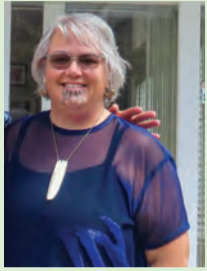




## Inside



A well-deserved award for an outstanding local woman. See page 7.



A colourful New Zealander who will be greatly missed. See page 13.



A serious assault in Opunake. A man is arrested. See page 5.



Cake cutting at the Manaia RSA to celebrate their 90 year anniversary. See page 15.



Does this man deserve the Nobel Peace prize? Turn to pages 4-5.

## Rumours of Cinema 2 closure abound

Currently, there are rumours circulating about the future of Hawera Cinema 2, which is located at 110 Princes Street, Hawera. The cinema is run by a six member Trust board, which was originally set up under the auspices of the South Taranaki District Council (STDC). The Trust was established by deed on 24 April 2007.

Originally the cinema was privately run, but for reasons which included financial viability the Council stepped in and purchased the premises for a million dollars.

Since May 2007 the Trust has leased the premises from STDC and it also receives a \$40,000 annual grant to help with overheads.

Because of the fact that Hawera has a relatively small population base this grant has been a necessary input for a facility which benefits the South Taranaki community as a whole.

There have been some concerns voiced to indicate that, if the closure rumours are correct, it is against a background of limited consultation with the community. There has even been some suggestion that a conspiracy of silence has also been imposed in that certain involved people have been asked not to say anything.

One informed source



Hawera Cinema 2 in Princes Street, Hawera.

had indicated that, rather than let a valuable facility disappear, and a dedicated staff lose their employment, a group of young business owners want to take over the existing Trust with the current Trustees standing down and new trustees elected as that would be a seamless transition.

Unfortunately, the Trust lost its valued (and deserved) registration with the Charities Registration

Board in late 2013, despite their commitment to a definite charitable focus and community spirit, as well as just entertainment. An excerpt from their letter of 3 July 2013 in defence of their status, although ultimately unsuccessful, reflects just what Hawera and south Taranaki are likely to forfeit if the

unfortunate closure rumours prove true: The cinema is an important and much appreciated entertainment facility and social hub in the local community, particularly for our young people. It's a place where the elderly can be entertained in a safe environment. It's an appropriate form of entertainment for Mums and

Dads to bring their children, therefore encouraging family outings. It is one of the few entertainment facilities that isn't alcohol focused where youth can meet up with their mates and enjoy a movie.

That surely says it all.

## STOP PRESS

### Urgent Public Meeting Hawera Cinema 2 facility

There is a meeting being held on Friday 30 January at 5pm in the Community Centre Lounge on Albion Street, Hawera.

The meeting is being held to look at supporting the Hawera Cinema 2 Trust in keeping the Cinema open and looking at any ideas and suggestions for the Cinema to ensure it remains financially viable.

Please spread the word/share this post and come along to the meeting. We would love to see as many of you there as possible.

We need to save Hawera Cinema 2 as it is vital for the community.

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## It’s too easy to knock down buildings

It seems there are two extremely good suggestions concerning Manaia’s historic War Memorial Hall and the multisport centre.

Suggestion One. In reading Mr John Parry who owns a soap factory and is a local identity of this town has suggested to Mayor Nixon the hall becoming part of this centre, plus he has mentioned that there are many funding organisations which could easily save this Council millions upon millions of dollars which really sounds great to me.

Suggestion Number Two. This idea coming from Mr John Yarrow, director of Yarrows Bakeries to donate land next to the Memorial Hall, which could be a really good asset to this centre.

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.

Mr Parry mentioned that in Okara, Whangarei in the 1990s Pilkington’s glass factory closed down. Instead of demolishing the building it became a thriving shopping centre and is still operating today.

I certainly agree with both gentlemen that who have stated that any demolition is becoming extremely expensive and isn’t always an optimal solution, yet still some councils still think that demolition is the only way, instead of thinking positively on how these buildings can be saved and used. There are still some buildings that are beyond saving, yet still councils have to think about what they can be replaced with and what can be put on the empty section.

Many people know that Hawera has many empty buildings. For those thinking about demolition, think very seriously about what these empty buildings can be used for.

Look, there’s been so many community meetings over this issue, so how long before we see something finalised? Remember, the longer this issue goes on for, our building materials will be getting very expensive.

Tom Stephens  
New Plymouth.

## Visitors to Taranaki Maunga

After reading the article (Sunday Star-Times January 4) on the Tourist fees, International Visitor Levy (IVL), and where the money is going, it was interesting that government bureaucrats fight over these funds and where it is going, and it is not just a few dollars but millions of dollars. Of course in New Zealand beautiful places are tourist attractions attracting overseas visitors,

local New Zealanders and local Maori to them. Take Te Papa-Kura-o-Taranaki National Park. Since the NZ Provincial Growth Fund awarded Department of Conservation a hefty \$13.4 million for the Taranaki Crossing Trek, the Mangorei Track/Pouakai Tarns Trek in the past two decades it has increased from 100 visitors (mostly locals) to 20,000 day walkers annually, paying for their visits and using their own transport. When I read Mr Rob Needs, local shuttle owner crowing about how the Taranaki National Park could take 500% more tourists, one would need to ask the local DoC plus where are these people going to park for their visit, and funny there are no local guiding companies on Taranaki Maunga.

Question: when it comes to shuttle providers to our Te Papa-Kura-o-Taranaki what

Continued page 4

## ADELPHOS

Another New Year—2026. *ugit tempus*. Have you noticed how time flies by more quickly when you’re doing something enjoyable or as you get older? But when sitting in a dentist’s waiting room, the minutes can drag on? What does time feel like for a preschooler, parents during school holidays or someone sentenced to 5 years imprisonment? Then, think how you would experience time if you just won \$32,000,000 at Lotto. Each person’s lived experience has a richness and diversity beyond the mere ticking away of time on a clock.

We don’t have time machines to turn back

time. Sure, recalling life’s milestones and positive experiences can provide comfort and connection during difficult patches. However, living in the past isn’t healthy. Winston Churchill famously said, “If we open up a quarrel between the past and the present, we shall find that we have lost the future.” Replaying past hurts negatively impacts our brain health and well-being. It can be energy zapping.

So what can free us from wasting our time in a past toxic time warp that steals our present enjoyment? How about praying (Philippians 4:6-8) or practicing gratitude each new day by saying five positive things that we

## It’s about time

are grateful for or forgiving yourself for past blunders or broken relationships? Sometimes, we’re our own worst critics. Or what about challenging and reframing irrational thoughts that never happen?

Then there’s the future. Worldwide geopolitical unrest, climate disasters and wars won’t disappear if I just worry enough about them. Neuroscientists tell us that the amygdala in our brain tends to focus more on negative thoughts than positive ones. Social media addiction can be a time-wasting brain rot that focuses on catastrophic and dystopian scenarios.

Although our eternal God

created time, we sometimes think He is slow and doesn’t answer our prayers on time. “With the Lord a day is like a thousand years and a thousand years like a day” (2 Peter 3:8, NIV). Like King David we might question God, “Why LORD, do you stand far off? Why do you hide yourself in times of trouble?” (Psalm 10:1, NIV). David didn’t stop praying or thinking that God no longer cared; he was asking God to hurry up and help him. That’s OK.

Lastly, we live in a high-tech 5G revolution demanding instant AI Google answers. Here’s one wise man’s thought about how time works, “Everything that happens in this world happens at the time God chooses” Ecclesiastes 3:1, Good News Bible). Oops. I’ve run out of time. So I’ll leave that thought with you.

Nga mihi nui,  
Adelphos

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Letters to the Editor

Continued from page 2.

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**DOC must get their act together**

I don't blame Ian McAlpine, a mountain guide for over 30 years telling our Department of Conservation (DOC) it's high time they got their act together. It still seems that many visitors and tourists, including experienced climbers are all wanting information before they visit or climb our maunga, as that to me is the reason why we've had so many injuries and deaths, which now stands at 87, which should never have occurred at all, so my suggestions to DOC.

Why hasn't somebody from DOC been available at our Puke Ariki Landings I-Site helping those people who are wanting information about our maunga before they go climbing?

I have stated many times beforehand it wouldn't take much to have printed brochures done and put into our I-Site so people could have some sort of idea and information, like what to wear, what type of footwear to have on, plan your climb beforehand, have some people available if someone gets into trouble, and don't climb alone, which some people have done.

So come on DOC. It's high time your whole management starts taking

a very good look at themselves.

Tom Stephens  
New Plymouth.

**Statistics don't surprise**

Re 1 in 8 Teens sexually abused (Opunake and Coastal News December 18). It doesn't surprise many people with these sort of statistics. One only has to observe what teens especially girls are wearing and how they parade themselves. As Matt Rilkoff of Taranaki Daily News recently portrayed parents have no control any more over their children.

Most teens will wear what they think is best to make themselves more attractive or better than their friends. Sex is used in many adverts and on TV in order to catch your attention. It is used to make you think what is the best shape/ body you must have to be "someone." If teens and others were taught you can only be you, and not try and be the image of someone else, then we would not have the victimisation or sexual attacks that we currently have. Parents - set the rules and the consequences. You are the boss not your children right up to age 16.

Keith Aldrich  
Hawera.

# EDITORIAL: Mr Trump and the Nobel Peace prize

United States president Donald Trump recently said he was worthy of the Nobel Peace Prize because he stopped eight wars. Really?

As the 150 United States aeroplanes flew over northern Venezuela, backed by military helicopters, the inhabitants living in the apartment block that was bombed would mostly have died in their beds. It was 2am on January 3. Estimates vary, but reportedly 80 people were killed (in the operation) with 112 injured. The strike was code named Operation Absolute Resolve. This was not the only civilian building bombed; the Venezuela Institute for Scientific Research was also targeted.

The aim of the raid was to capture the nation's leader Nicholas Maduro and his lawyer wife Cilia Flores. She must have put up a struggle as her face showed signs of being beaten up.

I admit, I don't know too

much about the couple, but the sight of them shackled, including at the ankles, sounded alarm bells. The Deputy leader of Venezuela Delcy Rodriguez called the violent capture "a kidnapping."

Mr Trump acted alone and did not consult either the United States Congress or the Senate before the deadly strike. If he had approached the United Nations he would have been informed that the military strike was illegal, a violation of sovereign boundaries and an act of war: Article 2 (4) of the United Nations Charter

"I am president of Venezuela and a consider myself a prisoner of war. I was captured at my home in Caracas," declared Mr Maduro. If he is an unfit person to be a leader surely that is for Venezuela's judiciary and politicians to decide, not for a much bigger country to take this kind of action with considerable loss

of life.

Mr Maduro is to be tried for narcoterrorism and has already appeared in a Manhattan Federal Court. Is Mr Trump also going to be tried for ordering an action which has cost the lives of many people, including presumably children?

Preceding this raid, boats at sea (Caribbean and Pacific Ocean) have been attacked and sunk also with the loss of many lives; this was also ordered by Mr Trump. The death toll is now reportedly 126 people. Following the attack on one boat the military returned for a second attack and killed off survivors clinging to wreckage.

Mr Trump claimed the boats were bringing cocaine to the United States coastline. Were they? How can he be sure that also included in the attacks were fishing boats going about their legal business, or recreational sailors. Anyway, whatever

happened to the innocent until proven guilty golden rule.

Also worthy of mention was the pre-emptive strike on Iran's nuclear plant, which Mr Trump claimed was in the process of manufacturing nuclear weapons. It is unclear what casualties accompanied this military action. President GW Bush was always threatening the same action, but thankfully never carried it out. But that was about 25 years ago; if Iran are preparing a nuclear bomb they are taking an inordinate time to do so! The country's leaders are far from exemplary (to put it mildly), but it looks like accuracy when they said that their nuclear plant was solely for the provision of nuclear power.

Then there have been the threatened military actions, which so far, have not been carried out. The obvious one has been Mr Trump's threat to take possession of

continued page 5.

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# Serious assault in Opunake, road closed

On Monday January 19 a woman was assaulted in Opunake, allegedly after first being hit by a vehicle. The incident occurred on Ihaia Road around 10.15pm and the road was subsequently closed for many hours. As late as 9am on Tuesday 20 January a section of the road remained closed where there was police tape and a police presence. Vehicle owners (including one of our staff members) who approached the cordon were instructed by a police constable to return to Wiremu Road to find an alternate route to make it to Opunake.

The critically injured woman was taken by Rescue Helicopter to Taranaki Base Hospital, but soon after helicoptered to Waikato Hospital where she remains in a critical condition.

A 37-year-old man was arrested on King Street at 9.45am and charged with wounding with intent to cause grievous bodily harm and remanded in custody. He appeared in Hawera District Court the same day where no plea was entered. He is due to reappear in the Hawera District Court on Monday February 10.



Ihaia Road was blocked off for several hours on January 19-20.



## EDITORIAL

Continued from page 4.

Greenland, using military force if necessary. This invariably would entail extensive bombing with the loss of life of many Greenland nationals. What have these rightful inhabitants of the

island nation done wrong to deserve this fate? A Nobel Peace Prize for President Trump? I don't think so. The leaders of many nations have spoken out against the actions of this president. Missing in moral

action is New Zealand. Why have our political leaders been so silent? All credit to former prime minster Helen Clark to have spoken out; however it should not have been left just to her.

