerned about the welfare of animals on New Zealand factory farms, while 72% oppose confining animals in factory farms. 88% believe animals should have the freedom to go outside when they want, and 93% believe codes of welfare should be regularly reviewed and updated to reflect the latest animal welfare science and public concerns.

Brodie says factory farming

doesn’t persist because New Zealanders don’t care about animals, it persists because most people don’t see it.

“The scale of factory farming in Aotearoa is enormous, but the full picture is still hidden from public view. That distance makes it easier for factory farming to continue unchallenged.”

“Our campaign is about bringing factory farming into the light, challenging the rules and structures that keep it in place, and turning public concern into meaningful change.”

The campaign calls for an

independent review of New Zealand’s animal welfare legislative framework, followed by the reforms needed to end factory farming systems.

More than 25 years after the Animal Welfare Act 1999 was enacted, SAFE says the framework is no longer fit for purpose. The law has not kept pace with what we know about animal welfare or addressed intensive farming systems that cause significant harm.

Recent decisions on the regulation of pig and hen farming have reinforced

SAFE’s concerns, with the most intensive forms of confinement remaining permitted.

“We don’t have to accept that this is simply how farming works.

“We can choose differently. And we are asking New Zealanders to join us.”

SAFE is calling on New Zealanders to sign its petition and join the campaign to end factory farming in Aotearoa.

The next issue of the Opunake & Coastal News is on September 10.

Local TSB team saves customer from losing savings

A Taranaki woman has been spared a major financial loss after a phone scam was stopped by TSB’s fraud team.

The customer had spent hours on the phone to a scammer who convinced her to grant remote access to her computer and began transferring money from her accounts.

Behind the scenes, TSB’s fraud monitoring systems detected unusual activity and immediately flagged the transactions as suspicious.

website.”

Erin says one of the hardest parts of her job is seeing the emotional impact scams can have on victims.

“It isn’t just the financial loss – it’s what it does to people’s confidence. Many victims feel embarrassed or blame themselves afterwards. They start questioning their judgement and wonder how they could

have fallen for it. The reality is these scams are incredibly sophisticated, and they can happen to anyone. That’s why it’s so important people know they’re not alone and ask for help as soon as something doesn’t feel right.”

As for the TSB team involved in the case, Erin says they were ‘absolutely buzzing’ afterwards.

Protecting a customer from losing a life-changing amount of money was incredibly rewarding. Knowing we’d helped keep one of our customers safe from what could have been a devastating financial loss is exactly why we do what we do.”

Steps to stay safe from scams

TSB is encouraging

customers to remember these simple steps:

Hang up if you receive an unexpected call claiming to be from your bank.

Never share one-time security codes or passwords.

Never download software or allow remote access to your device because someone asks you to. If

you are sent a link to login to your banking app, don’t click. Go to the official banking app or website and log in from there.

If something feels urgent, take a moment to pause and verify it’s genuine.

If you think you’ve been scammed, contact your bank immediately.



Kermit at East End Beach is among the latest creations from Coastal Taranaki artist Graham Kirk.

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PRINCIPAL'S ADDRESS

Andrea Hooper Carr

Ka tangi te pipiwharauoa, ko te karere a Mahuru

The shining cuckoo cries, the messenger of spring

As spring rapidly approaches, our school continues to bloom. With successes in NZ Made Dance competition where we had tremendous success (see below).

Our Science department also shines brightly with Jaz Kemsley and Gerald Torres picking up a swag of awards at Taranaki Science Fair, awards including Scholarships, sponsorships, and special prizes.

It has been wonderful working with our feeder primary schools around literacy and numeracy and how we can support our young learners with their reading, writing and maths. We are working hard as an educational community to ensure smooth academic and pastoral transitions between schools, however we do need the help and support of whānau in this space. Reading with our tamariki sparks rapid brain growth. Unlike speaking, which humans pick up naturally, reading requires the brain to build entirely new neural pathways by connecting vision, sound, and meaning. Shared reading strengthens white matter tracts in the brain, expands language networks, and accelerates cognitive and emotional development, enabling our tamariki to grow into life long learners.

The more that you read, the more things you will know.
The more that you learn, the more places you'll go.

Dr. Seuss

Our young kaiarahi have also been getting out and about in the community working with the wonderful kindergarten tamariki. These DREAMS students have been helping out, connecting with the little ones, and having oodles of fun in the process. Opunakē is definitely a village, raising our children together.



Students are also preparing for their course selection with Year 10s and 11s attending the Taranaki Careers Exposition, and hearing from curriculum experts about the pathways. Our Year 12s and 13s have been making university visits to ensure they follow a tertiary education that suits their needs and passions.

Finally I would like to thank and awhi our amazing staff who performed as a roopu a selection of waiata at the Te Kahui Whetu regional evening. Our commitment to te reo and matauranga maori is alive and well. We may not be the best at kapa haka, but our enthusiasm and passion is second to none.

Arohanui.

UPCOMING

EVENTS

END OF TRIMESTER 2
28th August

Winter Tournament Week
Week 7

NCEA L1 CAA Exams
Week 8

Reno Rave (School Dance)
Thurs. 17th Sept.

2027 Course Selection
(Year 10-12)
Week 10

Benchmark Exams
(Year 11-13)
Week 10

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DANCE NZ MADE

Katerina Papageorgiou

Our students delivered stellar performances on Friday, August 14, making the community proud during a action-packed day of workshops and high-stakes dance at the Dance NZ Made competition. Learning directly from top choreographers, the dancers showcased exceptional behavior, skill, and dedication from start to finish.

The hard work paid off with several top placements across key categories:

2nd Place (Year 9–10 Duet/Trio): Mayana Larsen and Bree Neha Simons

3rd Place (Year 11–13 Teams): Isabelle Neil, Waimarie Magele, Cheska Capati, and Jess Hroscroft

Golden Ticket Recipient: Reika Campbell

Reika's performance earned her a coveted Golden Ticket, selecting her from a pool of over 200 young dancers. Reserved for only a handful of standouts per region, the ticket grants her access to exclusive workshops and auditions this coming January, along with a chance to compete for a \$1,000 prize.

While the large group ensemble missed out on a top-three spot in a fiercely competitive field, the team remains upbeat and ready to take on the stage again next year. Video recordings of all the day's routines were captured, and the group performed their massive showcase routine to the school at Iwi this week.

Events like these depend on strong community backing. Special thanks go to all the supporting parents, with extra gratitude to Liz Thompson for providing essential logistical and emotional support to the dancers throughout the day.



BASKETBALL FINALS

Despite some very valiant efforts, our Senior Girls and Senior Boys were unlucky losers in their Taranaki Secondary Schools Basketball finals last weekend.. Congratulations to both teams on their seasons to finish second overall and good luck as they embark on the regional qualifiers this weekend - both teams shooting for Nationals.



Cancer cure closer to home and changing lives

Cancer care closer to home changing lives in Taranaki

Just weeks after marrying her husband, Taranaki woman Hilary Moffett received news no newlywed ever expects to hear, she had breast cancer.

Diagnosed on 2 December 2025, Hilary’s life changed overnight. Amid the shock and uncertainty, there was one piece of good news. The newly opened Taranaki Cancer Centre | Te Hōpua Whakahauora, home to the region’s first Linear Accelerator (LINAC), had begun operating.

The LINAC delivers beam radiation therapy to treat a wide range of cancers. Its advanced technology allows radiation to be delivered precisely to an area or to target cancer cells, while minimising damage to surrounding healthy tissue to effectively treat cancer.

Having the ultramodern LINAC in Taranaki means most patients can now access radiation therapy locally, reducing the need for lengthy travel and time away from home.

For Hilary, this meant she didn’t need travel to Palmerston North for treatment, instead she was able to remain home and connected to her family, work and community during one of the most challenging periods of her life.

“My diagnosis was the wedding present we didn’t want,” says Hilary.

“However, having a LINAC in New Plymouth has been an absolute godsend. It’s meant I haven’t had to travel to Palmerston North for radiation therapy the way both of my parents did.”



Hilary Moffat in front of the Taranaki Cancer Centre.

