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Local MPs returned comfortably to Parliament

David MacLeod, Carl Bates and Barbara Kuriger were comfortably returned as Members of Parliament for their respective electorates.

Sitting MP David MacLeod (National) has been returned to parliament for the New Plymouth electorate, with a bigger majority than in 2023 when he beat Labour's Glen Bennett. This time, with 21,286 votes (56.4%) his main opponent was Amanda Clinton-Gohdes who had 13,498 votes. (35.8%). His majority, therefore, was 7788.

"I'm incredibly humbled to have been re-elected for a second term. I look forward to continuing to represent you, working hard for our community and delivering for our region. A big thank you to everyone who supported me."

David expressed surprise at the size of his win as he expected a much closer race. He thought the related issues of employment and the future of the oil and gas industry had helped his cause.

Sarah Lucus (Opportunity) secured 2,330 votes (1.7%) and has been elected to parliament as a List MP, as her ranking of seventh was sufficient.

Rusty Kane had 640 votes (1.7%).

In total 37,754 valid votes were cast. However, with special votes yet to be counted there will be some change.

The party votes were as follows:

National 12,945 (33.9%)
Labour 9,169 (24%)
ACT 5,139 (13.5%)
New Zealand First 4,691 (12.3%)
Greens 3,356 (9.39%)
Opportunity 2,276 (6%)
Legalise Cannabis 82 (0.2%).

The party votes numbered 38,141.

In the Whanganui electorate Carl Bates (National) has been also returned having taken 19,373 votes (53.3%). His improved majority is 6,748; his main opponent Angela Roberts (Labour) secured 12,625 votes (34.7%). "It was a real vote of confidence in the work of an active, engaged local member of Parliament," said Carl. His vote was well up from the 5,512 majority he got at the 2023 General Election.

Interestingly, Carl became the first Whanganui MP to earn re-election since the late Hon Chester Borrows retained the seat in 2008, 2011 and 2014, respectively.

"I've been very pleased by the response we've been getting out on the campaign trail, people coming up and just acknowledging little things we've done over the last three years and some of the bigger things."

He concluded, "I am excited to continue my work advocating for our community including those who are new to the wonderful Whanganui electorate."

In third place was former National Party MP Harete Hipango-Brownlie, this time standing for New Zealand First. She gained 3,412 votes (9.4%). She has been duly elected as a List MP.

Sandra Kyle (Animal Justice) has 613 votes (1.7%) and Juan Coffey has 323 votes (0.9%).

The total number of votes cast was 36,337.

The party votes were distributed as follows:

National 11,177 (30.8%)
Labour 9,576 (26.4%)
New Zealand First 5,626 (15.5%)
ACT 4,532 (12.5%)
Greens 3,421 (9.4%)
Opportunity 1,579 (4.3%)
Legalise Cannabis 102 (0.3%)

Continued page 2



Barbara Kuriger, Taranaki King Country.



David MacLeod, New Plymouth



Carl Bates, Whanganui

Final General Election result still hangs in the balance subject to the count of special votes

The right-leaning Coalition of the National, ACT and New Zealand First Parties look to have the numbers to likely form the next government with 65 seats (provisionally) in hand. The left-leaning bloc of Labour, Greens and Te Pati Maori have just 55 seats.

Questions however continue to be raised about the overhang of seats which may dictate who gets to govern the country.

With the special votes (almost 400,000 including 96,947 overseas votes) in the process of being counted, it seems unlikely that such a large deficit can be overcome even if a couple of the Coalition Government results are eventually overturned.

There has been some speculation that the Opportunity Party, led by Qiulae Wong, could bolster the Coalition's total, but it would seem that their seven seats (based on 5.9% of the total vote) will not be needed. However, the prime minister Chris Luxon has had talks with Ms Wong, as has Labour leader's Chris Hipkins.

Anyway, the official result will be announced on Friday November 27, which will definitely decide the issue.

The result of the General Election is unusual in some ways. Despite a swing of -8.87% against National (compared with 2023 General Election) and a swing to +2.45% to Labour (a +11.32 turnaround), National gains six seats to attain 42, while Labour, with more votes loses two to end up with 36 seats.

Of National's 42 seats, several can be described as overhung, which means more were gained that expected by the percentage vote attained by National This situation which has stimulated some controversy, it has to be conceded.

Provisionally, Labour's 710,330 votes (29.36%) was the greatest total with National's 706,680 (29.21%) second.

Yet the National-led coalition is helped by a swing of +2.28% to ACT (264,121 votes) and +3.7% to New Zealand First (236,630 votes).

The Greens have become the third most popular party with 13.3% (321,902 votes) (16 seats) a swing of +1.7%. Chloe Swarbrick, a co-leader with Marama Davidson featured in the most preferred prime minister poll results, often being placed ahead of Deputy Prime Minister David Seymour. Ironically, being targeted by the National Party's campaign probably uplifted her profile.

With 264,121 votes (10.92%) ACT ended up in fourth place and New Zealand First with 236,630 votes (9.78%) fifth.

Billed as a possible kingmaker the Opportunities Party 144,298 votes (5.96%) allowed them to attain the threshold to gain List seats. (Back in the 2023 General Election they gained just 2.2% of the nationwide vote to end up with no parliamentary representation). They finished in sixth place, based on percentage of votes.

The leaders of Te Pati Maori, Debbie Ngarewa-Packer and Rawiri Waititi, requested that their voters only give their candidates a vote, but to cast their party vote for Labour. With just 0.57% (13,845 votes) of the vote they ended up with five seats by overhang.

Incidentally most voters (67.3%) in the nation cast their vote on November 7, although many (61.4%) cast theirs early. The total votes cast numbered 2,418,565.

As a consequence of overhung seats to National and Te Pati Maori the new parliament will have eleven extra MPs than the expected 120 to total a record 131.

See editorial page 2

EDITORIAL

Election result

With the special votes yet to be counted the country remains on tenterhooks as to who will govern New Zealand as we all await the counting of 400,000 special votes, 100,000 of which are overseas votes.