*Rolland McKellar*

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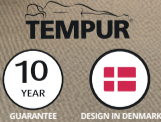
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# Revived Rawhitiroa service remains popular

In a reversal of an earlier role Allan Hawkes fronted up to the Eltham-Kaponga Community Board on Monday. Until last year as a board member he would have been at the table listening to others speak at the open forum. The Rawhitiroa farmer and former board member said he was asking the South Taranaki District Council if the memorial gates at the

Rawhitiroa Swimming Pool could be included in the Council's swimming pool maintenance budget. The memorial gates have in recent years been the venue for what has become a popular and well attended Anzac Day service. "The services have had up around 150 people there lately, considering they had started from nothing," said Allan. "In my opinion the next generation is getting



Allan Hawkes.

more interested in it." The Rawhitiroa service follows on from the Civic and RSA services held in Eltham and finishes with a pot luck lunch. Allan told the board the black paint on the gates was starting to get rusty and they wanted to apply the same coating to them that are on

the Eltham Primary School gates. Allan says the pool which was built with local labour and opened in 1960 was one of the first tiled pools in the country. He said when he was at school Anzac Day services had been held at the pool but health and safety factors like the requirement

to have a lifeguard present in case any children fell into the pool meant these were shifted to the school. When Anzac Day was included in the school holidays these services came to an end. "A few years ago a few families that had been there a long time suggested switching the services to the gates," said Allan. After a meeting with the Council it was decided that a plot of "rubbishy ground" could be developed for the services. "They nicknamed it Anzac cove because of the rocks," said Allan. "It sort of grew its own life." Another recent addition was 42 wooden crosses representing those from the area who had served in the two world wars. Later in the meeting it was remarked that the Rawhitiroa pool is the most used of the rural pools which the South Taranaki District Council administers. South

Taranaki district mayor Phil Nixon said he has childhood memories of picnics at Rawhitiroa. Board member Dave Stewart said he could remember biking to the Rawhitiroa pool. These days everyone gets in a vehicle to go there, but it's still the most used, he said. South Taranaki community services manager Rob Haveswood said the discussion from the open forum would be minuted and taken back to the Council to look at. On an unrelated note, Mr Haveswood said work on the Kaponga Library was on track to meet the Anzac Day target. This would mean that the Kaponga War Memorial Hall supper room, which had served as a temporary premises would be available for use for the town's Anzac Day commemorations. The Council would then consider the future of the Kaponga Municipal Building, he said.



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## Landslides still a risk

New Zealanders are not yet in the clear when it comes to the dangers posed by landslides following the recent severe weather events that hit the upper North Island, according to National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA). The agency says the heavy rainfall will continue to cause impacts including "widespread flooding damage, road closures, and the high risk of further landslides." Dr Tom Robinson, Senior Lecturer in Disaster Risk and Resilience, University of Canterbury comments: "Landslides are historically

New Zealand's most deadly hazard, having killed more people in the last 200 years than all our earthquake disasters combined. As our climate continues to warm, the warmer atmosphere can hold more moisture leading to more frequent and heavier rainfall, which in turn is likely to cause more frequent landslides. Unfortunately, this means we should expect these kinds of storm events to become more common over the coming years. The risk from landslides in New Zealand is only likely to increase. "While we can sometimes mitigate against landslides, this is often expensive and not always possible. Avoidance is often our best

option – not building in locations where landslides are likely to occur. But for existing properties this is challenging, rarely do we 'red zone' a location before an event actually occurs. Even in locations where a landslide has occurred previously and a red zone been implemented, this history can be forgotten and the location re-inhabited, as we sadly saw in Muriwai in 2023. "Over the coming years, we as a nation are likely to face some difficult decisions around how we manage the risk faced by landslides and other natural hazards. Importantly, we need to decide exactly how much risk we as a nation are prepared to tolerate before

we are prepared to retreat away from high-risk locations." Martin Brook, Professor of Applied Geology, University of Auckland, comments: "The 200 mm of rainfall in 24 hours seen in parts of northern New Zealand would easily exceed the rainfall threshold to trigger landslides in many parts of New Zealand. The Bay of Plenty, Coromandel, Northland and Tairāwhiti are always susceptible to shallow rainfall-triggered landslides after intense rainfall. The water weakens the surface soils and underlying highly weathered rock, causing shallow landslides to occur. The

Continued page 7.



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# Service to local government and Maori recognised

Bonita Bigham says she initially thought the email informing her of her New Year honour was a hoax. Bonita (Nga Ruahine, Te Atiawa) of Manaia was awarded the Kings Service Medal for services to local government and Maori in the New Years Honours list.

“When I received the email I thought it must be spam or a hoax. I showed it to (husband) Kevin and said what do you think this is about? He said ring the number. It turned out to be linked to parliament and they assured me it wasn’t a hoax.”

At the time of writing this article she still didn’t know who nominated her.

“When the shock wore off I was very very humbled that people would think I am worthy when there are so many people in our community who do so much. Our community is full of people doing amazing things so it does sit uncomfortably with me to be singled out when there are so many people doing awesome things.”

Bonita was first elected to the South Taranaki District Council for the then Egmont Plains (now Taranaki Coastal Ward) in 2010. She was the Council’s representative on the Taranaki Coastal Community Board, and then served a term on the board after stepping down from the Council in 2019.

In 2022 she was elected to the Taranaki Regional Councillor representing the Maori Constituency. Following last year’s local body elections she was elected the Council’s deputy chair.

She notes the uncertainty in the future of regional councils and the fact that the constituency she represents will be done away with at the next local body election. “The irony is not lost on me that while I received the award for services to local government and Maori, both my roles will be disestablished by



Bonita Bigham with husband Kevin.

the government. It’s been challenging for me to accept the honour, knowing that.” She says the introduction of Maori wards across the country is among the high points of her time in local government.

“It showed the way Aotearoa has matured in its thinking and understanding of the contributions the Maori voice can make at the governance table.”

She says that while referenda had voted for the removal of a number of Maori wards around the country including those on the Taranaki Regional and South Taranaki district councils, they had not been rejected “by a great margin,” indicating an increased appreciation of the value of these wards.

Another high point was the increasing number of women elected to council positions, although she notes the misogyny and harassment many have faced.

“There are obviously some people who find female leadership threatening for whatever reasons.” Another concern is the “huge tsunami of reform” facing local government “on multiple fronts.”

“This puts our very dedicated and talented staff under immense pressure during a time of uncertainty and means the governors responsible for long term planning and budgeting are accordingly in limbo with the unknown outcomes

of these reforms and their impacts on councils.”

Bonita’s award citation lists a myriad of groups and organisations she has been involved with, including, among others, Creative New Zealand, the Local Government Commission, the Taranaki-Whanganui Conservation Board and the New Zealand Geographic Board.

She is still involved with most of these.

“I’ve taken a break from the marae, iwi and hapu space after 30 dedicated years there,” she says.

As a trustee of the Waiokura marae she was involved in the construction of the wharekai and wharemoa buildings.

“It’s allowed our marae to host visitors on a scale we’ve never been able to do so before, and I’ve had a lot of personal satisfaction knowing that,” she says.

A major turning point for her was when 12 whales were stranded at Kaupokonui Beach in 2018 and she was part of the harvesting of bones and parts which was led by whale recovery expert Hori Parata.

This led her to undertake a PhD which included a year studying in Hawaii on a Fulbright scholarship. Her area of interest is how the United Nations Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species, to which New Zealand is a

signatory, along with 290 other countries affects the rights of indigenous peoples and their rights to travel internationally with their taonga.

She says she still has a lot of work to do on her thesis.

“It’s about pulling the threads together and weaving them into a final package.”

Bonita is also widely known as an artist and has been involved in the Toi o Taranaki ki te Tonga arts collective. The gallery they set up in Manaia is currently being used by youth worker Quinton Robinson, who Bonita says is doing much valuable work with the tamariki and rangatahi of the town.

Bonita pays tribute to the support she has received from her husband Kevin.

“Kevin is my backbone. I can’t do any of this work without his love and support and prodding. I am safe and secure in the knowledge that he has my back. We are a unit. While I maybe out the front, I am nowhere and no one without him.”

## Landslides still a risk

Continued from page 6.

landscape often provides evidence of prior landslides, such as undulating surface topography, so rural landowners often are aware of landslide hazards on their land. However, landslides can also occur in steep road cuts so are visible to people, and impact traffic via road closures etc. We are still at the end of a La Niña, and La Niña conditions in the tropical Pacific tend to bring wet weather to northern New Zealand. Indeed, the recent deluge was predicted on the 10-day forecast two weeks ago on various weather websites.”

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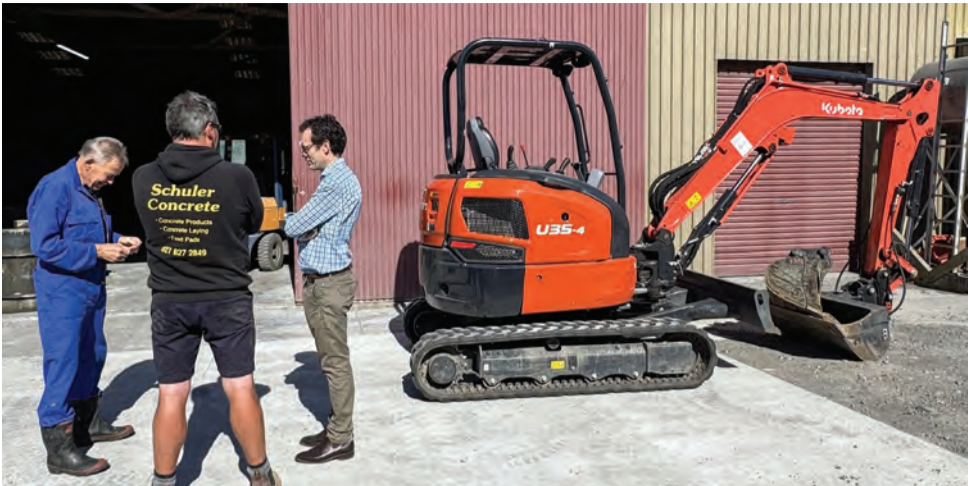
# The state of the nation

Prime Minister Rt Hon Christopher Luxon delivered his annual State of the Nation address in January.

Economic growth remains a priority for the National-led coalition. Inflation, even at 3.1% is far less than the 7% recorded in 2022. Interest rates have fallen significantly, and most home or landowners are paying significantly less every month in interest on their loans.

Having been reselected as the National Party candidate for Whanganui (including Stratford and South Taranaki), I look at growth and the economy through our regional lens. Here is some of what I see for us this year.

The last Federated Farmers Farmer Confidence Survey was laden with good news. At a staggering negative 66% when the last Labour Government left office in



Carl Bates MP (right) with Bevan Schuler (middle) with his new digger.

2023, rural sector confidence has soared to 33% under the National-led Government.

This reflects the reality that the economic recovery is underway. Any change of government would put everything at risk, and all the gains of the last three years would be eroded. RMA reform would cease, and the gains that farmers have made since 2023 would become meaningless.

Global milk prices have rebounded after a series of

pre-Christmas falls. Red meat is at record levels, and last week there was heavy demand for strong wool at good prices. Our farmers are leading the economic recovery.

Even more good news is that it is not just farmer confidence riding a wave. The latest ANZ Business Confidence Survey is at its highest level in 30 years, with a net 74% of businesses expecting better times this year. ANZ-Roy Morgan

Consumer Confidence lifted 3 points from 98.4 to 101.5 in December, the highest level since September 2021.

Leading into Christmas, I visited businesses in the Auroa/Kaponga area. Among the people I met was Bevan Schuler from Schuler Concrete. Bevan was rapt with their new digger which will help him work even more effectively. Bevan said that the tax rebate via the Investment Boost programme made it an easier

decision to purchase this new equipment.

We have also seen the services sector is back in growth mode after two years of decline. Last week, the Performance of Manufacturing Index rose to 56.1 in December, marking the highest level of activity since December 2021.

As we head back to Parliament this week the National-led Government is focused on RMA reform to make it easier to build houses and other critical infrastructure like roads, energy projects, hospitals and schools. We're making more changes to the Justice system to make Kiwis feel safer and continuing the reform of the Education sector to give our youngest New Zealanders the start in life they deserve.

National is on a mission to fix the basics and build the future and we have made tremendous progress so far.

Carl Bates MP for Whanganui

## Bull's terrified escape highlights need for rodeo ban

An 800kg bull named Thunder broke through a fence at the Far North rodeo in Kaitiāia on 2 January in a desperate attempt to escape his torment in the rodeo arena.

Bulls are naturally social herd animals, yet in rodeo bull riding competitions they are singled out and provoked into fearful, reactive behaviour for the entertainment of a small minority.

SAFE campaign manager Emily Hall says rodeo holds no place in a society that values compassion for animals, particularly as it is promoted as a family

friendly event.

"The pain and suffering inherent in the rodeo industry is absolutely appalling. During the last rodeo season five animals were killed due to lameness, dislocated limbs, and other severe injuries" says Hall.

"If animals were tormented and abused in this manner anywhere else there would be serious repercussions, so why is rodeo still getting a free pass?"

SAFE says Thunder's desperate attempt to escape illustrates the torment of animals forced into the rodeo arena, pointing to comments made by Far North rodeo club president, Quinton

King. Mr King has stated "He just wanted to get away. He wasn't running towards people as such, he was trying to run away."

Rodeo has long been condemned by veterinarians and animal welfare agencies in New Zealand and internationally. Most rodeo practices violate the Animal Welfare Act 1999 due to animals being subjected to extreme physical and psychological trauma.

"Our Animal Welfare Act states that the physical handling of animals must minimise the likelihood of unnecessary pain and distress, yet rodeo practices depend on force and rough handling" says Hall.

"We pride ourselves on being a nation of animal lovers, so we must move away from events that subject animals to extreme stress and violence and instead focus on events that promote positive community values."

With the National Animal Welfare

Committee (NAWAC) currently preparing the revised Rodeo Code of Welfare, SAFE emphasises the updated code must bring the industry into line with the Animal Welfare Act.

"The release of the revised Rodeo Code of Welfare will allow Kiwis to voice their opinion on the future of cruel rodeo events" says Hall. "Public consultation is the vital next step."

Five animals were killed during the 2024/25 rodeo season, between 29 December 2024 and 15 March 2025.

In July 2022, SAFE and the New Zealand Animal Law Association (NZALA) jointly contested rodeo in the High Court. The court ruled that the National Animal Welfare Advisory Committee (NAWAC) must determine appropriate animal welfare guidelines. NAWAC is due to approve the final draft of the revised Rodeo Code of Welfare at its March 2026 quarterly meeting.

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# Do property values double in a decade?

