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The Pink Hammer at Hawera Rep runs from March 18-28. Page 33.

## Entertainment on Friday night

Entertainment by local musicians at Green Cow Burger Co on Friday nights has been proving popular by people who enjoy entertainment while they dine at the Opunake café or just come along to listen.

The Friday night sessions from 6pm to 7ish have been held over the summer months and hopefully will continue.

There's been a succession of local musicians performing a mix of originals and covers.

"We want to get local musicians involved," said Bert adding that they had had a mix of performers which had included various singers and guitarists, a violinist and others.

Bert and Stephanie who have performed elsewhere as the Tuesday Duo added that, the experience of performing live was also "good for us".

The idea of live entertainments by musicians of course harks back to earlier times in the late 50s and early 60s where musicians would perform and indeed were sometimes discovered by talent scouts.

The 2is coffee bar in Soho in London was where a Tommy Steele and Cliff



Bert Treffers and Stephanie MacKenzie at Green Cow last Friday night performing one of Bert's original compositions *It's Too Late*. A catchy tune with heartfelt lyrics, it was an enjoyable performance.

Richard and the Shadows were first "discovered". There was a little stage downstairs where musicians could perform. So, you never know all you musicians out there!

## Warning against lowering bar for patient safety

The New Zealand Resident Doctors' Association – representing over 3,000 resident doctors across all specialties in Aotearoa New Zealand – is sounding a clear alarm over the proposed regulation of 'physician assistants.' The recent consultation proposal does not restrict this group from seeing patients with new or undiagnosed symptoms, posing a catastrophic risk to patient safety.

When a patient presents at a clinic with a vague symptom such as chest pain or a headache, identifying whether this is a minor issue or a life-threatening emergency requires a complex medical process called differential diagnosis. This high-stakes skillset is honed through decades-long, rigorous medical training that all doctors undertake. It cannot be replicated by a two-year postgraduate degree.

"Clinical assistants lack the breadth and depth of training to safely navigate clinical uncertainties. If they miss a 'red flag' symptom, the patient is put at significant risk before the doctor even enters the room," said Dr Deborah Powell, National Secretary of the NZRDA. "This is exactly what we've seen happen in the UK, where loose regulatory controls and public confusion over these roles have tragically led to at least six patient deaths in recent years."

The NZRDA submission firmly opposes this assistant workforce seeing undifferentiated patients and calls on the Medical Council (the regulator) to restrict their scope of practice to post-diagnosis care only, under direct instruction from a supervising doctor. It also calls for clarity in their title to avoid confusion with doctors; another feature that has been implicated

in Coroner reports of preventable patient deaths overseas.

"The use of 'physician' in their title has misled many patients into believing they were seeing a doctor," said Dr Powell. This was a key finding of the UK's independent review into the physician associate role, with grieving families noting they would have sought further help had they known a doctor was not involved in their relative's care.

"New Zealand maintains a stellar patient safety record – much better than the countries currently using this model," said Dr Powell. "The fact is this workforce fills no unique skills gaps that cannot already be filled by our own locally trained and regulated practitioners. If their regulation is to proceed, we must ensure there are clear guardrails to uphold patient safety above all else."



Pat Dudley drew quite a crowd when she performed at the previous Friday night.

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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.

### Praise for OCN

O&CN is the only newspaper I get or read here in Oakura village.

Just wanted to convey how much I enjoy it, as I’m certain a lot of your readers do, but they may not necessarily take the time or use the tech to contact you with their positive feedback.

On behalf of all of us here in Oakura nga mihi nui for everything you do to provide so many of us out here in our coastal communities and addresses your outstanding newspaper.

I’ve just finished reading the Richard Hall Mind Support Opunake article, which I personally found so relatable and beneficial it prompted me to offer my thanks and feedback!

Richard’s article promotes and teaches wellness in such a relatable way; a diverse age group from tweens to seniors would all potentially benefit and enjoy this type of info promoting up to date understanding of health & well-being.

Regular wellness - well-being promoting articles would potentially be really beneficial and enjoyable for your readers myself included, of course, and are

very much needed in my humble opinion.  
E mihi koe.

*Nga mihi nui  
Rebecca.*

### No seabed mining

Well, finally we have seen Trans-Tasman Resources (TTR) who was really counting on this government’s Fast Track policy and process giving them permission to begin their seabed mining project off our South Taranaki coastline. They have now given up because there were too many against their project.

People in Taranaki and Whanganui and many environmental organisations have all united together to actually stop this project which would have ruined completely our West Coast coastline, starting from Kawhia right down to Wellington big time. So now we see Māori Party co-leader Debbie Ngarewa-Packer going around the country while our Supreme Court is saying the same thing that there’ll be no seabed mining in Aotearoa forever and a day, to which I totally agree.

*Tom Stephens  
New Plymouth.*

### Support for Trump and Israel

Support for Trump and Israel Go Donald (Mordekai) Trump. Persia needs you and the U.S need you more than ever. Along with Israel and their commander and chief Adonai victory is on their side.

Zionists, Christians and anyone who won’t conform to Islam are being slaughtered by the thousands daily. Boko Haram, Houthis, Hezbollah, Hamas, ISIS, along with conflicts in Pakistan, Afghanistan, Syria, Iran, Iraq and Lebanon all share the common denominator of Islam.

The Labour parties in Britain and Australia are sympathetic to the Muslim communities just to make sure they get their vote, so they hold on to their high paid positions.

New Zealand has no military but we could send Whitaker chocolates, Weet Bix, Marmite and pavlovas to the serving service men and women. Dairy is no good because we are now importing butter from the U.S cheaper than Fonterra can produce?

I fully support the

Commander and Chief of Israel, Adonai and the United States of America. God’s Blessings to all.

*Bruce Salisbury  
Manaia*

### Facility for Manaia

Thank you so much Mary Moore for answering my letter (January 29, 2026) which I really did appreciate, as I can vividly remember when this certain issue began to be discussed some time ago., as it’s never really gone away, but never mind.

Then, finally, it’s good to see that the South Taranaki District Council has finally decided to demolish both the Manaia Town Hall, which is a great pity and the old sporting complex, and is to build this new hub on the same site as the sporting complex.

I know that Opunake has really gone ahead, but it seems towns like Manaia, Kaponga and small towns and villages have somehow missed out, but I can see that once this new hub is

*continued on page 4*

### ADELPHOS

In the last few years have you noticed the increased signage in professional offices asking people to behave courteously? Here’s a not uncommon sign in one New Plymouth practice that I recently visited, “We will not tolerate any forms of verbal or physical abuse towards our staff. All incidents of this nature will be forwarded to the appropriate authorities

### The Times They Are A-Changing

and your referral will be cancelled.”

New Zealand has been consistently ranked as one of the top 10 friendliest countries in the world. We Kiwis are generally perceived as famously friendly with a laid-back positive attitude, especially in rural regions. However, a 2025 study commissioned by the Helen Clark Foundation indicated a decline in social cohesion with Kiwis becoming less trustful of others, having lower self-worth and less happy.

A 2024 Ipsos survey—a global market research firm—indicated that three in five Kiwis believed that New Zealand society was in decline. Remember, New Zealand’s national psyche has been traumatised by the Islamophobic mosque massacre, Australia’s antisemitic Bondi Beach Hanukkah murders and day after day exposure to social media’s horrific images of Israeli-Palestinian and Russian-Ukrainian War

death scenes on large high resolution TV screens. Psychologists recognise that this repeated and graphic media exposure causes secondary traumatic stress (STS), which can spark seemingly uncalled for aggressive behaviour: just one result of indirect post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). On the bright side, New Zealand is consistently rated in the top three safest places to live. That’s great news indeed.

However, there’s also some upsetting news for many people. Jesus and the Old and New Testament writers predicted that before Messiah returns on “The Day of the Lord” human behaviour will exponentially deteriorate (2 Timothy 3:1-4). Jesus predicted that there will be global astro-ecological flashpoints such as signs in the sun, moon and stars, massive coastal storms causing worldwide anxiety (Luke 21:25-28) and increasing international wars (Matthew 24). These events

will intensify before Jesus’ return and God replaces His earth, that humans have polluted and almost completely destroyed, with a new heaven and new earth (Revelation 21:1). In a seemingly divided and distracted world, this is not a time to fear but to draw near to God and be comforted by His promises of a new future.

Jesus taught that finding God means “actively” seeking Him and repenting (Matthew 7:7-8 and Matthew 4:17). As humans we do not naturally seek and trust God because of our unrepentant sinful nature (Romans 3:23; 6:23). It’s much like why burglars don’t seek trusting friendships with policemen. Maybe reading the four New Testament gospels is worth putting on a bucket list? “The Times They Are A-Changin’” faster than ever, as Bob Dylan’s famous folk-protest song reminds us. Peace,

*Adelphos*

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## Letters to the Editor

continued from page 2.

built, Manaia itself will slowly grow, plus it will bring all of the district's organisations together, plus knowing Manaia has also Yarrows Bakery and other viable industries which could grow in the future, so I hope I'll have the chance to meet you plus be able to see this new hub, which I do believe will help Manaia big time.

Tom Stephens  
New Plymouth.

### Israel has the right to defend itself

Israel has right to defend itself

The 2.4 billion Christians worldwide should support the Jews keeping all their land which the only God there is gave to Abraham over 3000 years ago. The boundaries are written in the Bible which is accurate historically and proven archeologically. God said he will bless those who bless Israel.

The Christian religion is based on the fulfilment of the many prophecies in the Bible, written by the Jews, concerning the birth of Jesus Christ who left Heaven to become flesh to die for the human race as the perfect blood sacrifice for sin so whoever believes

in him has eternal life. Jesus had 500 eyewitnesses who saw his death and resurrection.

Believers are to be baptised in the name of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Note - there is only one God.

In the name of Jesus, miracles are still occurring

today.

There should be no Palestinian State in Israel as they voted for the terrorist group Hamas who have vowed to destroy all Jews. From the river to the sea means this.

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in Israel in October two years ago. Terrorists started the war. There is no other country which is not allowed to defend itself which some countries criticise Israel for. Israel has been feeding the Palestinians for two years now, otherwise they would have starved to death, and the Hamas are hiding

amongst them. The Jews have treated them well considering it is a war.

God gave that small country to the Jews.

Jo Ward  
New Plymouth

# Police given powers to order homeless to move on

New powers will enable police to require people to leave a public area for up to 24 hours.

In an amendment to the Summary Offences Act, the 'move-on' orders can be applied to anyone over the age of 14 who is exhibiting disorderly or threatening behaviour, obstructing a business entryway, rough sleeping, or begging. Those who breach the order risk a fine of up to \$2000 or a three-month jail term.

Professor Darrin Hodgetts, School of Psychology, Massey University, comments:

"I think the announcement is not a new or practical idea. These banishment strategies have been tried before. Punitive approaches to hardship and homelessness don't work. They just make hard lives even harder. It's a bit ironic to bring out this initiative when the government's own housing and employment policies are contributing to poverty and homelessness. You can talk to most community agencies about that, and they'll tell you the same thing. Look at the recent Salvation Army state of the nation report.

"We are not going to resolve these issues of homelessness if we keep trying to hide

or obscure the problem by banishing homeless people from sight. Scholars have written about the concept of 'Disneyfication,' which is relevant to the government's initiative. Disneyfication is the idea that everything is made to look polished, clean and lovely on the outside. Behind the scenes is the hidden exploitation and inequities that drive poverty and homelessness. We hide our dirty laundry as a country and present ourselves as this lovely tourist destination for cruise ships and events at the new convention centre in Auckland, for example. This means we need to expel homeless people from sight.

"Countries often tend to move homeless people on in this way during big events so they can convey a more positive image of themselves or support the myth of a caring society. So when the Prime Minister is talking about the new convention centre and cruise ships to try and justify the move-on orders, he would appear to be more concerned about our image than the welfare of our people. He's saying we should hide the poverty we have from our visitors. In a sense, we're giving a false impression of New Zealand when we Disneyfy CBDs. Trying to just exclude homeless people because the government do not think it is a good look is not going to help us resolve our growing homelessness problem.

"Now, some of the Government's comments

about the fact that people shouldn't be harassed when going about their business or enjoying CBDs are important. When I'm out at a restaurant, I don't want someone behaving inappropriately next to me or badgering me. But I also accept that such situations are part of life in this country today. It's part of a price we pay for growing inequalities and poverty. If we don't want such anti-social behaviour we have to be smarter about how we respond as a society.

"Groups like the Auckland or Wellington City Missions, and the other social agencies have done a lot of work with street communities to manage these issues and anti-social behaviour in more humane ways. We have done work with these agencies in the past and they do phenomenal work. A good starting point is for the Government to reinvest in poverty reduction and services to assist homeless people. The resources that would be wasted in this move-on initiative in terms of police time etc. would be better spent on the community services that know how to deal with these situations. So, the research evidence suggests that the government strategy will simply be ineffective.

"I was really impressed with the Police Association response. It was very professional and raised the realities of police time being used to shunt homeless people on. When we're tying

up police officers doing this work, they're not doing other work. If the government is willing to spend resources on this issue, then why not support such community agencies who respond humanely to homeless people and the situations in which they find themselves.

"Some might argue that the move-on orders are deeply cynical and constitute a political move in an election year. I have some sympathy with this view having seen these initiatives pop up in election cycles. I'd also note that there are some good people in government. I'd hope they speak up about alternative and more human responses to homelessness. We also need to realise that homelessness is not going away until we start addressing the primary causes, which are structural inequities that grow poverty. Homelessness is the sharp end of a bigger problem in our country.

I'd like to see mature conversations about how we address the fundamentals of poverty, rather than having politicians try and motivate their bases by scapegoating homeless people."

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# The continuing saga of the ‘unpaid’ speeding fine

In our February 26 issue (page 2), under the title Leon gets the royal runaround over speeding fine, we told the grim story of an elderly Stratford man, who is being harassed over a speeding fine he paid (on line) months ago (on 17 October 2025). After a saga lasting about five months we thought the situation was resolved – we were wrong. Leon has received further demands to pay the fine.

One letter dated 19 February ‘Issued by Corrections’ claimed that the Ministry of Social Development had indicated that Leon had not paid the fine. He was instructed to get in touch within 10 days. “I’m not sure what’s it to do with the Ministry of Social Development,” commented Leon.