It also meant she could continue being present for her family at a time when they were facing multiple challenges.

“Throughout my journey I have been able to keep working, support my children and husband, and

be there for my father, who diagnosed with dementia and needed help moving into a rest home. Without the LINAC here, I simply wouldn’t have been able to juggle all the curve balls that life has thrown us.”

Hilary says the care she

received extended well beyond clinical care.

“The Taranaki and MidCentral oncology and radiation teams have been incredible. They took the time to understand what was important to me and even worked my

appointment schedule around my honeymoon in Japan. There was no way I was going to miss that.”

In the eight months since opening, it is clear the Taranaki Cancer Centre is making a significant difference for patients and whānau.

“The impact of the LINAC is best measured in what it has meant for patients and whānau,” says Marie Burnell, Head of Treatment, Radiation Therapy, Cancer Screening and Support for MidCentral.

“Since becoming operational in December more than 120 courses of radiation therapy have been delivered, equating to 1,880 individual treatments. That’s 1,880 nights Taranaki patients have been able to sleep in their own beds rather than spend time away from home receiving treatment.”

The service has also saved patients and whānau an estimated 140,000 kms of travel, reducing the time, cost and stress often associated with accessing cancer care.

“Receiving care locally

means people maintain a sense of normality when life has been turned upside down.”

“Small things, such as being able to collect prescriptions from a local pharmacy or sleep in your own bed, can make a huge difference when you’re undergoing treatment. Some of our palliative patients even think the shorter travel times have reduced discomfort and fatigue and allowed them to rest more comfortably.”

Delivering the service has required a collaborative effort across the region. While one radiation therapist is permanently based in Taranaki, additional clinicians travel from Palmerston North each week to provide continuity of care.

As more patients access treatment locally, the Taranaki Cancer Centre is delivering on its promise to bring specialist cancer care closer to home, helping people stay connected to their loved ones, their communities and the things that matter most.



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Your good friends are keeping you feeling healthy and happy

People who feel content in their friendships are more likely to report better physical and mental health, according to a survey of 200,000 adults across 22 countries.

To investigate how family and friends influence how we feel about our health, the researchers asked the participants to rate how content they were with their friendships, how satisfying they found their friendships and how strong their relationship with their parents was growing up.

The researchers then asked the participants to rate their own physical

and mental health. The researchers say those who reported higher happiness with their friendships were more likely to report better physical and mental health,

and positive relationships with parents were also linked to better self-reported health to a lesser degree.

The researchers say their survey shows positive

relationships are likely have health benefits across cultures.

Journal of Mental Health

Hi, I’m Margaret Bryce, the Chiropractor who talks about subluxations.

If you just want to feel numb, you need someone else to help.

A subluxation is when your brain has lost control of a spinal segment through some stress or other. It can mess with your body’s communication. My job is to find out what’s not working in your spine and gently get it working again so your brain can run your body better. **My examination fee is \$120, but I’m opening 7 exams for \$30 each, which we’ll give to World Vision. Call me now.**

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First baby born in Taranaki Base Hospital’s new maternity ward makes history

A newborn baby girl has secured a special place in Taranaki Base Hospital’s history, becoming the first baby born in its new maternity ward.

Carmyn weighing 7lb 14oz and measuring 53 centimetres long was born to parents Holly and Nathanael after the hospital’s new maternity unit welcomed its first patients on Monday, June 29.

For Holly, the significance of the moment didn’t sink in until her midwife mentioned it as they walked into the hospital.

“When we were walking through the entrance, my midwife said no babies had been born yet in the new ward and we could very well be the first people to make the milestone,” she said.

“The first thought that went through my mind was, ‘That’s crazy.’ It was almost disbelief.”

The new maternity ward forms part of the hospital’s new six-storey East Wing Building, Te Rau Matāpuna o Taranaki, a major investment in healthcare for Taranaki.

The ward is fitted with modern birthing suites and spacious postnatal rooms designed to give new parents more comfort, privacy and room for whānau to stay together during those first precious days.

Holly said the family immediately noticed the difference when they arrived.

“When we first walked into the main area of the maternity unit, all the staff were excited. It felt very welcoming and a little overwhelming at the same time.”

“The rooms were very big and roomy.”

Despite making history, Holly approached the birth with little expectations.

“I went in with no birth plans because I don’t like to have expectations for something like that,” she said.

“Everything went as smoothly as it could. It was all done pretty quickly, so I can’t really complain.”

While many new parents choose to spend extra time in hospital, Holly said she was eager to return to the familiarity of home.

Carmyn joins an excited



older brother, aged two, at home.

“I honestly just wanted the comfort of my own house and bed after giving birth and wanted to get back to reality. I had the opportunity to go home, so I took it.”

The family has settled in well, with Holly recovering well and Carmyn thriving.

Looking back on the milestone, Holly said it still felt surreal knowing their daughter’s birth would forever be linked with the hospital’s history.

“We think it’s pretty cool that our daughter’s birth will forever be a small part of the hospital’s history. We’re still in disbelief over it.”

She hopes it’s a story Carmyn will treasure as she grows older.

“We hope it’s something she’ll enjoy hearing about when she’s older.”



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OPUNAKE & COASTAL

NEWS

The Haps

The South Island is too often forgotten, but not by ACT. The Party launched its Mainland Campaign in Christchurch at 7pm on Friday August 21 at the Town Hall.

ACT continued its campaign of ideas for a better tomorrow, with a fully detailed version of how pharmacies could treat more minor ailments. Dispensing robots are freeing up Pharmacists’ time, while patients spend more time waiting for GP appointments, and people pile into chaotic Emergency Departments instead.

Paying pharmacies a fee for service could save community pharmacy by giving them a new revenue stream instead of more closing. At the same time it could reduce wait times and save the Government money by practicing more preventative care. It’s the kind of win-win solution ACT brings to the table.

itself as “New Zealand’s leadership ecosystem where state, business and community converge.”

Obviously a politically incorrect publication like Free Press would never be invited to share such mighty company, but what we heard fascinated us.

Videos were played with children on beaches, stirring music, and a narrator telling us that the Māori God Papatūānuku would bring us all together to save the planet, starting with Aotearoa.

This seemed odd because Revved people don’t really seem like church goers. More like people who wouldn’t go to church unless someone died. Perhaps, though, they were spiritual. They just replaced traditional organised religion with a new teaching.

The story made us think of Michael Crichton. He was an anthropologist, a doctor and, most famously, the author of Jurassic Park. He wrote the book before genetics were widely understood, in fact he helped popularise genetic science. A smart guy ahead of his time.

He once got asked why he thought environmentalism was a religion, the four minute video is well worth a watch.

The key part is:

...from the standpoint of an anthropological view, a religion is a collective set of beliefs. There is a leader or leaders who promote the beliefs among the followers. Followers make some kind of contribution or change in their lifestyle based on the religious belief. The religious belief gives them a total view of the world... what’s right, what’s wrong, what’s good action, what’s bad action. That all fits perfectly onto environmentalism.

He goes on to say:

...[environmentalism] rather precisely maps a lot of Judeo-Christian beliefs about the origin of the world and so on. So that in environmental thinking, there is a view that there used to be a sort of Eden, and then people came and ruined that Eden, and that we are therefore sort of original sinners because we’re destroying this planet. And what we can do, however, is get salvation through sustainability. And if you’re a good person, you will seek salvation, and if you’re a bad person, you’ll drive SUVs. That is a kind of a religious

New Zealand’s New Religion

We have heard reports from someone who sat last week with the good and the great at Revved, a conference which promotes

Source of proven returns in South Taranaki

A substantial large format retail and industrial warehouse in one of New Zealand’s key dairying regions is for sale, giving passive investors the opportunity to secure a strong and growing income stream backed by a subsidiary of the country’s largest company.

The property at 215 Glover Road, Hāwera in South Taranaki has been occupied since new by RD1 Limited, now trading as Farm Source, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Fonterra Co-operative Group Limited, and the nation’s leading agricultural supplies retailer with 65 stores nationwide.