Lore tells us that property prices double every 10 years, but the latest data from realestate.co.nz shows this wasn't the case nationally in the last decade. Between 2015 and 2025 New Zealand's national average asking price only increased by 55.1%, from \$556,931 to \$863,747. While the highly sought-after doubling in value milestone may not have occurred nationally, seven of New Zealand's 19 regions did achieve the coveted accolade. Gisborne topped the chart with a 145.5% increase in its asking price from \$284,134 in 2015 to \$697,527 in 2025. Manawatu/Whanganui followed with a 121.5% increase from \$274,032

in 2015 to \$606,985 in 2025 and Central North Island recorded the third highest increase of 119.2% from \$348,659 in 2015 to \$764,316 in 2025. Of the major centres, Auckland delivered the least value increase in the last decade with a 23.5% increase from \$846,730 in 2015 to \$1,045,328 in 2025. Waikato was the standout performer with a 95.9% increase in average asking price over the decade, from \$405,770 in 2015 to \$795,097 in 2025. Vanessa Williams, spokesperson for realestate.co.nz, says while it may be true for some, the last decade has debunked the notion as a general rule. "The idea that property always doubles in value every 10 years is a simplification that doesn't

reflect how the market really works," says Williams. "Property moves in cycles – we have peaks, plateaus, and periods of correction, so doubling in value isn't a guarantee and it will always depend on individual properties and locations as well." "Over the past decade, we've seen significant regional variation and, in many areas, growth has fallen well short of that aspirational 'doubling in value' benchmark. While prices generally rise over time, growth is rarely linear and depends heavily on when in the cycle you buy and sell." Southland (111.3%), Hawke's Bay (105.0%), Wairarapa (100.7%) and Coromandel (100.1%) were the four remaining regions that more than doubled their

average asking price during the past decade. Williams says despite an ever-changing landscape, the value of property continues to increase over the long term. "Over the past 10 years, we've seen the New Zealand property market navigate some of the most dramatic economic shifts in recent history, from a pandemic-fuelled boom to a sharp market reset. In the same period, we've seen significant regulatory change, with the introduction of loan-to-value (LVR) restrictions, the bright-line test, and more recently, debt-to-income (DTI) ratios. Through it all, property has remained a national

conversation and a first-choice of investment for many Kiwis." There's better news for homeowners who bought 15 years ago – the national average asking price has come close to doubling over this period, increasing by 91.9% since 2010, from

\$450,014 to \$863,747 in 2025. Perhaps unsurprisingly, Central Otago/Lakes District recorded the greatest in average asking price over the 15-year period with prices rising 125.1% from \$660,246 to \$1,485,995.



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## Testing begins ahead of sewage pumping stations major upgrade



The Mangati Walkway will remain open while ground-testing takes place at the pump station.

NPDC is taking steps to protect Bell Block's Mangati Stream by upgrading a sewage pump station on the adjacent walkway. The pump station has a history of overflows whenever the station has stopped working, for instance during a power cut or during wet weather events. To reduce the likelihood of overflows occurring in the future, large underground

emergency storage will be installed beneath Mangati Walkway's path. "The first stage of the project is ground-testing – finding out how much water is in the soil and installing monitoring equipment in bore holes," says NPDC Project Delivery Manager Sean Cressy. "The information we gather will help us design emergency storage that is suitable for the

environment." Silt control bags and fences will capture any sediment to prevent it escaping. Pedestrians will be able to walk past the worksite with care during the three-week work. Stage two, the installation of underground storage, will take place in 2026/27. This project is part of NPDC's \$289m investment over 10 years to 2031 to fix the district's plumbing.



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# The human system: powered by electricity and managed by chemicals

The Christmas holidays are already a distant memory so let's start reminding ourselves how we basically work. If humans came with a warning label, it would not say 'Handle with care'. It would say 'Powered by electricity and fueled by chemicals - ensure it sleeps, eats, and avoids stress to work well. Can operate in all weathers.'

Living in South Taranaki, we already know the weather part is doing a lot of heavy lifting. One minute it is sunscreen at Opunake Beach, next minute you are leaning into the wind like you are auditioning for a farming calendar.

We like to think of ourselves as logical, rational beings. Very modern. Very evolved. But under the hood we are basically walking power stations, running



RICHARD HALL

on salty water, electrical signals, and a chemical mix that can turn you into a saint or a snapper depending on sleep, stress, and whether you have eaten anything besides a biscuit since 7am.

### Under the hood

Every thought you have ever had, from "I love this person" to "Why did I walk into this room again?" happens because electricity is doing its rounds through your body.

Your brain is packed with neurons that communicate with tiny electrical impulses. Think of it like texting, except the network is made of fat and protein, and the signal quality depends heavily on sleep, food, and how much you have been white-knuckling your way through the week.

Muscles move because of electricity. Your heart beats because of electricity. If the electricity stops, that is not having a lie down, that is a very permanent nap.

Chemicals do the next part of the job. Neurons do not actually touch each other. There is a microscopic gap, and chemical messengers cross it to deliver the message. These neurotransmitters and hormones help shape mood, motivation, bonding, and stress. In other words, your inner world is like a decent bit of No. 8 wire: it holds things together brilliantly, but it can also do some very creative damage if you're not careful.

### Stress feels real because it is

When your brain senses danger, it does not hold a meeting and circulate an agenda. It flips the switch.

Electrical signals fire through survival circuits and stress chemicals surge. Your heart rate climbs, breathing shifts, muscles get ready, digestion slows down, and your thinking can narrow to a few loud priorities. It is an ancient system designed to keep you alive.

The problem is that your nervous system is not great at telling the difference between a lion and an overdue bill. Add in modern pressures like constant notifications, money worries, relationship strain, and too many tabs open in

your brain, and the system can stay switched on longer than it should.

A tight chest, racing heart, or a 2am sense of doom is not you failing at coping. It is your body doing exactly what it was built to do, but in a world that regularly keeps pressing the alarm button.

### Calm is biology too

If stress is electrical and chemical, calm is as well. You are not trying to talk yourself into calm, you are resetting the system.

Slow breathing can shift signalling in the body and brain. Gentle movement helps use up stress energy. Safe connection, a kind voice, or even a warm cup of tea can help your system register that it is not in danger right now.

This is why a walk on the beach can feel like a full reset, especially when the wind is behaving and not trying to relocate your eyebrows. This is not 'woo-woo.' It is biology.

### Why humans get stuck

After a scare, many animals shake, discharge the stress response, and carry on. Humans are special. We sit very still and think about it for the next twenty years, often at 3 in the morning.

Our brain is brilliant, but that 100,000+ year old 'software' our emotional centre works from can keep the alarm system repeatedly sounding. We replay, analyse, judge, and catastrophise, which is a fancy way of saying we can scare ourselves with our own imagination.

That is how short-term survival responses can turn into longer term anxiety, burnout, or feeling stuck. The good news is that the same system that learned to stay on can also learn to settle again.

### The takeaway

You are a finely tuned biological system built for the savannah, now trying to function in traffic, emails, family life and South Taranaki weather that can deliver four seasons before

morning tea.

Electricity runs you. Chemicals colour your world. When you understand that, you can appreciate that your nervous system (of which the brain is a part) is attempting to do its best – so you need to do your best for it.

Remember the fuel to produce your electricity and chemicals is the food you eat and drink – and the nutrients and micronutrients they contain. So after those blow-out treats over the holidays, look to eat healthily and hydrate well so you can function fantastically and feel amazing.

Richard Hall  
Mind Support

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# An enchanting read

**I really Need a Coffee, Warren G Dawson.**

Before reading this book several people had raved about the book and urged me to read it saying they couldn't put it down. Neither could I. I Really Need a Cup of Coffee was written by Warren Dawson who grew up on a farm "one mile out of Rahotu".

It begins with some funny tales of Warren and his mates, typical farm boys, describing what they got up to in their adventurous youth. There's comical escapades and also touching moments. Of he and his mates over a beer at the beach he says in the book: "Normally we would talk about girls, none of us were ever brave enough to ever talk to them though. We would think we were really cool. Looking back, it turns out at that age we were just not thinking at all."

The former Opunake High School student wasn't great at school. The idea that you need an academic education to succeed, he rebuffs today (he was, it later transpires, dyslexic). "It's a lot to do with attitude," comments Warren when I met him at the Greencow Burger Co in Opunake.

The book which chronicles Warren's eventful life full of ups and downs but through which Warren emerges with courage and optimism, certainly proves this.

Says Warren who now lives in Tauranga, the book came about when he had an accident a year ago and badly damaged his wrist. Being an active and enterprising person and clearly out of



**Warren Dawson second from left with, from left wife Robyn, Clem Coxhead, Donald Anderson, Paul and Bernadette Bourke (both standing), Brian Vincent and Bernadette Gopperth at the Greencow Burger Co in Opunake.**

action for a while he thought what can I do.

"My life's been full of interesting interludes and directions," he reflected at the time and decided to write about his life, something he'd previously contemplated.

He left school at 15 and worked for a while at Rahotu Stores then the Rahotu dairy factory. After a stint at running the family farm with his brother – they didn't hit it off – he decided to forge out on his own and he and a mate moved to Tauranga. A variety of jobs followed and he eventually acquired his own horticulture business. By now married with three daughters, he was cruising along quite happily he thought when life was turned upside down when his wife announced she was having an affair with one of their

employees. "I lost my wife, my house, my kids and then my health," says Warren admitting he had some pretty dark thoughts and began to realise why people come to the decision to end it all. This continued for some time till Warren decided there was nothing for it but to "get up and try again."

Various business successes - and failures - followed

and another chance at love. How he met his second wife was another touching story with Warren's cheek and initiative much in evidence. When he rather overstretched himself and bought a mortgagee sale of a kiwi farm. Fortuitously he averted bankruptcy himself when he couldn't make it work and turned property developer converting it into

a housing estate which he christened Sarona after his hometown farm in Rahotu named in honour of his grandfather who fought in the first World War. By amazing chance some weary Israeli tourists in need of a cup of coffee mislead by directions to a café ended up at Warren's place and recognised the name Sarona. The

serendipity meeting sparked a fascinating pilgrimage to Israel where he retraced his grandfather movements from his detailed letters and diaries during World War 1 in the company of grateful Israelis who remembered the courage of the New Zealand soldiers. Warren and the team commissioned a silver fern sculpture which stands in memory of the 57 soldiers who died at Sarona in Israel. The book took a year to write. The first person who read the completed book enthusiastically commented "I love it Warren" and immediately ordered 10 copies.

So many people have enthused about the book since.

"I wanted people to laugh, cry and think," says Warren. It does all those.

"I really need a coffee is self published. It's available at Greencow Burger Co at 80 Tasman Street, Opunake and at other book outlets round the mountain. There's also a website address: [www.ireallyneedacoffee.nz](http://www.ireallyneedacoffee.nz)

A truly charming book. Amusing, uplifting, interesting and honest, it is a lovely testament to the human spirit. I recommend it highly.

*Bernice McKellar*



**The cover photo of the book was taken by Warren Dawson at the location where he caught the school bus at five years old.**

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## Vandalism of monitoring stations puts lives at risk say TRC

Repeat vandalism and theft from weather and flood monitoring stations could be putting the public’s lives at risk, the Taranaki Regional Council has warned.

The warning has been made after the monitoring site on the Waiwhakaiho River near Mitre 10 Mega at The Valley in New Plymouth was vandalised, the second time the site has been hit over the last three months and the third time since its installation in 2020.

The lower Waiwhakaiho River gauge has now been repaired and New Plymouth police are investigating the incident which occurred on Sunday 11 January at 1.20am.

Craig Pickford, the Council’s Environmental Data Team Leader, says the theft and destruction of monitoring equipment could seriously impact the timeliness of alerts to the public about rising river levels when the region experiences significant weather events.



Vandalism at the Waiwhakaiho Station.

“The Waiwhakaiho River is a particularly dynamic waterway and can change very quickly after heavy rainfall so we need to be able to rely on real-time data if the river is rising and could pose a threat to those living and working nearby,” says Craig Pickford.

“We saw last July just how fast it can change. We had to undertake repairs after a berm near Mitre 10 was washed away as the nearby gauge recorded 535m<sup>3</sup>/sec river flow.

“That monitoring station is now being repeatedly targeted by thieves, with the most recent incident involving the door being ripped off and loss of equipment.

“Our message to those committing these senseless acts is to stop and think about their actions, as these

stations provide the crucial information we need to keep the public informed about when to get to safety in the event of a flood.”

The Taranaki Regional Council works with Civil Defence Emergency Management Taranaki to alert the public about potential flooding when the region experiences heavy rainfall which our rivers to rapidly rise.

While these events are rare, the Taranaki Regional Council maintains a number of flood defence schemes and critical monitoring stations – including on the Waiwhakaiho and Waitara rivers – to protect homes and businesses in at-risk locations which have historically been prone to flooding.

“While we accept some monitoring stations are

damaged by severe weather events, it’s hard to understand why anyone would intentionally put people’s lives at risk,” Craig Pickford added.

Other monitoring stations have also been the target for vandalism and theft including the Waiwhakaiho at Rimu Street and the Mangati at SH3 stations.

These sites are part of a region-wide monitoring network managed by the Taranaki Regional Council which provides real-time environmental data including rainfall, river levels, wind speed, air temperature, water quality and river flow.

If you see any untoward behaviour please let the Taranaki Regional Council or police know.

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# Obituary: Sir Tim Shadbolt KNZM JP

Sir Tim Richard Shadbolt was born on February 19 in Remuera Auckland 1947. He died in Invercargill on January 8 2026. He is survived by his partner Asha Dutt, a lawyer and his young son, as well as older adult children from an early marriage. Asha said: "Today we lost the cornerstone of our family and the man who has devoted himself to promoting the city of Invercargill for almost 30 years."

Sir Tim was mayor of Invercargill from 1993 to 1995 and again from 1998 to 2022. Earlier, he was also mayor of Waitemata City from 1983 to 1989.

He attended Rutherford High School in Auckland where he was a prefect. Later he attended Auckland University.

Feeling strongly about many causes Sir Tim was a prominent protester, leading to his arrest on 33 occasions. Once he was imprisoned for several weeks for uttering the word bullshit in public. He was opposed to New Zealand's military involvement in the Vietnam War, and the 1981 Springbok Tour. He also protested to uphold the rights of Maori people. Apartheid horrified him.

Sir Tim has had led very full life. He has acted in feature films including The World's Faster Indian (featuring motorcycle speed record breaker Burt Munro), Utu and Two Little Boys. He has also been in television programmes such as The Weakest Link and Dancing with the Stars (He and his dance partner came third).

He even set a world record in 2012 for participating in the longest interview ever (up to that time) of 26 hours.

Several books were written (or co-written) by Sir Tim including A Mayor of Two Cities and his best known one, the classic Bullshit and Jellybeans, which sold 30,000 copies.