A few days later Leon received a more strongly worded letter (dated February 28) demanding



Leon Moffitt with one of his notices.

that he pay the fine. This letter was signed Collection Services District Court of New Zealand. This one (unlike the previous ones) had threats

including consequences which included:

- Suspending your driver licence or clamping your car.
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You may not be able to get a loan, credit car or hire purchase.

At the time of the last story (last issue) Leon was finally told that the fine amount had been remitted by the police and no further action was

needed. Anyway, Leon once again paid it on-line (on 27 February).

Let’s hope this is the end of the on-going saga “I can only wait and see,” commented Leon with a shrug.

## On this month in history Captain Robert Falcon Scott dies

On March 12, 1912 (or thereabouts) Captain Robert Falcon Scott died in his storm-bound tent in Antarctica, with two companions (Dr EA Wilson, and Lieutenant H Bowers). They had returned from

reaching the South Pole, but discovered the Norwegian explorer Captain Roald Amundsen had got there a few weeks earlier in late 1911. Two others Petty Officer Evans and Captain Lawrence Oates had died

earlier. The British explorers had run out of food and fuel and were suffering frostbite. They were only a day’s march from their next food depot, which could have saved their lives.

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# Volunteer firefighters call for respect and safety at emergency scenes

Our volunteer fire brigade responds to emergencies with one purpose: to help people in their time of need. Recently, at a MVA in our community, some friends and family of the injured person became hostile and aggressive toward both our firefighters and the ambulance crew. This behaviour put everyone at risk, including the patient we were all working hard to help.

At the scene of the crash, emotions were understandably high. People were worried and distressed for someone they care about. However, the situation quickly escalated when several individuals started shouting, pushing in close, and interfering with the treatment of the patient. This made it harder for the ambulance crew to do their job and created a dangerous



Sean Nunes in the Toughest Firefighter competition.

and stressful environment for all responders.

Why this is a problem

- Aggression and interference can delay

life-saving treatment

• Emergency workers may be forced to step back for their own safety

- Hostile behaviour can

escalate quickly and put more people in danger

- First responders are volunteers from the community who deserve

respect

What we ask from the community

When firefighters, paramedics, or police arrive at an emergency, we need space and cooperation to do our job safely and effectively. We understand that these moments are emotional and frightening, but aggression does not help the person who is injured. In fact, it can make the situation worse.

How you can help

- Stay calm and keep a safe distance
- Follow the directions of emergency personnel
- Allow paramedics and firefighters to focus on the patient
- Support your loved ones by letting trained responders do their work

We are your neighbours, friends, and community members. We volunteer our time to help others on their

worst days. Please help keep emergency scenes safe by treating all first responders with respect. We are there for one reason only: to help.

On a lighter note, three of our firefighters took part in the Toughest Fire Fighter competition in Hawera recently. The competition is a five-stage obstacle course involving carrying hose upstairs, dragging hose, dragging a dummy, and more - all in full kit level 2 fire fighting gear. The idea is that it mimics what we come across on the fire ground. Well done to Steve, Laura and Sean for entering this and for all coming second in their class.

Andrew Pentelow (CFO)

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## Arrests follow Kina Road incident

Taranaki Police have arrested one person and summonsed another following antisocial road user behaviour in Oaonui.

On Saturday 21 February, around 1am, Police were notified of a group of antisocial road users gathering at Kina Road.

Police Area Commander Inspector Mark Miller says police attended and found the group to be well established. After speaking with some of the people gathered, a tactical decision was made to move back and gather information to be used in the investigation phase following the event.

Police have charged two people with operating a motor vehicle recklessly. An 18-year-old man was convicted and sentenced in



Kina Road showing signs of skid marks which concerned police.

the Hawera District Court on March 3.

A 20-year-old man was due to appear on March 10.

This is in addition to impounding one vehicle, and 14 infringement notices that have been issued for driver

licence breaches - nine of which were issued on the night of the incident, and five during the investigation phase.

The investigation remains ongoing, and

Police are appealing for any information on the whereabouts of a silver or light-coloured Toyota Estima - or its driver - that was involved in Saturday night's activities.

### On this month in history Kate Sheppard is born.

On March 10, 1848 Kate Sheppard (nee Malcolm) was born in Liverpool, England. She emigrated to NZ in 1869 and married Walter

Sheppard.

The social reformer is best known for leading the campaign for women being allowed to vote. Between 1888 and 1893 she organised five petitions to parliament.

The first four were rejected but the fifth one, with 31,872 signatures (about a third of adult women in NZ) carried the day. In 1893 the Electoral Act was amended allowing women to vote.

Kate was also involved in the Women's Christian Temperance Union, which she joined in 1885.

Kate, whose image is on one of our banknotes (\$10), died in 1934.

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# Community patrol being proposed

Former Rahoitu fire chief Paul Mundt is hoping to start a community patrol in the coastal community surrounding Opunake.

“The police are pretty pushed and it’ll be another set of eyes and ears,” says Paul adding that it would help the police and also hopefully reduce crime in the region.

The community patrol would be entirely voluntary and would be based at the Opunake Police Station.

There’s already a community patrol based in Hawera and also one in Stratford. Initially Paul applied to join the Hawera one when it was suggested he start one in the Opunake region.

The area covered will extend as far as Pihama and just outside Pungarehu.

Paul is looking for volunteers and plans to have a public meeting at which the police will be present



**Paul Mundt QSM, who is looking to start a community patrol in the Opunake area.**

along with councillors and possibly a member of Parliament.

“It’s all about community support,” he says adding the service could also work in

with cameras.

“A lot of it is about being seen – having a presence.”

Paul who spent 25 years in the Rahoitu Fire Service – the last 20 as Fire Chief

– will be drawing on his vast experience over many years. He has attended all sorts of incidents in that time. Some tragic he says referring to fatal car accidents, sometimes with multiple fatalities.

He says they would be noticing suspicious behaviour at any time of day or night though it will of course depend on how many volunteers they can get. He adds “most crime happens at night.”

Paul lists car thefts – of which there seems to have been a spate recently. Issues with drugs, stock on the road, antisocial road usage such as people doing wheelies which, if there’s a loss of traction can be a danger to others as well as destroying the roads. Boy racers – are another potential danger to not just themselves but also to others. “We could stop some of that,” says Paul. There was recently an incident in Kina Road which involved the police and thrill seekers.

They would be patrolling the area in special patrol cars with flashing lights with two to a car. Isolated places can be particularly vulnerable he says citing farms and also businesses.

They could also help out at accident and crime scenes.

“For the public, our community it’ll be amazing,” says Paul adding the presence could stop a lot of things going on. He’d already spoken to

the Opunake & Districts Business Association who were supportive of the idea.

The community patrol would be open to all age groups. Having a driving licence “is a help” adds Paul.

If anyone would like to know more or register their interest they can contact Paul on 027 255 2201.

Meanwhile Paul will be canvassing the area to gauge

interest adding it will need a minimum of three people to start up the community patrol.

“We need it. Make our community a safer place.”

We’ll keep you posted and look out for the public meeting which will be advertised in the Opunake & Coastal News.



**A stolen car recently found incinerated in Ihaia Road, near Opunake.**

## Air pollution may directly contribute to Alzheimers disease.

US researchers say people who have been exposed to more air pollution may also face a higher risk of developing Alzheimer’s disease. The team looked at how much air pollution over 27.8 million people aged 65 and over were exposed to

over an 18-year period, and then followed up with how many of them developed Alzheimer’s. People who had greater exposure to air pollution were more likely to develop the condition than those who avoided pollution, as well as this link being

slightly stronger in people who had also experienced a stroke.

Additionally, they say their research showed that common chronic conditions such as high blood pressure and depression had little additional effect.

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# Another win for rural New Zealand

The special interest group Rural Nats launched at Fieldays in 2024 to support our advocacy for rural New Zealanders in Wellington. We have a strong group of MPs who come off farm, or from the agriculture sector, and we all actively engage in this group.

Suze Redmayne, National's MP for the Rangitikei is one such farmer. Suze advocated to enable people in service tenancies, such as farm workers, to be able to access



**CARL BATES MP**  
WHANGANUI

their KiwiSaver funds to assist in buying their first

home. It was her Member's Bill to address this that the Minister of Finance announced at the beginning of March would become law.

The change helps not only farm workers; it will also assist rural teachers, country cops, and Defence personnel. Up until now, they have effectively been locked out of first home withdrawal from KiwiSaver because their jobs require them to live in employer-provided housing.

The announcement by Finance Minister Hon Nicola Willis and Consumer Affairs Minister Hon Scott Simpson ensures workers in service tenancies are not denied the opportunity to put a foot on the property ladder. The Ministers indicated that the Government would introduce the legislation before the middle of this year.

The proposed legislation goes further than first homes. Minister Simpson says the Act will also be changed to allow first-time farm buyers to put their KiwiSaver balances towards the purchase of a farm through a commercial entity they majority own, where it will be their principal place of residence.

KiwiSaver rules currently allow the purchase of a farm under a KiwiSaver member's name (so long as they intend to live on it) – however, in practice, most farms are purchased through a company or trust. This change reflects the commercial reality of



From left, Suze Redmayne (MP Rangitiki), John Wilkinson (Third place), David Reese (First place), Ethan Muir (Second place) and Carl Bates MP for Whanganui.

modern farm ownership. These may be seen as relatively modest changes. However, to those who will benefit from them they are significant. The changes offer them a pathway to home or farm ownership that was previously closed off. The feedback I have received to date has been positive, with rural people grateful that the Government has heard their requests for equal treatment.

The National-led Government remains focused on fixing the basics and building the future. For a generation of farm workers, would-be farm owners and those working in rural locations where a house comes with the job, the future is looking brighter. Lastly, I had a most enjoyable night at the Taranaki Regional Final of the FMG Young Farmer contest

on Saturday night, where I was one of the judges.

Congratulations to the winner, David Reesby of Marton Young Farmers, whilst Ethan Muir from Central Taranaki Young Farmers placed second. The National Finals will be held in New Plymouth in early July, with the practical competition being held in Stratford.



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## We often think our environment is doing better than it is

A 2022 survey of how New Zealanders see the environment shows that in many cases, our perception doesn't match

the science. Analysis of responses from over 2000 people representative of the population showed that we rightly thought our air

quality was doing better, and our lakes and rivers worse, than eight other environmental "domains." However, over half those surveyed thought our native forest and bush were in a "good" or "very good state" despite native forest loss in previous years.

those in Gisborne, an area which had gained forest, gave the lowest. The study authors say we need better information and transparent communication from environmental experts, to bridge the gap between public perception and what the data show.

Those in Southland, which had lost native forest, gave the highest rating while

*Journal of the Royal Society of New Zealand*

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# Community update: Western Taranaki Rāhui Protecting our coastline for future generations

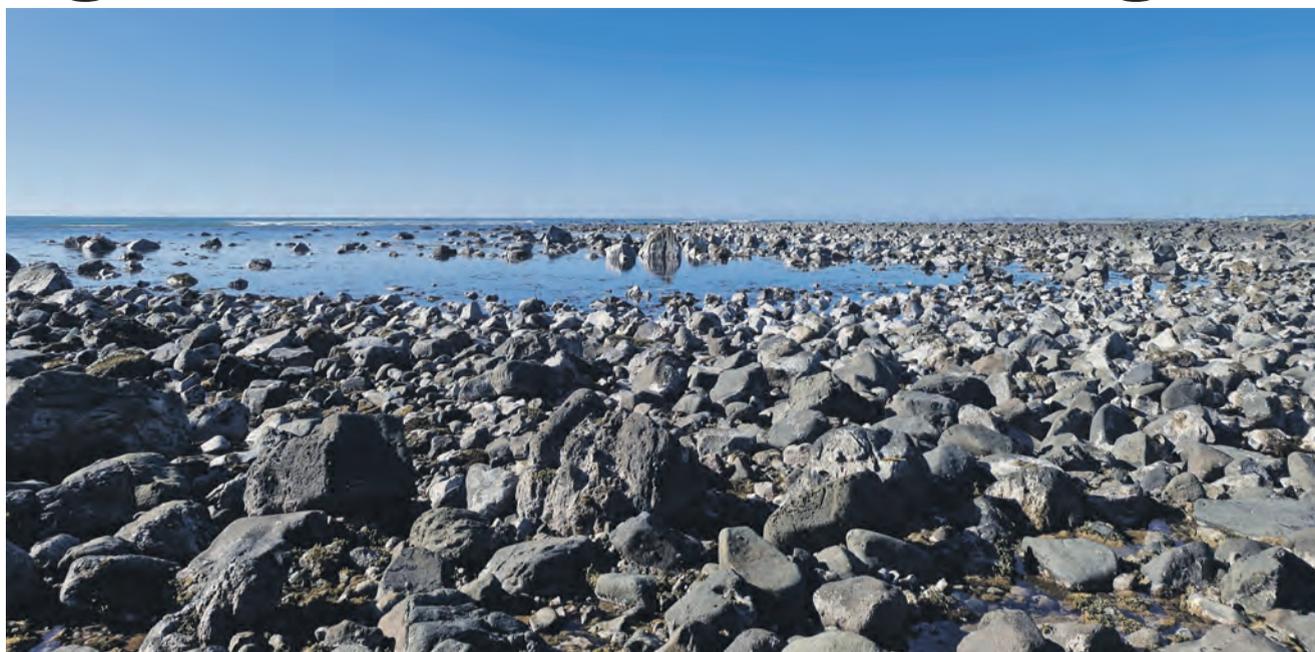
Our moana and coastal environment are central to who we are as coastal communities, marae, pā, hapū and iwi. Over recent years, increasing pressure on kaimoana stocks and the visible decline of key species led to the establishment of a rāhui across the Western Taranaki coastline. This rāhui, now supported by a temporary legal closure under section 186A of the Fisheries Act, stretches from the Tapuae Stream in the north to the Taungātara Stream in the south, and remains in place from 16 December 2024 to 15 December 2026. This closure restricts the harvest of all shellfish (except rock lobster), all seaweed (except beach cast), anemones, stingrays, and conger eel species. This action follows earlier customary rāhui placed by hapū and iwi in January 2022 after repeated concerns over the depletion of pāua and other taonga species, with monitoring showing that more time was needed for meaningful population recovery and long term protection strategies.