The 4,145sqm freehold site supports a 936sqm modern building constructed in 2004, comprising an open-plan retail area, high-stud bulk store warehouse, office and meeting space, amenities and a mezzanine floor. The balance of the site is fully sealed and provides a large, enclosed yard with dual access to allow efficient vehicle movement, and 15 marked car parks. The building is well-presented with concrete and steel construction, and an A grade seismic rating.



215 Glover Rd Hāwera.

Farm Source’s current lease term is six years, with rights of renewal, if exercised, extending the final expiry to 2042. As of November 2026, the property returns net annual income of \$127,165 plus GST, with the lease including fixed three percent increases and market rent reviews, providing steady rental growth. The tenant has occupied the property

for more than 20 years, reinforcing the income profile.

The property is for sale by deadline private treaty closing Wednesday 9 September, unless sold prior, through Mike Houlker and Samara Phillips of Bayleys Auckland Central, and Iain Taylor, Bayleys Taranaki.

Houlker says the resilience of New Zealand’s primary

sector continues to underpin confidence in businesses across dairy regions, supported by firm commodity prices, steady export demand, and consistent production volumes.

“The primary sector is the country’s largest export earner, and continues to perform with real consistency. That stability

supports businesses like Farm Source that serve rural communities every day.”

He says investors appear to be favouring strong performing regional assets, with rural landowners diversifying into commercial and industrial property to spread risk, and national investors widening their focus to regional opportunities that deliver

strong yields and dependable returns.

“A property like this, backed by a subsidiary of Fonterra and located in one of the country’s most productive dairy regions, offers the secure long-term income investors appear to be targeting in the current market.”

Hāwera is a proven rural service town, and its wider commercial environment is strengthened by the long-standing connection to the dairy industry, says Taylor.

“The presence of the Whareroa Dairy Factory and the scale of farming across South Taranaki create a strong and reliable commercial setting that supports long-term tenant performance.”

The property sits on the southern side of Glover Road, a key arterial route with high traffic volumes, and around 200 metres from the Waihi Road and State Highway 3 intersection. The surrounding area is a strong commercial precinct within Hāwera, with neighbouring occupiers including Bunnings, VTNZ, Mico Plumbing and Supercheap Auto.

The Haps

Continued from page 22.

belief.

Before we go any further, we should acknowledge religion can and has done a lot of good. It can replace haunting questions with comfort and faith. It can give people a reason to do the right thing because someone (God) is always watching. The Christian idea that each person is made in God’s image was a critical argument to ending slavery, among other things.

Now even the Green Party seems to have moved on from environmentalism, which they hardly ever talk about. The story about Papatuanuku offering salvation got us thinking, though. Is there another religion-like belief system that’s become popular in New Zealand in the last couple of decades?

Something with an original sin that we all have to be sorry for. Something that requires new rituals, like at the start of every meeting. Something that encourages wearing adornments around your neck to show you believe. Something that helps the followers tell the difference between good and bad people, who they cast out with various epithets?

We realised the last couple of decades in New Zealand

have seen a new religion. Before white people, noble savages lived in a kind of Eden (most religions skip a detail here and there). Colonisation is an original sin, but if you wear a Pounamu, say a Karakia, and declare non-believers to be racist heretics, you can seek salvation.

You’ll find acceptance with fellow believers. Together you’ll seek (with some success) to make your belief system the law of the land. You’ll feel that you are one of the initiated, who can breathe easy knowing they have atoned for the original sin, your existence here will be meaningful and justified.

Like Environmentalism in Crichton’s telling, Treatyism fits the anthropologists’ view of a religion. It also has many of the elements of the Judeo-Christian story. What’s wrong with that?

In the second part of the video Crichton says:

And so when I look at how we treat the environment, I think we have to be flexible. I think we have to try things and see how they turn out. We have to be ready to change course. We have to be able to adapt. We have to say we’re wrong and let’s do it right. We have to do research. This is all stuff that fundamentalist religions can’t do. And if

environmentalism is a kind of fundamentalist religion, then that’s not a good way to manage the environment.

Most people in the modern world separate their religion from the rest of their lives. If you are a Christian engineer you still rely on maths and physics instead of praying to design bridges. This Enlightenment was essential to making progress, spirituality over here, everyday problem solving over there.

Treatyism has never been seen as a religion though. It finds its way into Government, the workplace, the school curriculum, resource consenting, even healthcare. Rational debates about everything from healthcare funding to the future of the country are drowned out by charges of racism made with irrational anger.

Maybe it’s time to call Treatyism what it is, and separate Church and state again.

The next issue of the Opunake & Coastal News comes out on 10 September 2026.

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NEWS

Survey shows continued shift towards beef cattle

New Zealand's livestock mix continued to shift towards beef cattle over the past year, according to Beef + Lamb New Zealand's latest stock number survey.

Beef cattle numbers increased by an estimated 3.3 per cent to 3.96 million between 30 June 2025 and 30 June 2026.

During the same period, total sheep numbers fell an estimated 2.0 per cent to 22.78 million, with reductions recorded in every region. However, the lamb crop is expected to be relatively steady.

Kate Acland, chair of Beef + Lamb New Zealand, said increases in beef cattle numbers had been supported by strong returns, feed availability, and farmer preference for trading and finishing cattle.

"Despite fewer sheep, the lamb crop is forecast to be broadly stable at 19.75 million head, down just 0.3 per cent, supported by an estimated ewe lambing percentage of 132.3 per cent. The final result will depend heavily on spring lambing conditions.

"The 2025-26 season was generally positive for New Zealand sheep and beef farmers, with strong livestock prices, improved wool returns, and good feed availability across much of the country.

"Good summer and autumn pasture growth supported stock condition, while stronger farm-gate returns enabled some farmers to increase fertiliser use, reduce debt, and strengthen their financial position.

"However, conditions were more challenging in some areas, and high store livestock

and input costs continued to pressure margins."

The survey is good news for rural communities and the New Zealand economy, said Acland.

"This shows the continued strength and resilience of a sector that supports jobs and keeps spending flowing through regional New Zealand.

"Research for B+LNZ and the Meat Industry Association shows New Zealand's red meat sector generates \$48.7 billion in spending across the economy each year and supports one in every 20 jobs. The sector also generates \$12.8 billion in export earnings annually, with a powerful multiplier effect that sees \$133 million a day being spent across New Zealand.

"The world has an insatiable appetite for New Zealand beef, and these results show farmers are responding to strong market signals while continuing to produce high-quality red meat for discerning consumers around the globe."

According to the survey, beef cattle numbers in the North Island increased 3.2 per cent to 2.71 million head. Taranaki Manawātū recorded the largest North Island increase, up six per cent, followed by East Coast, which grew by 2.9 per cent, and Northland Waikato Bay of Plenty, up 2.3 per cent.

The South Island beef cattle herd increased 3.6 per cent to 1.25 million head. Southland grew by 6.7 per cent, driven by more weaners and trading cattle on finishing farms.

Continued page 25.

Getting the best start this season - strip till and precision planting with Kalin Contracting

For South and Central Taranaki farmers looking to maximise crop performance this season, getting the seedbed right from the outset makes all the difference, and Kalin Contracting is here to help.

Operating the region's only Precision Cultivation strip-till pto machine alongside a Väderstad maize planter, the team manages the process start to finish for an accurate, consistent result. Kalin Contracting has acquired the cultivation operations of GB Contracting this season and thanks Greg for his long service to the industry and his innovation in offering one of Taranaki's first strip-till machines.

Owner Alastair Kalin says, "For farmers wanting a low tillage approach, strip-till reduces soil disturbance while still preparing the ground for reliable crop establishment. Less erosion and better retained moisture means the tillage can focus where the crop needs it most."

"Not every situation will suit strip-till, so to see if it's the smarter option for your paddocks this season contact us for a chat," says Alastair.

With over 65 years of agricultural contracting behind them, the team understands no two paddocks are the same, offering a full range of cultivation options tailored to each property's soil type and conditions.

Their 4-metre Horsh Pronto drill makes light work of regrassing and planting, offering discs, paddles and separate clover application in one pass. They also operate an Erth Pan Buster soil aerator allowing compacted soil to breathe, developing deeper root structure and helping paddocks handle both dry spells and excess surface water issues.