Interviewed for our March 24 2022 issue in Okato he was asked which of his



Sir Tim Shadbolt pictured in March 2022 while visiting Okato. He was still mayor of Invercargill at the time.

many achievements he was most proud of, he said it was the publication of the above mentioned book "Mine is the only book about that era and I was there at the coal face." One surprise was his view of former prime minister (1960-1972) and governor-general (1977-1980) Sir Keith Holyoake (1904-1983): "He (Sir Keith) refused to allow baton charges (on protestors). He stood for peace."

Sir Tim also mentioned as a highlight his winning of court cases: "A genuine maintenance of civil rights and free speech is important." One case involved a local body politician who sued him over something he had written in a newspaper column. Also sued was Fairfax NZ (now Stuff) and the plaintiff was ordered to pay a large amount. However, Sir Tim never received his financial award and was left with legal fees of \$350,000, which left him virtually broke: "I won the case. After I won the plaintiff went into receivership."

Tim is understandably proud of what he has achieved for Invercargill during his time as mayor.

Free tuition fees for the Southern Institute of technology students was one achievement. "The roll increased from 1,000 to 5000." Also he was proud of free buses, and cheap aeroplane flights: "A direct flight from Invercargill to Auckland is a stunningly good price of \$27, which has stimulated the local economy and basically put Invercargill on the map and focused as an attraction for tourists."

At the time of the 2022 interview Tim was still mayor and heading towards his last campaign in October. He was with Bryan Campbell his campaign manager, as well as Adrienne and Bruce Blair from Auckland. His three friends went for a walk around Okato while the

interview went on and when they returned the entourage looked with interest at the historic St Paul's Church.

Unfortunately, Sir Tim lost the mayoralty, which he said he expected, but he did not expect to miss out on a place on the Council. "I was absolutely shattered."

It was a privilege to have met and spoken with this outstanding New Zealander (I rated the interview as the one which meant the most to me for 2022).


Many people have spoken of Sir Tim's kindheartedness, championship of the underdog, excellent ability,

humour and charisma.

However, the last word goes to the prime minister the Rt Hon Christopher Luxon:

"Few New Zealanders have given such devoted public service as Sir Tim. He served Southlanders and Aucklanders for decades with a smile on his face and distinctive charm."

*Rolland McKellar*




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# BPW’s great Christmas celebration at Dunlop’s wool shed

Wow, what a fabulous night BPW Hāwera had at the rustic Dunlop’s wool shed. The delicious Christmas dinner brought to them by The Recipe catering.

The bottle auction with auctioneer Brent Espin, was so much fun and we hope all enjoyed their mystery purchases. And then there was the fabulous Campbell



A great night out at Ross and Jan Dunlop’s famous woolshed.

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of motivation with a side of laughter and maybe dessert. Come meet the go-getters who’ll lift your spirits. First-timers welcome. Regulars adored. Wine optional (but highly recommended). For more information or membership enquiries, contact bpw.hawera@gmail.com

## Keep calm and your horse will carry on

Horses can smell your fear - and it makes them scared too, new research suggests. Scientists collected sweat on cotton pads from people watching a scary horror movie, or a joyful video clip such as “Singing in the Rain” or Pixar’s “Birds.” They put the sweaty pads, as well as pads with no sweat, in the muzzles of 43

horses and then studied the horses’ responses to events like being groomed or an umbrella opening. Those exposed to human “fear” were more startled by the umbrella and less likely to approach a person or new object than those who smelt “joy” or no sweat. This tells us more about how smells communicate

emotions between species, the authors say, and also that emotion regulation for people working with horses could be important for safety and horse welfare. The next issue of the Opunake and Coastal News is coming out on 12 February 2026.

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# Manaia RSA celebrates 90 years

When thinking of Christmas parades the armed forces and military vehicles do not immediately spring to mind. This was however the case in Manaia when the Manaia Returned and Services Association celebrated 90 years as a branch in conjunction with the town's annual Christmas Parade. Following on from Santa were RSA members with a banner proclaiming the Manaia RSA's 90 years. Behind them were uniformed members of the armed forces and military vehicles driven by members of the Taranaki Military Vehicles Club and others.

The RSA in Manaia is older than 90 years, but before becoming their own branch in 1935, they had acted as a sub branch of Taranaki. After the parade was over there was a lunch at the Robert Gibson Memorial Hall and speeches from South Taranaki District mayor Phil Nixon, Whanganui MP Carl Bates, Wellington- West Coast-Taranaki RSA regional president Tom Cormack and Manaia RSA president Barry Smith. Tom Cormack said the Taranaki-Wellington-West Coast region takes in 40 RSAs from Seatoun to



Military personnel and vehicles helped the Manaia RSA celebrate their 90-year milestone.

Waitara. The current RSA national president Tony Hill had been born in Waitara, and he had taken over from legendary All Black Buck Shelford who has family connections to Taranaki. Tom spoke about his own family links to Taranaki. He lives in Upper Hutt, but his father, who was a career soldier had been born in New Plymouth and remained a lifelong supporter of Taranaki rugby. Tom himself was living and working in New Plymouth in 1996 when Taranaki took the Ranfurly Shield off

Auckland. He recalls family trips to Taranaki where his father would point out the farm near Inglewood where he once worked. Tom's father served in Vietnam and rose through the ranks retiring with the rank of major which Tom says was at the time the highest that someone who had not done special officer courses could hope to attain. He referred to newspaper reports of the founding of the Manaia RSA and the ball which followed where a telegram was read out from Major General Sir Andrew Russell, the RSA Dominion President. Tom said since then the RSA movement has gone through significant changes

during its history. "It's a tribute to local RSAs like Manaia that have persisted in supporting veterans and organising community events," he said. Carl Bates spoke about the need to keep reminding younger generations of the sacrifices made by those who had served their country in keeping alive our freedoms. Mayor Nixon said he is a third generation member of the Manaia RSA. His father had come back from World War I with the Military Medal and his father had spent four years as a prisoner of war after being captured at Sidi Rezegh in 1941. "Everyone has stories and so many of them are inter-connected," he said. "Those

people never shared a lot of their stories with those who didn't go into battle. What they did for us we can't comprehend." Barry Smith paid tribute to the veterans and to those

who had kept the Manaia RSA going in its 90-year history. After lunch the cake was cut by Manaia RSA patron Aileen Joyce and Anne Chisnall.



Manaia RSA patron Aileen Joyce (right) with Anne Chisnall cuts the cake.

## Ethnicity an independent predictor of health needs

Māori are around 1.5 times more likely to die early from preventable causes than Europeans in New Zealand, even after accounting for other factors, shows new research. Scientists tracked the New Zealand population from 2009 to 2018 and adjusted for age, sex, deprivation and health conditions, confirming that ethnicity independently predicted unmet health needs. The researchers said this

shows the importance of including ethnicity along with deprivation and health conditions when the government decides who receives funding for healthcare services and programmes. New Zealand Medical Journal



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# Changes coming to bus services in April



The afternoon Opunake-New Plymouth service is to be reduced to two days a week from April.

A reduction in bus services from Opunake to New Plymouth is among the changes the Taranaki Regional Council will be rolling out in April. The number of afternoon bus trips on this route will be reduced from five days a week to two, and the Opunake-Hawera route will no longer travel via Kaponga.

Other changes include weekend trips between Hawera-New Plymouth and new Waitara-New Plymouth trips, as well as new bus stops in Omata. Eleven new electric buses will also be joining the bus fleet.

The Taranaki Regional Council say these changes are part of a long-term plan to make public transport in Taranaki simpler, more reliable and better connected. They say the updates build on community feedback gathered over the past year

and respond to what people have said they want – easier routes, better access and more options for getting around the region. They also mark the introduction of the region’s new public transport brand, Te Pahi, and the launch of a dedicated new public transport website to make bus information easier to find.

Council Transport Engagement Manager Cheryl Gazley says the new network reflects local priorities and sets the foundation for a stronger public transport system.

“We’ve heard what people want – a network that’s easier to use, more reliable and better connected,” Ms Gazley says.

“Some of the wins in the April roll-out of new services are improved hospital access and better weekend coverage with the introduction of Saturday services between Hawera and New Plymouth and new Waitara to New Plymouth trips.

“And, of course, we’ll be adding an additional 11 electric buses to the fleet, which is moving us closer to our goal of zero emissions by 2035.”

She says some of the changes may be challenging for current users of the services. Some existing services will also be adjusted, reflecting lower ridership on certain routes and times.

“Where practical, we are exploring alternative options such as community and on-demand transport to help maintain access.”

“This update addresses some of the community’s aspirations, though it doesn’t cover everything on our collective wishlist. The changes coming in April, however, represent an important first step toward that goal.”

While government funding limits what can be delivered right now, Ms Gazley says this work lays

the groundwork for future enhancements as investment grows.

“This is just the beginning. With each phase of investment, we’ll continue to grow and refine the network so it works better for those who rely on it every day and for those who may choose to use it in the future.

A dedicated new public transport website will launch at the same time as the new network which Ms Gazley says that this will eventually replace the Transit app currently used by many passengers.

As part of the network update, a two new fare zones are being added in South Taranaki to better align with the wider Taranaki network. The Hawera-Patea trip will now be classified as two zones, reflecting similar travel distances elsewhere in Taranaki, explains Ms Gazley.

“These updates help ensure the distance travelled per zone is fair and consistent across the region.”



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# Council confirms remedial work for Eltham Town Hall



The 115 year old Eltham Town Hall.

At its ordinary meeting on Wednesday 10 December, the South Taranaki District Council confirmed that it will not proceed with further earthquake strengthening of the Eltham Town Hall, opting instead to focus on essential remedial work.

The decision means the Council will continue with planned improvements, including fire compliance upgrades, exterior cladding replacement, and front façade renewals, while cancelling the previously approved seismic strengthening work.

Mayor Phil Nixon says the decision balances safety, affordability, and community service. “The hall remains safe to use, and the remedial work will ensure it continues to serve Eltham well without adding unnecessary costs to ratepayers.”

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## New Plymouth District Council chief executive resigns



Outgoing CEO Gareth Green.

NPDC chief executive Gareth Green has informed New Plymouth District’s Mayor Max Brough and councillors of his resignation from the role.

Green, who joined the organisation in March 2023, has accepted a position as the Manager of the Mayoral Office at Tauranga City Council. A normal notice period will be worked through in the New Year.

Mr Green said that this was not an easy decision for him and his family to make, as the New Plymouth District is a wonderful place to live, and he has enjoyed his time at the Council.

However, he said that the time was right for a change for him and his family and he leaves the organisation well placed to work with the elected members and community to build the next Long-Term Plan.

New Plymouth District’s Mayor Max Brough expressed his disappointment at Gareth’s departure.

“Given that I have worked alongside Gareth for the last three years, I have gained immense respect for his capabilities and delivery of change.”

Decisions will be made early in the New Year about the timing and process for a replacement CE of a similar calibre to be found.

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# Four simple ways to save in 2026

Consumer NZ’s research has found the number of people concerned about the cost of living has doubled in 4 years.

With some small adjustments to your spending habits, though, you could save thousands in 2026.

Here are four simple and practical tips to help you keep more of your money where it belongs – in your pocket.

1. Save up to \$1,680 by changing your car insurance

Switching your car insurance provider could save you as much as \$1,680 a year.

Our car insurance survey found the difference between the highest and lowest premiums for a family was \$140 a month – or \$1,680 a year.

“Car insurance premiums can vary wildly depending on the provider, it is worth taking some time to shop around,” says Jon Duffy, Consumer’s chief executive.

Consumer says other steps you can take to bring down your premiums include increasing your excess or paying an annual lump sum if you can afford to.

2. Save up to \$600 by tweaking your power usage

Small changes in how you use power can lead to big savings.

By adjusting the way you use your heat pump, switching off appliances at the wall and cutting down shower times, you can save hundreds each year.

“Get the most out of your heat pump by setting it between 19°C and 21°C, and regularly removing the filters for a gentle clean with a vacuum. Your room will be warm enough, and you will save about \$90 over the year,” says Duffy.

“Switching to cold water for washing your laundry could save you \$50 a year, and reducing your shower length from 15 minutes to 5 minutes could save you up to \$260 a person each year.

“Switching off appliances at the wall when they’re not in use can save up to \$200 a year, too.”

These small steps make a big difference to your bill.

3. Save \$240 by dropping a streaming service

If you’re paying for multiple streaming services, it might be time to review your subscriptions.

If you’re paying \$20 a month for a service you don’t use much, unsubscribing could save you \$240 a year.

“Streaming services are generally pretty easy to start and stop,” says Duffy.

“Why not make a list of everything you want to watch on a particular service and rotate through different services a month at a time.”

4. Save up to \$350 by changing your power company

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# Tuia Taitonga ki Tai Southlink



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

## South Taranaki Communities Champion Circular Stationery Initiative

South Taranaki has once again shown its commitment to supporting the local community through reuse and sustainability with an overwhelming response to South Taranaki District Council’s Stationery Drive. Councils Environment and Sustainability Manager Cindy Koen says the generosity from the community has made a real impact this year, with a staggering total of 103.22kg of stationery donated — 101.94kg going directly back into the community, and 1.28kg diverted from landfill through TerraCycle. The donated supplies will be delivered to a local school in the community that contributed them, ensuring they reach the tamariki who need them most for the start of their school year. Thanks to support from the Waste Minimisation Fund, Taranaki Timebank Upsewing also produced 50 book bags and pencil cases, all made from upcycled materials, as Council’s contribution to the donations. Cindy says the initiative highlights the power of collective action. “This initiative is a great example of how small actions by many people create a meaningful impact,” she says. “By choosing

to donate rather than discard, our communities are helping reduce waste, support reuse and ensure local tamariki start the school year with the tools they need.” “We’re grateful for the generosity shown across South Taranaki, and we look forward to continuing this momentum throughout the year. It really proves that one person’s old is another person’s gold.” The Circular Stationery Initiative will continue throughout the year in preparation for the start of the school year next year. Anyone having a clean-out is encouraged to drop off good, usable stationery items (pens, pencils, highlighters, markers, crayons, exercise books, notebooks, art books, erasers, rulers, sharpeners, glue sticks, protractors, scissors, calculators, headphones or book bags) to the Hāwera Administration Building or any LibraryPlus in Hāwera, Eltham, Kaponga, Manaia, Ōpunakē, Pātea or Waverley.



