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Opunake High School principal Andrea Hooper-Carr and prefects make the love heart sign to symbolise the school's "loving students back to learning" message.

National commendation for OHS

Opunake High School has received a national commendation in the inaugural Ministry of Education Academic Excellence Awards.

"Opunake High School demonstrates a deeply relational and strength-based approach, focusing on positive engagement with students and whanau and actively working to reconnect learners by 'loving them back to learning,'" the commendation citation reads.

The awards were announced by Education minister Erica Stanford at a ceremony held at parliament on June 24. Five secondary schools were announced as award winners, while another five including Opunake High School received commendations.

Opunake High School principal Andrea Hooper-Carr said there had been an application process and the school's data had been used in deciding whether to grant the commendation.

Since the awards were announced messages of congratulation have come from among others, people who had taught at the school, including a former principal Mark Bowden.

"It reflects our journey from Post-COVID when there was a lot of negativity and lack of respect for each other," says Andrea.

That journey has led them to a place where there have been marked drops in fighting and bullying.

"We still have issues, but if students are better connected and confident they can learn better. If they are fearful and

disconnected they can't."

At a teacher-only day, high school staff had had a Zoom conversation with Erin Gruwell, who, played by Hilary Swank, was the central figure in the 2007 movie Freedom Writers about a teacher who had turned around a school in California.

Andrea says this is where she picked up the phrase "loving students back to learning," used in her principal's annual plan.

"There's been a strategic plan to involve aroha, kindness and love in our conversations with students, and strategies to improve literacy and numeracy," she says. "You can see it in our school culture, changing the culture to one of kindness. Everyone is more connected and kinder to each other."

She says it's something that the entire school "from the board to Year 9" have been on board with.

"It's predominantly about care, focusing on what students are doing well, feeling that they are being cared for, and having really great conversations with students who are not doing that well."

This has involved "a lot of restorative conversations," and Andrea says she was particularly encouraged by one she had had "the other

day."

"They owned their behaviour and they were gutted that they were not doing well."

The commendation comes with a \$1000 prize. At the time of writing, Andrea said they hadn't decided what that money would be used for.

"I might ask the students. They were the ones who won it for us, and it was their behaviour that got us this award."



Remember these?
Page 11



Barry Soper's ranking of
past prime ministers. See
review of his book. P 23.



Taranaki Club Rugby
Finals. Pages 27 & 29.

Toi Foundation extends deadline

The deadline for public submissions on a proposal to sell the Taranaki Savings Bank (TSB) has been extended. Initially the deadline was Tuesday June 30, but Toi Foundation chair Chris Ussher has conceded that the time given for submissions was one day short of the required 28 days, so the deadline for public feedback will be extended until midnight on August 12.

"The error relates to how the commencement and close time for the 28-day period was calculated," he said in a statement. "On review, it closed a day earlier than it should have done and we apologise unreservedly. Even though we had been accepting late submissions, we recognise the loss of time in the process may have meant people who wanted to submit were not able to."

Meanwhile an incorporated society the Taranaki Community Accountability Society has been set up under former TSB chair Elaine Gill which opposes the merger.

The Opunake and Coastal News hit the streets to ask locals what they thought about the merger.

"Bigger is not always better," said one woman in

Continued page 20

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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.

Hands off

To those people who think they can help themselves to plants, artwork etc from the Opunake Loop Trail gardens-don’t.

These areas are looked after by volunteers who give up their time, energy, and sometimes money from their own pockets to care for our town. We love our walkway/cycle track, and so do all our visitors/tourists. Flowers aren’t for picking for your own vase or to sell at Saturday markets. Hands off.

This is one of our town’s pride and joys and everyone loves it. If you see any of these things happening please report to the police or to our local newspaper. Thanks.

If the artwork isn’t returned before the next issue of the Opunake & Coastal News your photos will be published to be named and shamed.

The Volunteers
Opunake.

Unique in the world

Last week on the eve of Matariki, a remarkable meeting was held in New Plymouth at a suburban church, not far from Port Taranaki.

Several community groups had collaborated with two congregation members, who’d called for the meeting.

A team of volunteers delivered flyers to residential areas around the Port, inviting discussion on the government proposal to import Liquid Natural Gas [LNG].

At the meeting several highly qualified speakers presented opinions about the safety of bringing LNG into a port with residential areas so close by.

Others described emerging [and safer] alternatives for maintaining our energy

supplies during ‘dry’ [ie low hydro-generation] winters.

However, for me the most surprising and frankly terrifying news emerged in the Q & A discussion, when one speaker said that to their knowledge New Plymouth would become the only city in the world with an LNG import facility so close to residential housing, should this government plan proceed.

The researcher noted one exception in the US, where some houses had been built on land near an established LNG import terminal, because the ocean views were so magnificent.

An LNG accident was described as both low-probability and catastrophic.

A video of an experimental release showed a thick fog of vapour, eventually finding an ignition point at which a huge fireball ensued.

Lethal impact from an accidental release, would extend to around 2

kilometres. There are 10 schools, several pre-schools, many businesses and thousands of houses, within this distance of the Port.

Furthermore, Ngati Te Whiti has only just begun to build their long-awaited marae, on land opposite the Port and a short distance from Ngamotu beach.

This is the hapu whose famous ancestors Tohu Kakahi and Te Whiti-o-Rongomai of Parihaka, brought the world’s attention to Taranaki as a Peace Province.

Let’s not become famous for anything, other than peace and goodwill to all.

Rob Ritchie
Opunake

Middle East

Yes, I agree that there is much frustration in the world about the Middle East. But here is another view. The

Continued on page 4.

ADELPHOS

A good friend, intending to visit family in Holland, recently had her flight canceled at the last minute due to the start of the Iran war. She was not the only one. Wars threaten not only our global safety but our personal peace. When they begin to negatively impact on our pockets we take note: there’s a domino effect. Through the repeated graphic images of death and destruction we can become emotionally desensitised, or even traumatised, grappling with the increased numbers of tragic civilian deaths in distant overseas war zones.

The Middle East poses one of the biggest and most complex geopolitical threats

to world peace. Both Israelis and Palestinians claim historical ties to the disputed land boundaries. The Israelis claim the authority of biblical prophecy (Jeremiah 31:10; Ezekiel 36:24; Isaiah 11:11-12; Amos 9:15 etc.). The Palestinians claim the disputed land based on continuous generations living there. Iran, however, is the key player pulling strings behind the curtain in the Middle East.

Since the 1980s and 90s Iran has supplied cruise missiles, rockets, funding and training to four Islamist militant groups vowing to destroy and replace Israel with a Palestinian state. They are: 1.) Hezbollah

War and Peace

in Lebanon 2.) Hamas in Gaza 3.) The Palestinian-Islamic-Jihad (PIJ) primarily operates in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank and are committed to the violent destruction of Israel replacing it with an Islamic Palestinian state and 4.) The Jihadist-Islamist Houthis in Yemen. Their slogan is “God is the Greatest. Death to America. Death to Israel. A curse be upon the Jews. Victory to Islam.”

All four distinctive yet cooperative groups form Iran’s “Axis of Resistance” to eliminate Israeli, American and Western influences. Israel sees these Iranian-backed groups as existential threats and seeks

to destroy Iran’s nuclear programme and overthrow their existing hostile government. Both sides seek peace through war.

In the Bible, peace will only happen when Jesus the Prince of Peace returns with a new heaven and new earth (Isaiah 65:17; Revelation 21:1; and 2 Peter 3:13). Mainstream biblical prophecy predicts that cataclysmic wars will first be ignited in the Middle East and then involve great nations, along with severely increasing natural disasters and cosmic disturbances. (For these events see Adelphos’ article, “The Times They Are A-Changin” in the March 12, 2026 issue of The Opunake and Coastal News archives online).

**Jesus offers believers inner peace to help reduce anxiety. It has proven physical and psychological benefits. Early believers, like today’s 370 million persecuted Christians worldwide, are encouraged to pray to God during times of martyrdom, worry and anxiety so that: “The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 4:7, NIV). Peace.

Te Rangimarie,
Adelphos

**For practical ways to help self-manage anxiety see Adelphos’ article, “Anxiety Blues” in The Opunake and Coastal News. Click on the February 13, 2025 issue in the archives section online.



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Letters to the Editor

Continued from page 3.

Jews have lived in Israel for over 3500 Years, but in 70 AD the Romans destroyed them and drove them out and they were dispersed to other countries, but a remnant was left, peasants mainly.

About the 1700s there was about 5000 people in Jerusalem mostly Jews under Ottoman rule. This is a list of people living in Jerusalem, others in other areas of Israel.

1844: 7,120 Jews, 5,000 Muslims, 3,390 Christians. 1896: 28,112 Jews, 8,560 Muslims, 8,748 Christians. 1944: 97,000 Jews, 30,600 Muslims, 29,400 Christians. 1967: 195,700 Jews, 54,936 Muslims, 12,646 Christians. 2018: 528,700 Jews, 311,100 Muslims, 15,600 Christians. 2023: 577,000 Jews, 378,100 Muslims, 15,300 Christians.

People say that Israel is an Apartheid State but there are Arab Parties in Israel's Government. That does not

sound like Apartheid.

People are also saying that Israel is committing genocide, but they are only attacking to defend themselves. Israel has often told the civilians that Israel is about to attack a place so the civilians can leave but the terrorists make them stay, and that place would have weapons etc stored there. Israel does not have a choice but to attack because Israel knows those weapons will be used against them. The terrorists tell the world that Israel has killed women and children, (did you know that Hamas has soldiers as young 12-years-old?). So who is killing the women and children? Some of the Arab nations call Israel the Little Satan and America the Big Satan and their goal is to wipe them off the face of the earth. Israel only wants to live in peace but the terrorist nations want to eliminate them. Do you know that Israel exports to the nations medicines, medical equipment, scientific innovations, hi-tech parts for computers and mobile phones, agricultural innovations and more? I read a letter a while ago from a nurse in Auckland Hospital who said about the amount of equipment that they have that is because of Israel. Something to think about.

Norm Baker
Hawera

Awakino Gorge

Regarding the Awakino Gorge closures. NZTA closed the road on the night of Tuesday June 9 at 6.00pm when the opening of the Mystery Creek Feildays was the next day on Wednesday June 10 for a four day event. The forecast was for 4-5 days of good weather ahead and no rain. If there was

rain for 3-4 days ahead, yes I may have understood why they closed it.

I had a cardiologist appointment on Wednesday the 10th at 11.00am through the Public Health system at the Waikato Hospital in Hamilton. I only heard about the closure at 8.30pm through Marcus Lush that night (June 9), so I was not a happy person. I packed my car up and drove to the closure to state my concerns about how they went about closing the road. To cut a long story short, after talking to a supervisor from Downer, and him speaking to another person on his phone, he agreed to drive me around the Goat Track Road called Manrorongo Road, which is all gravel and very windy. That took three quarters of an hour to get back to State Highway 1, just before Piopio township, which I appreciated. If I couldn't have made it to my appointment, this could have cost me two Fielday passes, my accommodation for three nights, plus my ticket to the Chiefs' game on Friday night. I would have lost \$600 in prepaid funds non-refundable. It cost us one million dollars per day from the Taranaki Province when the Gorge is closed, and you and I pay more for our groceries and petrol to fill our vehicles etc.

Chris Luxon at the meeting was boasting about the new four-lane motorway between Warkworth and Whangarei, and leaving us out. Not good enough.

The Waikato Expressway is getting extended from Cambridge to Parere, Otaki to north of Levin, and Transmission Gully to Wellington.

The Mt Messenger bypass shouldn't have taken place.

The Awakino Gorge should have been first, to get those slips sorted out. Mt Messenger wasn't really a problem, with minimal slips. So they got that one wrong. Ask the trucking companies regarding this, and they will tell you they are getting this wrong as well.

They use the traffic flow going through the Gorge. I think it's between 2500-3500 per day Max Brough told me when I saw him at his office. He said they can't justify spending so much money on the Awakino Gorge. This is so wrong. We in the Taranaki Province have a right to a state highway north to Auckland. We pay taxes, trucking companies pay road user charges etc. The 50 million the Government has given us to fix the repairs etc is an insult. I hope David MacLeod pushes as an MP for our province of Taranaki as a whole to get the Awakino Gorge problem sorted once and for all.

He needs to be the voice in Parliament for our province of Taranaki and our city of New Plymouth.

Peter Buis

Palestinians

Why should we in faraway NZ feel concerned for so-called 'Poor Palestinians?' May I remind New Zealanders that we are a country founded on Judean/Christian principles.

And what does that mean? It means we strive towards equality, justice and mercy, and this creates order and safety.

The so-called 'Poor Palestinians' some want us to feel sorry for come from a destructive society. Hamas, that is the elected controllers of Gaza are totally funded by

Iran, with no concern for its citizens. And what do they create? Terror, terrorists and destruction.

Why would we want that here?

Every time I hear people citing 'Poor Palestinians' it certainly sounds like they're crying for that horrible destruction to come here. Is that really what we want in New Zealand? Fear-mongering, disorder, terror and destruction? What Christians or other minority groups are safe in such countries? Certainly none in Gaza. In many such countries they are extremely unsafe. Don't be deluded by this destructive society.

We need to beware of what we may be inviting to our peaceful country. Do we really want an unsafe society with disorder and destruction.

C. Salisbury
Maniaia

Mountain safety

For over 60 years of my life, messages from all sorts of places warning of dangers of our mountain. Yes, some people make mistakes but most of these human mistakes are the same as the reasons as the ones recently. A half a dozen people's troubles have hit the headlines. At the same time, hundreds/thousands of people, park-users go on our mountain, enjoy and return to their beds that night, safely.

The mountain, even our one, is not for you or against you, but give it a chance it will get you anytime. Hats off to those who enjoy the mountain(s) and stay safe.

Ian McAlpine

Even modest sleep loss could lead to weight gain in some people

Losing even a small amount of sleep each night could be linked to weight gain, according to international researchers. The team analysed two previous studies including

95 adults over age 20 who normally got at least seven hours of sleep, and found that decreasing sleep by just an hour and a half each night was linked to increases in body weight, waist

circumference, and heart and metabolic risks.

The team also noticed people tended to be less active than usual when they'd not had as much sleep.



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End of the road for Manaia town hall



Going...

Manaia’s third town hall has been pulled down and work has begun on demolishing the town’s Sports Complex.

The Manaia and Districts War Memorial Hall which opened in 1955 was closed in 2015 because it failed to meet earthquake strengthening standards. Initially the South Taranaki District Council earmarked funding to fix it up, but then the Manaia Sports Complex also failed earthquake strengthening standards.

A protracted debate ensued as to whether money should be spent on either or both of these buildings, or whether both should be pulled down and something new put in their place. At one stage

the idea had been mooted of the Council and Te Korowai o Ngaruahine working together on a combined facility.

Last year the Council voted to demolish both buildings and put up a new community facility to replace them.