## Why the Rāhui was put in place?

Coastal depletion was becoming unsustainable. Hapū and iwi noted significant declines in kaimoana beds, coupled with increasing pressure from large numbers of visitors harvesting along the coast. Some pāua beds were reported as being “stripped bare,” prompting urgent calls for recovery time backed by both tikanga and science.

The rāhui was enacted to:

- Allow depleted species time to rebuild.
- Protect the integrity and mauri of the coastline.
- Reduce clashes occurring between those trying to enforce tikanga and those breaching it.
- Ensure future generations can continue



Our coastal environment. Photograph credit: Dr Emily Roberts.

to gather kaimoana as their parents and grandparents did. Government recognition of the rāhui also enables Fishery Officers to legally enforce the temporary closure — an important step in supporting the tireless mahi of hapū, iwi and community volunteers who have monitored the coast day after day. Monitoring & data Collection: What we’ve learned so far

Since the rāhui began, hapū, iwi, environmental partners and volunteers have been actively monitoring kaimoana recovery, beach activity, and ecological indicators. The iwi’s applications for the ongoing closure highlighted the need for continued data collection over a sufficient time scale to understand population trends and develop sustainable protection strategies. Monitoring efforts along the coast include:

- Observing kaimoana beds and recording abundance and size changes.
- Assessing the health of inshore ecosystems such as seaweed beds and reef structures.
- Gathering community observations from locals, divers, whānau and kaitiaki.

- Planning long term monitoring programmes for both seafood stocks and seabirds.

All of this information helps the Rāhui Steering Committee — made up of representatives from marae, pā, hapū, iwi and community members — to chart a long term, community led vision for the protection of our coast.

A special acknowledgement goes to Te Kāhui o Taranaki for their significant financial contribution over the past three years, and for their continued support as we step confidently into the next phase.

Where to from here?

The rāhui has given our coast a chance to recover, but it is only temporary. Local hapū, iwi, and community

representatives are now looking at the next steps for long-term protection of our moana.

The pathway being considered moves from short-term recovery to enduring local stewardship — beginning with the rāhui, moving to a rohe moana, and potentially leading to a mātaimai reserve in the future.

A rohe moana would recognise local hapū as customary guardians of this coastline and allow appointed kaitiaki to help manage customary fishing, informed by both local knowledge and ongoing monitoring.

If a rohe moana is established and working well, a mātaimai reserve could follow. This would provide stronger, community-endorsed

protection while balancing customary, recreational, and community interests.

No decisions have been made yet. Over the coming months, community meetings will focus on what a rohe moana could look like for this coastline and whether a mātaimai reserve is the right long-term option.

Our coast belongs to all of us. By working together now, we can help ensure it remains healthy and thriving for future generations.”

## Upcoming Rāhui Community Meetings

These gatherings will provide an opportunity to:

- Understand the reasons behind the rāhui
- Hear updates on monitoring and data collection

- Ask questions and share local knowledge

- Discuss potential pathways for long term coastal protection

Community meeting dates:

- Monday 16 March (6.30pm–8.00pm) – Ōkato Domain, Ōkato

- Wednesday 18 March (6.30pm–8.00pm) – Ōāonui Hall, Ōāonui

- Sunday 22 March (11.00pm–1.00pm) – Cape Egmont Boat Club, Wārea

- Monday 23 March (6.30pm–8.00pm) – Sinclair Electrical & Refrigeration Events Centre, Ōpunakē

- Wednesday 25 March (6.30pm–8.00pm) – Kaitake Community Sports Club, Ōākura

These hui are open to the entire community — residents, fishers, business owners, rangatahi, and anyone who loves our coast.

He Karanga ki te Hapori – A call to our Coastal Whānau

Our coastline is precious. Its restoration and protection require kotahitanga — unity. Whether you are a life long local, a visitor, a fisher, a surfer, or someone who simply loves this unique stretch of moana, your voice matters.

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# Serotonin in the Brain: The “Assistant Coach” that helps you stay on track

Last issue we chatted about dopamine, and likened it to a training coach in your mind: the one that helps you start, push through, and learn what is worth repeating.

Another chemical, serotonin, is a different character. If dopamine is the coach getting you moving, serotonin is the steady assistant coach who helps keep the team regulated: sleep, appetite, stress sensitivity, and mood



RICHARD HALL

steadiness. Not constant happiness, more like keeping things from tipping

into chaos. You will often hear serotonin called “the happy chemical.” That label is popular, but it is also an oversimplification, a bit like saying Mount Taranaki is a large hill. Serotonin is involved in mood, yes, but it does a whole lot more than “make you happy.”

What does serotonin do in real life?

Serotonin is one of dozens of chemical neurotransmitters in the brain, and it is involved in a stack of functions. The key ones, in plain English, are:

1) Mood regulation and steadiness

Not constant happiness. More like helping keep your emotional baseline steadier, so you are less likely to be yanked around by every stressor, thought spiral, or awkward comment at the dairy.

2) Sleep and daily rhythm

Serotonin is part of the wider system connected to sleep and wake regulation and circadian rhythm. It is also a building block used in the pathway that produces melatonin. If your sleep is chaotic, it is harder for mood and stress regulation systems to stay steady.

3) Appetite and feeling satisfied

Serotonin is involved in appetite regulation and satiety. If dopamine is the coach yelling “go on then, have one more piece”, serotonin is often part of the “actually, we are full” signal.

4) Stress sensitivity and anxiety related processes

This is where wording matters. It is fair to say serotonin is involved in brain systems that influence anxiety, fear and threat learning, and threat

sensitivity, but it is not accurate to say “serotonin causes anxiety” in a simple one chemical way.

The gut serotonin fact, with the fine print

You may have heard that a large amount of serotonin is in the gut. In the body, serotonin plays major roles in digestion and other functions.

Here is the track fine print: serotonin in your bloodstream does not simply stroll into your brain and change your mood, because the brain is protected by the blood-brain barrier. The brain largely makes its own serotonin. The gut and brain still communicate in plenty of ways, but it is not as simple as “boost gut serotonin and your brain will be happy.”

A useful way to understand it is this: what happens at sea level can influence the summit of Mount Taranaki, but it is not the same weather system. Connected, yes. Identical, no.

Serotonin, feeling sad, and depression: the “chemical imbalance” story, updated

This is the part people get most confused about, because for decades we were sold a tidy story: depression equals low serotonin, therefore antidepressants “top you up.”

The current research-based position is more cautious:

- The simple claim that depression is caused by low serotonin has not held up well. A major umbrella review (looking across decades of previous serotonin research) concluded there is no consistent evidence that depression is associated with lowered serotonin activity or concentration in the straightforward way the public message often implied.

- Many experts agree the “chemical imbalance” slogan is outdated, and that depression is heterogeneous.

That means different people can arrive at similar symptoms through different mixes of biology, stress, sleep disruption, thinking patterns, illness, inflammation signals, trauma, and life context.

- At the same time, some researchers have pushed back on the idea that this means serotonin is irrelevant, arguing the interpretation can be overstated and that it may still be involved in some pathways for some people.

So serotonin may be part of the mental health puzzle, but it is now recognised that it is not a single switch explanation for depression, anxiety, or persistent low mood.

Also, sadness is not automatically an illness. Feeling sad can be a normal response to loss, stress, loneliness, exhaustion, hormones, or just being human in 2026. Depression is usually more about duration, severity, and impact, plus other symptoms, not just “feeling sad.”

Practical ways to support serotonin related regulation

Morning light most days  
Light helps regulate your body clock, which supports sleep and mood regulation. Even a short walk, even if the mountain is wearing its classic cloud hat.

Move your body

Walking, gardening, swimming, biking, a quick loop of the block. Not because exercise “creates serotonin instantly,” but because it supports the systems that keep mood and stress steadier over time.

Sleep like it matters

Sleep is a major regulator. If sleep is all over the place, everything else becomes harder, including mood stability and cravings for quick fixes.

Eat for steady mood and energy

Serotonin is made using building blocks from diet

(like tryptophan, found in protein foods). This is not about fancy supplements. It is about regular quality fresh meals, so your brain is not trying to run the show on fumes and caffeine.

Connection and calm count  
Supportive relationships and manageable stress reduce the load on your threat systems. Serotonin related regulation works better when your nervous system is not constantly bracing like it is about to be hit by a southerly.

The bottom line

If dopamine is the coach pushing you to start and keep going, serotonin is the steady assistant coach, helping you stay regulated and on track, especially when the weather changes without warning.

It is not a “happy button.” It is part of a wider regulation system for mood, sleep, appetite, and stress sensitivity. The old “low serotonin equals depression” story is not strongly supported in the simple form it is often told, but serotonin still matters as part of a much bigger picture.

And if you are feeling persistently low, anxious, or not yourself for weeks, it is worth talking to your GP or a qualified mental health professional. You do not have to white knuckle it up the mountain alone, even if we Kiwis are very good at pretending we are “all good, mate.”

Richard Hall  
Mind Support  
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# Gurkha knife legendary throughout the world

The Gurkha kukri knife is more than just a blade—it's a cultural icon, survival tool, and military weapon with deep roots in Nepalese history. Its distinct inward curve and chopping power make it instantly recognizable across the world.

Revered for its heritage, the kukri khukuri represents the resilience and valour of the legendary Gurkha soldiers.

Origins in Nepalese tradition

The khukuri has ancient roots in Nepalese culture, dating back over 2,500 years, with early versions believed to have evolved from Greek kopis-style blades. Initially used as an agricultural and daily utility tool, its practicality and effectiveness made it indispensable to rural life.

As its prominence grew, the Nepal kukri transitioned from farm fields to battlefields—eventually becoming the defining weapon of the Gurkha warriors. Its powerful curve was ideal for both chopping firewood and defending territory, blending utility with deadly force. The kukri's symbolic and practical value soon cemented its place as a national icon.

The Gurkha connection  
The deep bond between the Gurkha soldiers and the kukri began in the early 19th century when British forces encountered Nepalese fighters wielding these uniquely curved blades during the Anglo-Nepalese War (1814–1816). Impressed by their bravery and skill, the British incorporated Gurkhas—and their iconic Gurkha knives—into their military ranks.

Over time, the kukri evolved from a regional farming implement into the formidable Gurkha knife, known globally for its combat effectiveness. Issued as a standard sidearm in both the British and Indian Gurkha regiments, the design was refined for battlefield durability, creating what became known as the “great Gurkha khukuri.” Today, the kukri stands as a symbol of courage, discipline, and tradition across militaries and collectors worldwide.

Design evolution and blade variants

The design of the Gurkha kukri knife has evolved significantly while preserving its iconic inward curve. This curved blade geometry maximizes chopping force, allowing the kukri to function both as a utility tool and a powerful weapon. Traditionally forged with a distinct forward-weighted blade, the kukri delivers deep cuts with minimal effort—making it highly effective in both battle and daily survival



Gurkha Kukri knives as seen at Cecelia's on Tasman.

tasks.

A distinctive feature of nearly every kukri is the small notch near the base of the blade, called the cho or kauri. This notch may serve functional purposes—such as preventing blood from running onto the handle—or carry symbolic significance tied to Hindu traditions.

Most traditional kukris also come with two accompanying tools:

- Karda – a small utility knife for everyday cutting tasks
- Chakmak – a flat steel used for sharpening the kukri blade or creating sparks with flint

Historical milestones and world conflicts

The Gurkha kukri knife became legendary through its

fierce use in pivotal global conflicts. Its earliest military prominence began during the Anglo-Nepalese War (1814–1816), where British troops were astounded by the skill and fearlessness of the Gurkhas wielding their distinctive khukuri blades.

During World War I and II, the kukri's reputation soared. Gurkha regiments used these knives not just for close combat but also for essential survival tasks—cutting trenches, clearing brush, and even preparing food. Its forward-curved design proved brutal in trench warfare, earning the kukri machete a feared reputation among enemies.

Legendary tales abound—such as a single Gurkha soldier holding a position

using only his kukri, or entire units advancing with nothing but their traditional blades. These stories aren't myths—they're well-documented accounts that fuelled the mystique surrounding the Gurkhas knife.

Conclusion

From its ancient roots in Nepalese farming communities to its rise as the symbolic blade of the fearless Gurkhas, the Gurkha kukri knife has carved a path through both history and myth. Its enduring legacy lives on—not just as a tool or weapon, but as a symbol of bravery, craftsmanship, and cultural pride.

Cecelia's on Tasman.

## Government must cut fuel tax as Middle East tensions push petrol above \$3

The New Zealand Taxpayers' Union is calling on the Government to temporarily cut fuel taxes as global tensions in the Middle East drive oil prices higher and push petrol prices above \$3 per litre in many parts of the country.

Taxpayers' Union spokesman Jordan Williams says households should not be forced to shoulder the full cost of global instability.

“Petrol prices are surging past \$3 a litre in many parts of the country. At a time when households are already struggling with the cost

of living, the Government needs to wear some of the burden rather than lumping it all on motorists.”

“Kiwis can't control wars overseas, but the Government controls how much tax we pay at the pump. When petrol hits three dollars a litre, it's working families and small businesses that feel it first.”

Williams says a temporary reduction in fuel excise would provide immediate relief.

“Reducing fuel tax is a proven way to support households when global fuel

prices spike. In 2022, Jacinda Ardern's Government cut fuel excise by 25 cents per litre to ease the cost-of-living crisis caused by soaring oil prices following Russia's invasion of Ukraine.”

“A similar three-month reduction today would cost roughly \$350 million in foregone revenue to the National Land Transport Fund, the same order of magnitude as the 2022

policy.”

Williams says the relief could easily be funded by reprioritising wasteful spending.

“With billions of dollars being funnelled through schemes like the Regional Infrastructure Fund — which is fast looking like a Provincial Growth Fund 2.0 — the Government has plenty of room to fund temporary relief for

motorists.”

“Redirecting wasteful spending into the National Land Transport Fund would allow the Government to provide fuel tax relief while still maintaining investment in transport infrastructure.”