### Upcoming meetings

- Workshop**  
*Central Government Legislation Proposals*  
Monday 2 February, 12.30pm
- Workshop**  
*Annual Plan*  
Monday 2 February, 2.30pm
- Extraordinary Council**  
*To consider a Road Closure, Road Widening and Taranaki Triennial Agreement*  
Monday 2 February, 4.30pm
- Te Kāhui Matauraura**  
Wednesday 4 February, 10am
- Policy and Strategy Committee**  
Monday 9 February, 1pm
- Water Services Committee**  
Wednesday 11 February, 1pm
- District Plan Committee**  
*Plan Change 4 Hearing*  
Monday 16 February, 10am
- District Plan Committee**  
*Plan Change 4 Hearing*  
Tuesday 17 February, 9am
- Risk and Assurance Committee (Mercer)**  
Wednesday 18 February, 11am
- Extraordinary Council**  
*Parking Bylaw Review Hearing*  
Monday 23 February, 3pm
- Eltham Drainage Committee**  
Wednesday 25 February, 10am
- Ordinary Council**  
Wednesday 4 March, 4pm



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

### Sport NZ Rural Travel Fund open for applications

Applications for financial assistance under the Sport NZ Rural Travel Fund are now open. 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](http://www.southtaranaki.com/funding), at Te Ramanui o Ruapūtahanga (121 High Street, Hāwera), from your local LibraryPlus or by emailing [funding@stdc.govt.nz](mailto:funding@stdc.govt.nz). Applications close at 5pm on Wednesday 18 February.

### Have Your Say: Consultations open for feedback

Council currently has two consultations open for community feedback:

- Proposed Speed Management Plan.
- Pātea South Development.

To have your say, head to [www.southtaranaki.com/consultations](http://www.southtaranaki.com/consultations) or scan the QR code below:



### Paepae in the Park this Waitangi Day - 6 February!

Paepae in the Park is being held in Pātea again this Waitangi Day! This smoke and alcohol-free, whānau-friendly event includes live performances, food and craft stalls, activities for all ages groups and health checks delivered by local health providers!

Head to the Aotea Waka at Memorial Park Pātea, from 10am till 4.30pm on Friday 6 February.

For more information, check out the Paepae in the Park Facebook page.



### Waitangi Day Kerbside Collection

Kerbside collection will continue as normal over the public holiday, so please put your bins out on your usual day.



Tuia Taitonga ki Tai

Southlink



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

## Clip Your Lid

Wheelie bins **will not be collected** if it the lid isn't closed or clipped, or if there is rubbish sitting on top of it.



## Overfull Bins won't be collected from 1 February

From 1 February, overfull bins out for kerbside collection will no longer be collected. Since the changes to kerbside collection, the contractor has given residents a grace period to settle into the new system by collecting overfull bins. However, as of February, South Taranaki District Council Solid Waste Bylaw standards will be followed, and overfull bins will not be collected. Overfull bins pose a risk of litter in our roads, safety risks to staff and public, and challenges with effective service delivery. To ensure a clean and safe collection process, bins must have the lid fully closed.

To ensure your bin is collected:

- The lid must be able to close completely.
- Make sure extra items are not placed on top or beside the bin.

What happens if my bin isn't collected?

- In the first instance, your uncollected bin will have a red tag on it explaining that it was not collected due to it being overfull.
- In the second and third instance, your bin will have a red tag, which will also be

followed up by the Council.

If you have excess waste, please consider:

- Fill up your bin and then take the excess to your local transfer station (free of charge for recyclable materials, or for a fee for general waste).
- If you find that you need a lot more capacity than the current Council service offers, residents are able to buy an additional bin for general waste collection. If you are interested in this option, please touch base with Council by calling 0800 111 323.

Thank you for helping us keep our community clean and our solid waste services effective!

For more information on how to sort your waste, visit [www.southtaranaki.com/solidwaste](http://www.southtaranaki.com/solidwaste) or scan the QR code:



# Keeping up with the Community Summer Pools

Council is proud to provide towns around the district with community pools, free of charge, that open during the summer months. As the school holidays draw to a close, Council will be updating the community pool open hours as below:

### Rāwhitiroa

Open hours starting from 2 February

Monday.....4pm - 7pm  
Tuesday.....4pm - 7pm  
Wednesday.....4pm - 7pm  
Thursday.....**CLOSED**  
Friday.....4pm - 7pm  
Saturday.....12noon - 7pm  
Sunday.....12noon - 7pm

### Eltham

Open hours starting from 2 February

Monday.....**3.30pm** - 7pm  
Tuesday.....**CLOSED**  
Wednesday.....3.30pm - 7pm  
Thursday.....3.30pm - 7pm  
Friday.....4pm - 7pm  
Saturday.....12noon - 7pm  
Sunday.....12noon - 7pm

### Kaponga\*

Open hours starting from 2 February

Monday.....3.30pm - 7pm  
Tuesday.....3.30pm - 7pm  
Wednesday.....3.30pm - 7pm  
Thursday.....3.30pm - 7pm  
Friday.....3.30pm - 7pm  
Saturday.....12noon - 7pm  
Sunday.....12noon - 7pm

### Manaia

Open hours starting from 2 February

Monday.....3.30pm - 7pm  
Tuesday.....3.30pm - 7pm  
Wednesday.....3.30pm - 7pm  
Thursday.....3.30pm - 7pm  
Friday.....3.30pm - 7pm  
Saturday.....12noon - 7pm  
Sunday.....12noon - 7pm

### Pātea

Open hours starting from 2 February

Monday.....3.30pm - 7pm  
Tuesday.....3.30pm - 7pm  
Wednesday.....3.30pm - 7pm  
Thursday.....3.30pm - 7pm  
Friday.....3.30pm - 7pm  
Saturday.....12noon - 7pm  
Sunday.....12noon - 7pm

### Waverley

Open hours as of 19 January

Monday.....**CLOSED**  
Tuesday.....**CLOSED**  
Wednesday.....3.30pm - 7pm  
Thursday.....3.30pm - 7pm  
Friday.....3.30pm - 7pm  
Saturday.....12noon - 7pm  
Sunday.....12noon - 7pm

## Stay up to date with the summer pool opening hours!

If you want to stay up to date on the commuity summer pool open hours, visit [www.southtaranaki.com/summerpools](http://www.southtaranaki.com/summerpools) or follow the Hāwera Aquatic Centre Facebook page.

\*Please note the Kaponga Pool hours will change again on 9 February. Check Council's website for the new times.

# Pukeiti and Tūpare retain top garden rating

Taranaki regional gardens Pukeiti and Tūpare have both retained their high star ratings in the latest New Zealand Gardens Trust (NZGT) assessments. The independent assessments measure gardens against national and international standards, with judges praising the consistent quality, strong horticultural practices and ongoing development at both sites.

At Pukeiti, judges commended the garden's commitment to research and experimentation in a challenging environment, the introduction of new species and the care taken with hard landscape features that enhance the visitor experience. The garden was noted as sitting just below the six-star threshold.

Tūpare was awarded six stars, the highest possible rating. It was described by judges as a pleasure to revisit, with praise for the craftsmanship of the gardening team, the striking

labyrinth on The River Flat and the detailed planting throughout the garden and glasshouse. The assessment also highlighted the value of mentoring between experienced horticulturalists and emerging designers.

Taranaki Regional Council Gardens Manager Stuart Robertson said the results reflect the dedication of the teams behind both gardens.

“Recognition at both a national and international level is a strong endorsement of the work being done across our regional gardens. These results highlight the skill, care and long-term commitment of our gardening teams.”

Tūpare Head Gardener Nick Lelean said the assessment acknowledged the garden's continued evolution.

“It's encouraging to see the judges recognise both the restoration of historic features and the innovative work being developed by the team.”

Pukeiti Head Gardener Kristian Davies said the feedback was rewarding given the site's unique conditions.

“Having the judges acknowledge our planting design and experimentation confirms we're heading in the right direction.”

The NZGT star ratings provide visitors with an independent measure of quality and help reinforce Pukeiti and Tūpare's reputation as standout gardens within the region.




The Pukeiti Gardens Team.



The Tūpare Gardens Team.


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## Publication Dates for 2026

JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL
S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28	S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30
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**DEADLINES:**  
EDITORIAL - 5pm Thursday prior to publication.  
DISPLAY ADVERTS - 5pm Friday prior to publication.  
CLASSIFIEDS - 3pm Monday prior to publication.  
Adverts and readers' contributions may be phoned, emailed, posted or dropped into the Opunake & Coastal News at 23 Napier St, PO Box 74, Opunake.  
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# Taranaki farmers win back voice on council committee

Federated Farmers will keep a farmer representative on a key Taranaki Regional Council Operations and Regulatory Committee.

In the first week of November, the newly elected council ended Federated Farmers' representation committee, which oversees resource consents and compliance monitoring.

At a council meeting attended by Federated Farmers Taranaki leaders and members, a majority of councillors voted to again offer a seat on the committee to a Federated Farmers representative.

This came after a motion from second-term councillor Donna Cram. "We're thrilled the council has recognised how important it is to have



Taranaki Fed Farmers president Leedom Gibbs.

practical, on-the-ground knowledge at the table when shaping decisions that affect the region," Federated Farmers Taranaki president Leedom Gibbs says. "Taranaki Regional Council's earlier decision

was unfair and made without warning or consultation, overlooking a community whose work underpins the local economy.

"But credit to them - they've recognised the value of Federated Farmers and reversed their earlier stance."

"This is a working arrangement that's served the region well for more than 30 years - and to say farmers were disappointed is a huge under-statement," Gibbs says.

"The council has a strong track record of 'working with people', and the November decision was a serious slip-up and disservice to the rural community."

The seat will be held by Nick Brown, Federated Farmers Taranaki meat and wool chair.

"Nick and family members won the 2020 Ballance Farm

Environment Award for Taranaki, and he and his partner Sophie have just won Taranaki Regional Council's Environmental Leadership in Farming Award," Gibbs says.

"So, we couldn't ask for a better farmer to speak up for us around the council table.

"This hiccup in the relationship with the regional council is behind us.

"Through Nick, we're looking forward to our continued work with Taranaki councillors to achieve the best outcomes for the environment, food production and local jobs."

# Federated Farmers names new chief executive

Federated Farmers has appointed Mike Siermans as its new chief executive.

Siermans has been the organisation's interim CEO since September last year, following Terry Copeland's departure after seven years in the role.

Federated Farmers president Wayne Langford says Siermans brings extensive senior leadership and commercial experience that set him apart from other candidates.

"This is a significant appointment for Federated Farmers. We conducted a significant search for the right person, with many strong candidates having the experience and qualities we are looking for in a CEO," Langford says.

"Having worked closely with Mike over the last few months, I'm confident we've found the right leader for our team who will help us deliver our ambitious strategy for membership growth.

"Mike's experience in sales, marketing and corporate management will be a huge asset for our organisation. He understands that strong advocacy needs to be backed by sharp commercial nous."

Langford says he's looking forward to working



Mike Siermans. Federated Farmers chief executive.

with Siermans and his team to make sure Federated Farmers is a well-oiled, modern machine set up to deliver outcomes for farmers.

"Federated Farmers is sitting in a really strong position. We've got a clear vision, a strong strategy, and an exceptionally talented team helping to deliver it.

"The organisation's results speak for themselves, with clear messaging, a long list of major policy wins, and a membership base growing for the first time in a generation.

"It's now Mike's job to pick that up and continue to build on that platform."

Before joining Federated Farmers, Siermans built a commercial career across fast-moving consumer goods, pharmaceuticals, and technology.

He held senior sales and marketing roles at Douglas

Pharmaceuticals, Pfizer Animal Health, and most recently at Taura Natural Ingredients.

Siermans sees his broad commercial experience as central to his role at Federated Farmers.

"Federated Farmers is a very special organisation that's played a major role in New Zealand's history over the last 125 years," Siermans says.

"My job as CEO is to make sure we've got the right strategy, team and culture that's going to set us up to succeed for the next 125 years.

"That means we'll continue to modernise the organisation, with a real focus on creating sustainable revenue streams and finding new ways to grow our products and services.

"I want to make sure Federated Farmers has the resources to keep employing the best advocates, communicators and policy experts, so we can deliver real results for Kiwi farmers.

"Federated Farmers has always been the true voice of farming in New Zealand and I want to play a role in helping make that voice even stronger."

Siermans and his wife live in Tauranga, and they have three adult children.

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# Network of trained veterinarians being established for potential biosecurity outbreaks

Minister for Biosecurity Andrew Hoggard has announced a partnership between the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) and The Veterinary Council of New Zealand (Vet Council) to establish VetNet-Biosecurity, a network of trained veterinarians that can quickly respond in major biosecurity events.

MPI's Biosecurity New Zealand Tiakitanga Pūtaiao Aotearoa works to prevent exotic pests and diseases from significantly damaging the country's economy, environment, and way of life. New Zealand's veterinarians are a vital part of this system, providing early detection, veterinary care, and analysis.

VetNet-Biosecurity has



skills to a wide variety of biosecurity scenarios, such as foot and mouth disease.

Vet Council CEO and Registrar Iain McLachlan said the Vet Council would be encouraging all veterinarians to take advantage of the training. Given the nature of the potential biosecurity issues, it is expected there will be a higher uptake from large animal veterinarians.

“Veterinarians are the professionals working at the frontlines on our farms and in clinical practice, so their skills will be essential in any biosecurity response,” he says. “Not only are they working with animals, so they can detect and report warning signs early, they are trained to provide treatment and have built trusted relationships in their communities and the wider veterinary sector.”





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been formed with the Vet Council to ensure a network of trained veterinary professionals can be called upon to provide an immediate and strong response if New Zealand was to face a biosecurity emergency such as foot and mouth disease (FMD).

A significant biosecurity outbreak would impact New Zealand's people, economy, and primary industries. Veterinarians play an important role in maintaining and protecting our animals and primary industries by reporting suspected cases through MPI's exotic pest and disease hotline and by providing trusted advice and clinical management.

MPI will provide free training through the Vet

Council for all New Zealand-registered veterinarians. Training will involve veterinarians applying their



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# Fonterra looks south for organic farmers

Fonterra’s organic business is inviting applications from farmers in the South Island.

The new South Island recruitment of farmers interested in converting as well as existing organic farms will initially focus on those located around Southland and up to the Canterbury region.

This is in addition to continuing to recruit more organic farmers in the North Island, where more than 100 farms are currently part of the Fonterra Organic Programme.