The Manaia and Districts War Memorial Hall replaced the previous town hall which was partially destroyed by fire in June 1953. Manaia’s first town hall was the Drill Hall which was built by the Armed Constabulary in the town’s early years as a military settlement. This had itself been burned down in 1905.

The deadline for a Government subsidy on new memorial buildings was due



Going...

to close one week after the fire that closed the second hall. Over two hundred people met to elect a rebuilding committee chaired by R.L. Bennett which got to work to raise £12,000 in six days. Meanwhile the architect John Brimblecombe worked late into the night to prepare the plans for the new town hall.

English-born Brimblecombe (1900-1979) was a colourful character. A dedicated painter and a keen fly fisherman, he wrote a series of articles for the farming magazine “Straight Furrow.” These were later published as a collection entitled Shear Nonsense.

He had trained as an architect in England and

arrived in New Zealand in 1935 to cut gorse. Later he joined the Department of Housing and made the model of the first large government housing block at Hamilton, which was displayed in the 1940 Centennial Exhibition at Wellington.

He moved from Wellington to Eltham in 1941 as a health inspector with the Health Department, and the following year moved to Manaia. He later practiced as an architect in Hawera.

He also designed St Cuthberts Anglican Church in Manaia which was deconsecrated on January 29 2021. Hori Manuirirangi who was at that service (Opunake & Coastal News 11 February 2021) remembered Brimblecombe as someone who drove a mini, despite being six foot six inches tall, much to the amusement of him and his childhood friends.

The Manaia and Districts War Memorial Hall was opened on 15 April 1955 by the MP for Egmont Ernie Corbett, less than two years after the fire which had closed the previous hall.



Gone. Last days at the Manaia and Districts War Memorial Hall.

Seventy-one years later will replace both the hall
locals are waiting to see and sports complex will look
what the new facility which like.



Work begins on demolishing the Manaia Sports Complex.

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Cellular network problems caused by changes

Former policeman and security installer Graham Lynch has grave concerns about recent changes to the cellular network, which has seen large areas of Taranaki with little to no coverage. Prior to the shut down of the 3G network, we went

communication modules to 4G modules. These modules were in devices like alarms and equipment controlling devices on farms. We were assured the 4G and new 5G coverage would be equal to coverage provided by the old 3G network, but it clearly



isn't. We had to remove the 4G units in some cases and put the 3G devices back until they pulled the plug on the 3G network. Now we

have to come up with other options for our customers. More of concern is traveling around the coast and finding the ability to make and

receive calls is the worst it has ever been. I have also heard from farmers who can longer make cell calls from their houses and over the farm. Many of these farmers have dispensed with their land-lines as copper lines were phased out. In a recent case a customer was trying to ring for medical help for a child, and struggled with the call quality. Before the closure of the 3G network they could make calls fine. Many rural people are having to go to the likes

of Starlink for internet coverage and then enable WIFI CALLING on their phones which most modern phones have. They would still need to be close to their houses though for this to work. I carry dual sims in my phone for Spark and OneNZ, and have found both networks have considerable dead areas in Taranaki They should not have had to rely on Elon Musk to bail out their poor cellphone coverage.

Graham Lynch



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Taranaki's maunga

Ian McAlpine has compiled some interesting facts about the mountain that dominates the province of Taranaki. The summit height in summer is 2518 metres above sea level (half a metre on a good year in winter with snow build-up). The last time Taranaki Maunga showed signs of an eruption was approximately 1854. There have been 80 recorded deaths in the Te Papa-Kura-o-Taranaki since 1890, but of course as legend has it, there were many unrecorded deaths on the slopes of the mountain before this. At North Taranaki the distance between the Egmont Road End and the summit is 1.5 vertical kms. The first recorded legend ascent of Taranaki Maunga was by Tahurangi. The first European Ascent was recorded on 24 December 1839 by Ernst Dieffenbach and James Heberley. The fastest recorded time to the summit and return from and to the North Egmont Carpark was 96 minutes and 42 seconds by Greg Barbour on 20 March 1992. The vertical height gain from Stratford Plateau to the summit is 1,300 metres. The vertical height gain from the Dawson Falls Road End to the summit is 1616 metres. Record times are recorded on the 'Taranaki Speed



The last time Taranaki Maunga showed signs of an eruption was approximately 1854.

Records' website. Climbers carrying out official multiple-ascents are required to walk on foot to each of the mountain houses. The distance a summit climber walks on the North Egmont Ridge route from road end to the summit is 6.5kms. The average air-temperature at the summit will be 15 degrees Celsius lower than sea level. The wind speed at the North Taranaki Visitors Centre could be 10 kms an hour but 200 kms an hour on the summit. Beware. There is very little plant life

above 2000 metres because of the harsh conditions although it is rising to the crater due to global warming. There is a permanent snow and ice field in the crater (2450m) although often covered by scree. On Taranaki Maunga it can be clear as a bell at one minute with views extending to 200 km but clouds come and can engulf you in seconds reducing visibility to zero. There is a circle around Te Papa-Kura-o-Taranaki (the maunga) of vegetation which measures 9.6 km. On the Maunga's eastern side there is a steep route

called 'Ted's Alley,' named after Ted Thompson is the 1960s. There is a multiple-ascent Taranaki Maunga of four ascents from the mountain houses, north, south, east and west, of a 6,426 metre ascent. There are male and female records. The mountain over the years has had name changes: Mount Egmont, Mount Taranaki, and in April, 2025 a name change to the present Taranaki Maunga. There has been no management plan for the then Egmont National Park for the Department of Conservation since the last one was written in 2002.

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Prime Minister speaks at Plymouth International Hotel

There was standing room only at a meeting at the Plymouth International Hotel, in new Plymouth when the prime minister Rt Hon Luxon spoke on Saturday July 4. The MC for the well-organised meeting was the Hon Simeon Brown, and New Plymouth MP David MacLeod also spoke. Mr Brown was emphatic that the proposed LNG (Liquified natural gas) facility would only proceed if it was totally safe.

There was as strong police presence outside the hotel and a significant number of orderly protesters with placards and signs on the roadside on both side of the premises. One placard read Gaza is genocide is NATO racism. On the other side of the hotel a sign read Nothing about us without us - hear our voices. Hikoi of hope for disabled New Zealanders. Nearby another sign read LNG free Tarana-ki. Stop burning fossil fuel with a warning about the risks, which included nitrogen oxide (NO2), carbon monoxide (CO), formaldehyde (CH2O), water (mould), asthma and respiratory harm. Methane carbon's footprint is 33% greater than coal, it added. At the meeting, Mr Brown commented that Taranaki held an innovative and vital role in New Zealand's energy profile. He requested that any questions asked at the end of Mr Luxon's address be "short and concise."

Mr Luxon spoke well,

quoting statistics seemingly without notes. There was a multitude of questions at the end and he did his best to answer them, but time ran out before all questions were taken. It was good that there was a roving microphone so each question was clearly heard.

Mr Luxon paid tribute to Mr Macleod. "You have an outstanding parliamentarian here in David."

Early on he spoke against the invasion of Ukraine by the USSR, who were, "disrespecting Ukraine's sovereignty."

He spoke positively of New Zealand, going forward, "I think we have an amazing future, I really do." and praised our social and democratic traditions. However, he stressed that it was important to "fix the basics, towards building for the future."

The basics included such aspects as reining in wasteful spending (National had saved taxpayers 43 billion dollars to date), bringing down inflation and interest rates (average mortgage rates were reduced, by \$10,000 per annum) and lowering taxes. Also important was "Paying off the nation's debts so we can achieve a surplus."

However, he conceded that the task had been challenging, 'It's been a big job.' He added, this is what is crucial in the process, "financial discipline."

Law and order was another keynote issue. Mr Luxon shared that violent crime had been reduced by 33% since

his Government took office. Ram raids were down by 85%, he explained.

Yet gang-related crime was still of concern. "Although they are less than 1% of the population they commit 25% of all crimes."

He spoke with pride of the reforms in the education sector, so that equal opportunities exist for all learners. It was important that all students learn from the same methodology, he said. With improvements on the problem of students not attending school, he said that 136,000 children are now back at school at acceptable figures. He welcomed that grades were back in focus, "So parents and employers could understand what had been achieved educationally individual students."

"Some of the results are really exciting," he concluded. Mr Luxon concluded with the comment, "This is an amazing country - don't give up on it."

The questions as expected covered a wide range of issues. One was from a fire-fighter who sought improvements for fire fighters, commenting that he was unimpressed" with the status quo.

Another person posed a question about people with disabilities, pointing out that 20% of the population have a disability of some kind, and what legislative steps could be taken to improve the situation. Unease about the Bill currently in front of parliament, was also of concern.

Mr Luxon commented that when he came to power the situation was "in a bit of mess" and explained that considerable extra funding had been put in place and that the eligibility for assistance would not be decreased. He spoke of a "leg-



Gaza protestors were also joined by advocates for disabled people and opposition to the proposed LNG facility.

islative framework" which would improve things for disabled people. He commented that things had been somewhat "ad hoc" before his government took office. A questioner asked what the government was doing about what he described as genocide in Gaza. The International Court of Justice (World Court) was mentioned as South Africa has taken a case against the Israel for its treatment of the Palestinian people. Mr Luxon replied that his government supported the International Court of Justice. He added that entry into New Zealand had been denied to Israelis who hold extremist views. Near the end a question was

asked as to why Mr Peters (Minister of Foreign Affairs) and Mr Luxon himself had been quiet about America's invasion of Iran, the assassination of its leader, the bombing of a girls school (in

Iran), threats of a military takeover of Greenland, and the abduction of the leader of Venezuela. Mr Luxon strongly denied the suggestion of quietness and gave examples to the contrary.



Protesting against the LNG poposal.



Simeon Brown and Christopher Luxon.

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If world wobbles New Zealand going to be caught

Finance minister Nicola Willis says getting to grips with the debt problem now will make things easier the next time a global financial crisis comes along. “The world is pretty heavily indebted right now, so we have to be brave to the fact that in a global crisis internationally New Zealand is going to be exposed,” she told a lunchtime meeting in Hawera on July 3. “If the world wobbles New Zealand is going to be caught.” She said this had been recognised by two earlier finance ministers, Bill English and Michael Cullen. It was therefore important to address the debt problem before the next global financial crisis hit.



Nicola Willis MP with Whanganui MP Carl Bates addressing a lunchtime meeting in Hawera.

“Other countries around the world have done the experiment where they racked up the debt and it doesn’t end well.” She said New Zealand is particularly vulnerable because of the amount of money borrowed from overseas. “If the world is in flux overseas lenders are going to be nervous about lending to New Zealand.” She said the country’s debt servicing costs are \$9 billion a year, which is four times the entire operating allowance spend in this year’s budget. “If we keep debt going up and up, what else is going up? The interest bill.” The meeting at the Presbyterian Church Hall in Hawera was the third in a series

of meetings in a tour of the Whanganui electorate with local MP Carl Bates to discuss the 2026 Budget. She had made what she said was her first visit to an Open Country dairy factory. She quipped that having once worked for rival Fonterra she felt “A bit of a traitor” in doing so. She said Carl Bates is “one of the most active land voices” in advocating for the regions. “When I’m in this part of the country I feel a surge of optimism,” she said. “Dairy is going well. Meat is going well, and also wool is going well.” She noted that it wasn’t always the case that the dairy-ing and meat sectors did well at the same time.

Nicola said that in the first three months of this year the economy was growing three times faster than the Australian economy and twice as fast as that of the United States. “Then we had the global oil shock which was a bit of a setback,” she said. Now, she says Treasury have forecast that inflation will stabilise, “and we can expect to see wages growing faster than inflation.” “It will happen because individual men and women will decide to start a new business or expand their businesses.” She said the government’s role is to create the conditions where people feel confident in making these decisions.

“We need the people who can create the next Rocket Lab.” She said thousands of new jobs are being created every month, but the media focus has been on the cutting of 8400 public service positions in Wellington. “I work with public servants and many of them are super smart. I don’t think giving me policy advice is all they can do.” She said Wellington is the centre of the growing film and gaming industries, and other exciting things are happening there as well, including what Victoria University has been doing in the field of stem cell research. Looking ahead to the election in November she said National worked well with current coalition partners New Zealand First and ACT and should National again lead the government she couldn’t see any change in economic direction, although the mix of ministers could be different. A recent opinion poll had shown an uplift in support for the Opportunities Party, but she didn’t think they would be a factor. “They don’t have a very clear brand. They’re into land taxes and policies that are much more in line with the Greens and Te Pati Maori parties.” After the Hawera meeting it was off to Stratford where National Young Farmer of the Year contestants were going through the competition’s practical round.

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A record year for the dairy sector

Export revenue for dairy for the year ended 30 June 2026 is an unprecedented \$28.6 billion. That is an increase of 5% over the 2024-25 year, an outstand-

ing result and tribute to the hard work of everyone involved in the dairy industry, particularly here in the Taranaki. Dairy is a



CARL BATES MP FOR WHANGANUI

key driver of the National-led Government’s goal to double export returns within a decade.

Highlighting the impor-

tance of our rural sector, last week Associate Agriculture Minister Mike Butterick toured the Whanganui electorate. This is part of the Rural Nats on Tour throughout the country, providing an opportunity to meet directly with farmers, listen to their concerns, see what is happening on the ground, and talk about National’s agriculture policies.

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Carl Bates MP for Whanganui

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A headshot of Carl Bates, a man with short dark hair and glasses, wearing a dark suit, white shirt, and blue tie.

Barbara Kuriger MP for Taranaki-King Country

barbara.kurigermp@parliament.govt.nz

barbarakuriger.national.org.nz/

A headshot of Barbara Kuriger, a woman with short blonde hair, wearing a light pink top.

David MacLeod MP for New Plymouth

david.macleodmp@parliament.govt.nz

www.national.org.nz/davidmacleod

A headshot of David MacLeod, a man with short dark hair, wearing a dark suit, white shirt, and blue tie.

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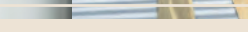
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Why your brain often mistakes the past for the present

Most of us like to believe that we see the world exactly as it is. We open our eyes, take in the facts and respond sensibly. Or at least that is the theory. In practice, the human brain is less like an impartial television camera and more like a slightly overconfident weather forecaster.

It makes the best prediction it can, but it may still tell you the day looks settled shortly before the mountain disappears, the wind arrives sideways, and somebody's washing on the line heads towards Eltham.

The brain is constantly trying to predict what will happen next.

A recent paper from the University of Oslo, published in the journal *Entropy*, explores one of the most influential ideas in modern neuroscience: the brain does not simply wait for life to happen and then react. It uses previous experiences to predict what is likely to happen next.

It then compares those predictions with what is actually happening and adjusts them when necessary. This is enormously useful. Without it, everyday life would be painfully slow.

When someone throws you a ball, you do not carefully

calculate its speed, direction and likely landing point before moving your hands. Your brain rapidly predicts where the ball is going and prepares your body to catch it.

Ideally.

Sometimes it predicts that the ball is going directly into your hands. Reality then provides the useful information that it has instead bounced off your forehead.