Whatever the season



Getting the seedbed right from the start makes all the difference.

throws at you, having the right gear and know-how on hand matters. Kalin Contracting prides itself on a can-do attitude and reliable,

on-time service, helping farmers get the most from every paddock. Whether you're planning your next maize crop or

renewing pasture, get in touch with Kalin Contracting to talk through the best approach for your farm.

Images uncover the secrets of the narwhal tusk

International researchers have discovered why narwhals, the unicorns of the sea, have such straight tusks. The team combined multiple imaging techniques to figure out how narwhal tusks – which can grow to over two metres in length – grow so

long and straight, as they're the only known straight tusks found in nature. They found that, at a microscopic level, the large-scale helical (twisting) structures are produced by arrangements of mineralised collagen. However, they found the

inner layer twists right, while the outer layer covering the tusk twists left, which could be what enables the narwhal tusk to grow straight while maintaining its distinctive left-handed twist.

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Eltham cheese reigns supreme

Eltham has made some big contributions to the New Zealand dairy industry. These include the first dairy factory, first export of butter and the first rotary cow shed. It can now add producing a cheese judged the best in the world. Kapiti Kikorangi Triple Cream Blue, which is produced at the Lactalis New Zealand Bridge Street Eltham site took out the Supreme Champion Cheese Award at this year's International Cheese and Dairy Awards held in the United Kingdom. This was as well as taking out the awards for Champion Overseas Cheese and Best New Zealand Cheese.

The UK-based awards have been held for 108 years, and Kapiti Kikorangi Triple Cream Blue was pitted against over 5000 cheeses from around the world.

"This one means a lot," says Eltham Bridge Street master cheesemaker Cathy Lang. "We've come close before, so to finally take out Supreme Champion with Kapiti Kikorangi Triple Cream Blue is incredibly special to everyone involved."

She says the nearest they had got before was back in 2023, also with Kapiti Kikorangi Triple Cream Blue. On that occasion it took out the Champion Overseas Cheese and Best New Zealand Cheese, but fell short of the Supreme Award, taking out Reserve in Show instead.

Cathy says they had been making blue cheeses at Eltham since 1951, and "that particular blue" since the 1980s or 1990s.

There are around 200 judges involved, and on previous occasions Cathy has been one of these, but not this time, as the awards took place while the transition from Fonterra to Lactalis was being worked out.

The award was accepted on their behalf by a representative from Lactalis based in England.

"I sat this one out and it turned out to be the good one," says Cathy.

The judges always judge blind and they're never given their own cheeses to judge. The English Stilton producers tend to have a good winning record, she says.

"It's all subjective and up to the judges on the day."

So why does she think this Lactalis blue won this time?

Cathy says New Zealand cheeses have a good name because of the pasture, climate and environment



Master cheesemaker Cathy Lang at the Eltham Cheese Bar with the trophies and awards from the International Cheese and Dairy Awards.

from where they come from.

"We use pasture-fed cows. It's quite a creamy cheese. The blue mould that we use we've been growing on site for 75 years. It's quite a unique blue mould. It's

a regional Taranaki blue mould grown on Yarrows bread, so it's very local. We try to pick a batch of cheese quite early that would be good in a month's time. It's hard as they have to travel so far to get there.

"It takes a huge amount of care behind the scenes to get to this point. From

the cheesemakers through to the people who help get it shipped safely across the world, this result belongs to the whole team."

Lactalis New Zealand CEO Pascal Francisque has welcomed the result.

"It's wonderful to see the Kapiti brand recognised on the global stage," he says.

"This achievement reflects the world-class talent and expertise within our New Zealand team. From our skilled cheesemakers through to those supporting production, logistics and quality. It takes exceptional people working together to deliver these outstanding results."

Survey shows continued shift towards beef cattle

Continued from page 24.

Marlborough Canterbury increased 3.6 per cent, and Otago increased 1.3 per cent.

Nationwide, breeding ewe numbers decreased by 1.9 per cent and hogget numbers decreased by 4.5 per cent. The North Island sheep flock was down by 3.0 per cent to 11.14 million head, and the South Island flock was down 1.1 per cent to 11.64 million head.

Northland Waikato Bay of Plenty had the largest regional decrease, dropping 6.3 per cent and reflecting

fewer breeding ewes and hoggets. Taranaki Manawatu decreased 2.5 per cent, and East Coast decreased 1.6 per cent.

Marlborough Canterbury saw a very small drop of 0.5 per cent, as an increase in hoggets offset part of the decline in breeding ewes. Otago decreased 0.8 per cent, while Southland decreased 2.4 per cent as hogget numbers fell.

Acland says the changes reflect a longer-term structural shift in the livestock mix and land use.

"Total sheep numbers have fallen 46 per cent since 2000-01, from 42.26 million, while beef cattle were 5.6 per cent below 2000-01 levels despite increasing in each of the past three years.

"The long-term decline in sheep numbers reflects cumulative land-use change and changing farm policies, including dairy conversion, forestry and native planting, retirement of grazed land, urban development, and farmer decisions around labour, succession, and relative livestock returns.



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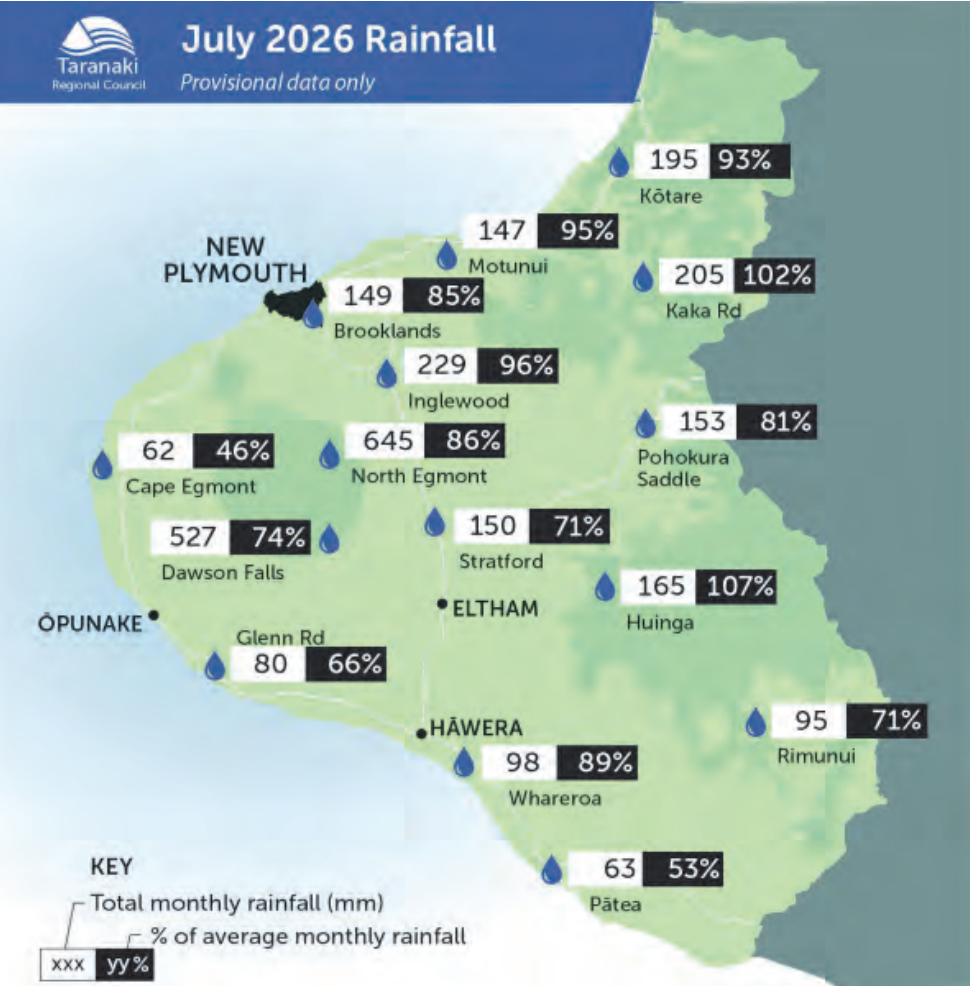
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A drier July for Taranaki



Faster access to innovation for farmers and growers

Farmers, growers and rural businesses are getting faster access to the products they need to protect crops, manage pests and remain competitive, Environment Minister Nicola Grigg says.