Anne Douglas, Group Director for Fonterra Farm Source, says the expansion into the South Island is another positive news story for the Co-op.

“We already have a strong performing organic business but have more room for growth based on increasing demand from customers around the world,” says Douglas.

“Our plan is to be able to process organic dairy products at our Stirling



Fonterra are looking to Organic farmers for supply.

site from the 2028/29 season, with the recruitment process starting now to allow time for converting farmers to achieve organic

certification.” Before work commences at Stirling to enable the segregated processing of organic milk, the Co-op is

looking to achieve minimum recruitment targets in the South Island that would ensure operational efficiencies.

“Expanding the programme seeks to offer South Island farmers another supply option and is also expected to benefit all Fonterra farmers based on the positive contribution our organic business makes to the wider Co-op’s earnings,” adds Douglas.

In recent years, the global organic dairy category has shown consistent retail sales value growth year-on-year.

Andrew Henderson, Fonterra’s General Manager Organics, says the Co-op offers support for its shareholding farmers throughout their transition to organic.

“Our support package includes conversion incentives, advice, networking opportunities and linking farmers up with peers who can mentor them through the process,” says Henderson.

“Organic farming might not be the right fit for all shareholders, but for those interested in converting it

has the potential to unlock additional returns.

“For example, since the Organic Milk Price was first established in 2016/17, it has delivered an average premium of ~\$2 per kgMS above the Farmgate Milk Price. There’s also the potential for lower input costs that are typical in New Zealand’s grass-fed organic systems.”

Fonterra’s organic business has been running since 2002, with Hautapu, Morrinsville and Waitoa UHT producing the majority of the Co-op’s organic dairy products.

The Organic Milk Price was introduced in 2016/17 to provide suppliers with a market-based return for their organic milk solids.

Since the 2021/22 season, the programme’s fully certified shareholding farmers have received an Organic Milk Price of more than \$10 per kgMS.

New record highs have been set for the past three years on the back of growing demand, culminating in a final payout of \$12.35 per kgMS last season. The current Organic Milk Price forecast for the 2025/26 season is \$13.10 per kgMS.

“At the heart of this business are farmers who are passionate about the principles of organic farming and who create goodness for customers and consumers around the world that value organic dairy,” says Henderson.

## Farms that use pesticides are home to fewer birds

French researchers compared pesticide purchases by French farms with records of bird numbers for 64 different species and found 80% of the bird species were less abundant where pesticide purchases were higher. The results suggest pesticides are harming birds, both those that specialise in living on farms and other species who are more occasional visitors, the scientists say. They add that future research should investigate the toxic impacts of pesticides on birds more thoroughly to determine how these chemicals are disrupting their food webs, and what the long-term effects on bird populations

could be. For now, is the best way to protect minimising pesticide use wildlife, they conclude.



A NZ Fantail. (Not French)



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# Animal welfare technology research wins award

Animal welfare is of paramount importance to New Zealand's dairy industry, with consumers increasingly interested in how food is produced, not just the quality of the final product. International customers like Nestle, are placing greater emphasis on sourcing products from sustainable and efficient farms, with animal welfare now recognised as a key pillar of sustainability. It is now vital for New Zealand dairy farms to demonstrate high levels standards of animal care on-farm. Understanding how cows interact with their



**Stacey Hendriks.**  
**DairyNZ**  
environment is pivotal, and increasingly, technology is helping with this.

DairyNZ scientist Dr Stacey Hendriks has studied the behavioural and environmental needs of grazing dairy cows and reviewed technology-enabled indicators that apply particularly to New Zealand's pasture-based dairy cows.

Her research won her the prestigious T.R. Ellett Agricultural Research Trust Emerging Scientist Award at the 2025 International Precision Dairy Farming Conference held in Christchurch in December.

Hosted by DairyNZ, the event was the first time the event had been held in the Southern Hemisphere. It was attended by almost 400 farmers, researchers, advisors, and technology developers from 22 countries.

During her presentation at the conference, Stacey showcased the potential use of technology in monitoring animal welfare for grazing dairy cows, emphasising a shift from traditional, subjective measures to more objective, data-driven approaches.

Historically, animal welfare assessments in dairy farming have relied on animal-based indicators like body condition score and coat condition. While often

considered the gold standard for evaluating the health and welfare of dairy cows, they come with significant limitations.

"Animal-based indicators are subjective, require trained assessors, and only provide a snapshot of an animal's experience at a given moment," explains Dr Hendriks.

Additionally, many of other indicators have been developed for use on housed cows, making them less applicable to the unique needs of New Zealand's pasture-based grazing dairy cows.

Dr Hendriks and her research team at DairyNZ identified animal-based welfare indicators specifically suited for New Zealand's pasture-based dairy systems, and then categorised these based on feasibility, validity, and potential for wider uptake.

"We found that technology can play a significant role in improving the scalability and real-time monitoring of animal welfare," says Dr Hendriks.

The team found most practically feasible indicators related to health and nutrition while fewer options were available for assessing the physical environment and behavioural interactions (both human and animal interactions and cows' social behaviours).

The team identified seven indicators related to the physical environment and five focused on behavioural interactions, which can now be measured using commercially available technologies.

Interpreting animal welfare based on individual behaviours, however, is complex.

"Lying behaviour, for example, can vary significantly. Both increases and decreases in lying time have been observed in cows experiencing clinical health issues or lying deprivation. This highlights that the relationship between behaviour and animal welfare is not always linear and is influenced by many factors," she says.

As a result, future research

aims to explore more comprehensive approaches, such as combining multiple behaviours and other physiological and environmental data, to provide a more complete picture of a cow's lived experience.

Dr Hendriks sees a promising future for the integration of advanced analytics like machine learning into building a bespoke tool for pasture-based welfare assessment. She says that by combining multiple data streams from behaviour to environmental conditions, researchers could develop composite models that offer a more nuanced understanding of animal welfare.

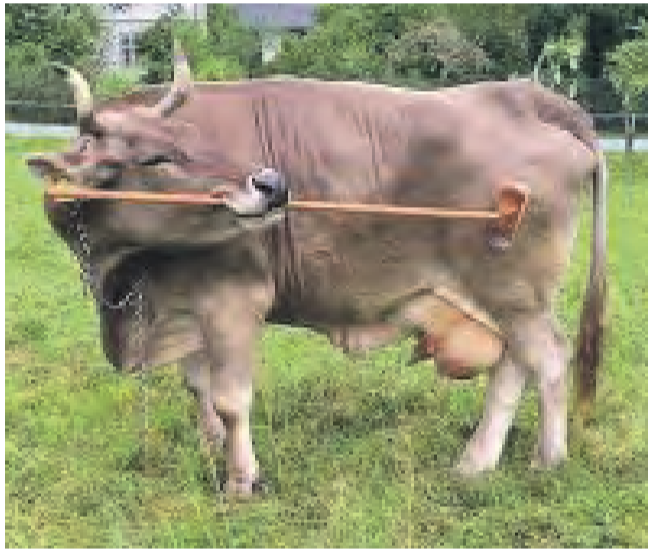
"We believe technology-enabled indicators could provide real-time, scalable

monitoring solutions for pasture-based welfare assessment," she says.

"If technology can also alert farmers to potential welfare challenges, such as heat stress, it allows them to take proactive steps to mitigate the problem. This not only improves animal welfare but can also result in economic benefits, like reduced milk production losses."

By focusing on providing farmers with timely and relevant information, Dr Hendriks believes that technology can complement traditional stockmanship, empowering farmers to make informed decisions that improve both animal welfare and farm performance, while demonstrating the high standards of animal care on New Zealand dairy farms.

## Can cattle use tools?



**Veronika, a 13-year-old brown Swiss cow living in an Austrian mountain village, has blown scientists away with her ability to use a broom to scratch herself.**

Behavioural tests with a pet cow show for the first time that cattle are capable of versatile tool use, say Austrian researchers. They gave a broom to Veronika, a cow known to scratch herself with a stick, and recorded how she picked it up and used it. She used the brush to scratch areas like her back with forceful movements and used the stick end more carefully for sensitive areas like her udder. The study

authors say this is the first experimentally verified use of tools by a cow, but this capacity may be more widespread - though, unlike Veronika, cows in 'impoverished' farm environments may not get the opportunity to show it. Livestock intelligence might have been underestimated due to gaps in observation, they say.

Current Biology

Our next issue is 12 February

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# Horo selected for Black Jacks

It took three attempts from New Zealand bowls coach Michael Kernaghan before Rahotu's Camron Horo decided to answer his telephone late on the evening of January 13.

Thankfully, Kernaghan had enough resolve to keep trying and thankfully Horo eventually plucked up enough courage to answer the call from a number unknown to him.

Horo was half-asleep, which partly explained why he couldn't believe the news: he had been selected to represent the Black Jacks at the Nations Cup in Kaula Lumpur on February 15-18.

It means that Horo, aged just 20 years, will become a full-international, following a rapid rise in recent seasons.

New Zealand are sending six men and three women to the event, in what many are considering is the final trial before the side for the Commonwealth Games, which commences on July 23 in Glasgow, is selected.

Three men and three women will make that trip, plus Para players, which will almost



Camron Horo. Bowls New Zealand.

certainly include Oakura's Kurt Smith.

"I couldn't sleep afterwards," Horo, who is in his eighth season of bowls, said. "I'm pretty stoked. It is very unexpected. I didn't think it would happen this quick."

Horo will lead in the pairs in the New Zealand Silver side for Australian-based Ali Forsyth. Shannon McIlroy, New Zealand's singles player at the past three Commonwealth Games, will play the four-bowl discipline.

In the Black team, Aiden Takarua plays with the singles, with Tony Grantham and Keanu Darby the pair.

The New Zealand women's team predictably contains established internationals Tayla Bruce, Selina Goddard and Katelyn Inch.

Horo, who splits his time

between the Rahotu and Paritutu clubs, has collated an impressive CV in his relatively short tenure in bowls. He has four Taranaki titles, including last year's open singles, has represented New Zealand Maori side at the 2024 Oceania Challenge, has won back-to-back New Zealand under-21 titles and then performed with distinction at the world indoor championships in Ireland late last year.

There he won the mixed pairs with Briar Atkinson and narrowly lost the semifinals in the men's singles. He was also Taranaki's best-performed player at the recent Dominion in Christchurch, making the quarterfinals of the singles.

Horo becomes the 119th man capped for New Zealand and the eighth to achieve the feat while affiliated to Taranaki. The others have been Edward Leach (cap 4), Bill MacArthur (49), Dave Baldwin (51), John Murtagh (60), Jim Christie (68), Maurice Symes (71) and Brian Baldwin (86).

# Barnes recommits to Taranaki Bulls

Yarrows Taranaki Bulls Head Coach Neil Barnes has re-signed with Taranaki Rugby for the 2026 NPC season.

Barnes has been Head Coach since 2021, and in that time has taken the side to an unbeaten 2021 NPC season, its second ever NPC championship in 2023 and a memorable Ranfurly Shield tenure between 2024-2025.

"Barnesy is a Taranaki rugby legend, both for what he's done on the field and in the local rugby community," says Taranaki Rugby Football Union CEO Jimmy Fastier.

"He is a huge asset at all levels of our rugby programme; he has built a winning culture within the playing group and is incredibly invested in all levels of our local game - always eager to develop players from high school and



Neil Barnes.

club level and help them achieve bigger and better things."

His support staff have also benefited hugely from his guidance and experience, with Assistant Coaches Jarrad Hoeata and Brad Cooper, Team Manager Aaron Moore and Strength & Conditioning Coach Sam Ritchie all progressing to roles with the Chiefs and Hurricanes respectively in recent years.

"I'm very proud of what we've achieved, as a group at Taranaki Rugby, right across our province in the last five years," Barnes says.

"As for the Yarrows Taranaki Bulls, developing an innovative, but successful brand of rugby to play, has been exciting and rewarding for all to be involved in. What doesn't sit well with any of us though, is we have bowed out of the competition at the quarter final stage two years in a row now, and that needs to change."


"That challenge still excites me, I'm still motivated to achieve more here, whether it's winning titles, or helping players grow to the next level. That day those motivation levels drop, or the players grow tired of me, and need a change, I'll happily return to the farm

and play more golf."

Head Strength & Conditioning Coach Jono Hayes and newly appointed Academy Manager Teihorangi Walden will be working closely with Barnes in the High Performance space.

With Hoeata and Cooper on Super Rugby Pacific duty for the first half of the year, Barnes will be leaning on a couple of experienced local coaches, Leo Crowley, and former Māori All Black and Japan international Bryce Robins to support wider training group sessions.

Taranaki Rugby Coach Development Lead Mike Kainga will continue as Scrum Coach over and above his day-to-day role of upskilling grassroots rugby coaches.



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# Booker Wins Superstock Grand Prix

Local Superstock driver Hamish Booker won the Mountain Motors New Zealand Superstock Grand Prix after two evenings of tough racing at the Five Star Liquor Stratford Speedway on January 9-10.

With entries hovering around the sixty-four car mark in the days leading up to the event, it was an eventual field of sixty of New Zealand's best Superstocks that rolled through the Speedway gates on Friday to attempt to make one of the twenty-four qualifying spots for Saturday's finals.