The brain uses the same predictive process in relationships, social situations, and emotional life. It learns from previous experiences and uses those lessons to anticipate what other people might do.

The problem is that a prediction is not necessarily a fact.

When the past shapes the present

Imagine someone who was frequently criticised while growing up.

Their brain may learn that mistakes lead to embarrassment, rejection, or anger. Years later, a manager might simply say, "Could I have a quick word?" Yet the person's nervous system immediately responds as though they are about to be hauled before a disciplinary tribunal.

Their heart rate rises. Their



RICHARD HALL

stomach tightens. Their mind begins searching for what they have done wrong. The manager may only want to ask where the stapler has gone.

Similarly, someone who has experienced rejection may become highly alert to signs that another person is losing interest. A delayed text message, a tired expression, or a slightly brief reply can be interpreted as evidence that the relationship is in trouble.

The brain is not deliberately trying to make life difficult. It is attempting to protect the person by using previous information to predict danger.

Unfortunately, it may be applying an old map to a new landscape.

It is a little like assuming every road is going to be clear because it was clear yesterday, then meeting a herd of cows occupying both lanes five minutes outside

Ōpunakē.

The old prediction made sense. It just did not include the latest information.

This helps explain why two people can experience the same event very differently. One person sees a neutral facial expression. Another sees disapproval. One hears constructive feedback. Another hears, "You are not good enough."

We do not experience the world through our eyes and ears alone. We experience it through everything our brain has previously learned.

Why negative patterns can become stubborn

The University of Oslo paper suggests that persistent expectations of criticism, hostility, or rejection may operate like rigid prediction models.

These models can survive because they give the brain something it values enormously: certainty.

The prediction may be painful, but at least it is familiar.

In evolutionary terms, it made sense for the brain to take possible threats seriously. If something rustled in the long grass, our ancestors were better off briefly assuming it was dangerous than wandering over to give it a friendly pat.

The cost of one false alarm was relatively small. The cost of ignoring an actual predator was removal from the family tree.

That ancient protective system remains with us. It now reacts not only to predators but also to emails, social gatherings, performance reviews, relationship tension, and the terrifying appearance of an unfamiliar number on our mobile phone.

For some of us, even the words "We need to talk" can produce more internal activity than a southerly arriving across the coast.

The brain would often rather produce ten unnecessary alarms than miss one genuine danger.

This can contribute to

anxiety. The brain predicts threat, the body prepares for threat, and those physical sensations are then treated as further evidence that something must be wrong.

"I feel anxious, so this situation must be dangerous."

The prediction and the bodily response begin reinforcing each other.

The 'inner critic' is predicting too

The same idea may help us understand the critical inner voice.

An inner critic often sounds as though it is delivering an objective assessment:

"You will make a fool of yourself."

"You are going to fail."

"They will think you are useless."

Yet these statements may be better understood as predictions produced by a protective system.

The brain may believe that criticising us first will prevent us from becoming overconfident, making mistakes, or being criticised by somebody else. It is trying to keep us safe, but its methods can resemble having an extremely pessimistic sports coach living permanently inside our head. One who believes motivation is best achieved by shouting, "Don't stuff this up," immediately before every important moment.

Understanding this changes the question.

Instead of asking, "What is wrong with me?" we can ask, "What has my brain learned to expect, and why?"

That does not mean every fear is imaginary or that we should ignore genuine warning signs. It means recognising that a powerful feeling is not automatic proof that our prediction is correct.

Helping the brain update

The encouraging part is that predictions can change.

However, telling ourselves to "stop worrying" is rarely enough. Deep expectations are often learned through repeated experiences, so

they usually need repeated new experiences before the brain fully updates them.

Someone who fears speaking in public may begin with a small, manageable conversation rather than immediately addressing a packed town hall.

Someone expecting rejection may practise checking the facts before assuming the worst.

Someone with a harsh inner critic may deliberately develop a more balanced inner response:

"This feels uncomfortable, but discomfort does not mean disaster."

"I made a mistake, but that does not make me a failure."

"I do not yet know what that person is thinking."

Every time reality turns out safer or more manageable than expected, the brain receives new information.

Change is not about pretending that everything will be wonderful. That would simply replace one inaccurate prediction with another.

We know better than that in Taranaki. Nobody sensible looks at a clear morning over the mountain and assumes the washing is guaranteed to remain dry all day.

It is about becoming more flexible, curious, and accurate.

Our brains are remarkable prediction machines. They keep us moving through a complicated world without requiring us to reconsider every step from scratch.

But like all prediction systems, they sometimes rely too heavily on old data.

The next time your mind confidently announces that something dreadful is about to happen, it may be worth pausing before handing it the keys to the control room.

Your brain may be offering a useful warning.

Or it may simply be forecasting yesterday's weather.

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Top tooth picks for healthy teeth

I am a dentist and my name is Dr Julie Martin. I am president of the Taranaki Branch of NZ Dental Association. I co-own Hawera Dental Surgery with my sister, Dr Belinda Martin. Our surgery is located at 5 Furlong Street, Hawera.

Our Taranaki branch of the NZ Dental Association had its annual Fundraiser Quiz evening recently raising over \$1000.00. Once again, a lot of fun promoting collegiality, while addressing the serious issue of child dental health. We continue to champion our Oral Health Therapists amidst their ongoing staff shortages in the School Dental Service. We had an excellent turn-out from dentists and their practices and all those involved in oral health care. Special thanks to our sponsors and to New Plymouth Mayor Max Brough for awarding the raffle prizes.

Every dollar raised goes toward providing dental kits to local schools, focusing on those most in need. So far we've donated dental kits to Ramanui School in Hawera and Avon School in Stratford. Next up we'll be visiting Kakaramea, Hawera Primary and two New Plymouth schools.



Back row: Dentist Belinda Martin (pink scarf), A'Marny, Kymarni, Massey-Jay, A'Dydis
Middle row: Erika, Teariki, Jethro, Ineyer, Dentist Julie Martin
Front row: Syris, Anton, Journey, Sativa-Leigh and Kahleah.

On the last day of Term 2 Belinda Martin and I went to Ramanui School in Hawera with donations of dental kits for every student.

On our arrival we were met by Principal, Debbie Drake, who is genuinely warm, enthusiastic and a true champion for the children.

We hope you enjoy this picture of students at Ramanui School, Hawera.

Dr Julie Martin

Patterns in heart-related deaths echo seasonal surges of respiratory illness

The COVID-19 pandemic allowed German scientists to study the timing of seasonal respiratory diseases like flu and RSV. Using modelling tools, they found that when a seasonal surge of illnesses was skipped, as during

pandemic measures, loss of immunity in the population led to a buildup of "susceptible hosts" - causing an earlier surge the following season. They also found that rates of deaths, which were dominated by heart-

related deaths, also shifted to an earlier seasonal surge, supporting the idea that viral respiratory infections are a major factor in heart disease risk. The authors say this shows the importance of timely vaccinations for

infections like flu.

Global Public Health

Exercise may help teens with depressive symptoms even if they don't have depression

Aerobic exercise could help teens reduce depressive symptoms even if they don't have clinical depression, according to international research. The analysis of previous trial data found that a 12-month aerobic exercise

program was more effective than mood and depression education sessions for teens with symptoms that did not yet meet clinical thresholds of depression. The researchers also found that the exercise was linked

to changes in brainwave scans, which could be used as markers to build personalised exercise-based interventions for teens.

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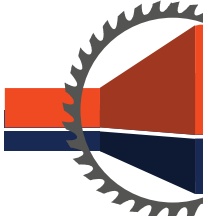
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Paper notes at Cecelias on Tasman.

Mangatoki WI

Here we are again after another couple of busy months. On June 3 we carpooled our way to a morning in New Plymouth for some exercise activities. We arrived at Bowlarama and proceeded to the indoor neon mini putt area. Here we divided into two teams and played the course. Amid a lot of laughter and stuck balls



A few of the ladies beginning their diamond art coaster. On the left-hand side are Judy, Bev and Maree. On the right-hand side are Kathy and Lorraine.

we finished the game with our overall winner being Charmain who managed to score a hole in one.

On to the bowling alley and again into two teams but with different players.

can feel like finding a small treasure. Your first question is probably, “What are these actually worth now?”

The answer really has two parts: what the Bank of England guarantees, and what an enthusiastic collector might be willing to pay.

For any withdrawn Bank of England note, you are always guaranteed its original face value. That means a £10 note will always be worth at least £10. However, certain factors like rarity, pristine condition, and unique serial numbers can make its market worth soar, turning it from simple currency into a valuable collectible.

Factors that determine banknote value

Ever wondered why one old £10 note is worth just its face value, while another that looks almost identical sells at auction for thousands? The secret is in the details. Valuing old pound notes means looking

past the big number printed on the front and learning to spot the subtle clues that can turn everyday cash into a collector’s dream.

Think of it like valuing a vintage car. You might have two cars of the same model and year, but the one that’s been kept in a garage with low mileage and a rare factory colour will be worth a whole lot more than the one that’s been used for the daily commute. It’s the same with banknotes—condition, rarity, and unique features are everything.

Think of an old £1 note less as money and more as a tiny paper time capsule. Its value is all tied up in the story it tells, how many others like it are out there, and how well it has survived its journey.

Raewyn at Cecelia’s says she irons the old notes and they come up fine. Cecelia’s shop in Opunake has a range of collectable notes and coins.

Through the month the Ladies have delivered Meals on Wheels in Eltham and also made pots of soup for delivery to the elderly by The Lions Club Ladies.

July 1 came around very fast and we met in Eltham at Touchpoint for a craft day.

After holding our monthly meeting with a lot of business discussion, we purchased lunch from the local businesses.

The afternoon was spent doing diamond art. Judy explained how it was done and it is not a lot different to paint by numbers. You use a pen type gadget and small sparkly coloured dimantes.

These were applied to patterned coasters. As these were not completed on the day, they are to be taken to our August Meeting which will be held in the Mangatoki Hall on August 5.

Another couple of great days and good get togethers being held.

Denise Carter.



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Tiny Home construction at Opunake High School

Since the start of the school year, Opunake High School students have been involved in the construction of a tiny home, under the supervision of teacher Michael Griggs and Kenneth Short. About fifteen Year 12 and 13 students have been involved in the project. “Our mandate is to get students into a work-ready mindset,” explains Michael. This tiny home, which is 9 metres long and 3.6 metres wide, is expected to be completed by the middle of next term. It has one bedroom, a utility room, and a kitchen /lounge area.

Mr Griggs says it’s important to teach your students how to use the right product and application as they would be expected to do in any normal build.

The tinted windows, supplied by Central Windows and Doors, are up to the modern standards with double glazing and thermally broken aluminium (hard plaster between two aluminium exclusions), which helps to make them incredibly well insulated. Michael admits they cost a little more to install, but will be a saving of money in the long run, as well as creating a more healthy living environment because of dry (non-weeping) windows.

The exterior cladding is Pallisides, with a 25 year life span (Warranty) precluding the need to spend money and time on the initial painting, but reduces maintenance needs over its lifetime. “It’s user friendly, and relatively easy to install. “It is designed for New Zealand conditions, sun (UV light) and a harsh environment. It costs a bit to install, but is cheaper in the long run.” Aesthetically pleasing Ribline roofing completes the exterior cladding and matches the aluminium.

Michael has been involved in the tiny home project since it’s inception in 2019. As part of the process the programme helps to assist students getting jobs where they can. The tracking data of the students that leave school, after participating in the Tiny Homes



Bailey Feek working on internal framing in the bathroom.

programme, shows a good correlation to students getting jobs/apprenticeships, although “not necessarily construction,” as such.

“I enjoy watching students acquire skills and personal growth as people,” he adds.

The project has definite challenges, in a positive sense, “we must ensure we produce work to the building standard with the students.” They need to learn a lot such things as knowledge of tools, wall and subfloor framing, braces requirements, installing of insulation (ceiling and

walls), risk management and, of course, Health & Safety requirements. “We take our time to go through the processes,” shares Michael. “There is also a significant amount of bookwork.” He reveals student accumulated over 100 plus pages of technical information and evidence over the build to ensure they pass the unit standards delivered within the programme. “This helps them to get used of evidence gathering for if they become an apprentice,” says Mr Griggs.

Sustainability is an important aspect of the project. The insulation product Earthwool Glasswool, for example, is comprised of 80% recycled glass bottles and silica sand. Pallisides cladding is made 100% from recycled materials. Solar panels will also be installed. The flooring will be stylish carpet squares, which can be readily replaced, if damaged or stained, rather than the expense (and adverse environmental footprint) of a total recarpeting process. The Tiny Homes programme is grateful for the input, both material and advice, from local trades people and firms.

He also acknowledges the important input of Gateway coordinator Liz Gasson for organising the experience for the students



A side on view of Jaden Dougherty who is levelling up a sheet of bracing plywood.

or WITT classes, as the participating students can be involved with both of these within their weekly trades timetable. Gateway allows senior students to gain hands on industry specific work experience, alongside other subjects. Employment and apprenticeships can be the positive result.

The final word goes to Michael:

“This Tiny Homes building site is as real as we can get it and we make the students accountable. Our goal is to show these students that they can be successfully involved in trades and feel comfortable with the skill set and work ready attitude required, so when they when they get the opportunity to work within the trades/ construction site it is not totally foreign environment for them.”



The tiny home as viewed from the exterior.

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Michael Griggs, who has been involved in the tiny homes project for several years.

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Iwi-led programme reshapes future of nursing

A powerful story of aspiration, identity, and community is reshaping the future of nursing in Aotearoa. At its heart is an innovative programme that shows what's possible when learning is grounded in kaupapa Māori and shaped by iwi.

Led by Te Rūnanganui o Te Āti Awa and delivered in partnership with Whitireia and WelTec, the Bachelor of Nursing Māori 'Matariki' programme is strengthening whānau, building community capability, and redefining what success in education can look like. Grounded in culture, connection, and manaakitanga, the programme was developed to help address the underrepresentation of Māori in nursing and to support the growth of confident, capable practitioners who remain closely connected to their communities. As the first 'Matariki' cohort prepares to graduate, the impact is clear - seen in the journeys of ākonga like Horowai Moeahu (Te Rūnanganui o Te Āti Awa).

For Horowai, nursing is about honouring her whakapapa, caring for her whānau, and serving her community. A mother of four, she is now in her final year of the Bachelor of Nursing Māori 'Matariki'. "I wasn't even sure I had the qualifications to become a nurse," she says. "But here I am, almost a graduate."

Horowai's journey began



Horowai Moeahu is soon to graduate in the Bachelor of Nursing Māori 'Matariki' programme which combines marae-based wānanga, whānau-centred learning, and strong connections to whenua and whakapapa.

through her work with Te Rūnanganui o Te Āti Awa, starting as a kaiawhina at a COVID-19 vaccination centre. She later supported whānau at drive-through clinics at Te Whiti Park and worked as a kaiārahi in Tamariki Ora.