Currently the right bloc – National, Act and New Zealand First - has 67 seats and the left bloc – Labour, Greens and Te Pati Maori - 55 seats, something of an incongruity as the percentage of votes dividing the two is wafer thin. The discrepancy in the left and right bloc seats is attributed to an overhang. While National attracted 29% of the preferred party vote and ended up with 42 seats in Parliament, Labour with 29.4% of the party vote has just 36 seats. Te Pati Maori also has 4 seats which don't reflects its party vote.

The Opportunity Party has 7 seats.

How the special votes fall and what happens in the marginal seats and the party vote may alter the allocation of seats.

Of the marginal seats Wairarapa's Mike Butterick's National candidate leads Labour's Kieran McAnulty by 139 votes. Specials historically tend to favour the left so if the seat flips to McAnulty the right bloc will lose one seat and reduce the right bloc to 66 and the number of seats in Parliament to 130.

Hamilton East is another marginal seat in which National's Ryan leads Labour's Georgie Dansey by 39 votes. If the seat goes to Labour on specials this would reduce the right bloc to 65 seats in a 129 seat Parliament. Hamilton East is traditionally an indicator seat for the country meaning it reflects how the country has votes and thus dictates the country.

Another marginal seat is Mt Roskill in which Labour's Michael Wood leads National's Carlos Cheung by 262 votes.

In Wellington Bays Labour's Craig Renney leads Julie Anne Genter (from the Green Party and already on the party list she is assured of a place in Parliament) by 140 votes. If the seat flips however it will not change the left bloc's tally of seats.

Currently Te Pati Maori have 5 seats, 4 of which contribute to the overhang but on the left bloc. If the Green Party take the seat then one of the left's overhangs will reduce by 1.

To further complicate things the Opportunity Party, depending on specials could acquire another seat.

NZ First meanwhile could lose a seat.

We will have to wait till November 27 to see how the specials affect the election night tally.

If there is no clear winner the negotiations start as to which combination of parties will run the country.

NZ First has decided the result for most of the elections since MMP was introduced in 1996.

Now firmly aligned to the right bloc, NZ First may yet again determine who governs. The Opportunity Party with its 7 newly minted MPs, depending on the final result after special votes are counted, may have displaced NZ First's traditional role as kingmaker.

Meanwhile 35 new MPs have congregated for their initiation in Wellington joining the incumbents to make up New Zealand's largest Parliament ever at 131 seats boosted by the strategic voting on both sides.

The debate over whether the election result is distorting representation in Parliament is gathering momentum. At the time of going to print, 46 leading constitutional experts lead by Andrew Geddis, Lara Greaves and Max Rashbrooke pointing to the 11 seat overhang have signed an open letter calling for MMP reform following this year's election result.

RNZ quotes Andrew Geddis who cites the '78 and '81 elections that delivered National Governments despite Labour winning more votes. That mismatch was "one of the reasons we actually shifted to MMP." He says the overhang could well deliver the same outcome where you have three parties that have a majority of the seats in the House, but receive fewer votes across the country than the other four parties in Parliament. "Not really the way democracy is supposed to work, and its definitely not the way MMP was supposed to work."

It does raise the question If there is no clear path to governing the country should there be another election to decide.

One thing is certain it's certainly been an election like no other.

Local MPs returned comfortably to Parliament

Continued from page 1

Barbara Kuriger (National) has been returned as MP for the Taranaki King Country electorate, having gained 13,540 votes (36.4%). This gave her a healthy majority of 12,031 over the Labour Party candidate David Pattermore, who had 7,408 votes (20.1%). "I am thrilled to begin my fifth term of Parliament. Members of Parliament are going to need to be much more collaborative in our work in order to deliver the results for the public in New Zealand. I am looking forward to a government being formed so we can move forward."

In third place was Les Smith (New Zealand First) who secured 3,961 votes (10.8%).

Phil McCabe (Greens) had 2,969 votes (8%) and Ivana Jovicic (ACT) 2,600 votes (7.1%)

The party votes were as follows:

National 13,540 (36.4%)
Labour 6,925 (18.6%)
ACT 6,527 (17.6%)
New Zealand First 5,116 (13.8%)
Greens 2,969 (8%)
Opportunity 1,559 (4.2%)
Te Pati Maori 107 (0.3%).

Total party votes numbered 37,167.

Keep in mind that these tentative voting numbers will be altered somewhat when the General Election result is officially announced on Friday November 2026.

Please refer to page 8 and 9 for our usual Letters to the Editor

ADELPHOS

Post traumatic stress syndrome

There's no denying that there is a lot going on in the big wide world at the moment. Some things are within our control when they happen, but others are not. Trauma of the physical, emotional and spiritual kind fit into the 'can't always control it' category. It's the specific issue of PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) that I want to touch on in this article, including some of the spiritual aspects.

Recent May, 2026 research trauma findings involving the world-recognised Dunedin Study (University of Otago School of Medicine) found that 18% of patients who suffered severe physical trauma experienced PTSD. Older children and adolescents and those involved in vehicle-related crashes had a higher risk of developing PTSD. Other studies estimate that about 10% of New Zealanders who experience severe trauma will also experience PTSD. It usually results from a single traumatic event, such as a car crash, living through a natural disaster, sudden and unexpected loss or a violent assault. It is different from long term or chronic trauma which can result in complex PTSD. But how does someone know they have PTSD?

Some of the common symptoms include flashbacks, nightmares and remembering the event vividly. Also, ongoing fear, anger, emotional numbness or guilt. Feeling jumpy, irritable, easily startled or on edge can be other signs of PTSD. Sometimes it can be avoidance of places, people or thoughts related to the event. These need to last more than a month to be considered PTSD. But some people can also experience spiritual struggles. These may include questioning the existence of a higher power, feeling abandoned by God or a sudden loss of faith. Or feeling the trauma has been a punishment from God or an inability to forgive self or others may also lead to ongoing spiritual wounds. Many people around the world have experienced PTSD, but it is common that people feel it has only happened to them. Such feelings may leave someone feeling isolated, alone and sometimes wondering if they are 'going crazy.'