The latest Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) performance report shows good progress in reducing wait times for hazardous substances assessments, with the number of applications awaiting assessment halving since July 2024.

“For years, farmers and growers have told us they were frustrated by lengthy approval processes that delayed access to new products and innovations. We listened, and we’re seeing real progress.

“Since the start of the term, the EPA has made substantial improvements in processing applications, reducing the assessment

backlog and getting decisions made faster while maintaining New Zealand’s robust environmental and health protections.”

The EPA completed 66 hazardous substances assessments in 2025/26, its highest annual total since 2018/19, and reduced the number of applications awaiting assessment by more than a third over the past year.

“This is a good example of the Government’s focus on fixing the basics. New Zealanders expect regulatory agencies to process applications efficiently and provide timely decisions, and that’s exactly what we’re seeing.

“These products play an important role in helping farmers, growers and other industries manage weeds, pests and invasive species, protect productivity, and continue producing high-

quality goods for New Zealand and overseas markets.

The Government is also progressing reforms to the Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Act to create a more efficient and responsive regulatory system.

“The proposed changes will streamline application processes and ensure farmers and growers can access the innovations they need to remain globally competitive, while maintaining the strong environmental safeguards New Zealanders expect,” Ms Grigg says.

The Primary Production Select Committee is expected to report back on the Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Amendment Bill in September.

There was a huge contrast between the amount of rain Taranaki had last month compared to the downpours the region experienced in July 2025.

There was double the amount of rainfall last year (341mm) compared to July 2026 (169.9mm), according to Taranaki Regional Council (TRC) figures.

On average, there was 17.9% less rainfall than usual, ranging from 53.9% less rainfall than usual at Kapoiaia at Lighthouse,

and 6.6% more than usual at Mangaehu at Bridge. In 2025, there was 70% more than usual for the month.

Mean river flows for July were 33.1% lower than typical values, low flows were 18.5% greater, and high flows 39.4% lower than typical values while mean river (non-mountain) water temperatures were 9.6°C, an average of 0.5°C cooler than long-term values.

The average air temperature for the region (excluding Te Maunga sites) was 9.6°C,

which is 0.4°C cooler than long-term averages. The maximum air temperature recorded in July was 17.7°C at Brooklands Zoo at New Plymouth on 15 July.

Average wind speeds were 12km/hr, with average gust strength of 12km/hr, these were 0.8km/hr lighter, and 0.8km/hr lighter than the long-term average and the maximum wind gust recorded in July was 104.8km/hr at Kapoiaia at Lighthouse on 9 July.

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Methven couple named Arable Farmers of the Year

Methven couple John and Mel McCaw were named Arable Farmers of the Year at the 2026 Arable Awards in Christchurch.

Nearly 500 people packed the Air Force Museum at the fourth annual celebration of innovators and leaders in the grain and seed industry, cheering winners in seven award categories.

The Arable Farmer of the Year is selected from winners of the Seed Grower of the Year (the McCaws), the Maize Grower of the Year (Mark Shera from Ashburton), the Cereal Grower of the Year (Andrew and Amy Darling, from Timaru) and the Positive Environmental Impact Grower of the Year (Lovett Family Farms).

Judges were impressed by how the McCaws bring simplicity to their arable rotation, their understanding of crop performance, and their strategic integration of multiple arable crops and livestock classes.

Good profitability is achieved alongside sustainability, with use of trees, cover crops, and tillage practices beneficial to soil conservation.

John McCaw contributes to the sector through various representative, community, governance and advisory roles, including chairing the Federated Farmers Herbage



2026 Arable Farmers of the Year, John and Mel McCaw.

Photo: Kelly Shakespeare Photography

Seed Subsection for the last six years.

Earlier this year he was named Federated Farmers Arable Advocate for the Year, with then Arable chair David Birkett calling his contribution “exceptional and hugely valuable.”

“The intellect and the balanced approach he brings to advocacy is outstanding.”

The award ceremony also saw three individuals and a couple join the Arable Hall of Fame: John McKay, John McKenzie, Eric and Maxine Watson and (the late) Murray Kelly.

From its beginnings in the early 1990s, South Pacific Seeds (SPS) has grown to be New Zealand’s largest vegetable seed production company, and John McKay has been managing director every step of the way.

“With SPS, John developed production systems and grower networks that enabled arable farmers to successfully produce specialist seed crops such as carrot, radish, Chinese cabbage, and he has worked hard to develop new markets for those seeds, particularly in Asia,” the Hall of Fame citation reads.

“He is also recognised for his investment and contribution to industry research and capability.”

John McKenzie has been a significant figure in New

Zealand’s pasture seed and forage industry for several decades; but first and foremost, he has always been a passionate arable farmer.

“Across many roles, John’s influence extended beyond seed sales into commercial plant breeding, research commercialisation, export-oriented agribusiness, integration of science and farming practice and the development of New Zealand forage genetics for global markets.”

Eric and Maxine Watson have been focused on arable farming at their property in Wakanui, near Ashburton, for over 30 years.

Throughout that time, they have been proactive and positive supporters of the arable industry.

They achieved Guinness World Records for wheat yields twice and Eric has worked closely with researchers throughout his farming career.

“The Watsons’ farm has hosted dozens of grain and

seed trials, and Eric has always been generous in sharing his knowledge and advice with other growers, young or old, local or international,” the Hall of Fame citation reads.

Murray Kelly, who died earlier this year, was a senior research agronomist at PGG Wrightson Seeds where he and his team researched and developed techniques to increase seed yields and improve production to get the most out of crops.

Kelly was a great communicator who was generous in sharing his knowledge and enjoyed mentoring the next generation of seed researchers.

Growers and his research and agronomy peers regarded him as “a walking encyclopedia on all aspects of seed production”.

Marty and Georgina Skurr, who work the Canterbury land Marty’s great-grandfather began farming in the 1920s, took out the Innovation Award.

What began as a desire to add value to the grain produced on their farm has grown into a thriving on-farm stone-ground flour business, creating a direct connection between grower and consumer.

The couple manage every step of the process, from growing and harvesting the grain through to milling, marketing and selling the final product.

Taranaki edge Whanganui in senior bowls fixture

Taranaki needed differential to edge out Whanganui in a senior representative bowls fixture at Paritutu’s indoor complex when the pre-season encounter concluded on Sunday, August 16..

Both provinces won six games each, with three matches drawn.

That seemed an unlikely outcome after Saturday’s three rounds. Taranaki won five of those nine

encounters, with two drawn. But the visitors did well to turn things around to level the ledger in Sunday’s two rounds.

In the development section, where Taranaki lent one different bowler to the visitors each round after they turned up with only eight as opposed to nine players, the hosts were dominant. Taranaki won 12 games from 15, even though selector Chris Commane used 16

players in that section, with nine of them winning all their matches, albeit none of them contested all five rounds.

Mihi Hona, Theresa Needham and Lois Debique all won four-from-four, while Michelle Warren, Shelly Clark, Colleen Hodges and Angela Debique won thrice from as many

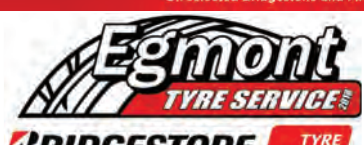
Continued page 29.



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North Island basketball talent heading to Hawera

Hāwera will welcome hundreds of young basketball players, coaches and supporters for the 2026 Taranaki Steelformers Year 9/10 Secondary Basketball Tournament at TSB Hub.

Teams begin arriving on 28 August, with tournament action running through to 1 September.

This year's event has grown to 22 teams across two grades, with schools travelling from Auckland, Hawke's Bay, Manawātū, Wellington, Taupō and throughout Taranaki.

Event organiser Matt Cursons said the tournament was created after identifying a gap for younger secondary school teams wanting more opportunities to compete against each other.