"I loved helping and educating whānau Māori in their health journeys and protecting them against illness," she says. "That's what inspired me to take this opportunity."

Guided by Te Ao Māori

and Te Ao Tapuhi, the Bachelor of Nursing Māori 'Matariki' combines marae-based wānanga, whānau-centred learning, and strong connections to whenua and whakapapa. The wānanga learning in Waiwhetū has been especially meaningful for Horowai.

"I didn't stay at high school long and struggled in a classroom," she says. "But studying on my whenua puts me at ease. If I feel overwhelmed, I can look to my awa, walk, see my

maunga, or go to the marae. That helps me reset." Clinical placements - especially in a hospital ward - have further shaped her path.

"That's when it hit me, I won't be a student much longer. I'll be a registered Māori nurse caring for patients."

With graduation approaching in September, Horowai has clear goals. In the short term, she plans to gain hospital experience while continuing to give back to Te Āti Awa communities, including

through Tamariki Ora. Longer term, she hopes to become a nurse practitioner and return to Taranaki. "I'd love to open a nursing-led medical centre for our Māori people, staffed by Māori nurses and doctors."

As Horowai prepares to enter the workforce, her journey shows what's possible when education is delivered by, with, and for Māori - connected to identity, strengthened by whānau, and driven by purpose.

Being culture culture may help stave off ageing

If you frequently enjoy the arts, your body may age less rapidly than folks who give 'culture' a wide berth, according to Japanese scientists.

The team analysed health data on about 1,900

English people aged 50 plus, estimating their 'physiological age scores'. The participants completed a questionnaire about how often they went to the cinema, a museum or art gallery and a theatre, concert or the opera, which the scientists used to develop a 'cultural engagement score'. They found people who engaged in cultural activities every few months or more had a physiological age of about

67 years, over three years younger than those who enjoyed the arts less often. And each additional point on the 'cultural engagement score' was linked with a reduction in physiological age of 31 days, they say.

This type of study can't prove that arts engagement actually caused improvements in physiological ageing, and the authors say it's possible being in better

health simply allows us to engage with the arts more often, so 'reverse causality' may be at play. Even so, cultural engagement might be an effective anti-ageing intervention, with an effect similar in size to frequent exercise, they say.

Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health

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Puanga Matariki celebrated at the Green School

The Green School at 406 Koru Road, celebrated Puanga Matariki, which is a special time of renewal, reflection and community. It marks the Māori New Year. The celebrations were held on Wednesday July 1, with a concert and afterwards a hāngī meal.

Puangi is bright star called Rigel, which is the brightest star in the Orion constellation. Matariki is another bright star which can be seen just below Puanga. It is a time to appreciate the fruits of growing, harvesting and storage and reflecting on the past year and loved ones, as well as remembering those who have passed away.

The concert, enjoyed by many people, was underway at 11am and featured poetry, music drama and performances by the students.

“This concert is a celebration of now - from the talent in the school. Everyone performing is putting themselves on show for you,” declared one teacher. The audience were asked to make sure they showed their appreciation.

Manawa Lukie (schools Kapa Haka Teacher) led the first part of the concert including the Pepeha action song, which was thoroughly enjoyed by all. He also led a rousing haka, before



There was plenty of audience participation which reflected their total enjoyment.

leaving as he had another commitment.

One delightful item was a humorous play entitled When the Teacher Leaves the Room featuring Tara, Imogene, Ena, Siahna, Maple, Wyatt and Whaea Haley.

Pearl performed a Highland (Scottish) dance to bagpipe music with finesse. Great effort.

“I chose this because it was the first rap song I grew

up with,” explained Wyatt before performing his rap solo with high energy, which had the audience clapping and toe-tapping along in time with him.

“It was a clean rap,” observed a teacher to laughter.

There were several other items, which are a positive reflection of the commitment of the students and staff to the performing arts.

The day concluded with a hāngī, which was lifted

in the early afternoon. A karakia mō te kai followed and everyone enjoyed a shared hāngī lunch in the Kina Atrium or on the field near Compass Hill.

Incidentally, the meat and produce for the hāngī was sourced from Green School NZ and Green Farms. Separate baskets were prepared for vegetarians at the event.

Principal Nigel Barrett made this contribution: “The celebration of Puanga Matariki at Green School NZ is one of the highlights of the school calendar. Bringing local and international families, past and present, to celebrate a uniquely Taranaki tradition is truly special. This year, for the first time, instead of receiving food for the hangi from families, Green School NZ and Green Farms produced almost everything. This is a big step for us as a school that goes beyond just being a school.”

Well done to everyone who was involved in this successful Puanga Matariki celebration.



Pearl performed her excellent Highland dance to musical accompaniment (bagpipes).



‘The Wolf Girls’ entertaining the audience with their tuneful singing.

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LOCAL ELECTIONS

Te Hāwera Community Board by-election called

South Taranaki District Council has announced a by-election for Te Hāwera Community Board following the resignation of Board member Celine Filbee. South Taranaki Mayor Phil Nixon extends his thanks to Celine for her service to the Hāwera community and her contribution during her time as an elected member. “On behalf of the Council and the Hāwera community, I thank Celine for her dedicated service over the past nine plus years. Her commitment, care and contribution to Hāwera and the wider district have been greatly valued, and we wish her all the very best for the future.” The by-election process officially commenced on 30 June 2026 with the publication of the public notice and the opening of candidate nominations. Nominations will close at noon on 28 July

2026. Eligible residents with an interest in representing their community are encouraged to consider standing for election. Information on candidate nominations and electoral enrolment will be available through South Taranaki District Council and the Electoral Officer. Voting documents will be delivered to Te Hāwera ward electors from 7 September 2026, with voting closing at noon on Wednesday 7 October 2026. Preliminary results will be available later that day, with the official declaration of results expected on 8 October 2026. For more information about the by-election, nominations, or enrolment, visit www.southtaranaki.com or contact the Electoral Officer.

Waverley town belt nears next milestone



Stage 2A of the Waverley Town Belt development is nearing completion, with the new car park and pedestrian footpath in their final stages of construction. The upgrades will improve access and connectivity throughout the reserve and build on previous enhancements to pathways, parking, fencing and infrastructure. The project is now preparing to enter its ecological phase, with reforestation planting scheduled to begin soon. The planting programme will support biodiversity, native restoration and the long-term vision for the Town Belt as a high-quality community green space.

Manaia hall demolition advances

Demolition of the Manaia buildings is progressing. The Town Hall building is now completely demolished and the contractor is tidying up to clear the site. Demolition of the old sports complex building is now underway. There has been a sense of nostalgia across the community as the buildings come down, with many remembering the events and occasions held in the buildings over the years, from ballet performances and cabaret evenings to cinema screenings, weddings, and concerts and after match celebrations. Preservation has been prioritised throughout the project, with

selected timbers, seating and other materials recovered by specialist recyclers. Club memorabilia such as trophies, photos, honours and sponsors boards have been removed and passed on to community members for preservation. Timber flooring from the supper hall will be incorporated into the new building, while chattels from both buildings have been retained for re-use in Council facilities. Concrete from the demolition will also be crushed and reused on site, helping reduce project costs and waste.

Te Puna Manawa Ora taking shape in Ōpunakē

Work on Te Puna Manawa Ora continues to make strong progress, with major structural elements now in place and the redevelopment taking visible shape. Foundations have been completed for key features including the shelter, puna and rock feature, while corten steel elements and the rebuilt rock wall seating area are beginning to define the space. Sections of the rock wall have been reconstructed using stone from the original structure, helping retain a connection to the site’s history. Preparation of the rain garden is also complete, with planting to commence soon.

Stark Park upgrade underway

Eltham’s Stark Park upgrade has officially begun, with demolition and site preparation marking the first stage of the project. While visible activity has been limited to date, significant planning and coordination work has been completed behind the scenes to support the delivery of the upgrade. Additional improvements are also progressing, including the development of new park signage and the relocation of refurbished seating to Eltham Cemetery. Existing features, including the boundary wall mosaic artwork, will be protected during construction and assessed for future restoration.



Upcoming Meetings

Workshop

Long Term Plan Day 4
Monday 20 July, 9am

Workshop – Head Start Pathway
Monday 20 July, 1pm

Extraordinary Council

To confirm Head Start Proposal
Wednesday 29 July, 1pm

Eltham-Kaponga Community Board
Monday 3 August, 10.30am
Mangamingi Hall, Morea Road,
Mangamingi

Te Hāwera Community Board
Monday 3 August, 4pm
Wharepuni Marae, Fraser Road,
Normanby

Taranaki Coastal Community Board
Wednesday 5 August, 10.30am
Te Kiri Hall, 2716 Eltham Road, Ōpunakē

Pātea Community Board
Wednesday 5 August, 4pm,
Hunter Shaw Building, Pātea



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



Nominate someone for a South Taranaki Community Award

These awards only come around once every two years. Take this opportunity to nominate an individual or group deserving recognition for going beyond the call of duty.

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New signage helping make Hāwera parks more inclusive

A grassroots community initiative aimed at making Hāwera’s public spaces more inclusive is now complete, with four Core Communication Signs installed at King Edward Park and Kōwhai Park. The idea was seeded by Te Hāwera Community Board following conversations with Enabling Good Lives Hāwera about the challenges some neurodiverse children and adults can face when interacting with public spaces. The signs provide a simple, visual communication tool for people who use alternative or assisted forms of communication, allowing them to express their thoughts, feelings and needs by pointing to symbols, words and images while enjoying the parks. Working alongside TalkLink Trust, local businesses and Council staff, the Community Board helped turn the idea into reality. Council staff supported the project with te reo Māori translation work, helped identify suitable locations, and worked closely with the Community Board to ensure

the signs would be accessible and useful for local families. What began as a conversation quickly gained momentum, with local businesses stepping forward to support the project. Pam and Paula - First National Real Estate Hāwera, Precision Building, Simply Speech and Matty Neil Building fully funded the signs, while Precision Building crafted the beautiful timber frames and installed them. As a result, all four signs were donated and installed at no cost to ratepayers. Just six months after the idea was first raised, the signs are already making a difference for local families. Te Hāwera Community Board hopes the project will inspire more community-led partnerships with some exciting new opportunities about to be made public later this week. The Board thanks Enabling Good Lives Hāwera, Council staff and sponsors for helping transform a simple idea into a lasting community resource that will help make Hāwera’s parks more welcoming for everyone.



New features for Pātea Saltmarsh

Work has started on the Pātea Saltmarsh project, marking an important step in enhancing public access to this unique coastal environment while safeguarding its ecological and cultural significance. The project includes the construction of a new pathway and viewing platform, providing visitors with improved opportunities to experience and appreciate the saltmarsh without compromising its sensitive habitats. Alongside these access improvements, the project will

deliver extensive native planting, interpretive signage, and a range of bespoke design features that reflect the identity and stories of the area. These elements are being developed in collaboration with local artists and stakeholders, helping to create a destination that celebrates the rich environmental, cultural, and community values of the site while supporting its long-term protection and restoration.

Trial roundabout proving a success in Hāwera



The trial roundabout at the Turuturu Road and Glover Road intersection in Hāwera is proving to be a success, with positive feedback from residents after just over five weeks of operation. Installed as a trial to assess its effectiveness, the roundabout has helped improve traffic flow and has been well received by motorists using the busy intersection. To further enhance safety and ensure the roundabout operates as intended, Council is planning to install additional traffic delineators on the southern Glover Road approach. The delineators will help prevent southbound vehicles from turning across traffic into the Bunnings car park reducing the risk of accidents and improving traffic movement through the intersection.



Turuturu Road pathway taking shape

Work on the Turuturu Road pathway project in Hāwera is progressing well, with pathway construction currently underway between the Ōhangai Road intersection and Kingsford Smith Drive. To date, approximately 480 metres of sealed pathway has been completed, marking a significant milestone for the project. The new pathway will provide a safer and more accessible route for people walking, cycling and using other recreational transport options along the corridor.

The next stage of the project is set to get underway from the Longview subdivision, where crews will begin sealed shoulder widening and shared pathway construction. Once complete, the pathway will improve connections for residents and enhance safety and accessibility along this growing part of town. Motorists and pathway users are thanked for their patience while work is underway.

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Nitrates may be linked to preterm births

Even nitrate levels well below the regulatory limit may slightly increase the risk of preterm births, a large New Zealand study finds.

For over 700,000 births in NZ between 2008 and 2021, researchers looked at where the mothers were from, the nitrate levels in their local drinking water, and how long their pregnancies were.

The researchers say that up to 120 early births a year could be linked with nitrate exposure - although other factors like smoking are known to have a bigger effect on the risk of preterm births.

Marnie Prickett, Research Fellow, Department of Public Health, Ōtākou Whakaihu Waka, Pōneke | University of Otago, Wellington, comments:

“This study adds to our understanding of the potential risks of nitrate in drinking water for human health and suggests that nitrate at lower levels than the maximum currently allowed in New Zealand has health impacts. It should be another indication to central and local government that there needs to be more done to protect communities’ drinking water sources from pollution.

“Unlike microbiological contamination, most drinking water suppliers don’t routinely treat nitrate out of people’s drinking water. It can be expensive and complicated to do so, and restoring the quality of a drinking water source can take a long time once it’s polluted. Protecting the sources of drinking water, lakes, rivers and groundwater, is the first and most important step in ensuring good quality drinking water for everyone, for generations to come.

“Troublingly, the Government is currently rewriting the Resource Management Act in such a way that new legislation will offer little to protect communities’ drinking water sources from nitrate contamination. This is a real worry, especially as we see nitrate levels increasing in drinking water sources in many parts of the country, particularly groundwater sources in areas under intensive agriculture.”

Associate Professor Tim Chambers, Ngai Tahu Research Centre, University of Canterbury; and author of this research, comments:

“Our study found that the risk of preterm birth increased by about one per cent for every 1mg/L increase in nitrate concentration in drinking water. If the relationship is causal, nitrate exposure could contribute to around 120 preterm births each year, or about four per cent of all preterm births in New Zealand.

“While the increase in risk is likely to be small for the great majority of communities supplied by public water systems, this study adds further urgency to reassessing regulatory limits for nitrate in drinking water.”

Inglewood church prepares for second century

When the people of Inglewood wanted to remember the men of their district who died in the First World War, they built a church and enshrined the names of the 138 fallen on a marble tablet on the wall.

More than a century on, the community is banding together again to preserve St Andrew’s Church on Rata Street, with some help from NPDC’s Built Heritage Protection Fund.

The Anglican church, which was completed in 1923, is a Schedule



Graeme Sykes outside St Andrew’s Church.

1 protected building in NPDC’s Part Operative District Plan and needs a new roof and earthquake-strengthening to see it through another century.

The Taranaki Anglican Trust Board (TATB) is set to start the \$4.2 million project with funding from residents and other donors, including \$100,000 from the NPDC fund.

Graeme Sykes, Chair of the St Andrew’s Property and Admin Committee, said the church was still seeking about \$1m for the work.