What can be done for PTSD? Well, thankfully, a lot more than after the First World War when it was labelled as shell shock. Firstly, talk to your GP and tell them what has happened and how it is affecting you. You can ask for a specialist referral and may be eligible for a free service. There are some good counsellors and psychologists in Taranaki who have specialised training in trauma informed practice, who can provide support and guidance for someone with PTSD. Secondly, seek help from someone you trust spiritually: it might be a friend or minister. Or use resources such as books, TED talks or podcasts. If you have a relationship with God, talk to Him. He is the great comforter and knows even the number of hairs on your head (even if you have none). Lastly, if you have a loved one who has PTSD symptoms, perhaps choose a time to discuss it with them. Be patient and listen without trying to solve their problems.

Arohanui

Adelphos, M.A. Counselling, University of Auckland, M.A. Biblical Studies, M.Div.

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An amazing and successful year at OHS



Eva Langton gave an inspirational speech. She recently won a bronze medal at the Edinburgh Commonwealth Games.

Board of Trustees Chairperson Andy Whitehead lauded Opunake High School's amazing and successful year, during his address at the prizegiving event on Thursday November 5.

He paid tribute to his fellow members of the Board of Trustees, "who work tirelessly behind the scenes to deliver outstanding outcomes for the students."

Andy mentioned the 2026 building upgrades and alluded to a vision to have covered sports facilities and a makeover of the science block in the near future.

He thanked past Board student representative Ashley Symons for, "Your outstanding contribution," as well as welcoming Leah Martins the new student representative.

Andy was delighted with the "overwhelmingly successful ERO report" reflecting, "Excellence in our delivery of curriculum, leadership governance, student progress engagement and belonging."

Gratitude was acknowledged, "To our amazing staff, our outstanding senior leadership team and our amazing principal Andrea, thank you."

The "outstanding" musical Urinetown got a special mention, which "Highlighted the dedication and commitment of Ms Papageorgiou and her team."

Near the end of his speech Andy said, "To everyone who receives an award today I extend congratulations for the well-deserved recognition for the hard work you have put in."

The keynote speech was delivered by Eva Langton who recently won a bronze medal (for 3 by 3 basketball) at the Commonwealth Games. Eva's speech was inspirational in that, while she had many doubts and was told (too often) that she was not good enough, she kept trying until her ability was recognised at a high level, including being awarded a scholarship to play basketball at a college in the United States.

Currently, Eva is playing in her fifth season in the New Zealand league. "It's the first season since playing in this league where I really feel like I'm making an impact."

Finally, she had three messages she wanted her listeners to remember:

"Firstly, your perspective has power." She adds, "You get to choose how you respond." She warns about the danger of getting negative mindset. Forget why me and instead embrace, "Why not me?"

"Secondly, fall in love with the process." She explains, "Don't become so focused on where you want to go that you forget to enjoy where you are. Work hard and stack days. You can't always control the result, but you can control the probability of success through being process focused."

"Finally, don't be afraid to fail. Be brave and courageous enough to make mistakes. Failure isn't the end of an opportunity, it's an opportunity to learn, grow and come back better."

After an introduction in Te Reo Maori Principal Andrea Hooper-Carr continued her inspirational speech as follows: 'They say that love and opportunity go hand in hand. When you love someone you offer them opportunities. Then the staff, BOT, especially the legend that is Andy Whitehead, Home and School, coaches, managers, the army of supporters and, of course, absolutely love our students. As we do our best to offer you the most amazing opportunities in this little kura on the Coast."

Andrea mentioned the huge number of such opportunities that the students have been blessed with, such as the Lysaght Watt Ronald Hugh Morrieson Literary Awards, Science Fair and school farm agricultural upskilling, she continued, to highlight, "Quality teaching and learning in a school that gained a national commendation award in excellence in education and was number one in Aotearoa in several subjects for achievement at Level 3." She encouraged students not to fear failure. "And if it all goes wrong, remember failure is a superpower. All failure is just feedback."



Another inspirational speech by Principal Andrea Hooper-Carr.



Gerald Torres, Proxime Accessit (Runner Up Dux) and Dux Jaz Kemsley.

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An Amazing and successful year at OHS

Finally, Andrea recited her Ode to Year 13 students 2026, who were soon to leave the school. All students were mentioned by name in connection with some of their strengths and attributes.

She concluded, "So today we fare you all with aroha. And may you continue to light up the world like the stars you are. No reira tena koutou, tena koutou, tena koutou katoa.

The event was positively visited by soulful waiatas, foot-thumping band numbers, and a rousing haka .

There were many highly-deserving award winners, academic, sporting and cultural, but special mention must be made of Jaz Kemsley who won the McNeil Adams Cup and OHS medal for being acclaimed as the Dux of Opunake High School.

Gerald Torres was awarded the OHS Medal and Award as Proxime Accessit (Runner Up Dux).

A delicious supper concluded the well-organised celebrations as students



From left are Shyan Kahui and Sabrina Sta Maria (Award for Runner up, Year 12 students), Ashley Symons (Sue Spindler Cup & Award as Top Year 12 student), and Tessa Cook (Taonga Te Maunga Tuu - Recognising High Levels of Academic Achievement for Senior Maori Students).

Paul Veric announced as new CEO of WITT

Paul Veric, former Principal of New Plymouth Boys' High School, has been appointed the new Chief Executive for the Western Institute of Technology of Taranaki (WITT), as the institute continues its path towards becoming a stand-alone crown entity once more.

Mr Veric is well known in the local community through his leadership at NPBHS as well as former CEO of Swimming New Zealand, Interim CEO of Taranaki Rugby Football Union, and a Board Member of the Taranaki District Health Board.

He was selected for his new role from 50 applicants from all over New Zealand and abroad.

Mr Veric told the Taranaki Daily News that he has; "always admired WITT from afar and especially when I was at New Plymouth Boys. It was always an institution that appealed to me to one day and hopefully I'd get the chance to work at it."