“Global oil shocks shouldn't become an excuse for the Government to collect windfall tax revenue. When fuel prices spike, taxpayers deserve relief.”



Cut the tax at the pump.



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# Making best decisions in worst of circumstances

The Royal Commission on COVID-19 has outlined more lessons on "making the best decisions in the worst of circumstances".

The report makes 24 formal recommendations, including:

framing the elimination strategy as temporary, improving public health and economic modelling, limiting the use of urgency in lawmaking, keeping an eye on the research around social cohesion, and creating financial assistance scheme options ahead of the next crisis.

"Anyone hoping for a rip-roaring exposé of corruption and incompetence at the highest levels will be disappointed, though this is a multi-volume potboiler at least in terms of length, says Professor Marc Wilson, School of Psychology, Victoria University of Wellington..

Associate Professor Siouxsie Wiles, Microbiologist, University of Auckland, comments:

"It is clear that the Royal Commission has done an enormous amount of work. They've held interviews,

public hearings, met with business and community groups, and worked through over 31,000 submissions from individuals and organisations. For those people concerned about the vaccines, I hope they will be reassured by the Inquiry's finding that the previous Government took extensive steps to mitigate the risks of the new mRNA vaccines by strengthening the country's vaccine safety monitoring systems, which identified the very rare risks of myocarditis and pericarditis. I also think it's important to note that the Inquiry found that vaccine mandates are a valid health intervention, though they should be used with great care.

"Overall, the Inquiry concludes that former ministers faced an extremely difficult situation, making decisions in what the Commissioners describe as "the worst of circumstances."Despite this, they found that New Zealand's response to the COVID-19 pandemic was effective, that former ministers and their officials tried their best to make the right decisions, and that the decisions they made were balanced and reasonable. It was these decisions, and a good dose of luck, that saw us record the lowest case numbers and fewest COVID-19 deaths per capita than nearly all comparable countries. Not only that,

our economy bounced back strongly and unemployment rates remained low.

"But we can always do better, and just like Phase One of the Inquiry, Phase Two has come up with a list of recommendations for us to build our resilience and prepare for the next pandemic. I hope the Government take these on board as one of the most important take home messages from the report is that New Zealand, like many other countries impacted by COVID-19, is in a weaker position to weather the next pandemic - or indeed any large economic shock - than it was at the start of the pandemic.

"The former Government

and their officials didn't anticipate the extent to which concerns about vaccine safety would emerge and seize attention. This is directly related to local and international COVID-19 disinformation campaigns; we shouldn't be caught out again.

"Finally, the release of the report coincides with our latest COVID wave. It's a timely reminder that this virus is still causing harm and we should still be trying to break transmission chains and protect ourselves and each other. So get a booster if you are eligible, test if you can, stay at home when sick if you can, and wear a well-fitted mask if you are indoors around others."

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## 'Bicycle face', 'telephone tinnitus', and 'railway spine': How anxiety about new tech becomes medicalised

Fears around new technologies such as cellphones, 5G towers, and wind farms are perhaps unsurprising given our historical reactions to new technology, say researchers in a NZ Medical Journal Viewpoint article.

They describe the late 19th century example of 'bicycle face' where newspapers - including in NZ - warned that women riding bikes could experience nervous exhaustion and 'facial grimacing,' leading to



Photo by Amsterdam City Archives on Unsplash

by a few influential doctors writing in the press.

They draw a parallel with modern social media and influencers, giving a number of suggestions on how doctors can manage pseudo-medical conditions, such as validating peoples' anxieties around new tech as being common and real.

New Zealand Medical Journal

disfiguration.

Although the medical profession was skeptical, the Viewpoint authors say, the idea was further popularised

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# Plans to reopen beloved Pungarehu church

Catholics on the coast are eager to see St Martin's Church in Pungarehu being used again.

The church has been closed since late 2023 after a problem with a leaking roof led to the discovery of asbestos in the steeple and the interior ceiling.

Since then, there has been a targeted campaign by local families to raise the money needed to get the church reopened and a sub-committee has been formed to oversee the project. The Palmerston North diocese has given approval for the work to proceed.

"We've got a good percentage pledged but we need a little bit more," says sub-committee member Denise Fleming. "If there's some fat, we'll get the exterior painted. From what we've seen people have a strong spiritual connection to this place from all over the world and want to support it."

Depending on progress by the contractors it is hoped the church would be back in use some time this year.

Denise said she wanted to acknowledge the work



The sub-committee overseeing plans to reopen St Martin's Church. From left. Denise Fleming, Kevin (Smiley) Barrett, Donna Mellow, Mary-Lee Hall, Feidhlim Hall, Andy Whitehead.

done by the Barrett, Hall and Mullan families in maintaining the building.

Sub-committee member Kevin "Smiley" Barrett says the church has played an important part in the history of Pungarehu.

"There's a rich history

here in this church," he says. "The Irish, Swiss, Dutch and Polish brought their faith with them and my parents and grandparents would talk about people going to church with a horse and buggy every Sunday. Our grandparents could see the need for it, and we can see the need to keep it going. We've got the building here and we want to preserve it for future generations."

A lot of local volunteer labour went into building the existing church, which was opened in 1973, replacing the original one which was opened in 1911.

Fifty-three years later the building is still in good nick, free of earthquake issues with little having had to be spent on its upkeep, says Parish Council chair Andy Whitehead.

"It's a solid building, just a small leak in the roof," he says. "It's having a second chance, an opportunity for which we have to thank a group of committed people."

Operating from Okato, the church at Pungarehu was given the name of the fourth century French saint, Martin de Tours.

A feature of the current church is a mural depicting St Martin de Tours as a mounted soldier in the Roman army giving half his cloak to a beggar.

"He was very young, around 15 when he was attracted to Catholicism," says sub-committee member Mary-Lee Hall. "He said I have been a soldier of Rome but now I am a soldier of Christ."

Mary-Lee says when the current church was opened in 1973 Father Barney Keegan, the priest at the time asked another priest, who was also an artist to put together a mural, which he did, applying the scarfeto

technique which involves scratching through wet or dry layers of paint.

St Martin de Tours Church in Pungarehu became part of Our Lady Star of the Sea Parish (OLSS) in 1996, joining with Our Lady Star of the Sea Church in Opunake to form a single coastal parish community.

Sub-committee member Feidhlim Hall says the church fills a valuable social function.

"In these times there are a lot of people who are feeling stressed and lost," he says. "You might have 500 friends on Facebook but still not talk to anyone. In a world where everyone is looking for the next new thing we need to be aware of where we came from. We need to preserve places where people can come back to and reconnect."



A funeral held at the original St Martin's Church which was opened in 1911.



St Martin's Catholic Church today. Note the mural depicting St Martin de Tours giving a beggar half of his cloak.

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# Wild West Convoy passes through Opunake

Tasman Street in Opunake was busy on Thursday March 5 as 28 vehicles of the Wild West Convoy of vintage military vehicles stopped so their drivers could have lunch. This is a biennial event for the New Zealand Military Vehicle club (NZMVC). On display were landrovers, jeeps and trucks – mostly of World War 2 vintage, although also participating are some from the Vietnam War and also a few ex-NZ Army landrovers.

Keith Drummond is the NZMVC Taranaki Area Rep and has been a member for eight years, but gestures at knee height as to how long he has been interested in this type of vehicle. His vehicle is a 1942 Dodge WC57 command car, probably originally used to convey high ranking officers.

Keith refers to the “camaraderie” of NZMVC club members as to why he enjoys it so much. He also appreciates, “Keeping the wheels of history running.” His New Plymouth Club has about 22 members at present, but there is also room for more, he says.

The convoy has been on the road for two weeks starting from New Plymouth. All the places they have visited



From left John Subritski and Keith Drummond. The 1990 Perentie Landrover belongs to John.

resembles a geography lesson with such places as Taumarunui, Piopio, Mokau, Waitomo, Raglan, Stratford, Ohakune, Ratahi and Pipiriki just some of the towns.

“As hard west as we could go,” explains Keith with a smile, “and mostly on gravel.”

Another member of the convoy is John Subritski,

the media man, who is from the Auckland club. He is proud of his 1990 Perentie Landrover. He explains that it comes from Australia where it was used for border patrol. He points out that there are thirteen visiting Americans taking part in the convoy from such states as Nebraska and Texas.

As they prepare to head down to Opunake Beach they

are a bit sad that the Wild West Convoy is drawing to a close, but there is always 2028 to look forward to.

We look forward to NZMVC’s next visit in two year’s time.

It was fascinating to see these classic cars.

Well done to John and Keith and the other organisers of this worthwhile event.



ABOVE: This 1967 Ford jeep took part in the 100th anniversary of the US Army Cavalcade, August 10 to September 14, 2019.



Many military vehicles down at Opunake Beach.



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# Battling to save iconic pine

An operation has been underway to save a Norfolk pine that has dominated the Oaonui skyline for over a century.

It is one of two trees which farmer Andy Whitehead says are estimated at between 30 and 40 metres tall. The trees, a male and a female, which stand alongside each other on Lower Kina Road can clearly be seen by anyone travelling along the Surf Highway. They are also visible out to sea and from the mountain, says Andy.

"The trees are supposedly more than 130 years-old. They are supposedly the oldest trees on the coast.

They are definitely the oldest trees in this area. There's no way of knowing where the seed came from or why they were planted."

He says they were definitely there when the Northern Monarch was wrecked off the coast in 1903 and its wood used to extend a nearby house.

"They were big trees when Ernie Olsen bought the farm in the 1950s, and I know it was written about in the Oaonui school magazine. Unfortunately one of them looks a little bit sick."

The other (male) tree seemed to be unaffected. The experts were called

in who likened the tree's plight to having cancer. They presented two options, remove all the dead and diseased wood, or cut the tree down.

It was decided to try to save the tree so the tree specialists starting at the top of the tree made their way down, removing dead branches as they went.

"Initially they thought the tree might have been too far gone, but when they got up there and found a healthy regrowth there was a good chance of survival, but no guarantees," said Andy.

They were working from 9am-3pm on Saturday February 28, a day in which the cars from Americarna could be seen making their way along the Surf Highway to Opunake. About half the branches were removed, leaving a massed pile of firewood.

"It was definitely appreciated by us," said Andy. "I just can't fault them for putting their lives at risk to save a 130-year-old tree."

And what is the prognosis for the future? Andy says he will be monitoring its

progress. "It could go either way. By removing the dead branches

it will either fight the disease and survive back, or it could still die."



The two oldest trees on the coast?



A head for heights.



The aftermath.

## Can AI predict embryo's sex before we can?

Artificial intelligence could help predict the sex of an embryo after just three days of development, according to international researchers. The team trained a model using over 500 videos of pre-implantation human embryos, and it successfully predicted the sex of embryos after

the eight-cell stage (which happens around day three of development) with 60% accuracy. The research is still at an early stage, but the team says the model could help researchers investigate early-stage sex differences, and understand why sex ratios are skewed in IVF.

Open Biology

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# Tuia Taitonga Southlink



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

## Ōpunakē Town Centre Upgrade Set to Begin

Work on the Ōpunakē Town Centre – *Te Puna Manawa Ora* project is scheduled to begin this month, marking a significant milestone in a programme several years in development. This stage of work is anticipated to take around three months to complete, weather permitting.

Council has worked closely with the Ōpunakē Co-Design Team — made up of dedicated community members — along with project partners and with the support and guidance of iwi and kaumātua representatives of local hapū to reach this stage. Their input is reflected in the strong support for the improvements ahead and has helped shape a design that meets the needs and aspirations of the Ōpunakē community.



This work brings us another step closer to delivering a welcoming, functional community space in the heart of Ōpunakē. Council thanks the Co-Design Team and everyone who has contributed to the project so far.

### Upcoming meetings

- District Plan Committee**  
*Plan Change 4 Deliberations*  
Monday 16 March, 9am
- Extraordinary Council**  
*To deliberate on the Parking Control and Traffic Flow Bylaw*  
Monday 16 March, 1.30pm
- Workshop**  
*Annual Plan*  
Monday 16 March, 2.30pm
- Te Kāhui Matauraura**  
Wednesday 18 March, 10am
- Environment and Assets Committee**  
Wednesday 18 March, 1pm
- Workshop**  
*Long Term Plan Strategic Direction*  
Monday 23 March, 10am
- Policy and Strategy Committee**  
Monday 23 March, 1pm
- Water Services Committee**  
Monday 30 March, 1pm
- Workshop**  
*Risk Management Framework*  
Wednesday 1 April, 10am
- Risk and Assurance Committee**  
Wednesday 1 April, 1pm

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## Hāwera CBD project progressing

The Hāwera CBD is looking noticeably sharper as the revitalisation programme reaches another milestone. All bollards, bins, seats and bike stands have now been sandblasted and repainted, and the refreshed look is already drawing positive feedback from people around town. This work has required careful coordination across multiple teams, including managing contractors, sequencing the removal and reinstatement of assets, and ensuring the CBD continued to

operate smoothly throughout the process. Planning is now under way for the next phase of the programme: replacing the 70 street light fittings across the CBD. The team is working with suppliers to identify suitable options that meet both durability and design requirements. Council acknowledges the efforts of everyone involved in keeping the momentum strong and delivering visible improvements in the heart of Hāwera.

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



### MARCH EVENTS

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HIGH ROAD ENTRANCE, NAUMAI PARK

### Nature Artist Stone Painting

with Hāwera Art Club

SATURDAY 28 MARCH, 1PM  
THROUGHOUT NAUMAI PARK

### Walk & Run Through the Park

with Hāwera Harriers Club

SUNDAY 29 MARCH, 1PM  
HIGH ROAD ENTRANCE, NAUMAI PARK



Find out more of what's happening by following Friends of Hāwera Parks on Facebook or on Council's website [www.southtaranaki.com/naumai](http://www.southtaranaki.com/naumai)

## Creative Communities Scheme Funding Closing Soon

Do you have an arts project that needs funding support? Applications for the South Taranaki Creative Communities Scheme are closing on Friday 13 March. The Scheme provides funding assistance for community-based arts activities in the District, that take place between 10 April 2026 – 10 April 2027.

Visit [www.southtaranaki.com/funding](http://www.southtaranaki.com/funding) for more information.