“This is an important piece of our town’s history, both as a memorial and as a distinctive architectural landmark. The parishioners at the time contributed to the construction of this church as a lasting memorial to those who gave their lives in the war, and now it’s fallen to us to carry on this work and preserve it as a reminder of the tragic cost of war,” said Mr Sykes.

“We’re very grateful to all the donors, including NPDC and the Lottery Environment and Heritage Fund, which has given \$300,000. NPDC’s Built Heritage Protection Fund made a significant commitment and shows our district is serious about preserving our history.”

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New bridge on Forgotten World Highway



A new 20 metre bridge across the Kururau Stream is helping future-proof the Forgotten World Highway.

A new bridge is helping future-proof the Forgotten World Highway, supporting more reliable journeys on this iconic route. The new 20 metre bridge has been built as part of the NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi priority bridge replacement programme. It's located between Taumarunui and Whangamōmona.

State Highway 43 Forgotten World Highway is a regionally important corridor linking Taumarunui and Stratford and is an important link for the communities along the way, including Whangamōmona and its tourism operators. The Forgotten World Highway is one of New Zealand's iconic back country journeys and an important link for local communities, farms, businesses, and visitors. The previous Kururau Stream Water Drive, located near Aukopae, is a hand dug culvert tunnelled through soft, sedimentary rock. At around 80 years old, it's an example of early local engineering. NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi project

visitors to travel this iconic Forgotten World Highway for years to come.”

The previous water drive structure has been left in place as part of the landscape, as the new bridge bypasses it with an improved road alignment.

“It's been exciting to see this new bridge take shape, in addition to two new culverts on State Highway 3 in northern Taranaki being completed in May.

“They're all part of the national priority bridge replacement programme and ultimately lead to more efficient, more reliable travel for people,” says Ms Ludeke.

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Doctors call on health professionals to state “politically inconvenient” evidence

In a NZ Medical Journal editorial, doctors say the safety of our health system is under threat. They say that for a long time the government has made reducing health inequities a priority, and there is a lot of research about interventions that can help, making them evidence-based rather than “ideological”. They outline examples of interventions that were recently stopped, like smokefree legislation and lowering the bowel cancer screening age for Māori and Pacific people, arguing this is because science doesn't match current government ideology. The authors conclude that professionals should be able to speak honestly about risks to health, and have an obligation to do so.

New Zealand Medical Journal

Paracetamol not linked to ADHD or autism

A large study of over 120,000 children has found no link between paracetamol use during pregnancy and the risk of ADHD or autism. The study compared pairs of siblings to try to remove genetics and family environment from the equation, as both ADHD and autism have a strong inherited component. The researchers found no link between paracetamol use in pregnancy and increased risk of either autism or ADHD, regardless of the timing, pattern, and dose of paracetamol use.

JAMA Internal Medicine

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Toi Foundation extends deadline

Continued from page 1

Opunake. “I don’t think they need to merge. TSB has been doing really well as they are. They need to stand alone and carry on supporting our communities.”

Another woman in Opunake took a different view.

“I do bank with the TSB, but all my banking is online, so whether they merge with Heartland Bank doesn’t bother me at all,” she said. “If the service and accessibility from Heartland are the same, from my perspective it doesn’t bother me.”

Sharon Stewart of Eltham said the TSB had been good for Taranaki.

“I’ve been with the TSB since I was a kid and I’ve always gone with them,” she said. “I’ve struggled with going with other banks. TSB is a really well known bank, and they’ve been good for the community and good for Taranaki. When the branch closed down here it was a big loss to the town. I think there must be something wrong with the banking system.”

Jason Windleberg said he would be open to the idea if it “opened the door” for people getting better banking services in Opunake.

“I would like to use the bank as somewhere to

transfer between accounts. If somebody from the TSB could be here maybe one day a week to manage TSB business, even if it’s operating out of the library, for things like getting a cashflow card. It’s hard if you have to make a trip to New Plymouth.”

He said it was something other agencies could do as well.

Shane Sandbrook also commented on the lack of banking facilities in Opunake.

“The fact is you have to go

to Hawera or New Plymouth to walk into a bank, and you’ve got one ATM that plays up. Not having a bank makes it difficult for people like me without any transport.”

In Eltham concerns were voiced about whether the merger would mean branch closures, a loss of services, and how a shift to more digital banking could affect older customers.

“Any decision is going to impact and cause unnecessary stress,” said one woman. “The younger

generation are already working tech savvy, but we older ones struggle with change. We still generally rely on customer service. If this happens most of our generation would take our funding out of the TSB and put it into a physical bank, and if they go with Heartland, you’ve got all these buildings that are going to be vacant.”

One man agrees that a merger would see existing customers pull out.

“What if everybody pulls out? It will go turkey up,”

he says. He thinks, however, the merger is a done deal.

“They’ve shut the one on the main street (in New Plymouth) already and they’re operating from around by Pak’n’Save, so they’ve already got the wheels turning.”

He concedes that the Toi Foundation “do a lot of good.”

“I think it sucks,” said one woman. “To have no banks is not fair. You’ve got to think about the old people who don’t drive and need to get money.”

TSB named Canstar Bank of the Year for Everyday Banking

TSB has been named Canstar’s 2026 Bank of the Year for Everyday Banking.

The Everyday Banking Award recognises the financial institution that provides the strongest combination of products, price, features and customer satisfaction across everyday banking – including transaction accounts, savings accounts and credit cards.

Canstar said TSB claimed the 2026 Everyday Banking

Award on the strength of a well-rounded product range that covers the full scope of day-to-day banking activities.



A TSB branch.

It highlighted TSB’s Connect Plus transaction account, which offers zero fees and unlimited transactions; WebSaver, which pays interest on all balances with no withdrawal conditions attached; and the Low Rate Mastercard, which has an 11.95% p.a. purchase interest rate.

The award follows TSB recently being named Canstar’s 2026 Bank of the Year for Credit Cards for the fourth consecutive year.

TSB’s General Manager - Product and Marketing, Nick Herbert, says the recognition reflects TSB’s focus on making everyday banking simple and useful for customers.

“Everyday banking is about offering simple, competitive products that help customers stay in control of their money.

“Whether customers are paying bills, managing daily spending, saving, or looking for flexibility across their banking, we want our products to be easy to use and good value.

“Underpinning this award is our focus on customer service which, along with a strong product set, is what really drives customer satisfaction. It’s a fantastic endorsement of what all our dedicated teams across the business do on a daily basis, and the continued improvements we’re making across digital and our brand.

“To be recognised again by Canstar for everyday banking, alongside our recent Bank of the Year – Credit Cards award for the fourth year running, is a proud moment for our team and a strong endorsement of the value we’re delivering for customers,” says Nick Herbert

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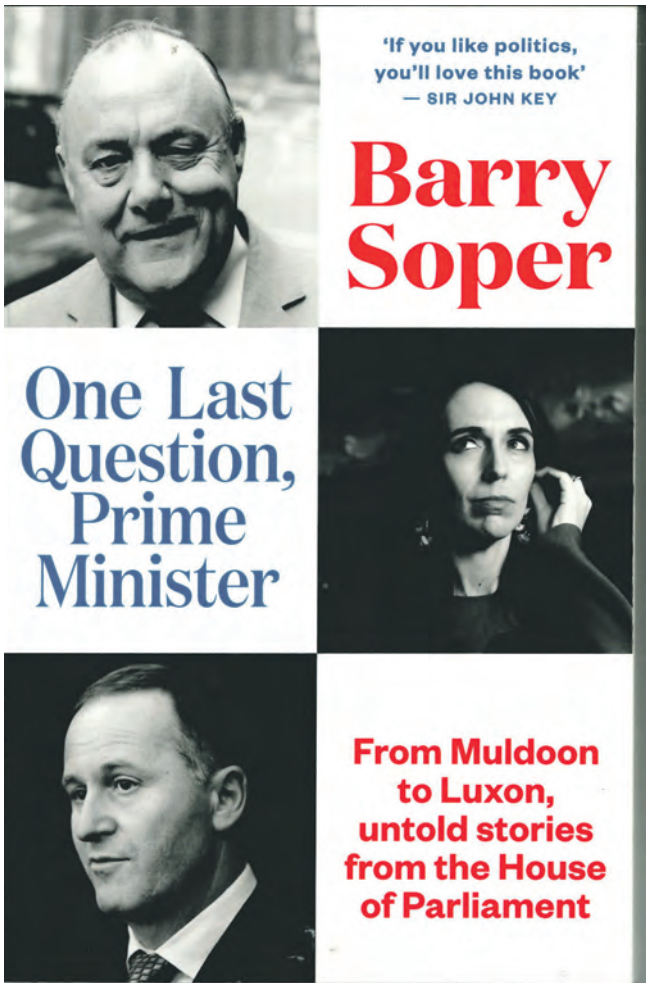
One Last Question Prime Minister – a book review

Written by Barry Soper
One Last Question Prime Minister: From Muldoon to Luxon. Untold stories from the House of Parliament is an excellent read. It is published by Harper Collins, Auckland (2026). It has many intriguing photographs featuring such giants as Mandela and President Obama

This fascinating account from an award-winning journalist who, from 1980, was a parliamentary press reporter. Soper dealt with a dozen prime ministers whom he groups six as significant and four as insignificant. Of the first group he ranks Helen Clark at the outstanding one with John Key a close second. The years 1999 to 2016, he therefore rates as the “golden years” of New Zealand prime ministers.

It will surprise many people to learn that he considered Dame Jacinda Ardern as the “weakest” and most “ineffective” of the prime ministers he rated in the significant list.

Soper had a varied career firstly (very briefly) as a budding policeman, to stints with such papers as the Mātaura Ensign, Truth and



the Waikato Times.

He had many overseas journalistic engagements including the four military Fiji coups. Although he got on well with politicians things weren't always pleasant. “Get that blowfly

away from me,” declared one Australian leader.

“Well you know what blowflies are attracted to,” commented Soper, in rebuke.

Occasionally he even crossed swords with New



Top photo Jim Bolger with Barry Soper and below Barry with Helen Clarke.



Zealand leaders. “You can't say that to the prime minister,” said one of Mr Bolger's staffers, shocked.

“Well, I just have and he swore at me first,” defended Barry.

This is rich history replete with intriguing anecdotes and information. I thoroughly recommend it.

Rolland McKellar

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Southland farmers named National Ambassadors



Michelle and Tony Roberts deer farmers win top awards.

Michelle and Tony Roberts have been named winners of the Gordon Stephenson Trophy and 2026 National Ambassadors for Sustainable Farming and Growing. After making the bold decision to move from the North Island to Southland in the mid-90s, the couple took on a sharemilking role with a strong vision and dogged determination to create opportunities for their family. Decades later, that dream has culminated in the country's highest recognition for sustainable farming. Navigating the awards process earlier this year was a challenging time for the

couple and their surrounding communities after a destructive wind event swept through Southland and Otago last November, creating widespread destruction and forcing the withdrawal of some of the entrants from Southland's Ballance Farm Environment Awards. Head Judge Karen Williams said the couple embodied everything the national ambassador role represents. "They chased a dream, worked their way from sharemilking into farm ownership and then built the business they have today. Their story gives hope to others that this pathway is still possible." Karen said the couple's greatest strength was the way they complemented one another. "Tony is always looking around corners. He's prepared to challenge conventional thinking, embrace new technology and ask, 'Why not?' But every great idea needs someone who can turn it into a sustainable reality, and that's where Michelle is exceptional. She brings a calm, considered approach and has a simple rule that new ideas sit for three days before any decisions are made. Together they create a really balanced partnership." Karen added Michelle also stood out as a leader in her own right. "She hasn't simply

supported the business from the sidelines. She's stepped into leadership roles that help shape the wider sector, including serving on Southland's Regional Forum to help guide freshwater management. She's prepared to tackle the crunch issues, ask difficult questions and be part of finding practical solutions." The couple are big believers in sharing ideas and telling their story. "Their gates are always open. They've hosted farmers from around New Zealand, international visitors, students and community groups." What also appealed to the judges was how relatable the couple and their farming business is, and their strong involvement in their community. "They're success hasn't been at the expense of their environment or their community, in fact, quite the opposite. They've also shown you don't need to have thousands of hectares to be a national winner." As the 2026 National Ambassadors for Sustainable Farming and Growing, Michelle and Tony will spend the coming year representing the New Zealand Farm Environment Trust programme, sharing their farming journey and encouraging others to celebrate continuous improvement and environmental stewardship. The National Sustainability Showcase event held

at Christchurch's Te Pae Convention Centre celebrated each of the 11 Ballance Farm Environment Awards Regional Supreme Winners from across the country. Hosted by the New Zealand Farm Environment Trust, the event is held annually as the pinnacle of the BFEA programme, and connects primary industry representatives from across the sector.

At a glance: Michelle & Tony Roberts
Farm: Top Deck Trading, Merino Downs, Gore.
Farming system: Specialist deer unit producing velvet and trophy bucks alongside intensive dairy heifer grazing and a small sheep flock.
Background: Moved to West Otago in 1995 to begin sharemilking before purchasing their own dairy farm
Property: Two neighbouring farms combined into a 269ha operation, purchased in 2017.
Livestock: 667 red deer, 635 fallow deer, 220 rising one-year-old dairy heifers and 35 sheep
Infrastructure upgrades: Installation of deer fencing, expanded laneway network, upgraded cattle water scheme, installation of covered deer troughs to improve drinking water quality, transformation of woolshed and covered yards into a deer handling facility with additional outdoor yards.
Environmental focus: Biodiversity corridors, retirement of wetlands and marginal land, improved water quality and enhanced biodiversity
Animal performance: Strong focus on genetics and animal health to maximise deer performance.
Innovation: Among the first to trial Nedap SmartTags on deer, using dairy technology to monitor rumination, activity and heat detection to support their embryo transfer programme.

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Tom Slee crowned 2026 Young Farmer of the Year

Otago Southland Young Farmer Tom Slee has been crowned the 2026 FMG after an outstanding performance at the Grand Final in New Plymouth, the first time the event has been held in the region.

The 29-year-old dairy farmer claimed the title following a fiercely contested competition against six other regional champions. Slee says he’s feeling “really good and proud” to take out the top spot.

“It means a lot to win – just proud to represent Otago Southland,” says Slee.

Slee becomes the 14th winner from Otago Southland, and the third member of his family to claim the title, following in the footsteps of his father Richard Slee (1999) and uncle Simon Hopcroft (2004).

The seven Grand Finalists from across the country went head-to-head across a demanding programme of challenges including exams, interviews, practical modules and public speaking, all designed to test the breadth of skills required in modern agriculture.

Heading into the Agri-Knowledge quiz, Slee was sitting in third place behind Cam Clayton and Jack



Young Farmer of the Year Tom Slee.

Taggart. A dominant buzzer-round performance saw him surge up the leaderboard and claim the national title, echoing a comeback his father Richard made during his own winning campaign in 1999.

In the end, runner-up Jack Taggart from Aorangi missed out on the title by ten points, and Cam Clayton from Waikato Bay of Plenty finished third.