Paul Veric.

Mr Veric says he has big hopes for WITT, disclosing that he is highly competitive and wants WITT to not only survive, but thrive and become a nationally recognized leader in vocational education.

His immediate priority would be listening to staff, students, schools, and industry rather than introducing sweeping changes. "You can't make immediate changes if you haven't understood the organisation."

Taranaki proud – local links important

WITT Board chair Patrick Landrigan said in a statement; "The field of applicants was incredibly strong, which made the selection process very challenging."

Continued on page 6.

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Sue Goble

Administrator & Funeral Assistant

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Sue loves and is dedicated to her new role which still enables her to support and care for her community as a valued member of staff.

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OPUNAKE COPS

A few summer reminders

As summer draws closer, we'd like to share a few reminders to help everyone enjoy a safe and happy holiday season.

We're lucky here in Ōpunake to have such a fantastic beach right on our doorstep. Having vehicle access to the beach is something many communities don't have, and it's a privilege we all play a part in protecting.

With that in mind, it's important to remember that the beach is legally considered a road, which means road rules still apply. Drivers need to comply with their licence conditions, ensure their vehicles are roadworthy, and be fit to drive.

The beach is a place for everyone to enjoy. We ask that people drive with care and consideration for other beach users.

Dangerous or careless behaviour puts people at risk and may result in enforcement action including fines, licence suspensions, or vehicle impoundment.

As always, we encourage people to make good decisions before getting behind the wheel. Whether it's alcohol, drugs, medication, fatigue, or stress, if you're impaired, don't drive.

We are continuing to detect a disappointing number of people driving above the legal alcohol limit and will remain focused on this issue throughout our area.

Driving while intoxicated puts not only the driver at risk, but also passengers,



BRAD COAD

family members, friends, and other road users. If you're planning to drink, organise a sober driver, arrange a ride home, or plan somewhere safe to stay.

In addition to alcohol testing, Chris and I will also be carrying out roadside drug testing using mobile drug screening devices.

These tests help identify drivers who have recently used qualifying drugs that may impair their ability to drive safely and are part of our ongoing efforts to keep everyone safe on our roads.

We know this is a time of year when lots of people are out and about making the most of the warmer weather and spending time with friends and family, but we ask parents and caregivers to ensure their young people are acting responsibly, know where they are, and understand what they're doing.

Recently, we've dealt with a few incidents involving young people roaming around town, causing disruption and damage. Most of our young people are making good choices, and we'd like to see that continue over the holiday period.

A quick conversation and clear expectations can go a long way in helping everyone enjoy a trouble-free summer.

We look forward to seeing you all out and about enjoying the warmer weather.

Brad Coad
Ōpunake Police

Accident closes road

There was a callout to an accident on Wiremu Road on Friday November 6 at 11:20am.

A truck travelling south veered off the road near Newell Road and the Oeo River bridge. The driver who sustained serious injuries as taken by ambulance to hospital and the road was closed for a period.

The accident happened in driving rain and misty conditions with poor visibility. No other vehicle was involved.





There was driving rain and misty conditions on the morning that a one-vehicle accident on Wiremu Road.

Paul Veric announced as CEO of WITT

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"Paul is a proud Taranaki local and will bring to the role his deep roots in our local community, and his immense pride and passion for our region," Mr Landrigan added. "We are really excited about the prospect of Paul leading and guiding the institute into the future. Paul has proven leadership ability in local Taranaki education."

In 2026 WITT has close to 3000 local learners enrolled across all its various course offerings, with a local staff count of close to 200.

"As a Board we were looking for a CEO who was a local first - someone who knows and understands our region and knows what an important part of our region and community that WITT plays," Mr Landrigan says.

He added that Veric's appointment, "sends a clear indication of the direction that we want the institute to head, with a focus on our local community, and driving growth in our student numbers here at WITT from our feeder high schools all around Taranaki."

"The government's recent announcement of the nine new vocational educational disciplines for high school students presents strong opportunities for the local education sector to unite to provide excellent education and development outcomes for our learners and provide industry with the skilled workers they need."

Current Operations Lead Executive Nicola Conley will assume the role of Acting CEO until Veric starts on 1 February 2027.

Mr Veric was introduced to WITT staff on the campus on November 3. In a short kōrero, he thanked staff for their perseverance in stabilising the organisation as it faced some challenging periods of change. He acknowledged their commitment to learners by, "keeping them at the forefront of your minds."

WITT has been part of the national entity NZIST (Te Pūkenga) since the beginning of 2022, with leadership based out of Wellington. From 1 January 2027 Witt re-emerges as a stand-alone crown entity, under local governance and leadership.



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Committee gets new computer and extension of collection ban

The Western Taranaki Rahui Steering Committee (Pou whakahaere whanaungatanga) received some high-powered support last week when Powerco presented them with a laptop and cable.

In 2022, Taranaki Iwi had imposed a rahui on collecting shellfish along the Taranaki coast from Paritutu to Opunake following concerns about out-of-town visitors denuding local seafood stocks.

The Rahui was later given Ministry of Primary Industries backing with a 186A Order temporarily banning the taking of shellfish on the West Taranaki coast.

Powerco community engagement specialist Salevi Tiatia turned up to the committee's meeting on November 10 to make the presentation.



From left. Phillip Barrett, Ngahina Capper, Tiatia Salevi (Powerco), Tapiukura Young, Mahara Okeroa, Cindy Dobbin, Murray Dobbin.

Salevi is no stranger to Opunake, having been based here as a police officer in 1992-4. He says presenting computers to community groups like the Rahui Committee is part of their community funding programme.

The presentation came two days after the committee heard that the 186A Order had been extended for a further two years.

Committee co-ordinator Ngahina Capper said over 80 per cent of submissions to the Minister of Primary Industries had favoured extending the order

The next stage would be to work towards a mātaitai reserve being put in place. A mātaitai reserve is distinct from a marine reserve and there are a number of these operating in different parts of the country. It would still allow taking seafood under certain circumstances, allowing where, when and how much can be taken.