# Red, white and blue deluge Opunake Beach



American vehicles of all shapes and sizes filled up the camping ground.

Americarna, that tribute to the American automobile made its annual visit to Taranaki in the last week of February. In what has become their traditional first public outing the cars made their way along the Surf Highway for the stop at Opunake Beach.

Willie Dargaville came from Kaitaia in his 1966 Country Sedan, having made the same trip in 2024 and 2025.

Coming to Americarna was something he had always wanted to do.

"I said we have to go," he says. "The first time I brought my 1963 Falcon Sprint but that broke down, so I had to go back and get this one," he said, pointing to the sedan.

He's been bringing it to Americarna ever since.

"You've just got to keep feeding it, but that's OK. It's comfortable to drive. It's got plenty of room so you can stretch out more. It's a 10-seater and you don't get many 10 seaters."

He says it arrived in the country in 1968 and had had other owners before Willie bought it six years ago. There was a bit of rust work

that needed doing, and he spent about \$20,000 to get it panelled and painted.

Willie is a member of the Far North Rod and Custom

Club and enjoys taking the Sedan and his other vehicles like the Falcon Spirit, his 1977 Pontiac and 1938 Chevrolet Flatbed to various shows, including fundraisers.

John and Sharon Allan from Waihi arrived in Sharon's 1932 Ford Roadster for their second Americarna.

"We came to the very first one (in a 1932 Ford sedan) and this is the first time back since then," says Sharon.

They've had the Roadster for the last 10 years. It has a genuine 1932 Ford body and was in Australia before coming out to New Zealand, where it had a couple of owners before Sharon and John acquired it.

"It was in a different state to what it is now," said Sharon. John set to work rebuilding it.

"It was a total rebuild which took thousands of hours, six years and working on it every day," says Sharon.

It's been back on the road for a year.

"To me, with the feel of hearing the engine and feeling the car on the road, it



Sharon Allan making her second trip to Americarna. This time in her 1932 Ford Roadster lovingly put together by her husband John.

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feels you're actually driving it. I'm very proud to be driving a car my husband built," says Sharon.

For Ian Leckie from Morrinsville this is his first Americarna. He says he bought his 1939 Barrel Nose Pickup "in bits" and embarked on a total rebuild. His job as a schoolteacher meant he "moved all around the place," all the while working on his car, "with the help of some very good friends." It's been on the road for about a year.

"It's a 1939 Pickup with

*Continued page 19.*

# Red, white and blue deluge Opunake Beach

Continued from page 18.

brand new running gear under it," he says. It comes with a powerful V8 overdrive auto and four-wheel independent suspension. "It drives like a modern car," says Ian. "It's basically a modern car with an old body on it. Now I'm going to drive the wheels off it and have a lot of fun."

He was enjoying his first Americarna. "It's just such a huge event with a lot of great people," he says. "It's not just about the cars, it's about the people." Opunake Business Association chair Murray Forsdyke said the Association had been engaged with the Americarna organisers as far as the traffic management

went. There had been extensive road works in the town's CBD prior to the cars arriving, and Murray said he was pleased with how the new roads were holding up. "That's ups to NZTA for doing such a great job," he said. He noted there appeared to be fewer cars this year. The Association ran a minivan during the day

which made 14 trips, taking 60 people between the beach and the town. "The shops had done a good job in dollyng themselves up for the day. Americarna is a great thing for the town, and I look forward to having them back next year."

**Right. There was a police presence as the cars came into town**



Willy Dargaville came from the Far North in his 10-seater Sedan.



Ian Leckie arrived to his first Americarna in his 1939 Barrel Nose Pickup. "A modern car with an old body on it."

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 <b>\$23,990</b> 2021 Mazda Atenza SW Full Spec, 2.5, Heated Seats, Leather, 52kms	 <b>\$21,990</b> 2015 Holden Colorado LTZ 2.8, DSL/T, Good kms, 4WD, Exc. condition	 <b>\$25,990</b> 2019 Mazda GTX 25 NZ New, 2.5, Immaculate, Rare car, 33kms	 Immaculate <b>\$17,990</b> 2015 MINI COOPER S, 5 Door 1.6 Turbo, Amazing little car, Only 43kms	 <b>Now \$61,990</b> 2019 Audi Q8 S LINE 3.0, Full spec, New model, Brilliant car, 71kms

# BPW Hawera supports local women through education scholarship

BPW Hawera proudly continues its commitment to women's advancement by offering an annual Women's Education Scholarship of up to \$1,000.

The scholarship supports women in South Taranaki who are furthering their education or pursuing a new career direction, helping with study costs and encouraging progress toward recognised qualifications and future goals.

This year, the exceptional quality of applications led the selection panel to award two scholarships. Congratulations to our 2025 recipients, Emily Werder, studying for a teaching diploma, and Jorja O'Neill,

completing a Bachelor of Physiotherapy. Their dedication reflects the values BPW champions.

Applications for the next round close on 24 September 2026, with forms available on the BPW Hawera website.

BPW Hawera meets every third Wednesday at Someday Café, providing a welcoming space for connection, networking, and professional growth.

Our next meeting on Wednesday 18th March features guest speaker Layla Cann from Citizen Leather. For enquiries or to get involved, contact info@bpwhawera.co.nz



Jorja O'Neill.



Emily Werder.

# A fence built on community



The completed fence.

A fence built on community together with generosity, skill, and heart. This week at Opunake Cottage Rest Home, we witnessed a powerful example of what can happen when a community comes

personnel from Ohakea arrived to carefully dismantle and clear the old boundary fence. Their mahi made it possible for the build to go ahead safely and efficiently. Their contribution was an



Residents at the Opunake Cottage Resthome.

Thank you to the following people who dedicated their time and skills for the recent rebuild of our front fence at The Cottage Rest Home here in Opunake:

- Community Services workers
- Shona Keighley and Bunnings Hawera
- RNZAF Base Ohakea team
- Rodney Woods, Opunake RSA
- Dave Steller, builder

*It was a reminder of the strength of community consisting of local people, local businesses, volunteers and service members all working together to support a place that cares for our elders.*

essential first step and set the rest of the project up for success.

A dedicated team from RNZAF Base Ohakea arrived to build the new fence. These Air Force personnel volunteered their own time, bringing skill, teamwork, and enthusiasm to the task. Their contribution reflects true service—going

above and beyond for a small rural rest home simply because they care.

This project was never just about replacing a fence.

It was a reminder of the strength of community: local people, local businesses, volunteers, and service members all working together to support a place that cares for our elders.

The next issue of the Opunake and Coastal News comes out on 26 March 2026. Ph (06) 761-7016 to advertise.

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# Riverlea WI cater at schools athletics



Catering at the Athletics

Riverlea WI held their monthly meeting on Wednesday March 4. The competitions were keenly contested with every member entering a bloom. Competition results - Bloom: 1. Bev Clark. 2. Doreen Matthews. 3. Myra Gibson. Cluster. 1. Myra Gibson. 2. Leonie West. 3. Dot Pope Tray of fruit and veggies. 1. Lynette Gargan. 2. Leonie West. 3. Margie Bishop. Three Butterfly Cakes. 1. Leonie West. 2. Lynette Gargan. 3. Bev Clark.

After the meeting, President Lynette demonstrated how to make pretty posy bowls. The Roll Call: Baking & Biscuits for catering at the Kaponga Schools Athletic day and Petfood for SPCA for the



Winners on the day- Auroa School

STFWI AGM roll call were well supported by members. The afternoon finished with a cuppa and a chat.

The day after our meeting,

some Riverlea WI members catered lunch for the officials at the Kaponga Schools Athletic Day at Victoria Park, Kaponga.

Helen Cameron was the MC for the day.

*Leonie West  
Riverlea WI Secretary*

# Manaia WI

The March meeting was held on March 3 at Rough Habits private dining room. The president Phyllis Malcolm welcomed all to the meeting.

The roll call was a donation of wrapped Easter eggs to be donated to a local retirement home.

The motto for the month was "some days you have to create your own sunshine." Seven members had attended the Founders Day lunch at Touchpoint restaurant in Eltham.

Grant Carter gave us an

update on the Taranaki Base Hospital cancer ward where Women's Institute had raised money and donated three drip stands and trolleys. After lunch Bruce Boyd spoke about Project Reef at Patea. We were surprised to hear what marine life was down in the ocean at Patea.

Members were reminded of the Federation AGM meeting on March 16 at the Kapuni hall.

The speaker for our meeting was Angela Paton from Halliwells. She gave an interesting and down-

to-earth talk on the making of wills and the power of attorney.

Competition results. Shrub. 1. Patty Symes. 2. Jean Harvie. 3. Phyllis Malcolm. Bloom. 1. Raewyn Fredrickson. 2. Bev Hawkes. 3. Ann Chisnall. Homecraft. Three Afghans. 1. Jean Harvie. 2. Ann Chisnall. 3. Bev Hawkes.

Members enjoyed lunch and a time of fellowship together.

*Meg Kelly.*



The grassfire being doused by members of the Opunake Fire Service.

# Grass fire contained

A call out on Friday March 6 early evening in Opunake turned out to be a grassfire in Ihaia Road a kilometre out of Opunake that had got

out of control. The fire was put out by the two fire brigades that attended.

Fortunately there was no

damage to a house adjacent to the paddock where the fire started.



Mangatoki WI members visit Naumai Park.

# Mangatoki WI

On the first Wednesday of the month the Mangatoki met for a day out and about in Hawera. We met at the entrance way to Naumai Park in Hawera. Here we enjoyed a catch up and a cuppa and then proceeded to have a short walk around one of the Naumai paths.

When completed, we headed out to Brandy's Botanicals on Livingston Road. A great shop for gifts and indoor plants.

Lunch was had at Marracabo Cafe and this was followed by a visit to the Hato Hone St. John ambulance station. Here we were shown around by Rebecca, a St. John staff member.

She presented each of us with an ICE booklet. This booklet is for information about yourself in case of an emergency (ICE). It will contain notes for your medications, your medical conditions and your medical

history. By now the day had warmed up considerably and we were all enjoying the heat. We look forward to our next get together which will be on April 1.

If anyone is interested in what we are doing, you can contact our President, Olwyn on 027 223 2679 or the secretary, Denise on 021 183 6813.

*Denise Carter.*

# Exercise could help cancer survivors

Survivors of bladder, lung, endometrial and ovarian cancer had a lower risk of dying over a ten-year period if they were more physically active, according to Australian and international research. The research,

which pooled together data from six studies, found that any amount of moderate to vigorous physical activity after diagnosis was linked to a lower risk of dying across cancers not often studied for their links to exercise.

The authors say the findings suggest that it is important for health care professionals to promote physical activity for longevity and overall health among people living with and beyond cancer.

# Taranaki dairy industry award winners announced

The winners of the 2026 Taranaki Dairy Industry Awards were announced at the annual awards dinner held at the TSB Hub at Hawera.

Samantha and Tom Lumsden were named the region's Share Farmer of the Year, with Miriam Lauridsen

winning the 2026 Taranaki Dairy Manager of the Year, and Shicaela Kane taking out the title for the 2026 Taranaki Dairy Trainee of the Year.

The 2026 Taranaki Share Farmers of the Year Samantha and Tom



From left, Shicaela Kane (Taranaki Dairy Trainee of the Year). Samantha and Tom Lumsden (Taranaki Sharefarmers of the Year). Miriam Lauridsen (Taranaki Dairy Manager of the Year).

Lumsden are a sharemilking partnership with Samantha managing the daily farm work and Tom working off-farm.

The couple are contract milking for Tom Lance, milking 330 cows on 121ha at Waverley.

After both leaving school at 15 years old to go dairy farming, the couple love the

job and the life farming has provided to bring up their three children.

Samantha, 35, has been dairy farming for the past 20 years, contract milking for the past six seasons and runs the farm, with Tom, 35, managing a quarry and helps with human resources and maintenance work on the farm.

Samantha has studied Primary ITO Levels 1-4 and completed a Diploma in Agriculture Business while moving up the farming career ladder.

The judges commented Samantha and Tom were "authentic, credible and full of heart, they are outstanding emerging leaders in our industry."

Runner-up in the Share Farmer category is Craig

and Kelsey Fisher from Stratford who are 50/50 sharemilking for Wayne and Sharon Fisher, milking 230 cows on 82ha.

Craig has more than 20 years' experience working on farm and Kelsey works on the farm around her full-time job as a chartered accountant.

One of their proudest achievements was getting a pass from the Taranaki Regional Council for their riparian fencing and planting audit.

"It was a big moment for us because it recognised the effort we've put into improving our waterways and doing the right thing environmentally. It felt like a real win for our business and our farm."

Third place was awarded to Bradley and Melissa Bullot. Bradley, 31, and Melissa, 29, are contract milkers for Dayle and Chayce Bailey, milking 270 cows on 88ha in Stratford.

Miriam Lauridsen was named the 2026 Taranaki Dairy Manager of the Year. The 29-year old is pasture, forage and herd manager for Liam O'Sullivan at New Plymouth, milking 370 cows on 137ha.

"Doing Primary ITO study and having such amazing and supportive employers has really helped me gain confidence and given me a desire to progress further in the dairy industry," she says.

Entering the Dairy Industry Awards was another

challenge to push herself out of her comfort zone.

"The awards process has challenged me to look ahead and set realistic goals for the future and to set up actions to achieve them."

Runner-up is Kate Logan, who is farm manager for Shirley Kissick on her 206ha farm at Hawera, milking 600 cows. Kate won the Taranaki Dairy Trainee title in 2022. She grew up on a dairy farm and went farming as soon as she left school and has since worked on farms in New Zealand and England.

Third place went to Laura Potroz who is herd manager for Chris and Amy Knowles on their 153ha farm at Tariki, milking 440 cows.

The 2026 Taranaki Dairy Trainee of the Year Shicaela Kane wants to set a good example for other young farmers and women in the dairy industry.

Shicaela, 23, is farm assistant for Dominic Schuler at Hawera, milking 300 cows on 92ha.

Shicaela grew up on a dairy farm and worked for a year in a local veterinary clinic before the opportunity came up to work on her family farm alongside her father and brother.