Despite the distance from Southland to New Plymouth, Slee had a support crew more than 60 strong cheering him on throughout the Grand Final

weekend – support he was quick to acknowledge on stage.

“I want to thank everyone who helped along the journey, all the sponsors, organisers and especially my family and partner Genevieve,” he says.

Heading into the Grand Final weekend, Slee says he was feeling a mix of nerves and optimism.

“Always hoping, but very nervous,” he says.

Trailing both Jack Taggart and Cam Clayton heading into the Agri-Knowledge quiz, Slee mounted a dramatic comeback during

the buzzer rounds to snatch the lead and secure the title. In a fitting twist, the late charge mirrored a similar comeback by his dad on his way to the FMG Young Farmer of the Year title in 1999.

In addition to taking home the coveted title, Slee also claimed top honours in Agri-business and the Agri knowledge challenge, taking his total prize haul to more than \$90,000.

Looking ahead, Slee says the win won’t change his immediate plans too much.

“It’s straight back to the farm, we’ve got calving to do,” he says.

While the title brings new opportunities, Slee says he’s happiest doing what he loves.

“I love being out on the

land with the cows and sheep, so hopefully I can just keep doing that.”

New Zealand Young Farmers Chief Executive Cheyne Gillooly said Slee impressed judges throughout the competition with their broad skillset, leadership qualities and commitment to the food and fibre sector.

“FMG Young Farmer of the Year is one of the most prestigious farming awards in the country. It’s incredibly exciting to see the title go to Tom, someone who is not only an exceptional farmer, but also a strong ambassador for the next generation of people working in the sector”

“The standard this year was incredibly high. Every one of these finalists should

be immensely proud of what they’ve achieved. These young farmers represent the very best of our sector, and the talent, leadership and commitment they’ve shown this weekend gives me a lot of confidence in the future.”

Gillooly also acknowledged the massive contribution of those working behind the scenes who make the competition possible.

“It’s the people behind the scenes, our volunteers, supporters and sponsors, who make this competition what it is. We’re hugely appreciative of everything they give to make it happen.”

“These seven young farmers represent the very best of not only the food and fibre sector, but I think the very best of this country.”

Farm mortgages drop on strong returns

Many farmers are taking advantage of strong returns for meat and milk to pay down debt, the latest Federated Farmers Banking Survey and Reserve Bank of New Zealand (RBNZ) data shows.

Reserve Bank data that shows total agricultural lending dropped \$1.4 billion to \$61.2 billion in the year to April 2026.

“Strong dairy payouts, including a capital redistribution of \$2 per share to Fonterra suppliers, combined with record beef and sheep farmgate prices, have likely allowed farmers to meaningfully reduce loan principal,” Federated Farmers banking spokesperson Mark Hooper says.

Responses from nearly 540 farmers to the Federated Farmers Banking survey in May also show falling farm mortgages and improved farmer-banker relationships. In the Feds survey, the number of respondents with mortgages under \$2 million has risen to 41%, up from 38% six months earlier.

Average mortgages for sharemilkers and for dairy and meat and wool farms all fell significantly between the November 2025 and May 2026 surveys.

“The outlier is arable

farms,” Hooper says.

“That sector is in near-crisis mode, with weak grain prices, rising costs, tough growing conditions and competition from lower cost imports.

“The arable farm median mortgage of \$3.5 million is the highest of all farm types.”

Other key survey results tracking the farmer-banker relationship continue an upward trend.

Farmer satisfaction with banks reached 69% in May, the highest rate recorded in the last eight years of Federated Farmers’ twice-a-year surveys.

The survey shows banks have lifted their game on the communication front.

Farmer satisfaction with their bank’s communication is at 69%, up from 61% in the November survey.

Another positive is that the number of farmers who said they were feeling undue pressure from their bank came in at 10%, the lowest since 2018.

The average mortgage rate was 5.49%, down from 5.78% in the November survey, and two out of five respondents to the May survey have over 75% of their loans on floating rates.

“One finding that all banks should ponder: the single most consistent theme across more than 200 general

comments added by farmers was that a knowledgeable, available bank manager outweighs factors such as loan rate competitiveness,” Hooper says.

“Where communication from banks works, it tends to reflect a specific person rather than the bank system. Where it fails, the cause is usually the same.

“One farmer’s comment states it plainly: ‘Never hear from our bank; don’t even know who our rural bank manager is. That’s concerning and disappointing if we need them’.”



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Hot potatoes

Whether they're eaten straight from the paper, tucked into buttered bread or drowned in tomato sauce, hot chips remain one of New Zealand's most-loved comfort foods.

Now, new nationwide research has revealed exactly how Kiwis like to enjoy them - with a simple sprinkle of salt coming out on top.

Research commissioned by Potatoes New Zealand, which surveyed more than 1,100 New Zealanders about the Kiwi favourite fish and chips, found 31 per cent

Kiwis reveal their favourite way to eat hot chips - and it's beautifully simple.

prefer to "just add salt" to their hot chips, closely followed by plenty of tomato sauce at 29 per cent.

Others like to make a meal of it: 19 per cent enjoy hot chips in bread and butter as a classic "chip butty", while 12 per cent prefer vinegar and two per cent reach for Worcestershire sauce.

Hot chips also stand out in their own right, with 16 per cent saying they are the real star and just one per cent saying they do not like them.

Potatoes New Zealand chief executive Kate Truffitt said more than half the domestic potato harvest goes into processing for hot chips or fries.

"We know there's very strong demand for domestically-grown potatoes for processing for

hot chips, so it's interesting to see this research showing how people enjoy eating them. Long may that Friday night fish and chips tradition continue.

"Potatoes make a significant contribution to New Zealander's diets because of their valuable nutrition status. Most New Zealanders get around 30 per cent of their vitamin C requirement from potatoes and they are a very good source of potassium."

The research found 83 per cent of participants associated fish and chips strongly or fairly strongly with New Zealand culture or Kiwi identity.

For many New Zealanders, Friday-night fish and chips still evoke a classic Kiwi tradition (46%), paper-wrapped hot chips (40%)

and the welcome relief of a night off cooking (38%).

There are over 150 commercial potato growers in New Zealand with a growing area of about 10,000 hectares. Potatoes are grown all over the country, with the principle growing areas Pukekohe, Manawatu and Canterbury.

"Potatoes support regional communities and local economies, while providing a nutritious, affordable and much loved food for Kiwi families," says Truffitt.

"They are also extremely versatile. So, while the research shows the popularity of hot chips, especially on a Friday night, potatoes are being served up and enjoyed in so many different ways in New Zealand homes every day of the week."

How to cut methane from NZ's cows and sheep

A new review looks at ways we can reduce methane emissions from pasture animals in NZ - like putting additives in the animals' food, swapping the plants they eat, or adjusting the babies' diets to change their gut bugs early, so they

make less methane while digesting. Breeding lighter, longer-lived animals that yield more milk or meat could lower emissions across a farm, the review finds. It may be possible to breed low-emission animals here soon, but tools like vaccines

against methane-making bacteria or genetically modified plants for cows and sheep to eat are a while off. While these strategies are promising, the authors say, we need research to ensure they're usable in New Zealand.

NZ Veterinary Journal

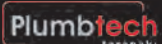


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Fonterra revises forecast

Fonterra Co-operative Group Ltd has updated its forecast 2026/27 Farmgate Milk Price off the back of declining prices at recent Global Dairy Trade (GDT) auctions.

The revised forecast is \$9.25 per kgMS, with a new range of \$8.00 - \$10.50 per kgMS.

This is down from the opening forecast of \$9.75 per kgMS announced in May, when the Co-operative started with a wide range of \$8.00 - \$11.00 per kgMS to reflect the potential for volatility and varied outcomes throughout the season.

Fonterra CEO Richard Allen says the change to the 2026/27 forecast reflects softer-than-expected demand at a time of strong global supply.



Fonterra CEO Richard Allen.

“GDT prices have fallen 11% across the reference products that inform the Farmgate Milk Price since we announced the opening forecast in late May, while milk production from key exporting regions is up on last year. We’re expecting a strong start to the season in New Zealand, noting the potential for the El Niño weather pattern to impact global supply as the season

progresses,” says Mr Allen.

“It’s very early days in terms of the proportion of our FY27 sales book that has been contracted, so we face significant exposure to changes in commodity prices.”

Mr Allen says the Co-operative continues to focus on maximising returns for its farmer shareholders.

“As the seasonal supply picks up, our plan will ensure we utilise our flexible operations footprint, strong customer relationships and robust supply chain to shift milk into the products and markets where we can get the best returns for our farmers’ milk.”

The 2025/26 forecast Farmgate Milk Price of \$9.60 - \$9.80 per kgMS, with a mid-point of \$9.70, remains unchanged.

Clifton beat Coastal in premier rugby final



A torrid scrum as the players compete vigorously for the ball.

For the first time since 1999 Clifton (captained by Sage Walters-Hansen) has won the Taranaki Men’s Premier Club Rugby title, beating Coastal 40-24 on Saturday July 11 (3pm). Coastal was captained by Chris Gawler. The half time score was 21-12.

Will Johnston refereed the game, which was played at Stadium Taranaki (Field 1). The game was played in good weather conditions, although it got fairly cold as the game progressed.

This result capped a perfect season as Clifton won all 15 of their season’s games in the leadup to the final.

Clifton secured an early

lead and were 14-0 after just ten minutes, although Coastal fought back. Despite the score territory and possession was fairly even in the early part of the game.

At one stage, at the 59 minute stage, Coastal were within four points of Clifton - the score was 28-24.

However, as the game continued Clifton forged ahead with two late tries making the victory clear cut.

Clifton scored six tries to Coastal’s three. Clifton’s try scorers were Paul Faoagali, Korbin Skelton, Chris Vunipola, Kini Naholo (2) and Liam Chapman. Juan Tantrum converted five of these, an excellent effort.

The team was coached by Jackson Ormond, aided by assistant coaches Tangi Takie and Daniel Brooks. The managers include Jimmy Hoffman, Sam Hardy and Callum Williamson.

Coastal’s try scorers were Jackson Sinclair (2), Jerram Sinclair and Beau Pari. Jackson Sinclair also converted two of these tries. The team was coached by Trent Olliver and Andrew Lane. The managers were Brendon Harvie and Simon Drought.

Well done to both teams who fought hard, but always in a positive and orderly spirit.



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COASTAL RUGBY 2026



Semi-Finals July 4

Property Brokers Premier Men

It's safe to say our supporters definitely showed up on Saturday. The team heard you from all corners of the field even with the cold northerly winds. It was fantastic to see everyone out at the Coast.

Coastal were off the mark early scoring the first try of the match to Jerram Sinclair within 10 minutes. Unfortunately it was unconverted but Coastal had the early lead 5-0. Coastal then doubled down and struck again a few minutes later which was converted by Jackson Sinclair to give Coastal a 12-0 lead. Unfortunately due to an injury there was an early change to the forward pack required.

New Plymouth Old Boys used the disruption to their advantage and were the next

to score, putting 7 points on the board for them around the 30 minute mark. This

gave Coastal the halftime lead 12-7.

The start of the second half saw two changes to our forward pack. Coastal also

struck first in the second half with a try to Ben Dufficy. Unfortunately the extra two points couldn't be added. Halfway through the second half saw some more changes for Coastal, two in the forward pack and two in the backline. From the 60 minute mark onwards it was a battle, with another injury enforced change. However the boys got the job done and took the win, 17-7! All the supporters let out a massive sigh of relief as the Prem's had made another

final. However, there's still one more job to do.

Player of the day (three points) went to Logan Crowley, two points went to Olly Lawson and one point went to Jerram Sinclair. The team & management are gearing up for a big day on Saturday with another title challenge on the line.

Make sure you get behind the team, come down to Stadium Taranaki in your Coastal gears and show your support! Kick off is at 3pm.



Logan Crowley.

Photo: Spinna Photography

FBT / Osflo Div 1

On Saturday we travelled to Vogeltown to play New Plymouth Old boys in the semifinal. The boys were fizzing all week for this game. They had prepared well and were focused when it came to game day. It was an absolute cracker of a game with both sides putting everything on park – showing why they had earned a semi-final spot. Both teams wanted to earn that finals spot and were fighting for everything.

The forwards lead the way with good work around the field, solid scrum, good defence around the rucks

and great pick and goes to provide go forward ball. While the backs showed off their skills and with speed on the outside and also showed up on defence. It was by far the most complete effort the boys had put in all year playing for the full 80mins.

We opened the scoring to Liam Kupe after some good pick and goes with Scott Anderson getting the conversion. Old boys hit back with a try of their own. We then hit back with a second to Liam Kupe which was converted by Scott. Scott also managed to slot 2 penalties to go into

the halftime break 20-19. The tensions were rising and there was a scuffle just before half time where both teams went down to 14 men for 10 minutes as each team was issued a yellow card.

The second half was a real battle. Scott landed another penalty before Old Boys hit back with a converted try. Old Boys then tactically took a penalty kick to push it out to a seven point lead 30-23 requiring Coastal to get a converted try even up the score. With two minutes left on the clock and a finals spot at stake, Coastal threw everything at the Old

Boys defence. Old Boys got sucked into the rucks which opened up space out wide for Dane Hofmans to score. Unfortunately the conversion went wide and time was up on the clock. The final score was 30-28 to Old Boys.

The boys left everything out on the field in one of their best games. They would like to thank all our supporters through out the year along with the coastal club. A big thank you to Simon and Heiny for their time and effort coaching the boys. Also the boys wouldn't have been able to get on the pitch



Cullum Tito and supporters. Photo: Spinna Photography



Daniel Crowley and family. Photo: Spinna Photography

week in week out without our physios Amy Honeyfield and Leon Koen for their great work. We wish the

premiers the best of luck this weekend in their final against Clifton.

Ride the Wave

Corkill Systems Colts

Saturday's semi-final saw the Corkill Coastal Colts host Tukapa at Rahunu in incredibly challenging conditions. There was a fierce wind making kicking almost impossible. To show just how strong it was, Coastal kicked off into the wind to start the match, and the ball didn't even travel the required 10 metres before

the wind brought it back towards our own players.

Despite battling the conditions, Coastal went into halftime trailing 15-7 after Cory Symes crossed just before the break, with Peter Grayling adding the conversion. With the wind at our backs in the second half, the boys fought hard to claw their way back into

the contest. Tries to Jackson Hewson-Baldwin and

Tomai Collins-Taiapo kept the pressure on, with Peter



The Colts in action.

Photo supplied.

Grayling converting one of them.

Unfortunately, the officiating was very unfair throughout the second half. A string of penalties went against us at crucial moments, making it incredibly difficult to build any momentum, but the boys never gave up and pushed right to the final whistle. Unfortunately, the comeback fell just short, with the Colts going down 20-19 in a heartbreaking one-point loss.

While the season didn't

finish the way we had hoped, the effort, determination, and resilience this group showed all year has been something to be proud of. A huge thank you to all of our supporters who stood on the sidelines for every game. Also a huge thanks to our sponsors for your continued support throughout the season. Your backing means the world to our players, coaches, and management to allow us to do what we love – playing entertaining footy. Thank you for riding the wave with us all season long.