Ngahina says the committee would be looking for input from the community, Iwi, Hapu and fishing organisations, both commercial and recreational. They aim to get their application signed off on January 31 and lodged on February 1.

"It takes about six months to get a response," he says. "We are hoping to get a good response so we can reopen our coast in a more sustainable way per our mātaitai reserve."

He said they are hoping this will happen around August. Gathering of seafood would not be as it was before the rahui, but would probably be based around seasonal takes.

He said since the committee was set up they had held about 30 meetings "right across the coast," and visiting every marae .

"We've been gathering information on how we can best protect our coast and harvest in a sustainable manner, so we can have sustainable reefs into the future and gather more kai."

Committee member Murray Dobbin says the laptop and cable will be very useful..

"It will really help out with monitoring. We need the digital equipment."

The next issue of the Opunake & Coastal News comes out on December 3 2026.

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Well that's the 2026 general election done - or is it?



Barbara Kuriger MP
Taranaki - King Country

Before I talk about the election in general, I would like to thank those who once again placed their support in me for a fifth term in Parliament. It has been my pleasure representing Taranaki-King Country electorate, and I will continue to do so, as it is an honour and a privilege.

I'm very much looking forward to representing my newest town. Taumarunui which has been added to the Taranaki-King Country electorate and brings the King Country back under the same representation.

I'm very proud of my large rural electorate. I enjoy engaging with my communities, helping individuals where I can, and taking the needs of our community to Parliament to see if I can get a resolution.

I'm looking forward to learning about our newest members and how they may wish to contribute to Parliament.



Barbara and Lewis Kuriger and a cute little dog.

This election was always going to be a tight race, but I don't think anyone thought we would be on a knife edge all election night, waiting for a result that we still don't have. Everything is going to centre around the special votes, and a seat or two either side could make a major difference.

MMP has really taken hold at this election, with seven parties now across the line. From here on in, it is important that members of Parliament start to look for similarities rather than battle over differences that sometimes aren't that big. The egos will need to go in the corner, and people need to undertake the art of collaboration and negotiation.

While each party has a different philosophy, there are many things we could work together on. Just one example would be a long-term infrastructure plan. I know it's been mentioned often lately, but it needs to happen. I know that you, the public, are very tired of the flip-flopping when there are changes of government. It's costing you, the taxpayer, a huge amount of money.

For now, it just feels like the old cheese ad on TV which says we wait and wait. Hopefully it won't be too long before a government is formed, and Parliament is back in action.

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First Gas Security Fund loans back new domestic gas supply

Resources Aotearoa welcomes the first loans from the Government's $200 million Gas Security Fund, showing New Zealand has gas projects ready to go and companies prepared to invest.

Chief Executive John Carnegie says the decision to provide Todd Energy with up to $23.5 million in time-limited loans for two Taranaki projects is a long-awaited boost to bring forward projects after several years of difficult investment conditions. Experienced operator Todd Energy will contribute around $10.1 million of its own capital.

"A new well at McKee and accessing deeper gas at McKee-Tariki could unlock up to 19.9 petajoules of additional gas reserves over five to nine years, with gas expected to be flowing by the end of 2027 if the projects are successful.

"These are practical opportunities using existing fields to get more gas into the market quickly. They also show what can happen when public funding helps unlock private investment."

Carnegie says production from existing fields can help address the near-term supply challenge, while further exploration and investment in storage will be important for rebuilding reserves and supporting the energy system over the longer term.

"We need to keep bringing more domestic gas to market, and we need the ability to store it so it is available when demand is high.

There are investment opportunities - with 17 proposals so far - across that whole chain, from producing more from existing fields through to exploration and storage."

He says the Gas Security Fund also strengthens the case for further work on the wider investment environment facing petroleum projects.

"Petroleum projects require large amounts of capital committed over many years. Investors will look at the quality of the opportunities in the ground and the durability of the rules they are investing under.

"Progress on regulatory and sovereign risk would strengthen it further and help attract the private capital needed to develop more of these opportunities

"We've spent a long time talking about how to get more gas into the system.

We now have projects being backed and a strong pipeline of further proposals. Let's get on with it."

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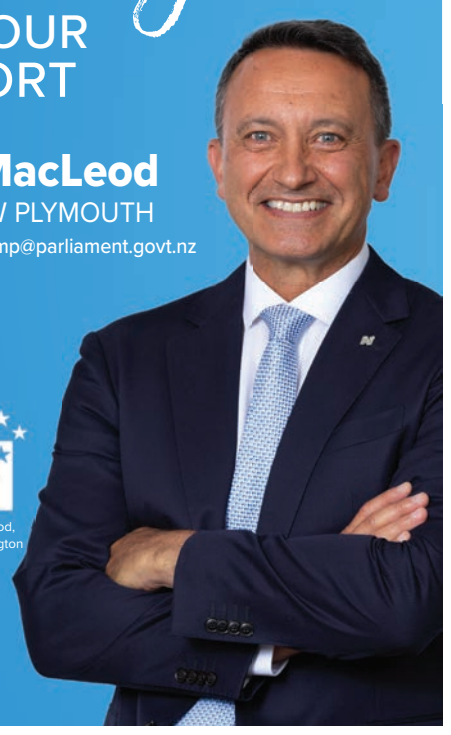

Authorised by David MacLeod, Parliament Buildings, Wellington

Letters to the Editor

Shocking state of Waihi Road Hawera.

This is an open letter to Mayor Nixon and staff plus councillors.

Mayor Nixon when did you last speak with NZTA and how often have you spoken with them about the appalling state of Waihi Road? It appears to many residents of this town that neither you nor any councillor has any respect for the rate payers. We have seen the deterioration of our roads for months. All we need is a day's rain and Waihi Road will become impassable due to the depth and size of the holes. Whilst the Mayor may arrive for work from the southwest there are councillors who travel Waihi Road. Do we hear any comment from them? No. So to the Mayor and all councillors who we democratically elected to carry out a job of keeping this town in a fit, clean state and travel the roads without swerving to avoid huge potholes. Do your jobs.