After three tough qualifying races for each of the three groups that saw two cars rolled in the very first heat, twenty-four of the twenty-six finalists were found, some notable top names such as Carl Shearer, Matt Picard, Trent James and Regan Penn along with former New Zealand Champion Asher Rees, who had only finished building his new car the night before the event, all missing out due to the high standard of competition and racing. Rees made short work of the competition to win the repechage from a front row start and cement his spot in the final field. The other driver to come through was Scott Joblin who was



Superstocks action at the Stratford Speedway earlier this month.

having a great qualifying run the previous night until he retired to the infield with car issues in heat 3. Hamish Booker had qualified with ease, taking second spot in his group on the Friday evening, cruising the track and staying out of trouble. After the first two final races on Saturday night, Booker was looking good on points, sitting in third place, five points behind

Ethan Rees and three points behind William Humphries but he would start with the better grid of fifteen compared to Rees on twenty and Humphries on twenty-six. Booker kept his nose clean while his club mates went to work hassling the opposition, Brodie James especially being instrumental in the final result, holding up the current New

Zealand Champion Todd Hemingway and Brad Uhlenberg who were both podium threats. Booker finished fifth in race three to give him a total points haul of sixty-three. Initially, it looked as though Humphries had won the title but officials discovered that a couple of cars had missed the lap scoring loop early in the race and once reinstated to where they should have been, both Booker and Humphries were tied on points at the top of the

table, necessitating a runoff to decide the winner. The runoff was very tactical with Booker showing Humphries the wall at the start before the pair battled over three laps with Booker making a run for the flag and taking overall victory on the last lap. Final Results. Hamish Booker first, William Humphries second, Brad Uhlenberg third. The second-tier event (Technical Welding Services King of the Mountain Champs) for

the non-qualifiers also produced exceptional Superstock racing with Wellington driver Keegan Levien taking the win from Stratford's Carl Shearer and Palmerston North's Kyle Rowe. Girl racers had their opportunity to shine in the Buckthought Engineering Queen of the Mountain Stockcar Champs which had an individual title, best pairs and pairs shootout all to be decided on Saturday evening. A solid field of twenty-five of the country's fastest and toughest women racers fronted and produced close and exciting racing all night. Whanganui racer Hailey James won the individual title from Brittany Carpenter and Asha Penn while the best pairs was won by Penn and Azaria Simpson. Carpenter and Rebecca Barr won the pairs shootout. Saloons raced for their Heritage Shield on Saturday with Thomas Korff taking the overall win ahead of Bradley Korff and Craig Korff, while on Friday the Stratford Stormers development team took on the Palmerston North Colts with the Colts winning both teams races.

Jarrod MacBeth

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# New Plymouth heritage destination open for free on Waitangi Day



Hurworth Cottage will be open to the public free on Waitangi Day

Hurworth Cottage, which is cared for by Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga, will be open to the public for free on Waitangi Day between 10am and 2pm.

This Waitangi Day, step into the stories of Aotearoa New Zealand’s past with a nationwide open day across 18 unique heritage destinations. These special places will open their doors for free, inviting all New Zealanders to connect with the people, events, and stories that have shaped our nation’s journey to the present.

From grand homesteads and bustling Victorian farms to historic whaling and mission stations, these heritage sites offer a window

into both the promise and challenges of our shared history. Explore locations where the Treaty of Waitangi was signed, delve into stories of innovation and industry, and visit the suffrage museum that celebrates New Zealand’s leadership in women’s voting rights.

This family-friendly day will feature activities for all ages, including guided tours and interactive experiences designed to bring history to life. Whether you’re retracing the steps of our tipuna or learning about the post-Treaty colonisation era, this is an opportunity to reflect on the complexity and significance of our nation’s past.

Visitors will receive a

complimentary educational booklet, Walking the Path to Nationhood (while stocks last). This resource delves into the stories behind three of our most foundational documents-He Whakaputanga (the Declaration of Independence), Te Tiriti o Waitangi (the Treaty of Waitangi), and the Women’s Suffrage Petition. It includes timelines, profiles of key figures, and insights into the importance of preserving Māori heritage and honouring Te Tiriti.

This Waitangi Day, discover the history that connects us all. Visit one- or more- of these heritage destinations and walk through the chapters of our journey together.

## Croquet Silver Buttons feature early in the year

Association Croquet Silver Buttons were played on 17 January 2026 between North Taranaki and South Taranaki in New Plymouth.

A grade. Bonnie Johnstone (South) beat John R Byers (North) 26 - 16.

B grade. Cherol Filbee (South) beat Brian Blencowe (North) 8 - 6.

C grade. Brian Gilberd (North) beat Heather

Sturgeon (South) 14 - 8.

Premier. John. R. Byers (North) won in two sets against John Fleming (South). Senior. Ben Rupapera (North) won in two sets against Len Hotter (South). Intermediate. Grant Gilberd (South) won in three sets against Len Hotter North Taranaki. Primary. Kaye Bird (South) won in two sets against Shirley

Cornes (North).

This is the last year the competition will be played as North Taranaki and South Taranaki have now amalgamated to one Association, Taranaki

**Bonnie Johnstone being presented with her button by John R Byers.**



## Sport NZ Rural Travel Fund Applications Open

Applications for financial assistance under the Sport NZ Rural Travel Fund are now open.

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](http://www.southtaranaki.com/funding), at Te Ramanui o Ruapūtahanga (121 High Street Hāwera), from your local LibraryPlus or by emailing [funding@stdc.govt.nz](mailto:funding@stdc.govt.nz).

Applications close Wednesday 18 February at 5pm.

For further information please contact:

Community Funding Advisor

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# Be a Wai Warrior – water restrictions are here



Using a bucket and sponge rather than a hose will help save water during the summer water restrictions

It's time to turn off the sprinklers and irrigation systems because NPDC's Wai Warrior summer water restrictions are here.

Under the odds-and-evens system, hand-held hoses can be used at odd-numbered houses on odd-numbered days and at even-numbered

houses on even-numbered days. The use of sprinklers, irrigation systems and unattended hoses is banned up to 31 March.

"Summer is when our water use is highest, but our supply rivers are at their lowest. Our treatment plants can produce only so much every day and we also want to keep as much water as possible in our rivers for the benefit of the environment," says NPDC Manager Three Waters Amy Quattlebaum.

"Gardens are where the most domestic water is used in summer and the odds-and-evens system helps ensure there's enough water for everyone, even with our growing population." New Plymouth District's average daily use has risen a little to around 300L per person, compared to 288L

in 2020/21. Water meters are being installed at urban properties to encourage less water use once volumetric billing (being charged for the amount of water used) starts in mid-2027.

Amy says that building good habits around water is about taking small actions every day.

"Little changes can make a big difference, such as turning off the tap while brushing your teeth or cleaning vegetables, or watering gardens only once or twice a week in dry weather," he says.

Wai Warrior tips to reduce water use around the home include:

- Water your garden in the early morning or the evening, when there is no wind.
- Use a good mulch to reduce evaporation from your garden.
- Take short showers.
- Don't wash down paths and driveways – use a broom instead.
- Use a bucket and sponge rather than a hose to clean your car.

More water-saving tips for in the garden and around the home are on NPDC's website at [npdc.govt.nz/WaiWarrior](http://npdc.govt.nz/WaiWarrior).

New Plymouth residents consume about 30 per cent more water per person, per day than the national average. About 84 per cent of 28,500 water meters have so far been installed across New Plymouth District.

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## Wai Warrior

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Don't waste our water.  
Visit [npdc.govt.nz/WaiWarrior](http://npdc.govt.nz/WaiWarrior)

# Artistic inspiration: Explore emotion, colour and playfulness



The Artistic Inspiration exhibition is at the Village Galley in Eltham until February 7, 2026.

The Village Gallery is pleased to host the first exhibition of 2026 - Artistic Inspiration, with over 60 original artworks by Taranaki artists Louise McFetridge and Amiria Wilson. Louise McFetridge presents a vibrant collection of sculptural forms, vessels, and playful characters. Her quirky figurines, with expressive eyes, exaggerated features, and unexpected shapes, exude humour and charm. From curious towers and sea-creature-inspired

forms to storybook cottages and miniature scenes, her work invites viewers to smile, look closer, and imagine the world through a

more whimsical lens. Amiria Wilson, a self-taught painter based in Eltham, shares a powerful collection of acrylic works inspired by emotion, spirituality, nature, and personal healing. ("Healing Journey" explores her time as an ambulance officer and her experience with post-traumatic stress, portraying the deep connection between art and recovery. "The Guardian" combines Māori symbolism and spiritual themes, while "Cosmic Touch" emerged from a mysterious moment of connection, what she describes as "a dash of appreciation back to the universe.") Her works range from bold abstracts to cultural motifs and quiet meditations, each grounded in lived experience. Artistic Inspiration runs until 7 February at the Village Gallery, 166 High Street, Eltham. Entry is free and all are welcome. Open from Tue to Sat., 10am-3pm.

## Artistic Inspiration

13/1  
7/2

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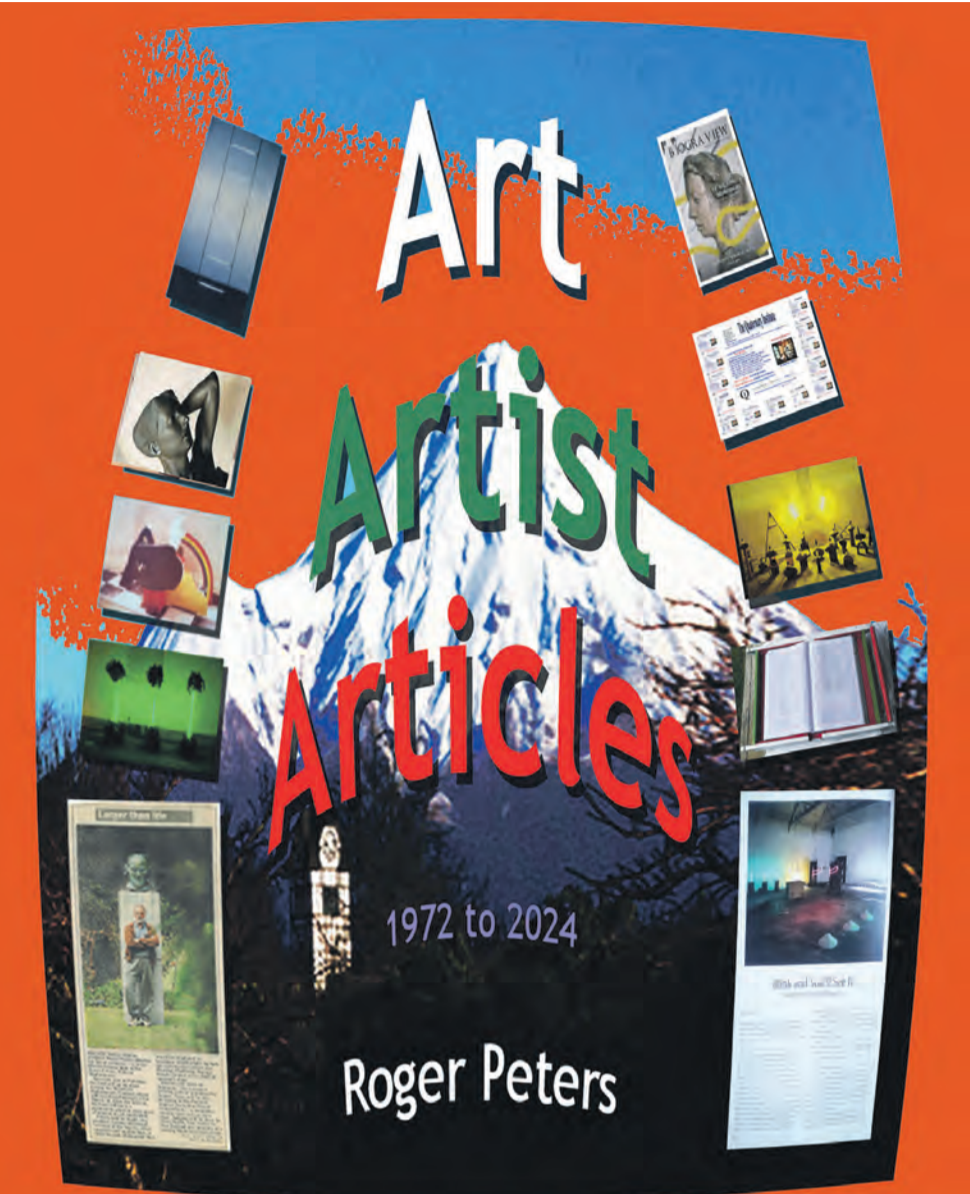
14 FEB	Crop Rotation   10am - 12pm Eltham E-Kai Community Garden 85 Bridge Street, Eltham
11 APR	Autumn Propagation   10am - 12pm Manaia Maara Kai 30 South Road, Manaia
13 JUN	Companion Planting   10am - 12pm St Mary's Community Garden 101 Collins Street, Hāwera

For more information or to stay up-to-date, visit [www.southtaranaki.com/gardenseries](http://www.southtaranaki.com/gardenseries) or scan the QR code.



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Measuring climate change.

2025 saw the world’s oceans store the highest amount of heat since records began, according to a new study.

The heat increase since 2024 was the energy equivalent of “detonating hundreds of millions of Hiroshima atomic bombs,”

according to the University of Auckland.

The New Zealand scientist involved in the study, Dr Kevin Trenberth said that ocean temperatures are “the best single measure we have that climate change is occurring.”

When greenhouse gases

in the atmosphere trap the sun’s radiation, “that energy ends up in the ocean,” he said.

Dr Trenberth linked the new record to recent wild weather, saying that sea surface temperatures near New Zealand were “exceptionally high” over the summer break.

As more moisture evaporates from warmer oceans, “The weather systems become a bit stronger, they can last longer, they can become bigger,” he said. “Ultimately they lead to heavier rains and greater risk of flooding.”

“We are creating a very different planet,” Dr Trenberth warned. “Do we really want to do that?”



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# Fun on the water



An inflatable playground at Moturoa Beach moored offshore is proving a hit among children during the school holidays.

# Send Help coming to Everybodys Theatre

In “Send Help,” two colleagues become stranded on a deserted island, the only survivors of a plane crash. On the island, they must overcome past grievances and work together to survive, but ultimately, it’s an unsettling, darkly humorous battle of wills and wits to make it out alive. “Send Help” is directed by genre-bending visionary Sam Raimi and stars Oscar nominee Rachel McAdams and Dylan O’Brien. The film is produced by Raimi and Zainab Azizi, executive produced by JJ Hook and written by Damian Shannon and Mark Swift, with original music by Danny Elfman. The all-original darkly comedic psychological thriller from 20th Century Studios releases in New Zealand cinemas on January 29, 2026.