"Getting the opportunity to go out on farm with the vets really peaked my interest. Seeing the veterinary side was a lot different to relief milking cows as a kid and it gave me more of an appreciation to the hard work and dedication of the industry."

Shicaela is studying Level 4 New Zealand Apprenticeship in Agriculture Dairy Farming through Primary ITO and is also chairperson for South Taranaki Young Farmers and is part of the Dairy Environmental Leaders network.

"I enjoy sharing the same vision of the farmer-led network to help encourage and influence other farmers to make a positive impact on the environment to ensure we have a sustainable future in dairy farming."

Runner-up is Molly Yarrall who is farm assistant for Briar and Marcus Yarrall on Phillip and Maree Gudopp's 242ha farm at Eltham, milking 800 cows.

Third place went to Karleigh Moir who is farm assistant for Joshua Lyon on a 115ha farm at Patea, milking 250 cows.

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# DWN announces appointment of new Associate Trustee

Dairy Women's Network (DWN) welcomes Nicola Bryant as an Associate Trustee to its Trust Board.

Based in Ōpunake, Taranaki, Nicola is a dairy farmer, community leader and passionate advocate for women in dairying.

The DWN Trust Board HR Committee says they are pleased to welcome Nicola into the role, recognising her commitment to the organisation and the wider rural sector.

"Nicola is a long-standing DWN member who has contributed extensively across the Taranaki region and through her involvement in DWN conferences. She brings a strong connection to our regional network, alongside wide-ranging community governance experience that spans local hall committees, Playcentre and school



Nicola Bryant.

boards, and leadership roles within Taranaki Catchment Communities organisation".

"Deeply committed to the rural sector, Nicola is known for her passion, ability to connect people, and clear, effective communication. She has clear aspirations to progress her governance journey, and the Board looks forward to supporting Nicola as she takes this next step with DWN."

Alongside her husband,

Nicola is a contract milker on a 485-cow farm, giving her strong grassroots insight into the day-to-day realities, challenges and opportunities faced by women and farming families across the dairy sector. She is also a mum to two teenage daughters, further shaping her commitment to creating inclusive pathways and positive role models for the next generation.

Nicola has been actively

involved with DWN for several years, holding a range of leadership roles including volunteer Regional Leader, Taranaki Hub Leader, Chair of the 2023 DWN Conference, and founder of the DWN Taranaki Business Group, which she continues to support through annual strategic planning.

"DWN has played a significant role in my personal and leadership development, and I am deeply aligned with its values of connection, inclusivity, and seizing opportunity," says Nicola.

Outside of her involvement with DWN, Nicola holds a variety of positions at a local governance and community leadership level, bringing extensive experience to this role. She is driven by a strong belief in giving back, building inclusive communities, and ensuring rural voices are represented at governance tables.

The Associate Trustee

role supports emerging governance leaders to gain experience at a national board level, strengthening DWN's future governance capability while maintaining strong connections to its regional membership.

"I applied for the DWN Associate Trustee role as the next step in my governance journey — moving from local and school-level

governance into a national not-for-profit board environment. I see DWN as a safe and supportive space to grow my governance capability, learn from experienced trustees, and gain a deeper understanding of board-level strategy and decision-making. This role will help cement governance as part of my future leadership pathway."

## SPCA launches new dog-safety programme

SPCA is launching a free online education portal to teach children safe ways to interact around dogs. This programme is available to teachers, parents and families across New Zealand.

SPCA's Chief Scientific Officer, Dr Arnja Dale says "our Dog Safe Happy Homes programme is a curriculum aligned, freely available teaching and learning resource for all New Zealand primary and intermediate educators, as well as parents and families."

"What makes this programme so useful is that

it provides children with ongoing, structured learning experiences using simple rules to keep safe around dogs." Dr Dale says that while recognising the signs of how a dog is feeling is essential. These resources are designed to empower children and families with the knowledge and confidence to interact safely and kindly with dogs in a wide range of situations.

"Dogs are wonderful companions who bring joy, comfort, and friendship. Spending time with them can even support children's wellbeing. Any dog has the potential to cause harm

if they feel threatened, overwhelmed, or are in pain. Helping children understand this is key to preventing incidents."

For many children, dogs are one of the animals they are likely to encounter in everyday life - at home, in the community, or at friends' houses. Giving children the tools to understand dog behaviour keeps them safe and builds confidence.

The programme includes resources on understanding dog body language, sharing a home with a dog, what to do if an unknown dog approaches, and more.

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# Central District Field Days



are hankering for some quality downtime there's a huge array of entertainment - and some delicious treats - to offer you too.

It's back after seven long years. The hugely popular Tractor Pull, powered by Brandt, will pull in the crowds at this year's Central Districts Field Days. Enter your tractor, test your machine's grunt as it pulls the sled as far as possible down a 100-metre track, or watch tractors large and small battle it out. The Tractor Pull competition will run over three days at Manfeild in Feilding from March 19-21.

There are also regular competitions that for will be a drawcard for spectators:

Southern North Island Wood Council Golden Loader Championship

Central Association Axemens Grade Championships

National Excavator competition

Central Districts Doubles Power Fencing Competition

Manawatu Strongman

CD Field Days has more than the latest machinery, tech and farm tools. There is also a wide offering of lifestyle brands too.

Teaching children about the importance of trees, the New Zealand Farm Forestry Association will be promoting alternative species, giving seedlings away to kids so they can plant them and watch them grow in the years to come, and there will also be a Waratah Simulator used by train operators of forestry machines to fell trees, for people to try out.

New Zealand's largest regional field days has something for everyone.

Kiwi ingenuity and that 'can do' attitude - all at Central District Field Days

What is the next big thing since Number 8 wire? That Kiwi ingenuity is often the impetus for fantastic new rural products - and there will be plenty on show at next month's Central Districts Field Days, in

Feilding.

Central Districts Field Days is a highlight in the Manawatu calendar with tens of thousands of people coming through the gates at Manfeild in Feilding.

From farmers and foodies, to tech-heads and townies, New Zealand's largest regional field days has something for everyone. As well as deals and new products to experience, there is also a wealth of entertainment for young and

old.

Sprawling across more than 33 hectares at Manfeild, there will be more than 500 exhibitors with so much to showcase. It's big, but it's not too big.

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# Young Farmers gave valuable life lessons

strong,” says Barry. “Young farmers worked towards getting a 50-50 job where they would own the stock. Those taking part in the mock clearance sale would be allotted a parcel of money to buy stock and the one who ended up with the best production figures would be declared the winner on the day.

“It taught us how to buy cattle,” said Barry.

“The education we got was terrific and very valuable to our future. We mixed with the more senior farmers in the district and those gentlemen taught us a lot.”

Older farmers would be attached to clubs as advisory members and Barry would later be an advisory member at Otakeho as well as acting as an advisor to the Country Girls Club.

Back then most country settlements had their own Young Farmers clubs. They would compete against each other in the national debating championships and at sporting events like cricket which would often be played on a makeshift pitch set up on a local farmer’s farm paddock.

He recalls the time when a group made a summit of what was then known as Mt Egmont “between milkings.” It was three and a half hours

up, three and a half hours down, then stopping for a drink at the Kaponga Hotel before heading home to milk the cows.

The clubs would hold their own dances and concerts where items would be performed. Barry recalls one item performed by Otakeho club members where they dressed up as mannequins being so popular that it was taken to other clubs.

The Young Farmers and Country Girls clubs would

often work in together and there would be kitchen teas put on for members who were getting married.

Barry left Young Farmers after he shifted from Otakeho. He went on to become a Kiwi Dairy Co-operative director. He notes that many people who had been involved with Young Farmers went on to become dairy company directors or to hold other positions of influence in the farming industry.



**South Taranaki District Committee of C.G.C., 1958**

Back Row:—F. GIBSON, Kaponga; J. ELIASON, Otakeho; J. LEONARD, Kaponga; M. REVELL, Mangatoki; M. FEAR, Mangatoki; B. SMITH, Y.F.C.

Middle Row:—T. COLEMAN, Y.F.C.; E. ROBINS, Mangatoki; B. CAMPBELL, Alton; G. LAMBERT, Alton; H. ALEXANDER, Eltham; R. ALABASTOR, Alton; B. BARTON, Otakeho; B. BENDALL, Otakeho.

Front Row:—J. COLSON, Pihama; M. HARROP, Pihama; MRS. CATHIE, Pihama, “Advisory Member”; D. CAMPBELL, Eltham, “Secretary”; N. NAIRN, Eltham, “President”; MRS. DAVIES, Mangatoki, “Advisory Member”; J. DOMPROSKI, Eltham; B. HALFORD, Pihama.

## The 1958 South Taranaki Country Girls Committee. Barry is back row far right.

Retired farmer Barry Smith has fond memories of his time with Young Farmers.

“When I joined Young Farmers it changed my life,” he said. “It put me on the right track for my involvement with farming and farm politics.”

The New Zealand Young Farmers are planning a reunion in Stratford on July 3 to coincide with New Plymouth and Stratford hosting the New Zealand Young Farmers Grand Final

on July 2-3. They are wanting to hear from anybody who had been involved in Young Farmers or Country Girls which existed alongside the Young Farmers Clubs. These two groups merged in 1973 to form the New Zealand Federation of Young Farmers Clubs.

Barry joined the Otakeho Young Farmers Club in the mid-1950s. He was an 18-year-old on wages when he was elected club president in 1956.

“At the annual meeting when I was elected chairman of Otakeho, Jack Hawkes (South Taranaki Young Farmers district council president) sat down with me and mapped out how to run a meeting. That stayed with me the rest of my life,” recalls Barry.

Barry was to serve as vice-president of the YFC South Taranaki Council and was on the Young Farmers’ Wellington Council which covered the lower North Island.

He recalls meetings being held where there would always be a guest speaker. These could include leading farmers in the district, representatives from the Dairy Board and Department of Agriculture, Dairy Company directors, bank managers and others. There was always a good relationship with the Department of Agriculture and their local representatives like Jock Spooner and well-known local mountaineering personality Rod Syme.

As well as this there were field days on the farms of leading farmers like Harry Bayliss, Jim Washer and Hardy Benton.

There were even mock clearance sales on the Waimate West Demonstration Farm.

“In those days 50-50 sharemilking was very



Barry Smith.

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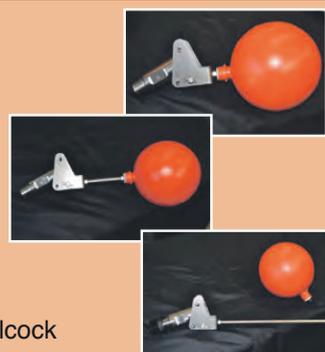
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# Super-premium wool contract strengthens future for strong wool

Super-premium wool contract strengthens future for strong wool

Wools of New Zealand has delivered a boost to wool growers by securing a new super-premium wool contract with keratin biomaterials company Keraplast.

The contract features a price of \$6.88 per kilogram clean for the 2025/26 financial year - representing around a 40 per cent premium to 2025 market pricing - and covers an estimated 400 tonnes of wool over five years from around 30 New Zealand growers, all producing certified regeneratively farmed wool.

Wools of New Zealand chief executive John McWhirter said the contract represents a major lift for strong wool growers and a clear vote of confidence in the future of New Zealand wool.

“For participating growers, the agreement provides price certainty, demand security and access to a rapidly growing global biomaterials market.

“This price is around \$2 per kilogram ahead of the current market, which is a meaningful premium for farmers.

“It shows that when wool is connected directly to high-value end uses, returns can lift well beyond traditional



John McWhirter and Howard Moore.

commodity pricing. That is exactly where Wools of New Zealand is focused.”

The wool will be supplied to Keraplast, which manufactures advanced biomaterials using keratin - the natural protein that makes up around 95 per cent of a wool fibre and gives wool its strength, flexibility and resilience.

Through a controlled manufacturing process, keratin extracted from strong wool is transformed into a range of high-value materials used in medical,

nutraceutical and personal care applications, including wound care products, tissue repair and hair and skin care. These products are sold into global markets, including the United States, Europe and Asia.

Mr McWhirter said the agreement reflects Wools of New Zealand’s strategy of working directly with innovative global manufacturers to add value to wool and improve farmgate returns.

“For Wools of New Zealand, this agreement demonstrates how strong

wool can move beyond traditional textile markets into advanced, high-value applications.

It shows strong wool has a future when we combine quality farming and innovative global manufacturing. Keraplast is creating real value from strong wool, and that demand is flowing directly back to New Zealand growers.”

Keraplast chief executive Howard Moore said New Zealand wool offered clear advantages over alternative keratin sources used

globally.

“Wool-derived keratin ingredients, manufactured through Keraplast’s science-based process technology, deliver functionality that is highly suited for medical, nutraceutical and personal care uses.

“The consistency, traceability and quality of New Zealand wool is critical to Keraplast’s product performance. New Zealand strong wool gives us a reliable, high-performing raw material and the regenerative farming systems behind it align strongly with our values and our customers’ expectations.”

All wool supplied under the contract must come from farms certified by the Savory Institute, following independent audits and a multi-year verification process.

“Regenerative certification is a critical part of this supply relationship,” said Mr Moore.

“It reflects a commitment not just to sustainability, but to creating a net-positive impact across communities, supply chain partners and the environment.

“The agreement reinforces the role of strong wool as a premium, future-focused natural material and highlights the value of direct connections between growers and global end-use manufacturers.”

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# RMA reform at a crossroads for farmers

A dark cloud is shading Matt and Tory Simpson's optimism that a new dawn for land use regulation is around the corner.

Like thousands of other farmers, the owners of Ranui Station in Canterbury were delighted to hear pledges from the Government that resource management reform would reduce red tape, and balance environmental protection with property rights.

"It's hugely disappointing to find the reality falls short of the rhetoric," says Matt, who's co-chair of Federated Farmers High Country.

"The two new bills are riddled with flaws and the select committee now has a mammoth task ahead to get things back on track."

For the Simpsons, and many other landowners and businesses, it's far more than just a desire for less paperwork, bureaucracy, hearings and expensive resource consents.

"Livelihoods are at stake," Matt says.

"We look after nature and want to develop this place so it's in good shape and a going concern for the next generation.

"We have high hopes the new resource management laws will help us combat the Outstanding Natural Landscape overlay restrictions on more than half the station, and other clamps on our ability to diversify income streams," he says.