Keith Aldridge
Hawera

Mayor Phil Nixon replies.
I completely agree with Mr Aldridge that the condition of Waihi Road is unacceptable. However, it is important to clarify that this section of road is part of State Highway 3. State highways are not managed or maintained by South Taranaki District Council. Responsibility for this road sits with the New Zealand Transport Agency, NZTA.
That does not mean I am prepared to simply leave the issue with them.
I was also concerned and frustrated by the condition of this section of highway, and in August I raised the matter directly with NZTA's Director of Regional Relationships for the Central North Island.
I have followed up with the Director several times since then, most recently two weeks ago. I have been advised that NZTA is working through options for repairing this section of the highway.
I will continue to raise the issue with NZTA because I agree that the current condition of the road is not good enough and our community deserves better.
I would also encourage anyone concerned about the condition of Waihi Road, or any other state highway, to report it directly to NZTA on 0800 444 449. The more information NZTA receives directly from road users about these issues, the better.

Thanks

We would love to give a huge thank you to you and your great team for the amazing coverage you gave again this year to our Taranaki Fringe Garden Festival.
Thanks

Anne Clough
Festival Organiser
Taranaki Fringe Garden Festival

More abortion talk

It's great that Concerned Teenager wants to share their thoughts on abortion, however, the words they use are inflammatory and incorrect and sounding like a pro-life pamphlet with truly horrifying words and images.

A foetus is not a baby. An embryo becomes a foetus at nine weeks. It is starting to form organs but is not functional outside the body. It is about the size of a grape. It is not a baby until it is born.

When talking about abortion, there are people who think women's rights should be protected, while others prioritize the rights of the unborn. Some would permit an abortion if the mother's life or health was endangered. Some think that personhood begins with birth or the first breath. Others would allow abortion in cases of rape or incest, again, others would not.

For a long time, feminists have fought and are still fighting for women's right to bodily autonomy. Bodily autonomy means women should have the right to choose if, when, and whom to marry, and if they want to have children, how many, when, and with whom.

There still are people in this world that think women belong in the kitchen, barefoot, and pregnant. True commitment to pro-life should not be only protection of a foetus but providing strong social safety nets, day care, healthcare, and economic support after a child is born. Pro-life doesn't support these ideas. Pro-life is also against contraception when the best way to prevent an abortion is to prevent an unwanted pregnancy.

Another way to prevent unwanted pregnancies would be to give baby boys a vasectomy. This could be reversed when they wish to start a family. Oh, too much? Don't like someone else making your choices for you?

If you don't like abortions, don't have one. But don't expect others are required to live by your rules.

Mary Moore
Manaia

A woman's right to choose

Woman are marvellous creatures, who possess the miraculous ability to grow human life, and with that also the ability to release/ terminate this process if they so choose. It has been this way since the beginning of human existence, it is nothing new. Nothing is black and white, and what's right for someone isn't right for another. Women can make choices which are uniquely right for them, their lives and the pregnancies they carry - sometimes which, the right choice is termination (gasp).

Women deserve to be able to make these decisions without feeling shame or being judged. What one woman does with her body and her life is her business. We cannot know what it is like to be in someone else's shoes.

Emily
Opunake

Neighbour issues

Ngā mihi for being a trusted option for this vulnerable female senior resident to have a voice. Can anyone in Opunake āwhina ki te tiaki i a ia - help protect her? Boundary crossing harassing intimidating male neighbour
KATI - STOP!!!
Nga mihi

Oakura Resident

Questions still need to be answered

What is happening behind closed doors (fences)?

Still no answers after some weeks ago activity was seen of workers drilling and digging holes in the old Dow Chemicals property, and still the New Plymouth residents have heard nothing, no current update.

This site if it was to be ever fit for human use could easily be used for an amazing adventure park. The big clear area of land in the New Plymouth area along with the unused old power station chimney and the high Paritutu Rock gives great access to high adventure activities. Activities are more exciting and possible now the high electricity pylons have been removed, opening up the area.

With some forward thinking this area could easily be timed into an incredible adventure park instead of an overall eyesore

Ian McAlpine
New Plymouth

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How to lighten the Christmas mental load



RICHARD HALL

Christmas is coming soon and it's supposed to be the relaxing part of the year.

Apparently, we finish work, put our feet up, enjoy quality time with family and peacefully reflect on what really matters.

There is just one small problem. Before reaching this state of festive tranquillity, somebody has to buy the presents, remember who wants what, organise the food, check who is coming, arrange travel, wrap everything, find the decorations and discover why half the Christmas lights worked perfectly well last January but have apparently died of natural causes in a cardboard box.

Then somebody asks, "Is there anything I can do to help?"

Recent research suggests there may be a psychological reason Christmas can become so exhausting, and it is not simply because we physically have more to do.

A study published in October in the journal Communications Psychology followed 293 UK parents for 35 days over the Christmas period. Rather than asking afterwards whether Christmas had been stressful, researchers repeatedly checked in with them throughout the festive season.

They were particularly interested in something psychologists call "cognitive labour," although most of us would probably recognise it better as the mental load.

This is the work that happens inside our heads: remembering, anticipating, planning, organising and monitoring everything that needs to happen.

Cooking Christmas dinner is physical work. Remembering that Uncle Dave is gluten-free, your daughter has become vegetarian, somebody needs picking up from the airport and there are only six dining chairs is cognitive labour.

And unlike washing the dishes, the mental load does not have a clear finishing point. It follows you around.

The researchers found that when parents experienced more mental load than usual, their stress tended to increase afterwards. But increased stress also predicted more mental load.

In other words, the two appeared to feed each other.

Anyone who has lain awake at 2am mentally organising Christmas will recognise this.

You start with one innocent thought: "I must remember to get batteries for that toy."

Five minutes later your brain has moved on to whether there is enough milk, whether you replied to your sister, what time the supermarket closes, whether the ham will fit in the fridge and why nobody has seen the good gravy boat since 2019.

By 2.30am you are effectively running a small logistics company from underneath a duvet.