COASTAL RUGBY 2026



Finals July 11

Property Brokers Premier Men

Last weekend saw us front up against Clifton for the finals of the CMK Premier Rugby Championship. Clifton had finished top of the table and were undefeated so it was going to be a tough game but the lads were up for the challenge. Unfortunately we didn't get the result we were after but the boys fought until the final whistle.

Clifton put two converted tries on us in the first 15 minutes. The boys managed to settle into the game and gained some possession which resulted in our first try by Beau Pari shortly after. Unfortunately, Jackson Sinclair couldn't slot the conversion. Clifton then gained another converted try. Coastal managed to stay in touch on the scoreboard with a try on the stroke of halftime to Jackson Sinclair. Unfortunately, he couldn't add the extras. This gave Clifton a 21-12 halftime lead.

Soon after the second half kicked off, Coastal gained another try, scored by Jerram Sinclair, again unfortunately not converted. We then made some changes to the forward pack, as well as the backline.

The second half kicked off and Clifton started it much like the first half - scoring an early converted try around the 50 minutes. Coastal challenged the line and Jackson Sinclair managed to cross for his second try around the 60 minutes mark. He added the extra two points as well. Fresh legs were rolled on with about 20 minutes to go to bring some more energy. With 10 minutes to go Coastal was in the fight with Clifton having a narrow 4 point lead up with the score at 28-24. However, with time running out and fatigue setting in Clifton



Olly Lawson making a break against Clifton.

Photo: Spinna Photography

managed to score two more tries with one of them converted. Clifton were too slick in the final and ended up taking the title winning 40-24. A huge thank you to Clifton for a great contest, and we congratulate you on the fantastic season you have had.

Our player of the day went to the one and only, Olly Lawson who has played consistently all season and has been rewarded with a Taranaki Bulls contract. Congratulations to Logan Crowley, The Barretts -

Beauden, Scott and Jordie and Josh Lord who have also been named in the Taranaki Bulls squad.

Thank you to all of our sponsors who backed us throughout the season, we hope to see you back next year.

We wish to thank all of our supporters, even though it wasn't the final result we had hoped for, we appreciated your support throughout the season. We might be biased, but we think we have the best supporters in the comp!

Ride the Wave!



The referee having his say.

Photo: Opunake & Coastal News.



Players and supporters mingling at the end of a tough final.

Photo: Opunake & Coastal News.

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Taranaki Rugby welcomes three new Board members

Taranaki Rugby has announced the appointment of three new members to its Board, further strengthening the governance and leadership of the Taranaki Rugby Football Union.

Amy Williamson, Conrad Smith and Tim Stuck join the Board in 2026, bringing a diverse range of expertise spanning finance, education, community leadership and high-performance rugby.

Amy Williamson, a proud Taranaki local, brings significant financial expertise through her role as Head of Financial Information & Insights at TSB Bank. Her experience in strategic financial management and organisational performance will provide valuable insight to the Board.

Tim Stuck combines a strong rugby background with extensive leadership experience. A former Yarrows Taranaki Bulls halfback, he remains deeply connected to the region through his role as Principal of Francis Douglas Memorial College and his longstanding involvement in the community.

Conrad Smith is widely regarded as one of New Zealand rugby's greats, earning 94 Test caps for the All Blacks during an illustrious playing career. Since retiring from professional rugby, he has remained closely involved in the game through grassroots refereeing and his current role as Chief of Rugby Operations for the International Rugby Players Association.

TRFU Board Chair Dan Radcliffe welcomed the appointments.

"The appointments of Amy, Conrad and Tim bring significant experience and quality to the Taranaki Rugby Board," Radcliffe said.

"Collectively, they offer a diverse range of skills and perspectives, from finance and governance through to education, community leadership and rugby at the highest international level.

"We are excited about the contribution each of them will make as we continue to develop and grow rugby across Taranaki."

The three new appointments join an experienced Board led by Chair Dan Radcliffe, alongside President Kevin Barrett, Vice President Colin Cooper, elected directors Mike Summerell, John Dazley and Nathan Gray, and appointed directors Sarah Mako, Paige Croft and Scott Ireland

Seta Tamanivalu returns home for 2026 Yarrows Taranaki Bulls season

The Yarrows Taranaki Bulls have welcomed one of the province's favourites home. With midfielder Seta Tamanivalu returning to the amber and black for the 2026 NPC season.

Tamanivalu returns to Taranaki after eight seasons away, bringing with him an outstanding professional career across France and Japan.

During his first stint with the Yarrows Taranaki Bulls between 2012 and 2018, Tamanivalu made 61 appearances and established himself as one of the competition's most devastating midfielders. His combination of power, pace and footwork made him a constant threat with ball in hand, earning him the 2014 NPC Player of the Year award.

mentorship for the province's next generation of midfielders.



Seta Tamanaivalu.

His performances in amber and black led to opportunities with the Chiefs before joining the Crusaders,

where he was part of back-to-back Super Rugby title-winning campaigns in 2017 and 2018. He made his All Blacks debut against Wales in 2016 and went on to play five Tests.

Following his departure from Taranaki at the end of 2018, Tamanivalu spent two seasons with Union Bordeaux Bègles in France before joining Toshiba Brave Lupus in Japan, where he played five seasons and helped the club to a

Japan Rugby League One title. He also returned to the international stage with Fiji.

Now 34, Tamanivalu returns to Taranaki as a more experienced and complete player, adding proven quality and leadership to the Bulls' midfield.

His arrival further strengthens an exciting backline alongside Daniel Rona, Meihana Grindlay and rising talent Haki Wiseman, while providing invaluable

Career Highlights

- NPC Player of the Year (2014)
 - 61 appearances for the Yarrows Taranaki Bulls (2012–2018)
 - Two-time Super Rugby champion with the Crusaders (2017, 2018)
 - Five Tests for the All Blacks
 - Two-time Japan Rugby League One champion with Toshiba Brave Lupus
 - International representative for Fiji
- Head Coach, Jarrad Hoeata had this to say:

"Seta is a game-breaker who understands exactly what it means to represent the Yarrows Taranaki Bulls. He's someone who can change a game for you, but just as importantly, he brings years of experience from the highest levels of the game. Our younger players will learn a huge amount from him. Having someone of Seta's calibre back in our environment is a massive boost for our programme."

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Local food strong communities

Localising our source of food, and growing more of our own, can help us save money, reduce packaging, and help us to be healthier, and happier too. It can also very importantly help our communities become more connected, supportive and resilient.

With the rising cost of living, food and travel, and global turmoil, localising our food growing capability and supporting access to affordable, healthy kai matters more than ever.

Over the past few years, our local Pihama and Ōpunakē communities have participated in a number of local kai resilience workshops & initiatives. Building on this, our local community is invited to a 'Kai Kōrero & Community Potluck', with facilitators Ange Teasdale & Fiona Young. This will be on Friday 24th July @ Sinclairs Events Centre. We welcome people to arrive from 5:15pm and the event will go from 5:30pm - 7:30pm, in the front event room. In this season of Winter, Puanga and Matariki, we'll reflect on what's been and the future we'd like to create.

We're working to further develop a shared community vision and pathway, addressing needs, strengths and opportunities towards local kai resilience. We are keen to organise and bring together community initiatives, workshops, and events that can also attract funding support to mobilise and back our communities. An initial goal: equitable opportunities for people to learn about growing, storing, preserving, preparing and accessing local food - while also strengthening the connection between our kai/food, healthy soils, environment and community health and wellbeing.



The next Crop Swap at the Opunake Town Hall is on July 24.

Broader than this, is a wider vision towards furthering our local food opportunities. Though for now, let's help more people grow, share and access vibrant, nutritious and delicious kai.

A vibrant community already growing

We're fortunate to have a strong community of local growers, and makers in and around Ōpunakē, and throughout Taranaki. As well, many farmers are keen to diversify and supply or collaborate on more local food solutions.

Our communities 280+ and growing 'Ōpunakē Gardeners and Kai Growers' facebook group and our thriving Ōpunakē Crop Swap, are a couple of examples of the high interest, locally. These Crop Swaps are also active around Taranaki and beyond (www.cropswap.co.nz). Since our first monthly gathering on 1st February, we've attracted between 30 and 45 people each time, including plenty of kids. We have a solid monthly rhythm of the first Sunday of the month, 2-3pm at the Ōpunakē Town Hall (38 Dormett Street). People bring items they have

available to share from their gardens, orchards, chooks, kitchens or other related items, for growing or on the theme of food, such as baking, preserves, seeds and seedlings, cuttings, other plants, flowers or wellbeing related. Koha (donation) to support venue hire is also greatly appreciated.

It's been heartening to see how much everyone loves coming along, including the tamariki (children) who enjoy the space the hall provides for them to safely run around! They, like the rest of us, love meeting up, with new & dear friends, and taking part in the sharing of kai. We are hearing that kids are now reminding their parents about Crop Swap. This even includes taking the initiative to harvest something from the garden themselves to bring and contribute! It's a lovely inter-generational event - everyone is warmly welcomed, and everyone leaves with a fair share of what's been brought along, and, an extra spring in their step! It's been impressive to see all the diverse and complimentary items filling our tables, and the joy amongst everyone gathered.

Everyone puts what they've brought along on the tables (if they have something to share), meet and catch up with people, then we go around and share our name and what we brought along. We also share community notices. Then, rather than "i'll swap you this, for that" everyone simply goes around the tables for a community swap. It's very respectful and has been lovely to see and feel how everyone is considerate of each other, to share in the abundance. Any leftover goodness goes into the pataka/ kai cupboard across from the petrol station, and donations to the local food bank are also encouraged.

Strengthening our ability to grow more food.

We're putting together a proposal for a year-long programme of workshops and events to grow local knowledge and capability around producing, preserving, making and accessing kai, while connecting our communities in nourishing ways. As part of this, we want to hear from more of our community what you'd love to see and be part of. We'd like to better understand who's

doing what, who has skills & knowledge to share, and who's keen to learn what and address barriers and innovative opportunities for our local community.

We're lucky to have fantastic people, both locally and across Taranaki, who can support this mahi, both for the educational aspect and also for funding opportunities. This includes the Toi Foundation, whose upcoming Te Aho Poutiaki Fund 'is a participatory philanthropy fund that places communities at the centre of decision-making. It focuses on equity, enabling grassroots leaders and under-represented voices to guide funding choices and lead solutions where the need is greatest.' Ōpunakē is a community that, along with other smaller towns and under represented areas, has an opportunity in particular with this fund. 'With three tailored funding streams — Kākano (seed), Pūtake (develop) and Rākau (established) — the fund nurtures innovation and strengthens community initiatives across Taranaki.' We see real potential here to support our local kai resilience and equitable access to workshops, events and opportunities. The deadline for this funding proposal is August 1st.

We thank the Coastal Community Board &

STDC for seed funding that is helping bring our community together for localising our kai resilience. Thanks to their support, it is helping us to develop this community proposal, as well as supporting some of our initial Crop Swap venue costs.

Come along

Friday 24th July, Potluck is invited and encouraged, though more importantly, simply come along. Those able to offer a little more on the table can help cover those who may not have as much, or the time, to bring something themselves. Everyone is welcome. Please bring your own plates and cutlery.

In this season of Winter, Puanga and Matariki, we invite our community to come together, reflect, and look towards the future we wish to create for our local community, to flourish and be well nourished.

For RSVPs, to contribute, share ideas or for more information, keep an eye on our local community Facebook groups and pages, including 'Nourish Taranaki' or message Fiona at nourishtaranaki@gmail.com.

Let's grow & support access, to more healthy, diverse, local, nutrient dense and delicious foods.

Fiona Young

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Online GP Care is available if needed.

can find the fees (casual rates) for each provider on their website and outlined below, including lower charges for children, young people and Community Service Card holders. You will need a debit or credit card to pay, and your Community Services Card

if you have one. For online video consultations through a smartphone or computer, you will need access to the internet. For online appointments it is good to have:

- a quiet place for privacy.

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- may be asked to confirm your identity (name and date of birth).
 - may be asked to confirm you are happy to go ahead with an online appointment.
- should introduce any support people you have with you



The flu vaccination is free for many people. Are you eligible?

Fight the flu with an annual vaccination

As we head into the second winter month, a flu vaccine is recommended for everyone over 6 months old. It is free if you are aged 65 and over, if you are pregnant, or have medical conditions such as a history of significant respiratory illness. The flu (influenza) virus changes often. This means the vaccine has to be tweaked each year to match the new strains of the disease. Getting a flu vaccine every year means you have the best protection. Flu symptoms come on suddenly and can include fever, chills, muscle aches, runny nose, cough, shortness of breath, and stomach upsets. It can keep you in bed for a week or more. Flu is usually spread by coughing and sneezing and is most common during winter. The flu can make you very sick, even if you are usually fit and healthy. Your tamariki can get very unwell with it too. You could also spread it to vulnerable people, including older people or pregnant women. Risk of flu when you are pregnant If you catch the flu when you are pregnant, there is a high risk you could develop serious complications

that can affect you and your baby. Complications include: premature birth, low birthweight, miscarriage or stillbirth. You can get a free flu vaccine at any stage of your pregnancy. If you are pregnant across two flu seasons, it is recommended that you get a vaccination in both seasons. The flu vaccine is free for people at higher risk of getting very sick, including: people aged 65 years and over, people aged six months and over who have a long-term medical condition like diabetes, asthma, or a heart condition, pregnant women, children aged four years and under who have been hospitalised for respiratory illness, or have a history of significant respiratory illness, people with mental health conditions, including schizophrenia, major depressive disorder, bipolar disorder, or schizoaffective disorder, and people who are currently accessing secondary or tertiary mental health and addiction services. The funded flu vaccine for children six months of age and over and adults (available in Aotearoa New Zealand) is called Influvac Tetra.

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The next issue of the Opunake & Coastal News is due out on the 30th of July. Call us on 06 761 7016 if you would like to contribute.

Curious about solar and a warm healthy home?

The Ōkato Community Energy Collective is hosting a Healthier Ōkato Home Fair on Saturday the 25th July, 10am-2pm, at Hempton Hall, Ōkato.

The collective is a group of locals working together to encourage energy awareness and community resilience. People in the group are happy to share their knowledge and experience in making their homes warmer, drier and healthier while using less energy. The group is also keen to support others interested in exploring renewable energy options from the household to community level, and to back local suppliers of products and services.

Cherie and Jon Nouwens, members of the Ōkato Community Energy Collective and organisers of the Fair, have been living off grid for three years. “Producing our own power does mean that we are super vigilant about when and how we use power,” Cherie said, and she is looking forward to sharing that experience with people curious about making the shift to solar. Look out for the “Living within 3.5 kW” sign at the Fair and you will find Jon! Cherie will also bring her EV along to demonstrate how it can be used as emergency power backup.