Last December the Government released two new bills - the Planning Bill and the Natural Environment Bill - to replace the Resource Management Act (RMA).

Federated Farmers has lodged a comprehensive submission on the bills, restating strong support for overhaul of the RMA.

"We absolutely back the goals and principles agreed by Cabinet," Feds RMA Reform spokesperson Mark Hooper says.

"Those include enabling primary sector growth, narrowing the scope of effects of the RMA, and greater use of national standards while reducing the need for resource consents.



**Matt and Tory Simpson.**

"If you want that in less jargony terms - that means faster, better, more efficient processes and knocking on the head the trend of endless hearings, appeals and uncertainty.

"Unfortunately, somewhere in between the ambitions of Government MPs and drafting of the legislation, something has fallen over."

A major concern is that, as currently written, instead of a farm plan replacing the need for a resource consent, a farm may need both.

"We see a risk of farmers facing more red tape under the Natural Environment Act than they presently do under the RMA," Hooper says.

There are too many ambiguous, principle-based clauses in the two bills, which is likely to see continued expensive, time-consuming and litigious decision making, he says.

The environment bill fails to clearly rule greenhouse gas issues out of scope - despite these already being dealt with in other Acts - and the lack of a clear scope section and definition of effect also leaves the door open to intangible, hard-to-measure concepts such as the 'mauri' of water.

"Too much power is left in the hands of the Minister, under any future government, to impact the economy under National Policy Direction.

"And there's still too

much uncertainty over how farmers will access compensation for overlays and other restrictions on their property.

"We pushed hard for a risk-based approach to auditing and certification of farm plans, but that's also missing," Hooper says.

Federated Farmers' other concerns include the carry-over of aspects of outdated Water Conservation Orders from the RMA, lack of protection for stock drinking water, and inability to insure against inadvertent breaches of regulation.

Hooper says time pressure may be a reason for "too much drag and drop" of content from the RMA into the draft new legislation.

"The Government and officials worked hard last

year to make a series of amendments to the existing

RMA. "These were important fixes that enabled farmers to get on with production.

"That took focus away from the two new bills, and perhaps in the back of their minds was the fact there would be a five-month long select committee process and chances to weed out flaws."

But Hooper believes the select committee has a challenging task.

"Federated Farmers has already voiced its unwavering opposition to clauses in the Natural Environment Bill which enable the Minister to auction, tender, or levy water.

"Getting rid of these potential water taxes is

probably quite easily handled with changes of wording.

"But for other parts, the bill is drafted holistically and it's more like a spider's web, with layer upon layer of clauses that are interactive with other clauses.

"It's going to take a lot of effort to untangle it."

Hooper says it's vital the select committee works diligently, and that its members who represent the coalition Government stick up for the original goals of RMA reform: simplicity, efficiency, less cost and litigation.

"Quite frankly, they're principles and goals that an elected representative of any political persuasion should defend."

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## Dog safe happy homes



SPCA is launching a free online education portal to teach children safe ways to interact around dogs. See page 23.

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# OPUNAKE & COASTAL NEWS

Next issue 26th March

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# Gardner takes Taranaki title

Adult Ministock competitor Kurt Gardner cleaned up in a competitive field of racers to win the Tool Hire Taranaki, Taranaki Adult Ministock Champs on February 28 at Five Star Liquor Stratford Speedway.

Racing amongst a field of seventeen cars, made of up drivers from Taranaki and Palmerston North, Gardner was in top form and won all three races to win the title with maximum points. He won the first race from grid ten, the second from grid two and the third from thirteen. It is a very rare occurrence when a competitor in any class wins all three races to win a championship, indicating just how good a form Gardner is currently in. Second place in the Taranaki title went to fellow Stratford competitor Riley Booker who recorded a sixth place finish in the first race followed by two thirds while Palmerston North competitor Jono Mouldey, who has been a regular at Stratford this season was third after finishing second, seventh and fifth in the races.

Stockcars raced for the Warren Lowry Memorial which was awarded to the best stirrer of the night. Brad



Kurt Gardner cleans up.

Podjursky and Cory Symes both made their intentions clear in the first race and were causing trouble for the fellow competitors all night. After a tough decision, Brad Podjursky

was awarded with the sash for his menacing efforts through the races.

In support class racing, William Hughes and Brayden Fale won two races each in the Superstock class.

Wins in the Streetstock division were shared between Anthony Washer, William Limmer and Ron Washer while Youth Ministock races were won by Todd Clarke, Lainey Hancock, Lucas Hurley and Lakein Woods with Woods also being awarded driver of the night for his smooth driving in all races.

Speedway takes a break now with the next event being the Pick A Part sponsored event on Saturday March 14, featuring the West Coast Streetstock Teams Champs, Demolition Derby Teams Champs and the Repco Youth Ministock Spectacular.

Jarrod MacBeth



## NEXT EVENT

### SATURDAY MARCH 14TH

Event Sponsored By: West Coast Streetstock Teams Champs



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# Kaitake Community Sports Hub to host preseason match

The newly renovated Kaitake Community Sports Hub is set to host a blockbuster Yarrows Taranaki Bulls NPC preseason match.

The match against the Wellington Lions, dubbed the "Battle at the Beach" will be played at Corbett Park on the afternoon of Friday 24 July.

Following sold-out Manaia preseason fixtures in 2023 and 2025 and the Urenui Showdown in 2024, the TRFU have committed to taking another match to a township that does not host topflight club rugby, let alone provincial rugby.

Corbett Park is home to the Kaitake Rugby Club. The club was established in 1894 and recently won CMK Division 2 titles in 2021, 2022 and 2023.

The club is also home to a thriving junior rugby programme and is proud to be the junior club of Ricky Riccitelli and Teihorangi Walden.

To celebrate the Corbett Park match, the Yarrows Taranaki Bulls will don a Canterbury of New Zealand inspired blue and black Kaitake strip.

The event will acknowledge Kaitake local David Jennings who passed



Taranaki Rugby Chief Executive Jimmy Fastier, Kaitake Rugby Club Chair Jono White and Taranaki Rugby Academy Manager and Ōakura local Teihorangi Walden at Corbett Park, Ōakura - home of the Kaitake Community Sports Hub.

away in September 2025, aged 90.

David and his late wife Jennifer lived in the Omata and Ōakura district for six decades. Jennings was a

strong supporter of Amber & Black rugby and the recent Kaitake Community Sports Hub upgrade.

David was the Kaitake Rugby Club treasurer and a

junior coach in the 1960s and 1970s and the Spotswood College 1st XV coach from 1977-1982. The 1978 1st XV was the most successful in the school's history with

a 17 win, 3 loss and 1 draw record.

The clubrooms at Corbett Park will be renamed the David Jennings Lounge for the match day to recognise

David's contribution. TRFU Chief Executive Officer Jimmy Fastier was thrilled to announce the Kaitake fixture.

"Kaitake has a rich rugby history. The village have got right behind the recent Corbett Park renovations and hosting a Yarrows Taranaki Bulls match in their backyard will be a great way for the local community to celebrate the upgrade. Taking an annual preseason match to a small Taranaki town aligns with our vision of creating memorable experiences for the region."

Kaitake Rugby Club Chairperson Jono White said hosting the match day would give local youngsters the chance to meet some of their idols.

"We've got a growing junior club here at Kaitake. I think there are some future Yarrows Taranaki Bulls players running around in Kaitake colours at the moment, and an experience like this will inspire our juniors. The revamp of the Kaitake Community Sports Hub has created a meeting point in our community, so it is awesome to host such a special event and reward all those whose hard work and donations helped bring it to life."

## Sepsis – know the signs and save a life

Sepsis (mate whakatāoke) is a life-threatening condition that arises when your body's response to an infection damages its own tissues and organs.

Sepsis happens when an infection you already have – in your skin, lungs, urinary tract (pee/wee/mimi), or somewhere else – triggers a chain reaction throughout your body. This reaction releases chemicals throughout your body which damage tissues and vital organs (kidneys, heart, brain, liver, and lungs).

Although sepsis can affect

anyone, certain people are more at risk of sepsis. This includes the very old, the very young, and people with weakened immune systems or chronic medical conditions like diabetes.

Women are more at risk of sepsis during pregnancy or after giving birth. Sepsis is thought to increase the chance of miscarriage, premature labour or stillbirth. Early recognition and treatment is vital to reduce the risk to both mother and baby. In Aotearoa New Zealand, Māori and Pacific people get sepsis more often than non-Māori and non-

Pacific people, often at a younger age.

Sepsis can develop quickly and is often very frightening and confusing for individuals and their family / whānau. At the start of the illness, it may have felt as if you were developing a flu-like illness. You may have:

- Felt very cold and shivery
- Felt very hot and looked flushed
- Had a high temperature
- Had aching muscles
- Felt very tired
- Have had sickness

and / or diarrhoea (upset stomach)

- Not felt like eating,
- Seemed confused or had slurred speech

Not all symptoms need to be present and some can be confused with more common illnesses such as 'simple flu', or a tummy bug. People often say they feel like they are going to die, but remember, children may not be able to express this feeling, making

it even harder to recognise. If there is uncertainty about the cause of an illness and ongoing concern, then seek advice immediately, or if getting worse, go to an Emergency Department as quickly as possible or call an ambulance. Critical illness from sepsis is preventable if detected and treated quickly, like a heart attack or stroke - early intervention saves lives.



An infected Leg.

## Sandfords Mania Golf results

Juniors. February 22. Putting. 1. Lennox Finnigan. 2. Romyn Tupuse. 3. Joseph Bailys. 4. Elliott Bailys.

March 1. Junior Boys. 1. Harry Gopperth. 2. Liam Lynskey. 3. Romyn Tupuse.

Senior Boys. 1. Micah Gut. 2. Carter Ardern.

Girls. 1. Olivia. 2. Lisa and Lisa.

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# Luminous by Carina McQueen at The Village Gallery

The Village Gallery presents Luminous, a solo exhibition by Taranaki artist Carina McQueen. This thoughtful and light-filled show brings together a collection of her sketches, prints, and oil paintings - works that explore light, not just as illumination,



Av. de l'Opéra, 75009 Paris, France.

but as something tangible that shapes, reveals, and transforms what it touches. Carina grew up on

a sheep and beef farm in Purangi and began painting in oils at the age of 10. She went on to study Landscape Architecture and has continued to weave creativity into both her professional and personal life. Her practice often involves painting en plein air (painting outside from life) and sketching on the go, capturing fleeting moments of light and atmosphere that later become fully formed compositions.

through everyday scenes, Luminous offers viewers a chance to pause, reflect, and experience the quiet magic of the ordinary made extraordinary.

The exhibition runs from 10th March to 4th April at the Village Gallery, Eltham. Don't miss it!



Whether it's the soft glow on a hillside or light filtering



Crown Lynn Autumn Splendour.

Carina McQueen

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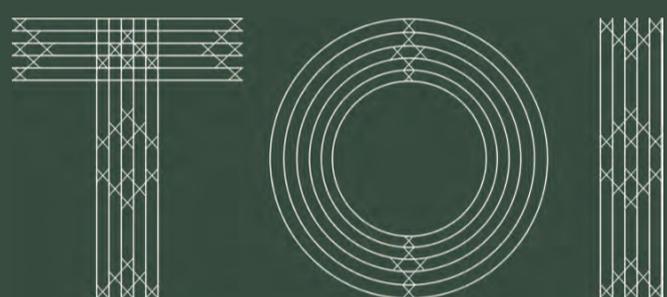
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# Whiti Exhibition opens at Lysaght Watt Gallery



Bonita Bigham KSM, curator of Whiti, with the poi she created.

The Whiti exhibition, curated by Bonita Bigham KSM (Ngaruahine, Te Atiawa), had its official opening (3pm) at the Lysaght Watt Gallery, Te Ramanui o Ruaputahanga, 121 High Street, Hawera on Sunday March 1. The opening was well-attended. It features the creativity of 27 artists.

Whiti, which is a collection of indigenous creative excellence, will continue until April 4. The exhibition is a collaboration of Te Atinga Contemporary Maori Art NZ and Toi o Taranaki Maori. Whiti celebrates the tenth Indigenous gathering, Turangi-nui-a Kiu.

As well as Bonita, also present were such noteworthy people as Dinah King (Chairperson of the Lysaght Watt Gallery Trust) and Ria Waikerepuru of Ngati Ruanui Ngaruahine.

Apart from the excellent collection of Maori art there were also some exhibits from overseas, such as one from Joe Seymour junior (Squaxin Island, Pueblo of Acoma) featuring acrylic on deer rawhide, entitled Guided by the Supernatural. This

exhibit was one originally part of an exhibition held in Gisborne in January, namely the Atinga Indigenous Artist Gathering.

The scope of Whiti is extensive and includes photography, print on paper, print on harakeke paper, whale bone carving, acrylic on canvas, screen prints, clothing, inkpen, poi, knitted wire mesh, and collaborative screen print – to mention just a selection.

Eye-catchingly appealing was Francis Stachi (Ngapuhi, Te Atiawa)'s work entitled Lost and found in translation. The extended exhibit of oxidised sterling silver featuring hand made chain holding suspended hand cut letters (in English and Maori). 'You and I are earth' read some of the words of this remarkable intricate exhibit.

One noteworthy contribution was a selection of whale bone carving (eg. patu, maripi), housed in a glass cabinet, which was the creative endeavour of Rangi Kipa (Te Atiawa, Taranaki, Ngati Tama Ki te Tauihu). Apart from whale bone as

the medium, also included was paua shell, pounamu, coconut sennit, steel, silver inlay mother of pearl and shark teeth.

Intriguing was Tama Iti's kai te ko Pa Taku noho – acrylic on canvas (4 works). This work demanded considerable thoughtful viewing

Bonita (see picture below) held up the pois she created. "I love neon colours," she enthused. "They are fun and bright - an easy 4 plait

activity."

One of my favourite exhibits was Regan Balzar (Te Arawa, Ngati Rua kua)'s Te Hokinga ki Te Ukaipo (The Return to the Homeland). The acrylic on canvas painting features a colourful hawk boldly presented in many hues such as red, brown and yellow.