"The tournament came from seeing a gap for Year 9 and 10 teams that didn't have many opportunities to play against each other in a tournament environment. What started as a regional idea quickly grew when schools from around the North Island told us they



St Patrick's College Silverstream celebrate winning the inaugural Premiership Grade at the 2025 tournament. The team will return to Hāwera to defend its title in 2026.

were looking for the same opportunity," Cursons said. "After a fantastic first year, it's exciting to have 22 teams coming to Hāwera in 2026. We're looking forward to

some great basketball and giving these young athletes another chance to test themselves against teams from around the North Island."

Last year's inaugural event attracted 18 teams, with St Patrick's College Silverstream winning the Premiership Grade and Te Paepae o Aotea taking out

the Championship Grade.

There will also be plenty of local interest, with five Taranaki schools taking part – New Plymouth Boys' High School, Francis Douglas Memorial College, Te Paepae o Aotea, Stratford High School and Spotswood College – alongside visiting teams from across the North Island.

The influx of teams and supporters is expected to provide a welcome boost for Hāwera, with accommodation in strong demand and visitors spending time in local cafés, restaurants, shops and other businesses during their stay.

South Taranaki Mayor Phil Nixon said the tournament was a good example of the opportunities created when the district hosts events of this scale.

"South Taranaki has some excellent venues, and TSB Hub gives us the ability to host events like this really well," Mayor Nixon said.

"We've got several big events coming to the district over the next few months,

which is a great opportunity for our communities and local businesses. This tournament alone will bring more than 300 players and supporters into Hāwera, giving them the chance to enjoy our hospitality and experience more of what our district has to offer."

South Taranaki District Council is supporting the running of the tournament, including coordinating activities for players and supporters to enjoy while they are in Hāwera.

Cursons said sponsor support had been important in helping keep the tournament affordable for participating schools.

"We're extremely grateful to our sponsors. Their support helps us keep costs down for teams and put on an event that gives these young athletes a really enjoyable tournament experience."

The tournament is free to attend, and locals are encouraged to head along to TSB Hub and enjoy the action.

Taranaki edge Whanganui in senior bowls fixture

Continued from page 28.

attempts.

In the seniors, veteran Kristin Stampa, who is returning to the representative scene this season after concluding a stint on the Taranaki Board, proved that she remains a top-notch competitor. Stampa won four games and was only denied a fifth win in the final round, when her and Susan Cottam were held to a 16-all draw by arguably the best combination that Whanganui could provide, Dianne Patterson and Reen Belliss. Patterson, who won the Taranaki Open fours-pairs event in January, won two and drew three during the weekend.

Gale Fache, another returning, won four out of five, as did Cindy Gray, who

has established herself at this level, following up some impressive performances from last season. Face and Gray's only defeat was in the last round, when the last delivery from Whanganui skipper, Gwen Stuart, removed Irene Taunt's stunning shot to take the game.

Taranaki's next representative fixture is against Waikato on September 5-6, with the men travelling to Hamilton and the women playing at Paritutu once more.

Results of the Taranaki-Whanganui representative bowls fixture held at Paritutu on August 15-16 (Taranaki names first):

Senior women, round 1: T Atkinson-Watt, S Lawn 11 A Richdale, D Patterson 18;

AJ Rowlands, S Cottam, G Fache 20 T Lawson, R Irwin, R Belliss 13; M Bastin, R Davey, C Gray, K Stampa 14 T Taylor-Pope, G Stuart, J Johnson, D Wildermoth 8. Round 2: J Merrick, K Stampa 23 J Johnson, R Belliss 14; T Atkinson-Watt, S Cottam, I Taunt 17 G Stuart, T Taylor-Pope, D Patterson 17; AJ Rowlands, R Davey, C Gray, G Fache 13 T Lawson, A Richdale, R Irwin, D Wildermoth 9. Round 3: M Bastin, K Stampa 17 T Taylor-Pope, D Patterson 17; R Davey, J Merrick, S Lawn 11 A Richdale, R Irwin, D Wildermoth 21; S Cottam, C Gray, I Taunt, G Fache 23 T Lawson, J Johnson, G Stuart, R Belliss 6. Round 4: J Merrick, K Stampa 23 A Richdale, D Wildermoth 13; M Bastin, T Atkinson-

Watt, S Lawn 12 G Stuart, R Irwin, D Patterson 18; AJ Rowlands, C Gray, I Taunt, G Fache 10 T Lawson, T Taylor-Pope, J Johnson, R Belliss 18. Round 5: S Cottam, K Stampa 16 D Patterson, R Belliss 16; R Davey, T Atkinson-Watt, J Merrick 11 T Taylor-Pope, J Johnson, D Wildermoth 19; AJ Rowlands, C Gray, I Taunt, G Fache 12 A Richdale, T Lawson, R Irwin, G Stuart 13. Final points: Taranaki 15 +13, Whanganui 15 -13.

Development women, round 1: A Murray, M Hona 33 A Webb, K Jaggard 5; M Warren, S Clark, T Needham 16 J Forbes, E Everitt, R Snowden 15; C Hodges, D Chapman, S Taylor, I Taunt 14 K Peeti, M Adams, M Bishop, N Maraku 10. Round 2: L Debieque, M

Hona 32 A Webb, M Bishop 9; C Hodges, A Debieque, T Needham 24 A Murray, N Maraku, K Jaggard 11; M McEwen-Shepherd, J Forbes, A Quay, L Kape 9 E Everitt, M Adams, K Peeto, R Snowden 15. Round 3: M McEwen-Shepherd, A Megaw 8 L Debieque, M Bishop 21; M Warren, S Clark, A Debieque 17 A Webb, N Maraku, K Jaggard 16; A Murray, D Chapman, S Taylor, L Kape 26 E Everitt, M Adams, K Peeti, R Snowden 9. Round 4: L Debieque, M Hona 25 N Maraku, K Jaggard 13; C Hodges, A Megaw, T Needham 15 E Everitt, M Bishop, R Snowden 11; S Taylor, J Forbes, A Quay, L Kape 6 A Webb, M Warren, M Bishop, K Jaggard 18. Round 5: A Megaw, M Hona 22 N

Maraku, K Jaggard 11; S Clark, A Debieque, A Quay 22 E Everitt, M Bishop, R Snowden 8; L Debieque, J Forbes, T Needham, L Kape 26 A Webb, M McEwen-Shepherd, M Bishop, K Jaggard 8. Final points: Taranaki 24 Whanganui 6.

Local news, Local people, local businesses, local sport, local arts and events. Delivered free around the mountain every fortnight.

OPUNAKE & COASTAL NEWS 06 761 7016

Simply Charming by Aithnia Batchelor

The Village Gallery welcomes Aithnia Batchelor to her exhibition “Simply Charming” opening 25 August.

Aithnia describes herself as a “sophisticated naive artist,” working in acrylic, oils and watercolour on hessian, board and canvas.

Simply Charming

A solo Exhibition by Taranaki Artist
Aithnia Batchelor



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Her paintings are bright, detailed and full of joyful subjects, with carefully composed scenes that draw the eye around each work.

Although creative from a young age, Aithnia did not begin painting until she was 44. An art class in Taranaki proved a turning point, when her tutor recognised the strength of her distinctive style and introduced her to colour theory.

When painting, Aithnia says she enters a different world, a colourful fairyland filled with happy and loving things. Through her work, she hopes to bring joy to others and reflect her wish for a happier, gentler world.



The exhibition is on display at The Village Gallery, Eltham, from August 25 to September 19.





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Rock the Bowl returns with a blockbuster summer lineup



Rock the Bowl has become a summer favourite, drawing thousands of music fans to the Bowl of Brooklands each year.

Rock the Bowl is returning to NPDC’s iconic Bowl of Brooklands on 29 December 2026, bringing a blockbuster lineup of international stars and festival favourites to New Plymouth.

Headlined by Aotearoa music legends Fat Freddy’s Drop, global dance music icon Carl Cox, Australian band Ocean Alley, and rising Kiwi indie-rockers NO CIGAR and Coast Arcade, the lineup offers something for every music fan, from rock and dub through to indie and electronic music.

Now in its fourth year, Rock the Bowl has become a fixture of Taranaki’s summer calendar, drawing thousands of locals and visitors alike to one of New Zealand’s most unique outdoor concert venues.