John Pullar, also a member, has built a new house and recently renovated an old house, with energy efficiency at the forefront of the build. “Initial cost was higher but over the life of the building and for the inhabitants, it’s much better. It’s a long-term investment,” said John.

“A couple of members of our group have begun a step-by-step renovation of their old farm house, from installing an electric water heat pump, insulation to retrofitting double-glazing, replacing part of the roof and most recently installing solar panels and storage batteries. They are happy to share their renovation journey with anyone who comes to the event,” said Catherine Cheung, another member of the group.

The Collective is keen to grow energy awareness in the community. “If you are not sure what your power bill is telling you, bring it along. We’ll have people to help decipher it with you,” said Catherine. There will also be Grab-and-Go bags on display, to show residents how to be prepared for emergencies as extreme weather events become more common.

The Ōkato Community Energy Collective has invited New Plymouth District Council’s Sustainable Design Advisor, the WISE Charitable Trust’s Healthy Homes Initiative team, and Community Energy Taranaki to the Fair, to offer advice and discuss energy issues that matter to the community, including funding options.

There will also be representatives from businesses that offer products and services for heating, insulation, solar panels and batteries, water tanks, and more.

The Fair is a free event. Koha/donation is appreciated. All are welcome.

A strong working partnership in South Taranaki

Hawera has beautiful parks. King Edward Park has a New Zealand Gardens Trust Five Star rating for its presentation, design and plant interest throughout the year. It is also a park that provides a safe, well managed and welcoming space for the local community. Goodson Dell is a small pocket of horticulture excellence that bursts into colour in the Spring. Naumai Park is a sanctuary of native beauty covering nearly two hectares of land within a five minute walk from the centre of Hawera’s CBD.

The long-standing community group, The Friends of Hawera Parks are ambassadors for the parks and aim to support The South Taranaki District Council horticulture team, management and staff who look after the parks. The friends hold weekly working bees in the parks and organise activities that promote and encourage visitors to enjoy Hawera parks. The South Taranaki District Council employs a places and spaces coordinator to ensure support, oversight and safety and visitors are keen to climb the steep stairs to look at the telescope. Events are held there and the Observatory is open for visitors during the Taranaki Garden Festival and other community events for a welcome cup of tea and shelter from inclement weather.

2026 is a big year for Naumai Park. The park turns 100 since it’s naming and the Friends in collaboration with the South Taranaki District Council are celebrating 100 years of hard work and contribution by the Hawera community. What was originally a scruffy, rubbish filled horse paddock is now a beautiful native tree sanctuary that includes two tranquil lakes, a Kauri grove, Magnolia dell, a shelter and tall native trees.

The History of Naumai Park booklet was launched in February 2026. The Friends of Hawera Parks have planned a year of varied events in Naumai Park which are all free. The events so far have been well attended and enjoyed by a wide variety of people including the great puppet hunt, tai chi, nature art, a run/walk through the park organised by the Hawera Harriers, a bird ID workshop, a Taranaki Singer Songwriters event and more. There are more events to come, and everyone is welcome. The New Zealand theatre group, The Barden Party are performing in the park during the Centuria

Taranaki Garden Festival in late October. Updated information is on The Friends of Hawera Parks Facebook page.

Diana Reid



The Hawera Observatory in King Edward Park.

of the volunteers.

The Friends hold monthly public events. These are advertised locally and are well attended. They include garden tool maintenance, rose pruning, composting, poetry in the park, Tai Chi, plant expert talks and tours, plant propagation, pest control, beekeeping, musical performances and Christmas Carols in the Park. The Friends provide morning teas for the parks staff and hold an annual plant sale to raise funds. The friends do the extra jobs in the parks such as fence painting, park signage and rubbish pick-ups.

King Edward Park has an historic band rotunda that was converted to an astronomical observatory in 1953. With the help of the council the friends renovated the observatory and now it is a base for the Friends of Hawera Parks as well as the Astronomical Society. Displays of artefacts and photos explain the history of the building

Do you have an event coming up that you would like to promote? Let us know on 06 761 7016 and ask us if we can cover it.



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Bryan Goodin 027 531 8511

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LISA KEEN AUDIOLOGY
Every 2nd Wednesday

ACTIVE + PHYSIOTHERAPY
Monday, Tuesday & Thursday

TARANAKI CHIROPRACTIC
Every Wednesday

COUNSELLORS
Karen Anderson 021 213 8513

MATTHEWS OPTOMETRISTS
1st Thursday of every month

TARANAKI PODIATRY
2nd Wednesday of every month

HIP
Monday, Tuesday & Wednesdays
Via an appointment from the
Opunake Medical Centre

FOOD BANK
Monday and Thursday
11.30am-12.30pm

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or visit us at www.coastalcare.co.nz
CONTACT ARETHA LEMON
Facility Manager on 06 761 8488

What’s On Listings

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

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
4th Sunday at 2pm - Cake & Debate
Open church for silent reflection, Pew for You, every 3rd Wednesday of each month, 4-5pm

Opunake Catholic Church

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

Other areas

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

St Patricks Catholic Church, Kaponga

Sunday Mass 8.45am.
Thursday Mass 10.00am (subject to change).

St Patricks Catholic Church, Okato

Saturday Vigil 6.00pm - weekly

The Wave

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

St. Barnabas Anglican Church

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

Okato Community Church

Meets 10.30am Sunday at Hempton Hall.
Everyone welcome

St John's Community Church. Kaponga

Cnr West and Egmont Streets.
Sunday Services 10.30am followed by morning tea

Manaia Union Fellowship

Terou St. Manaia.
Meet 10am every 3rd Sunday of the month with communion

Friend & Fellowship Group

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

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church

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

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

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

TUESDAYS

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

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

Wayoutwest Jiu Jitsu: Juniors 6pm, Adults 7pm. Sinclair Events Centre, Opunake..

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

WEDNESDAYS

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

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

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

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

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

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

Naumai Toastmasters: Every first and third Wednesday of the month. 6.30pm sharp start. St Mary’s Anglican Church, 206 Princes Street,

Hawera. Find us on Facebook. Guests always welcome. Contact Steve 021538101.

Sober and Drug Support Group: Coastal Care Meeting Room, 7pm

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

THURSDAYS

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

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

FRIDAYS

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

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

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

JULY 18

Opunake Cup Day: New Plymouth Raceway

JULY 24

Kai Kōrero & Community Potluck: At Sinclair Events Centre (front room). 5.30pm - 7.30pm. Nourishtaranaki@gmail.com to rsvp and for more info.

JULY 28

Opunake Rest Home Trust AGM: Opunake Business Centre, 11am.

AUGUST 4

Opunake Loop Trail Trust AGM: At Coastal Care, Opunake, 7pm.

OCTOBER 23 & 24

Inglewood Primary School 150 Years Celebration.

Sunshine lights up path to lower NPDC power bills

New Plymouth’s reputation as New Zealand’s sunshine capital is paying off as solar energy takes the load of NPDC’s power bills.

Two new solar power systems installed this year are already cutting bills by thousands of dollars and are expected to have paid for themselves within six years.

An array of 100 solar panels was installed on the roof of NPDC’s climate-controlled Archives building, in Hobson Street, in March and is expected to generate around 80,000 kilowatt hours (kWh) of electricity per year, equivalent to powering about 10 four-person households.

During its first month of operation, the system generated savings of over \$1,000 on the monthly power bill.

Another solar panel array installed on the TSB Showplace last month (June) is expected to generate more than 30,000 kWh per year.

Both systems supply about 35% of each building’s power over the year and are expected to pay for themselves within six years.

Around half of NPDC’s electricity – 6.2 gigawatt

NPDC Energy and Infrastructure Adviser Mat Sycamore, left, and Climate Change Response Lead Greg Stephens inspect the new solar panels on the TSB Showplace

hours, about the same as 885 average four-person households – has come from the New Plymouth Airport solar farm since November last year, and the rest comes from renewable supplies.

“Like every household, we want to get the best deal possible on our power bills and what could be better than harnessing one of our district’s most plentiful resources -- sunshine. Solar power promises to save money for ratepayers and it’s a benefit to the environment. It also makes

sense for our local economy too because we employ local contractors,” said NPDC Climate Change Response Lead Greg Stephens.

“We’ll keep looking at opportunities to harness the sun and make savings because electricity powers our core services such as street and traffic lights, keeps our water and wastewater pumping, charges our electric vehicle fleet, our pools, libraries and venues, not to mention keeping the lights on at the TSB Festival of Lights and

our summer gigs at the Bowl of Brooklands.”

At a glance

- NPDC’s average monthly power bill is about \$280,000, excluding GST.
- The Archives building solar array cost \$63,000 and the TSB Showplace \$33,000
- Solar power from New Plymouth Airport has enabled NPDC to get a discount of about 20 per cent on the general market rate for electricity.
- The Airport solar farm has about 14,400 solar panels over 15 hectares and is funded from Airport revenues.
- NPDC has about 110 vehicles, including nine electric vehicles, 22 hybrids, and two plug-in hybrid electric vehicles.
- We operate about 11,167 street lights, almost all of them have been energy-efficient LED lights since 2019.
- Since 2018, NPDC emissions from natural gas use have fallen 24 per cent to 2,013 tonnes of CO2 equivalent, and emissions from electricity by 22% to 1,249.

PUBLIC NOTICES

He Pānui
2026 Trustee Election

Te Kāhui o Taranaki Trust (the Trust) is the PSGE entity established to receive and manage the Treaty settlement assets of Taranaki Iwi. It replaces the former Taranaki Iwi Trust.



The Trust is governed by seven trustees who are elected on a rotational basis. Three of the current trustees will retire by rotation later this year. The Trust now invites nominations to fill the three vacancies. The retiring trustees can stand for re-election if they choose.

Nominations must be made on an official nomination form and close at 5pm on Friday 7 August 2026. Candidates must meet the eligibility criteria set out in rule 2.1 of the Second Schedule of the Trust Charter. Those eligibility criteria are outlined on the nomination form. The Trust will give further notification of the election process after nominations have closed.

Membership Registration

The Trust also takes this opportunity to invite all adults of Taranaki Iwi descent who have not already registered, to do so by completing a registration form. Registration forms and nomination papers can be sourced from the following:

Te Kāhui o Taranaki Trust office
Level 4, 139 Devon St West, New Plymouth
Ph 06 751 4285
admin@taranaki.iwi.nz
www.taranaki.iwi.nz

The Returning Officer
electionz.com Ltd
PO Box 3138, Christchurch
Ph 0800 666 032
iro@electionz.com



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DRY FIREWOOD. Mix of Mac and pine, shed stored. For a price and delivery TEXT 021 875 047.

EGMONT Firewood. \$90 per metre plus cartage. Ph 021 068 3700.

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Troy 027 469 7636 E: troystevo@gmail.com
0800 350 340

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027 4036469 | kanebarrettlivestock@outlook.com

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

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craig.mcgill65@gmail.com

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Inquiries to Clare Moss - Ph 06 278 4169
clare.moss@hughson.co.nz

Opunake-Rahotu Veterinary Trust

PO Box 117, Opunake - Phone: 021 729 471 - Email: ORVTrust@gmail.com

Applications are now open for tertiary students to apply to the
Opunake Rahotu Veterinary Trust
for financial assistance.

To qualify for this grant you must be currently studying or in an apprenticeship and have a relationship to the Taranaki Coastal Farming Community (Okato - Kaponga – Oeo)

Applications close 31st July 2026. Request a form by emailing:
ORVTrust@gmail.com

Completed forms can then be emailed back or dropped to
Aretha Macadam (Secretary)
CoastalCare, 26 Napier Street, Opunake

🌿 **Ōpunakē Loop Trail Trust Annual General Meeting (AGM)** 🌿

Do you love walking or cycling our beautiful Ōpunakē Loop Pathway? Want to have a say in its future developments, maintenance, and community projects?

We invite all trail users, volunteers, neighbours, and community members to join us for our AGM. Come along to share your ideas, see what we've been working on, and find out how you can get involved!

📅 **When:** Tuesday 4th August
🕒 **Time:** 7:00 PM
📍 **Where:** Coastal Care, 26 Napier Street, Ōpunakē

Whether you want to join the trust, pitch in at future working bees, or simply listen in, all are welcome. See you there! 🍷

Notice of 2026
Cape Egmont Sea Rescue Trust
AGM

To be held at Cape Egmont Boat Club,
Bayly Road, Warea
On Sunday 2 August
Monthly general meeting at 11:30am precedes AGM at 12pm

All welcome

Contact: R. Carr on 027 7848859



MOVING?
Subscribe to the Opunake & Coastal News and we'll post you a paper as soon as it's out!

06 761 7016
OPUNAKE & COASTAL NEWS

Curious about solar, insulation, a warmer drier home?

Healthier Ōkato Home Fair

hosted by Ōkato Community Energy Collective

Saturday 25th July 2026
10 am - 2 pm
Hempton Hall, Ōkato
Free entry

Enquiries contact 027 363 6290

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Driving Lights, Front & rear Parking Sensors, NZ New, Turbo, Auto Headlights, Cruise Control, 1.2, petrol, Auto, 49kms



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2014 Ford Focus AMBIENTE
KIWI NEW WAGON
Cruise Control, FWD, Electric Mirrors, Stability Control, Electric Windows, Steering Wheel Controls, 1.6, Petrol, Auto, 151kms



\$9,995

2012 Kia Picanto LX
FUEL SAVER!
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\$8,995

2015 Ford Fiesta SPORT
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2018 Ford Fiesta TREND
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Stability Control, Alloy Wheels, Cruise Control, Driving Lights, FWD, NZ New, Spoiler, 1.5, Petrol, Auto, 16kms



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2019 Mazda Cx-5 GLX
NZ NEW POPULAR SUV
Lane D2019 Mazda Cx-5 GLXarture, Reversing Camera, Auto Headlights & Wipers, i-Stop, Sports Mode, Tow Bar, Keyless Start, 2.0, Petrol, Auto, 94kms



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6 Cylinder, Half Leather Seats, RWD, Tinted Windows, Tow Bar, Daytime Running Lights, Spoiler, NZ New, 3.6, Petrol, Auto, 175 kms



\$18,995

2013 Toyota AURION AT-X
Alloy Wheels, 6 Cylinder, Auto Headlights, NZ New, Reversing Camera, 3.5, Petrol, Auto, 158kms



\$13,995

2011 Nissan Dualis
COMPACT 4X4
Driving Lights, Reversing & Side Mirror Cameras, Tinted Windows, Tow Bar, Panoramic Sunroof, Keyless Entry & Ignition, 2.0, Petrol, CVT, 158kms



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Front & rear Parking Sensors, Sports Mode, Auto Headlights & Wipers, i-Stop, Collision Avoidance, Keyless Start, 2.5, Petrol, Auto, 110kms.



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2016 Holden Captiva LS
ROOMY 7 SEATER
Keyless Entry & Ignition, Parking Sensors, Tow Bar, Auto Headlights, Daytime Running Lights, FWD< NZ New, 2.4, Petrol, Auto, 182kmss



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