Make sure you find time to experience this outstanding collection of indigenous art.

*Rolland McKellar*



An acrylic on canvas work by Tame Iti entitled Kai te ko pa taku noho.



Regan Balzar's work entitled Te Hokinga ki Te Ukaipo (The return to the Homeland) – acrylic on canvas.

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NEW PLYMOUTH

# Green School students to represent Taranaki on the global stage

Green School New Zealand students are continuing to expand Taranaki's global footprint, with five high school learners recently selected to attend the prestigious Villars Institute Fellowship in Switzerland. The achievement follows their recent participation in an international education conference in Shanghai

earlier this year, signalling the school's growing presence within influential global forums. Sophie Perrett, Samantha Perrett, Zac Schoonover, Siena Schoonover and August Nichols will travel to the Swiss Alps in June, as the first New Zealand students to attend the globally respected Villars



Green School students from left: Sophie Perrett, Sam Perrett, Augustus Nichols-McCray, Zac Schoonover, Siena Schoonover have been selected to attend a global education symposium in the Swiss Alps.

Symposium. The event brings together emerging young leaders from schools around the world to engage directly with leading scientists, policymakers, entrepreneurs and educators. Together, they'll discuss real-world solutions to

complex world challenges from sustainable economic systems, to social and environmental change.

Head of Green School New Zealand, Nigel Barrett, says the selection achievement reflects both the calibre of students and the school's global outlook.

"This is an outstanding achievement for these students and a powerful example of what happens when young people are encouraged to think beyond borders.

"At Green School, we believe education should prepare learners to engage meaningfully with the world's biggest challenges. Being invited into a forum like Villars places our students, and by extension Taranaki and Aotearoa, within an influential global

conversation."

Following the multi-day symposium, students enter a mentorship programme and gain access to a global network that includes research collaboration, publication opportunities, and continued engagement with thought leaders focused on sustainable futures.

Head of Learner Experiences and Wellbeing at GSNZ, Di Hoskin, says the global trajectory of these learners is intentional.

"We are so proud of these students. After attending the EiM WorldWide conference in Shanghai, their acceptance into the Villars Fellowship further highlights their curiosity, courage and readiness to step confidently into international spaces," Hoskin says.

"These opportunities allow

our learners to represent New Zealand values on a global platform, connect with peers who care deeply about the future of our planet, and return home with ideas and networks that benefit our own community."

The selection reinforces Green School NZ's growing global footprint, positioning its students as contributors, not just observers, in international conversations about sustainability and leadership.

As they prepare for Switzerland in 2026, Sophie, Samantha, Zac, Siena and August look forward to not only representing their school, but Taranaki and Aotearoa New Zealand on a respected international stage.



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# Outstanding New Zealand play kicks off Hawera Repertory 80 years celebration

Hawera Repertory Theatre is celebrating 80 years of community theatre in 2026 and plans are well underway for an exciting year that allows the opportunity to reflect on the past and look forward to an exciting future.

Their first offering is the outstanding New Zealand play 'The Pink Hammer' written by Michele Amas. It premiered in 2014 at Palmerston North's Centrepoint Theatre.

She described 'The Pink Hammer' as "outrageous, laughter-filled, and heart-warming."

The story follows the inaugural Pink Hammer Workshop.

Annabel, Helen, Louise and Siobhan turn up, looking forward to learning carpentry skills from a pioneering, female furniture



From left, Kathryn van Gameron (who plays Annabel), Kristy Logan (Siobhan), Christine Cameron (Louise), and Ron Scott (Woody).

maker... but instead they find Woody, an out-of-

work, disgruntled builder who's less than impressed to find four empowered and independent women amongst

his claw hammers.

Not the sort of women to back down from a challenge, the group convince Woody to teach them the tricks of the trade in this hilarious and heart-warming Kiwi comedy that'll have you doubled over in laughter.

The different motivations that brought each of the women to join the course gradually reveal themselves, enriching, and empowering them in their different ways.

The cast of 5 are:

Annabel, played by Kathryn van Gameron is a counsellor in a private practice, an active feminist in the 1980s.

Helen, played by Donnella Weir, is a horse breeder who has two sons to different fathers, both jockeys.

Louise, played by Christine Cameron, a nurse, moved home to care for her parents and is easily spooked.

Siobhan, played by Kristy

Logan, is Irish, lives with her cousin and works at the local vet.

Woody, played by Ron Scott, a grumpy, initially unwilling, out-of-work builder/carpenter whose "man cave" is invaded by the women. He reluctantly gets in touch with his sensitive side.

"The Pink Hammer", directed by Peter Meikle plays Wednesday 18 to Saturday 28 March at Repertory House, Collins Street Hawera.

Tickets are available from iTICKET <https://www.iticket.co.nz/search?q=pink%20hammer> and the Hawera iSite

More information on the Hawera Repertory Facebook page - <https://www.facebook.com/hawerarepitory/>

## Exercise before and during pregnancy could be good for baby's brain

Babies born to mums who were physically active before and during their pregnancy have a greater chance of strong brain development in early life, according to international research.

The team studied over 38,000 mother-child pairs, looking at the mums' activity levels before and during pregnancy and their kids' brain development every six months up to age three. Higher activity before pregnancy was linked to higher scores on each aspect of the development assessment at six months,

while higher activity during pregnancy was linked to improved motor skills and problem-solving.

By age three, most of these links were no longer visible, the researchers say, likely as other environmental factors such as childcare attendance kick in. The authors also note that women experiencing pregnancy complications need more rest, which may complicate the relationship between activity during pregnancy and the health of the baby.

JAMA Network Open

## Mammograms could help predict heart disease risk

Mammograms could be used to predict women's risk of heart disease at the same time as screening for breast cancer, according to US researchers.

They trained a computer model to analyse the blood vessels in mammogram images and see how much calcium had built up inside them.

Running the model on mammograms from over 120,000 women, they found those who'd had more calcium deposits in their arteries - a sign the arteries

are 'stiff' - were more likely to have later had problems like strokes and heart failure. The researchers say women are underdiagnosed for heart disease, so making extra use of mammograms in this way could enable earlier and more effective preventative care for women.

European Heart Journal

**Congratulations Nitika on winning this years Everybodys Theatres Award for Opunake High School Student Volunteer of the year 2025**

# Congratulations Nitika



### Our regular services:

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

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ST. JOHN AMBULANCE,  
PLUNKET & TDHB SERVICES.

For a full list of services & happenings here

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

## What's On Listings

### ONGOING

#### Movies at Everybodys Theatre in Opunake:

Playing several days and nights each week. Refer

### CHURCH NOTICES



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

#### Opunake Co-operating Parish

Havelock Street, Opunake - St Pauls - every Sunday

9am: Coffee prior to service

9.30am: Service

Rahotu - Wesley - 11am first Sunday of the month

#### Okato Co-operating Parish

St. James, Oakura - Sunday Service every Sunday,

10.00am

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

3rd Sunday - Communion Service and 4th Sunday at

7.00pm

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

You, every 3rd Wednesday of each month,

4.30pm-5.30pm

#### Opunake Catholic Church

St Martins, Pungarehu: Temporarily closed - no Masses

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

#### Other areas

Sacred Heart, Manaia - Temporarily closed - No Masses

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

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

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

11.00am

#### St Patricks Catholic Church, Kaponga

Sunday Mass 8.45am.

Thursday Mass 10.00am (subject to change).

#### St Patricks Catholic Church, Okato

Saturday Vigil 6.00pm - weekly

#### The Wave

Pentecostal Church 64 Domett St, Opunake

Sunday Services 10.30am

Women's Group 10am Tuesday

Men's Group 7pm Wednesday

Come along or contact

Belinda Philp

027 935 6191

#### St. Barnabas Anglican Church

141 Tasman St, Opunake

Sunday Services 9am

Communion 1st, 2nd, & 3rd Sunday

Prayer & Praise 4th Sunday

Every 5th Sunday all 4 churches gather for

a Combined Service

#### Okato Community Church

Meets 10.30am Sunday at Hempton Hall.

Everyone welcome

#### St John's Community Church, Kaponga

Cnr West and Egmont Streets.

Sunday Services 10.30am followed by morning tea

#### Manaia Union Fellowship

Terou St, Manaia.

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

#### Friend & Fellowship Group

Thursdays @ Manaia

Support our Faith and support each other with Prayer

and Bible study

Encouraging interactive discussion and Praise

All are welcome

We would love it if you could come

Rodney & Val 274 8550 or 0272384187

#### St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church

90 Regan St., Stratford,

9:00am Sunday: Breakfast and Study

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

Worship Service"

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

Stratford.

Contact Rev. John Mattock 027 2039799

#### Methodist Church Hawera

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

#### Manaia Community Church part of the Global Anglicans

Robert Gibson Hall, Manaia

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

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

follow

Contact: Rev Phil Woodmass 027 424 8318

timetable in newspaper.

#### MONDAYS: The Barnabas Centre Exercise and

**Social Morning:** St. Barnabas Church Hall, 141

Tasman

Street Opunake: Each Monday 10 am - 12:30 pm.

Information call Jenny 027 379 6844 or Ian 027

622 4878.

**Beginners Social Dance Classes:** Central School

Hall, New Plymouth, 7pm.

#### TUESDAYS

**Opunake Walking Group:** Every Tuesday 10am.

Meet outside Club Hotel on Havelock St. Phone

Margaret 027 477 5600 for more info if needed, or

just turn up.

**Pungarehu Golf Club Twilight:** Tee-off between

4.30 & 6.30pm.

**Brazilian Jiu Jitsu:** Adult classes, 7pm, Sinclair

Events Centre, Opunake.

**Opunake District RSA:** Meet 1st Tuesday

of every month at 5.30pm at the Opunake Fire

Station. Financial Members are welcome to attend.

#### WEDNESDAYS

**Coastal Young Farmers:** Meet 2nd Wednesday

of every month at 7pm at Butlers Reef Bar & Cafe,

Oakura.

**Lisa Keen Audiology at Coastal Care, Opunake:**

Wednesdays 9am - 5pm, for an appointment call

027 591 4222 - 0800 555 676

**Okato & District Historical Society open every**

**Wednesday:** At the Okato Community Trust Hall,

47 Cumming St, Okato. phone Meg on 06 752

4566.

**Opunake Embroiders Guild:** Meet 2nd and 4th

Wednesdays of the month, 10.30am-3pm at the

Opunake Business Centre, Napier St, Opunake.

Just come along or phone Sheryl 06 761 8769.

**Toi Foundation drop-in sessions:** Opunake

Library, 11am-3pm.

**Okato Community Market:** In Hempton Hall,

Okato 4pm to 5.30pm.

**Free singing experience with Taranaki**

**Harmony Chorus:** Meet every Wednesday at

Inglewood Mamaku Centre, 7-9.30 pm Phone

Helen 021 296 0700.

#### THURSDAYS

**Egmont Euchre Club:** Every Thursday 1pm at the

Opunake Bowling Club. Inquiries, 06 761 8337 or

06 761 8607.

**Brazilian Jiu Jitsu:** Adult classes, 7pm, Sinclair

Events Centre, Opunake



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

NO  
APPOINTMENT  
NEEDED

### DROP IN CLINIC | 19 MARCH

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TUI ORA

To find out more about Tui Ora, visit [tuiora.co.nz](http://tuiora.co.nz) or call 0800 TUI ORA

#### 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.

#### FEBRUARY 10 TO MARCH 17

**Taranaki Paintings & Beyond:** An exhibition by

Ian Littlewood. The Village Gallery, Eltham.

#### FEBRUARY 13 TO MARCH 15

**Art, Artist, Articles:** An exhibition by Roger

Peters, Percy Thomson Gallery

#### MARCH 10 TO APRIL 4

**Luminous:** An exhibition by Carina McQueen.

The Village Gallery, Eltham.

#### MARCH 14

**Kaponga Car Boot Sale:** 15 Egmont St, 9am-

2pm.

#### MARCH 14 & 15

**Giraffes Can't Dance?:** A production by Val

Deakin Dance Group, at the Dance Centre, 306

St. Aubyn Street, New Plymouth. 11.30am and

1.30pm. Tickets at the door or can be purchased

from the Dance Theatre website [www.](http://www.valdeakindance.org.nz)

[valdeakindance.org.nz](http://www.valdeakindance.org.nz)

#### MARCH 15

**Mountain to Sea Crosscountry Bike Ride:** From

Ihaia Rd, Opunake. See article and ad in the Feb 26

issue for details.

#### MARCH 20

**Green School Open Day:** See ad for details.

#### MARCH 18 TO APRIL 28

**Pink Hammer:** A production by Hawera

Repertory Society At Repertory House.

#### MARCH 21 TO APRIL 8

**Opunake Boat & Underwater Club Annual**

**Fishing Tournament:** Opunake. See ad in the

Feb 26 issue for details.

#### MARCH 22-23

**First Fires:** An overnight adventure for boys 12-

14yrs and their men. Koru Farm, Taranaki. See ad

in this issue for details.

#### MARCH 26

**Tumahu Hall Society AGM:** At the hall, 7pm

#### MARCH 27

**New Plymouth Boys High School Boarding**

**Open Day:** At the school. 10.30am-2pm.

#### APRIL 11

**Community Garden Workshop:** Manaia Maara

Kai. 10am-2pm.

#### JUNE 13

**Community Garden Workshop:** St Marys

Community Garden, Hawera. 10am-2pm.

**PUBLIC NOTICES**

**Notice of Tumahu Hall Society Inc  
AGM Meeting**

Thursday 26th March at 7pm at the Hall  
ALL WELCOME

For Agenda details please see  
the Tumahu Hall Facebook page  
or contact secretary at vickythomasnz@gmail.com

**KAPONGA CAR BOOT SALE**

15 Egmont Street  
9am to 2pm **Saturday 14th March**  
No Fee for Sellers  
contact: rickbyl@xtra.co.nz

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R.S.A.  
AGM**

MONDAY 30TH MARCH  
MANAIA BOWLING CLUB &  
R.S.A. ROOMS  
RIEMENSCHNEIDER ST.  
AT 7PM

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The frames have a dark blue  
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Inquiries to Clare Moss - Ph 06 278 4169  
clare.moss@hughson.co.nz

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