New Plymouth Mayor Max Brough says Rock the Bowl continues to showcase New Plymouth as a city capable of attracting major events and world-class entertainment.

“Events like Rock the Bowl play an important role in making New Plymouth a vibrant place to live, work and visit. Seeing thousands of people having a great time at ‘the Bowl’ is a great reminder of the value these events bring to our community, local businesses and the wider economy.”

Fat Freddy’s Drop

One of New Zealand’s most beloved live acts, Fat Freddy’s Drop have built a reputation for unforgettable performances that blend dub, reggae, soul, jazz and electronic influences. With a loyal fanbase spanning generations, the band remains a cornerstone of the Kiwi summer festival scene.

Carl Cox

Few names in electronic music carry the same weight as Carl Cox. He has spent more than three decades headlining the globe’s biggest festivals and venues, with a reputation for delivering unforgettable live performances. Carl Cox’s appearance at Rock the Bowl offers local audiences the rare opportunity to experience a true icon of dance music.

Ocean Alley

Australian six-piece Ocean Alley have become one of the Southern Hemisphere’s most successful festival acts, thanks to their laid-back fusion of psychedelic rock, surf rock and reggae influences. Returning after

their appearance at the inaugural Rock the Bowl in 2023, their unmistakable summer sound will entertain Taranaki audiences again.

NO CIGAR

Joining the lineup are Auckland indie-rock favourites NO CIGAR. Since forming in 2019, the five-piece have rapidly built a loyal following across New Zealand and overseas thanks to their energetic live performances and distinctive blend of indie, surf and alternative rock.

NPDC Event Attraction and Business Development Lead Neil Fenwick says Rock the Bowl continues to grow as one of the region’s premier summer events.

“What started as a new addition to the Taranaki summer calendar has quickly grown into an event people look forward to year after year. Rock the Bowl has built a reputation for bringing together outstanding artists in a venue unlike any other in New Zealand. This year’s lineup is one of our strongest yet, and we’re looking forward to welcoming music fans back to New Plymouth in December for what will be an unforgettable event.”

Te Puna Umanga Venture

Credit: Andy Jackson Photography

Taranaki General Manager Janet Reynolds says major events like Rock the Bowl play a vital role in attracting visitors to the region.

“We’re proud to support this event through our facilitation of the New Plymouth Major Events

Fund. This packed line-up is expected to draw numerous locals and visitors alike to the iconic Bowl of Brooklands venue, generating economic impact across the region as festival goers explore all that Taranaki has to offer.”

Rock the Bowl is the first announcement for the Bowl’s summer events, and the venue will also host Christmas at the Bowl (20 December 2026) and WOMAD (12 – 14 March 2027).

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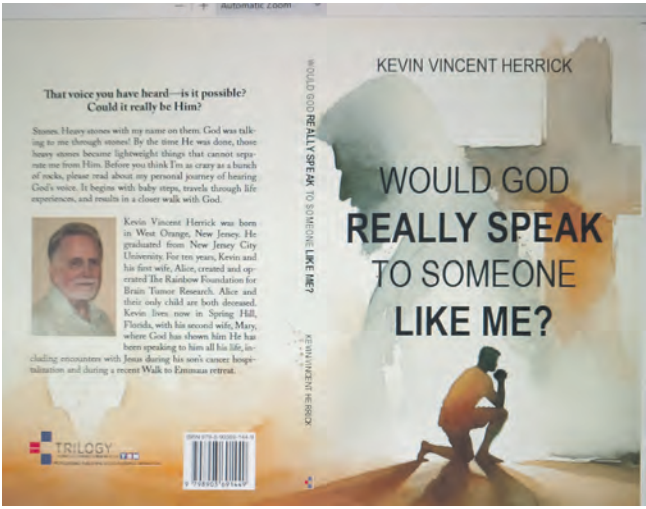
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Book Review

“Would God really speak to someone like me?” by Kevin Vincent Herrick

Kevin Vincent Herrick was born in West Orange, New Jersey., U.S.A. For ten years Kevin and his first wife, Alice, created and operated The Rainbow Foundation for Brain Tumour Research. Alice and their only child are both deceased. Kevin lives in Spring Hill, Florida, with his second wife, Mary, where God has shown him He has been speaking to him all his life, including encounters with Jesus during his son’s cancer hospitalisation and during a recent Walk to Emmaus retreat in chapter 8.

Kevin is a regular guy with no formal theological training. His easy read, 110 page book, addresses one of the most personal and searching questions that can arise in the Christian life: Can God really speak to an ordinary person like me? Even though many Christians believe in God and that He spoke to prophets, apostles and biblical heroes, they quietly



The book cover from “Would God really speak to someone like me.

struggle with feelings of inadequacy and doubt that God can personally guide and direct their lives.

Kevin’s autobiographical personal faith journey addresses this very uncertainty and self-doubt. It’s not a question of does God speak but would God speak to me? His approach isn’t abstract or heavily

theological but offers his readers a relational, caring, practical and pastoral quality that reaches out to them. The author wants you to reconsider any spiritual dryness or distance from God you are experiencing.

Chapter 1 begin’s Kevin’s faith journey with “Baby Steps.” The first step is becoming a believer by receiving Jesus as Lord and Saviour. The next baby step is then hearing and recognising God’s voice just as a baby recognises and trusts a parent’s voice. In chapter 2 he explains how to recognise God’s voice.

Kevin makes it clear throughout his eleven chapters that discernment and critical reflection are vital in any book dealing with personal revelation. Therefore, Kevin begins each chapter with a brief Bible verse and prayer. He encourages the reader to use the Bible and prayer to discern and test that any personal communication is of divine origin. He emphasises that spiritual attentiveness does not assume that every

strong thought, coincidence, feeling or desire is a direct message from God. Not every unanswered question needs to be converted into a supernatural explanation.

As the first editors, along with my wife, Janet, Kevin’s initial draft had chapter 5 as the first chapter. It is the very centre and heart of this publication and in my opinion, one of the most impactful chapters I have ever read. However, the publishers rearranged the sequence of chapters. It’s naughty of me, but, I recommend you might read chapter 5 first. I guarantee you will not want to put this book down or easily forget Kevin’s story and life-changing encounter. I recommend this book to anyone like Kevin who has wondered if God can and does work in their life, whether they now realise it or not.

This book can be pre-ordered on Amazon, Kobo and other online sites and published by Trilogy Christian Publishers a wholly owned subsidiary of Trinity Broadcasting Network. Its release date is September 8, 2026.

Reviewed by Bob and Janet Francesco



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Registrations Open for Aotearoa Energy Summit 2026

Registrations are now open for the Aotearoa Energy Summit 2026, a premier Māori-led forum bringing together iwi, hapū, whānau, Māori organisations, industry leaders and innovators to discuss and shape Aotearoa’s energy future.

The summit will be held on 13-14 October 2026 at the Plymouth International Hotel in Ngāmotu, New Plymouth, in the heart of one of Aotearoa’s most significant energy regions.

As New Zealand’s energy landscape continues to evolve, the summit will create opportunities for Māori to access the latest information on current and emerging energy systems, explore opportunities within their rohe, and engage directly with decision-makers, investors and sector experts.

The event builds on the legacy of the National Māori Energy Summit and reflects a renewed commitment to advancing Māori participation, leadership and influence across the energy sector. The summit’s refreshed identity as the Aotearoa Energy Summit signals a broadened national focus while remaining grounded in Māori aspirations and



Jamie Tuuta, Chair of Pou Tahua, the economic arm of the National Iwi Chairs Forum speaking at the 2025 National Māori Energy Summit.
Photo credit: Te Tōpuni Ngārahu / iStudios Multimedia.

outcomes.

Jamie Tuuta, Chair of Pou Tahua, the economic arm of the National Iwi Chairs Forum, says the summit comes at a critical time for Māori communities and organisations navigating opportunities arising from energy transition and infrastructure development.

“Aotearoa’s energy future is being shaped now, and it is essential that iwi, hapū and Māori organisations are active participants in those conversations and decisions. The Aotearoa Energy Summit creates a space where Māori can access information, share experiences, build partnerships and explore opportunities that align with our aspirations for our future generations.”