The study also found that as stress and mental load increased, parents were more likely to suppress their emotions.

That means feeling stressed, irritated or exhausted internally while trying not to show it externally.

This is understandable. Most parents do not want to spend Christmas morning announcing, "Santa has been, but I'm currently operating at approximately three per cent battery."

So we smile, keep going and try to create the happy Christmas everyone expects.

The researchers also found that mothers reported carrying more of the cognitive labour than fathers, although there was no significant difference in reported stress or emotional suppression.

That does not mean every household works that way, but it does highlight an important difference between doing jobs and being responsible for remembering that the jobs need doing.

Imagine one partner says, "Just tell me what needs doing and I'll do it."

That sounds helpful, and usually it is well intended.

But notice who is still responsible for thinking.

If one person has to remember that Grandma needs a present, decide what to buy, remind somebody to buy it and then check that it has actually been bought, much of the mental work has remained with them.

Perhaps the more useful question is not, "What can I help you with?" but, "What can I take responsibility for?"

There is a considerable difference.

Taking responsibility might mean one person completely owns presents for part of the family. Another takes responsibility for food. Someone else organises travel or accommodation.

The important part is that responsibility includes the remembering, planning and following through, not simply completing the final task after being reminded three times.

Getting things out of our heads can also help. Write down everything that needs doing, divide it up, and physically tick each job off as it is completed. A shared list, calendar or piece of paper on the fridge may seem remarkably unsophisticated, but it means the brain no longer has to keep rehearsing the same tasks in case something gets forgotten.

There is also something strangely satisfying about putting a large tick beside "buy presents" and knowing your brain is allowed to let it go.

It is also worth asking whether everything we think "has" to happen at Christmas genuinely has to happen.

Will civilisation collapse if there are four vegetables instead of six?

Will the children require therapy in adulthood because the Christmas table did not have colour-coordinated napkins?

Probably not.

The study does have limitations. It involved fewer than 300 UK parents and was observational, so although the researchers could see mental load and stress changing together over time, they cannot prove that one directly caused the other.

But the central idea is worth considering as Christmas approaches.

Sometimes stress does not come simply from how much we are physically doing. It comes from how much we are trying not to forget.

And perhaps one of the nicest presents we can give someone this Christmas is not another scented candle, pair of socks or novelty mug.

It might simply be taking a few things completely off their mind.

Richard Hall, Ōpunakē
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Fossil CO2 emissions decrease

New research from the Global Carbon Project has found that carbon emissions from fossil fuels are projected to decrease by 0.4% in 2026 – driven by the expansion of solar and wind power and the Iran conflict.

The report found that emissions from oil are projected to decrease by 1.9% – likely a short-term response to the energy shock triggered by the Iran conflict.

The report also found that while solar, wind power, and electric vehicles are growing in use, clean energy growth is not yet fast enough for a durable decline in global fossil CO2 emissions. Emissions from Australia were down 1.2% in 2025, while NZ emissions dropped 1%.

Earth System Science Data (ESSD), Nature Climate Change

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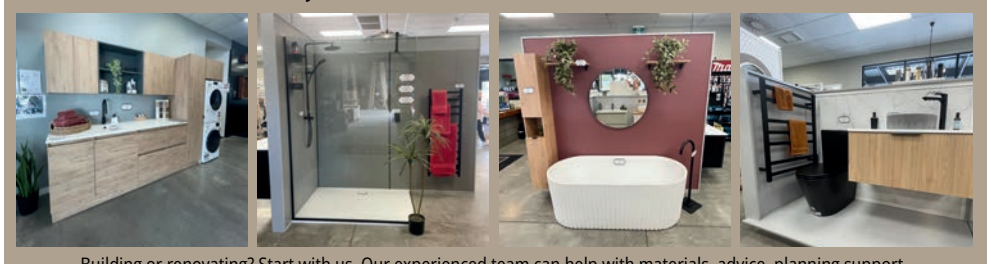

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Remembrance Day commemorated in Hawera



South Taranaki RSA vice president Fiona Hicks addresses the Remembrance Day gathering at Hawera.

In November 1919 Hawera mayor Edwin Dixon received a telegram from Prime minister Bill Massey advising him that at 11am on November 11 work should cease, and two minutes silence should be observed to mark a year since the signing of the Armistice ending what was then known as the Great War. The signal to observe the silence would be the sound of mill whistles and fire bells.

"A hundred and seven years later the sounds around us may be different but the purpose remains the same," South Taranaki District mayor Phil Nixon told a Remembrance Day ceremony held last week at the Memorial Arch in Hawera.

Around 80 people were at the ceremony. South Taranaki RSA vice-president Fiona Hicks welcomed everybody and read a message from South Taranaki RSA president Danny Garrett who was not able to be there.

A hundred thousand New Zealanders served in World War I, of which 18,000 lost their lives.

"Behind every one of those was a person. Some returned forever changed by their experiences. Others never returned home," the message read. "Generally all the First World War veterans are gone, and most of those who served in the Second World War are now gone. We can no longer rely on these veterans to share their stories."

The effects of war don't end when the fighting stops, and the South Taranaki RSA is committed to looking after veterans and their families, the message read.

"Keeping the spirit of comradeship alive is at the heart of what we do.

"Look at the conflicts today, and we are reminded that peace is something that can never be taken for granted."

Prayers were said by Pastor Paul Cornish, wreaths were laid and students from St Joseph's School, Hawera led everyone in the singing of the National Anthem. A message was read out by Whanganui MP Carl Bates who was not able to be there.

As the Last Post was played everybody was invited to face the New Zealand, Australian and British flags which were fluttering on what was a windy morning.



Students from St Josephs School, Hawera lead the singing of the national anthem.

Mapping missing links between genes and disease

Australian researchers have analysed more than five million immune cells to uncover thousands of genetic clues that could help explain why people develop diseases - and point to new ways to treat them. Across three studies, they identified nearly 1,500 genes potentially linked to 16 diseases, including cancers, autoimmune conditions and neurological disorders. They uncovered new ways that small differences in DNA can affect how cells work, including by switching genes on or off. The authors say their findings could help researchers identify new targets for drugs and eventually develop treatments better suited to individual patients.