EVERYBODY'S THEATRE  
OPUNAKE

72 Tasman Street, Opunake | [www.everybodystheatre.co.nz](http://www.everybodystheatre.co.nz)

<b>Avatar: Fire and Ash</b> 3hr 17mins   M Fri 30 Jan 7PM   Sun 01 Feb 1PM   Fri 06 Feb 1PM	<b>Wicked: For Good</b> 2hr 17mins   PG Sat 31 Jan 1PM
<b>The Choral</b> 1hr 53mins   M Sat 31 Jan 7PM   Sun 08 Feb 1PM	<b>Anaconda</b> 1hr 39mins   M Sun 01 Feb 7PM   Sat 07 Feb 7PM
<b>Marama</b> 1hr 29mins   RP16 Fri 06 Feb 7PM	<b>Scarlet</b> 1hr 50mins   M Sat 07 Feb 1PM
<b>Rental Family</b> 1hr 50mins   M Sun 08 Feb 7PM	

**Avatar: Fire and Ash**  
Violence & offensive language | 3hr 17mins | Rated: M  
**Fri 30 Jan 7PM**

**Wicked: For Good**  
Violence & sexual references | 2hr 17mins | Rated: PG  
**Sat 31 Jan 1PM**

The Opunake District Foodbank wishes to thank the community for the many donations of food, money and gifts that were so generously given as part of the Christmas Foodbank drive. There was also a large amount of time and effort from many volunteers from our community, who without the whole drive would not have been possible. A special thanks to Opunake Volunteer Fire Brigade, Opunake St John Volunteers and Opunake Surf Lifesavers volunteers and all those who assisted with their time.

After a 6 year break the Christmas drive was very successful, and we were able to deliver lovely food parcels with all the staples and some Christmas goodies to many families. We will be making this an annual event again.

We would also like to take this opportunity to thank the many individuals (most who wish to remain anonymous) and organisations who assisted throughout 2025; On the House, Eltham Foodbank network, COGS, Opunake Supermarket, Opunake & Coastal News, Lakeside Lions Opunake, Opunake Lions, Opunake High School, St Pauls Church, The Wave Church, St Barnabas Church, Country Connections, Pihama Women’s Institute, Todd Petroleum and Dynamite Bay Youth Group. In 2015 we supplied 746 parcels to 636 adults and 307 children.

So Thank you Opunake for helping us to help our community.

2025 Dynamite Bay group

**Our regular services:**  
**NZ POST, NZTA & STATIONERY**  
Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 5pm  
**COASTAL PRINTERS**  
Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 5pm  
**TARANAKI DENTAL PRACTICE**  
Thursday & Every Second Tuesday  
**LISA KEEN AUDIOLOGY**  
Every 2nd Wednesday  
**ACTIVE + PHYSIOTHERAPY**  
Monday, Tuesday & Thursday  
**TARANAKI CHIROPRACTIC**  
Every Wednesday  
**COUNSELLORS**  
Karen Anderson 021 213 8513  
**MATTHEWS OPTOMETRISTS**  
1st Thursday of every month  
**TARANAKI PODIATRY**  
2nd Wednesday of every month  
**HIP**  
Monday, Tuesday & Wednesdays  
Via an appointment from the Opunake Medical Centre  
**FOOD BANK**  
Monday and Thursday  
11.30am-12.30pm

**DID YOU KNOW?**  
*Coastal Care offers for hire private, well-appointed room's for meetings, training opportunities & social gatherings.*

Permanently residing in the building are:

OPUNAKE PHARMACY,  
OPUNAKE MEDICAL CENTRE,  
ST.JOHN AMBULANCE,  
PLUNKET & TDHB SERVICES.

For a full list of services & happenings here

**Find us on Facebook**

or visit us at [www.coastalcare.co.nz](http://www.coastalcare.co.nz)  
**CONTACT ARETHA LEMON**  
Facility Manager on 06 761 8488

What's On Listings

ONGOING

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

CHURCH NOTICES



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

Opunake Co-operating Parish

Havelock Street, Opunake - St Pauls - every Sunday

9am: Coffee prior to service

9.30am: Service

Rahotu - Wesley - 11am first Sunday of the month

Okato Co-operating Parish

St. James, Oakura – Sunday Service every Sunday,

10.00am

St. Paul's, Okato – 1st and 2nd Sundays –Worship Service;

3rd Sunday – Communion Service and 4th Sunday at

7.00pm

St. Paul's, Okato – Open church for silent reflection, Pew for

You, every 3rd Wednesday of each month,

4.30pm-5.30pm

Opunake Catholic Church

St Martins, Pungarehu: Temporarily closed - no Masses

Our Lady Star of the Sea, Opunake: 10am every Sunday

Other areas

Sacred Heart, Manaia - Temporarily closed - No Masses

St Joseph's, Hawera - Every Sat at 5pm; Every Sun at 9am

St Patrick's, Patea - 4th Sunday of month; 11.00am

St Francis de Sales, Waverley - 2nd Sunday of month;

11.00am

St Patricks Catholic Church, Kaponga

Sunday Mass 8.45am.

Thursday Mass 10.00am (subject to change).

St Patricks Catholic Church, Okato

Saturday Vigil 6.00pm - weekly

The Wave

Pentecostal Church 64 Domett St, Opunake

Sunday Services 10.30am

Women's Group 10am Tuesday

Men's Group 7pm Wednesday

Come along or contact

Belinda Philp

027 935 6191

St. Barnabas Anglican Church

141 Tasman St, Opunake

Sunday Services 10am

Communion 2nd, 3rd & 4th Sunday

Prayer & Praise 1st Sunday

Every 5th Sunday all 4 churches gather for

a Combined Service

Okato Community Church

Meets 10.30am Sunday at Hempton Hall.

Everyone welcome

St John's Community Church. Kaponga

Cnr West and Egmont Streets.

Sunday Services 10.30am followed by morning tea

Manaia Union Fellowship

Terou St. Manaia.

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

Friend & Fellowship Group

Thursdays @ Manaia

Support our Faith and support each other with Prayer

and Bible study

Encouraging interactive discussion and Praise

All are welcome

We would love it if you could come

Rodney & Val 274 8550 or 0272384187

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church

90 Regan St., Stratford,

9:00am Sunday: Breakfast and Study

10:30am: Breakfast is followed by "Coming Together

Worship Service"

Thursday: Study Group at 2 pm at 96b Brecon Rd.,

Stratford.

Contact Rev. John Mattock 027 2039799

Methodist Church Hawera

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

Manaia Community Church part of the Global Anglicans

Robert Gibson Hall , Manaia

1st, 2nd, 4th, 5th Sundays at 10 am

3rd Sunday Family Service at 4pm with shared meal to

follow

Contact: Rev Phil Woodmass 027 424 8318

timetable in newspaper.

**MONDAYS: The Barnabas Centre Exercise and Social Morning:** St. Barnabas Church Hall, 141 Tasman Street Opunake: Each Monday 10 am - 12:30 pm. Information call Jenny 027 379 6844 or Ian 027 622 4878.

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

**TUESDAYS**

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

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

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

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

**WEDNESDAYS**

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

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

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

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

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

**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.

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

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

**FRIDAYS**

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

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

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

**.JANUARY 4 TO FEBRUARY 8, 2026:**

**The Chair Affair:** Lysaght Watt Gallery.

**.JANUARY 13 TO FEBRUARY 7**

**Artistic Inspiration exhibition:** The Village Gallery, Eltham.

**.JANUARY 31**

**Summer Nights:** A free concert in Straford's King Edward Park, 5pm.

**FEBRUARY 1 TO 3**

**John Bertrand Collectables are buying:** Opunake and throughout Taranaki. See ad for more details.

**FEBRUARY 7**

**Mr Moondog Blues:** The Club Hotel, Opunake, 8-11pm.

**FEBRUARY 9**

**Opunake & District Business Association general meeting:** Opunake Business Centre, 5.30pm.

**FEBRUARY 11**

**Okato Community Valentines Market:** Hempton Hall, Okato. 4-7pm.

**FEBRUARY 13 TO MARCH 15**

**Art, Artist, Articles:** An exhibition by Roger Peters, Percy Thomson Gallery

**FEBRUARY 14**

**Community Garden Workshop:** Eltham E-Kai Community Garden, Eltham. 10am-2pm. See ad for more details.

**FEBRUARY 28**

**Taurean Kenny Mill sings Elvis:** The Hideaway Sound Shell, 683 Egmont Road. 6-10pm.

**MARCH 7**

**Full Metal Orchestra Rock festival:** The Hideaway Sound Shell, 683 Egmont Road. 6-10pm.

**APRIL 11**

**Community Garden Workshop:** Manaia Maara Kai. 10am-2pm. See ad for more details.

**JUNE 13**

**Community Garden Workshop:** St Marys Community Garden, Hawera. 10am-2pm. See ad for more details.

RETURN TO ROUTINE

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📅 17<sup>th</sup> & 18<sup>th</sup> February 2026

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PUBLIC NOTICES

OKATO COMMUNITY MARKET

Every Wednesday  
4 - 5.30pm  
Hempton Hall  
Veges, Baking, Op Shop, Chocolate,  
Crafts, Books, and more



Next Meeting is on  
Monday February 9, 2026 at 5.30pm

Key agenda item will be a discussion on Opunake promotion in tourism

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

OKATO COMMUNITY VALENTINES MARKET

Wed 11 February  
4 - 7pm  
Hempton Hall, Okato  
Chocolates, Veges, Gifts, Baking, Op Shop, Books,  
Crafts and more

Public notice of application for  
ON Licence

Section 101, Sale and Supply of Alcohol Act 2012

MORRESEY PEARCE TRADING LIMITED, 195 High Street, Eltham, Eltham, 4322, NZ has made application to the South Taranaki District Licensing Committee for the renewal of an ON licence in respect of the premises situated at 49 Egmont Street, RD 29/Kaponga, Hawera, 4679, known as KAPONGA HOTEL.

The general nature of the business conducted (or to be conducted) under the licence is Tavern.

The days on which and the hours during which alcohol is (or is intended to be) sold under the licence are:  
Monday to Sunday from 8:00 AM to 2:00 AM

The application may be inspected during ordinary office hours at the office of the South Taranaki District Licensing Committee at 105/109 Albion Street, Hāwera, 4610.

Any person who is entitled to object and who wishes to object to the issue of the licence may, not later than 15 working days after the date of the first publication of this notice, file a notice in writing of the objection with the Secretary of the South Taranaki District Licensing Committee at:

The Secretary, South Taranaki District Licensing Committee, Private Bag 902, Hāwera, 4640.

No objection to the renewal of a licence may be made in relation to a matter other than a matter specified in section 131 of the Sale and Supply of Alcohol Act 2012.

This is the first publication of this notice.  
This notice was first published on: 29/01/2026.



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OPUNAKE & COASTAL NEWS

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Phone 06 761 7016  
23 Napier St, Opunake



SITUATIONS VACANT



ŌPUNAKĒ HIGH SCHOOL

GATEWAY & PATHWAYS ASSISTANT

We are seeking an energetic and organised person to provide pathway assistance for our senior students.

Hours to be negotiated up to a maximum of 25 hours per week. A job description and application form are available from the school office.

Applications should include a covering letter and CV. Please apply to:

The Principal  
Ōpunakē High School  
PO Box 4  
Ōpunakē 4645  
sl@opunake.school.nz

Applications close Thursday 5th February, 2026

PUBLIC NOTICES

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



This newspaper is subject to NZ Press Council procedures. A complaint must first be directed in writing within one month of publication to the Opunake & Coastal News email address. If not satisfied with the response, the complaint may be referred to the Press Council, PO Box 10879, The Terrace, Wellington 6143. Or use the online complaint form at [www.presscouncil.org.nz](http://www.presscouncil.org.nz). Please include copies of the article and all correspondence with the publication.

TRADES & SERVICES

SCRAP METAL - for all scrap metal Taranaki wide, give us a call. Molten Metals (06) 751 5367. [www.moltenmetals.co.nz](http://www.moltenmetals.co.nz).

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TO LET



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Inquiries to Clare Moss - Ph 06 278 4169  
[clare.moss@hughson.co.nz](mailto:clare.moss@hughson.co.nz)





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The next issue of the Opunake & Coastal News is due out on Feb 12, 2026.

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Driving Lights, NZ New, Keyless Entry & Ignition, Spoiler, Daytime Running Lights, 1.4, Petrol, CVT, 144kms.



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LOW KM POPULAR NZ NEW SUV  
Auto Headlights & Wipers, Daytime Running Lights, Cruise Control, Android Auto & Carplay, Tinted Windows, 1.4, Petrol, Auto, 51kms.



**\$18,995**

**2014 Toyota CAMRY 2.5 HYBRID ECVT**  
NZ NEW HYBRID  
Auto Headlights, Reversing Camera, Keyless Entry & Ignition, Remote Boot Release, 2.5, Hybrid, CVT, 224kms



**\$11,995**

**THIS WEEK'S SPECIAL:**  
**2015 Holden COLORADO Z71**  
**4x4 SPORTS DOUBLE CAB**  
NZ New, Roof Rails, Tow Bar, Descent Mode, Driving Lights, Heated Electric Leather Seats, Running Boards, Tuff Deck, Tonneau Cover, 2.8, Diesel, Auto, 93kms



**\$26,995**

**2013 Mazda 6 GSX**  
NZ NEW  
i-Stop, Stability Control, Tow Bar, Driving Lights, Reversing Camera, Parking Sensors, Roof Rails, 2.5, Petrol, Auto, 159kms



**\$13,995**

**2019 Mazda CX-3 GSX**  
i-Stop, Tinted Windows, Blind Spot Monitoring, Electric Parking Brake, NZ New, Sports Mode, HUD, Auto Headlights & Wipers, 2.0, petrol, Auto, 119kms



**\$21,995**

**2005 Toyota COROLLA FIELDER**  
LOW KMs  
Factory Body Kit, Immobiliser, VVT-i, Auto Headlights, Roof Rails, Tinted Windows, 1.5, Petrol, Auto, 114kms



**\$8,995**

**2015 Mitsubishi Outlander XLS**  
NZ NEW 7 SEATER 4WD  
Auto Headlights & Wipers, Parking Sensors, Headlight Washers, Reversing Camera, Auto Fold Electric Mirrors, 2.4, Petrol, CVT, 199kms



**\$12,995**

**2013 Holden COMMODORE VF**  
STUNNING VF COMMODORE SV6  
Half Leather Seats, RWD, Tow Bar, Spoiler, Tinted Windows, Alloy Wheels, Daytime Running Lights, NZ New, 3.6, Petrol, Auto, 175kms



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**2007 Toyota Vitz**  
THRIFTY HATCH  
Moonsoons, Tinted Windows, VVT-i, Alloy Wheels, Dual Airbags, 1.3, Petrol, Auto, 127kms



**\$7,995**

**2014 Mazda CX-5 GSX**  
NZ NEW AWD  
Keyless Start, Tow Bar, Driving Lights, Traction Control, i-Stop, NZ Navigation, 2.5, Petrol, Auto, 177kms



**\$15,995**

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