“This summit is about ensuring Māori perspectives, values and leadership are front and centre as our country responds to changing energy systems. We welcome delegates from across Aotearoa to join us in Taranaki to contribute to the kōrero and help shape meaningful outcomes for our communities.”

Attendees will hear from leading speakers, participate in discussions on energy transition, Māori energy development, infrastructure

investment, innovation and emerging technologies, and build connections across iwi, government and industry networks.

Organisers are encouraging early registration, with strong interest expected from iwi leaders, Post Settlement Governance Entities, Māori land trusts, papakāinga developers, Māori businesses, government agencies and energy sector organisations.

Aotearoa Energy Summit 2026. 13-14 October 2026. Plymouth International Hotel, New Plymouth, Taranaki.

Registrations are now open. <https://aotearoa-energy-summit.eventsairsite.com/>

For programme updates, speaker announcements and registration information, visit the event website



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Are pleased to welcome Stony River Midwives to our building

We are a group of māmā who are passionate about providing whānau-centred, informed, holistic Midwifery care in Taranaki. We keep our caseload size small so we can provide you with warm, unhurried and compassionate care. We are passionate about home birth for informed whānau who choose it, while we also enjoy providing care at the hospital.

As Midwives who have been living and working in the coastal Taranaki region for several years, we can see the increasing barriers hindering access to maternity care for our birthing whānau who live in rural and semi-rural areas such as Ōkato, Ōpunake, Manaia etc. We love our coastal region and the beautiful community that thrives here and we are now in the position to offer a weekly, walk-in antenatal clinic at Coastal Care Community Health Centre in Ōpunake

~Walk-in clinic for pregnant whānau or those preparing for pregnancy~

Where: Coastal Care Community Health Centre - 26 Napier Street, Ōpunake

When: Every Thursday 10am-1pm - starting 6th August 2026

We will offer the following:

- Free pregnancy tests
- Preparing for pregnancy - Pre-conception information & advice
- Blood pressure checks for pregnant women (this can happen in collaboration with your LMC Midwife if you require more frequent checks and location is a barrier)
- Antenatal clinic appointments for our clients if they prefer this to our Ōākura clinic
- Enquiries and bookings for Midwifery care

For enquiries, find us each on www.findyourmidwife.co.nz - it is best to email the Midwife you would prefer to book with directly or come and see us at our walk-in clinic!

clairecasbymidwife@gmail.com
anna.b.midwife@gmail.com
adrehuntermidwife@gmail.com

Find them on Facebook and Instagram



What's On Listings

SUNDAYS:
Opunake Crop Swap: First Sunday of each month. 2-3pm at Opunake Town Hall.

CHURCH NOTICES



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 4th Sunday at 2pm - Cake & Debate Open church for silent reflection, Pew for You, every 3rd Wednesday of each month, 4-5pm
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: Ben (Dingo) Smith 027 2535526 or Wendy Tolland 022 617 9413
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

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.
Wayoutwest Jiu Jitsu: Juniors 6pm, Adults 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.
Naumai Toastmasters: Every first and third Wednesday of the month. 6.30pm sharp start. St Mary's Anglican Church, 206 Princes Street, Hawera. Find us on Facebook. Guests always welcome. Contact Steve 021538101.
Sober and Drug Support Group: Coastal Care Meeting Room, 7pm
Free singing experience with Taranaki 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.
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.
JULY 25 TO NOVEMBER 1
Kingi Tuhetia Portraiture Award: At puke Ariki Museum
JULY 28 TO AUGUST 22
Capturing the Moment: An exhibition by the Stratford Camera Club. At the Village Gallery, Eltham..
AUGUST 10 TO SEPTEMBER 14
Born Under a Lucky Star: An exhibition of Textile Art at Lysaght Watt Gallery, Hawera..
AUGUST 25 TO SEPTEMBER 29
Simply Charming: An exhibition by Taranaki Artist Althenia Batchelor. At the Village Gallery, Eltham.
AUGUST 29
Mr Moondog Blues: At the Club Hotel, Opunake. 8-11pm.
AUGUST 30
Earth's Greatest Enemy: The hard-hitting documentary by acclaimed film-maker, Abby Martin, in which she connects unrestrained US militarism and threats to life on the planet. Panel discussion, Q&A after. Free – koha and registration appreciated: <https://events.humanitix.com/screening-of-earth-s-greatest-enemy/tickets>
Lunch at 12.00, film at 12.30. At Te Whare Hononga, Taranaki Cathedral, 37 Vivian Street, Ngāmotu-New Plymouth.
NZ Labour Party Public Meeting: Ferndale Hall, Frankley Rd, New Plymouth, 1.30pm.
SEPTEMBER 5 & 6
Spring Flower Show: Hawera Community Centre. See ad for times and details.
SEPTEMBER 10
Pennylane 33rd Annual Bull Sale: 1167 Croydon Rd, Midhurst. 12 noon start.
SEPTEMBER 13
Everybody's Theatre AGM: At the Theatre, Tasman St, Opunake. 2pm.
Wesley Hawera Methodist Church 150 Year Jubilee: See ad for contact details.
SEPTEMBER 15
Kaupokonui & District Beach Society AGM: At The Foundry, High St, Hawera.
OCTOBER 23 & 24
Inglewood Primary School 150 Years Celebration.



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Opunake & Coastal News

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PUBLIC NOTICES



Public Meeting

Sunday 30 August, 1:30pm
Ferndale Hall
291 Frankley Rd, Ferndale,
New Plymouth

Fairer Retirement Village
Repayments and other
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Ingrid Leary
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and Spokesperson for Seniors

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for New Plymouth

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2 Gilmer Terrace, Wellington



M D HURLEY SOUTH TARANAKI VETERINARIAN STUDENTS CHARITABLE TRUST

The Trustees of the Marguerite Dorothy Hurley South Taranaki Veterinarian Students Charitable Trust invite applications for financial assistance to be granted from the Trust.

The main objective of the Trust is to assist in the education and training of persons looking to study either Veterinarian Science or Veterinarian Nursing. It is intended to assist persons who reside in the South Taranaki area. The Trust will also assist qualified Veterinarians and Veterinarian Nurses with funding for further education or research.

Application forms are available from Welsh McCarthy Parker Limited, Lawyers, 52 High Street, Hawera or can be requested by emailing katrina@wmplaw.co.nz after the open date.

Applications open 1st September 2026 and close 30th September 2026 at 4.30pm

Please return all Application forms to Welsh McCarthy Parker Limited, Lawyers, PO Box 434, Hawera 4640 or via email to katrina@wmplaw.co.nz

THE ROBERT AND AILEEN MORTON CHARITABLE TRUST

The Trustees of the Robert and Aileen Morton Charitable Trust invite applications for financial assistance to be granted from the Trust that was set up by the late Robert Morton, formerly of Auroa.

The main objective of the Trust is the advancement and encouragement of education of persons in or about the South Taranaki area. It is intended to assist students with their tertiary education.

Priority will be given to residents of the South Taranaki area.

Application forms are available from Welsh McCarthy Parker Limited, Lawyers, 52 High Street, Hawera or can be requested by emailing katrina@wmplaw.co.nz after the open date.

Applications open 1st September 2026 and close 30th September 2026 at 4.30pm

Please return all Application forms to Welsh McCarthy Parker Limited, Lawyers, PO Box 434, Hawera 4640 or via email to katrina@wmplaw.co.nz

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Manaia LibraryPlus

Thursday 20th August: 10.30am - 12.30pm

Opunake LibraryPlus

Saturday 22nd August: 10.30am - 12.30pm

For further information contact Jill 027 431 0145



Kaupokonui & District Beach Society AGM

Date: Tuesday 15th September

Time: 7pm

Venue: Te W’anake The Foundry
(130 High Street, Hāwera)

All Welcome



26th AGM
Tuesday 22th September 2026

7:30pm at Te Kiri Hall Te Kiri

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Mrs M. Drought, 2 Havelock Street, Opunake
By 20th September 2026

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Opunake & Coastal
News is due out on
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