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The portable writing desk — the Victorian laptop



Portable writing desks as seen at Cecelia's on Tasman in Opunake.



Writing desks — which we might aptly call Victorian laptops — came within economic reach of the increasingly literate Victorian middle class by the 1830s. Originally owned by wealthy men as early as the Tudor period, these small portable, lockable desks likely grew out of the medieval lectern and appear in literature as early as Shakespeare's The Comedy of Errors (Act IV, scene 1) where the merchant Antipholos of Ephesus directs a servant to fetch "ducats" from his desk for his release (Harris 10-11).

In Georgian, Regency, and Victorian times, women and men used writing desks — also called writing boxes, lap desks, writing slopes, dispatch boxes or cases, portable or traveling writing desks, or simply boxes or desks.

The Victorian age produced more writing desks than any other. Desk production increased for a combination of reasons including developments in the fancy goods trade, a rise in literacy, and the coming of the universal Penny Post in 1840, which, in turn, increased the number of post offices and decreased the cost of postage; a letter weighing up to ½ ounce could travel anywhere in the UK for only a penny.

Moreover, the Great Exhibition of 1851 showcased writing desks.

Portable writing desks were popular at a time when heating was inefficient, houses were not routinely electrified, and people made long visits to friends and family lasting weeks and months; desks typically fit into one's luggage, making them useful for travel. The portability and size of the writing desk facilitated comfortable writing and confidentiality since a writer could move it to a good light source, a warm fire, or a private study to write undisturbed.

As the desk transformed from a hand-crafted decorative arts furnishing for the wealthy to a mass-produced commodity affordable for the middle class, the writing desk lost what Walter Benjamin's "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" terms its "aura." The incorporation of heating and electrification into the Victorian home also led to the desk's discontinuation. Nonetheless, the writing desk paved the way for subsequent innovations in writing that have replaced it: the briefcase, the laptop, the Palm Pilot, the BlackBerry, and the iPhone.



Microplastics found in remote Amazon wildlife

Lowland tapirs and giant anteaters in the Amazon have microplastics in their blood, finds a new study of nearly 50 of these wild animals. Microplastics were found in the blood of all but four. Using satellite tracking to look at where the animals lived, researchers found that tapirs and anteaters living closer to humans and our waste facilities had higher amounts of microplastics in their blood. So reducing how much wildlife are exposed to human activity and our waste could help reduce microplastic contamination, the authors say. However, even the animals living in the world's most pristine wetland, 65 km from human settlements, had microplastics in their blood.



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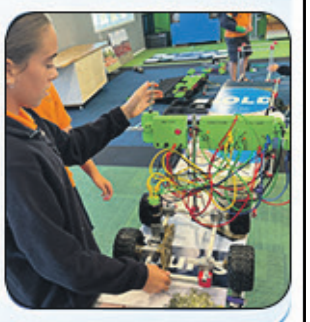

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St Martin's Church reopens in Pungarehu

Sunday November 15 was a special day, with opening celebrations and service, of St Martin's Catholic Church, which had been closed since October 2023 due to a leaking roof and the presence of asbestos in parts of the building. The eventual reopening was the result of considerable effort by many people, as well as the raising of a considerable amount money. The Toi Foundation, in particular, have been very generous.

A very special guest was Father Tom Lawn, who was the first priest to be ordained at St Martin's in May 1975. Last year he celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of his priesthood.

Special mention must be made of Denise Fleming who spearheaded the project as Funding Coordinator for the St Martins Subcommittee. Denise was aided by Andy Whitehead (Chairperson of the parish), Donna Mellow (treasurer), Mary-Lee Hall, Feilham Hall and Kevin Barrett.

Denise Fleming gave a comprehensive opening speech, which outlined the background to the memorable day. "We gather here, not simply to reopen a building, but to celebrate the reopening of a spiritual home – a place where generations have come to pray, reflect, celebrate baptisms, weddings ordinations, farewell loved ones and to encounter God's presence in the midst of everyday life."



Father Tom Lawn who conducted the service.

Also significant was the date of the celebrations because it was in November 316 AD that Saint Martin, the third Bishop of Tour was born in Savaria in the Diocese of Panninia (now part of Hungary). St Martin was reputed to have cast out demons, healed paraplegics and even returned to life people who had died.

Denise told of one famous story of the saint. "He came across a beggar, freezing from a lack of clothing in the middle of winter. Martin removed his cloak, cut it in half with his sword and presented one half of the garment to the beggar."

The relevance of this story Denise shared, "I can see the resemblance of Martin's story to the generosity of those who have given so much to preserving this church for whom St Martin is named, for generations to come."

With respect to the history of the church, it was Parish priest Fr Louis Menard who, in 1909, organised the building of St Martins de Tours (as it was then named), which duly opened for services in 1911. At that time immigrants from Ireland, Switzerland, Holland and Poland were greatly numbered amongst the congregation.

However the wooden structure was replaced in August 1973. "Parish Priest Fr Barney Keegan commissioned Fr David Orange to create a unique mural at the entrance to the church to greet parishioners as they arrived for Mass every Sunday," explains Denise.

Denise acknowledged many church families by name, who have served the parish with dedication, such as the Hall family and Barrett's – Kevin Barrett served as Chairperson of the Parish for 14 years ending just last year. "Throughout this project he was instrumental in meeting all the contractors and providing oversight for their work that has been carried out over the last year," explained Denise.

"We thank Bishop John and the Diocesan Management Advisory Commitment, who were willing to listen, to engage in discussion and to work with the community to achieve what we have set out to do and that is to continue to have a visible Catholic presence on State Highway 45."

Denise concluded, "May God bless St Martin's Church and may God bless all who enter here."

Father Tom conducted a poignant service which concluded in Holy Communion. "Think about our commitment to Lord Jesus and his love of justice and peace."



Denise Fleming in the middle of a interesting speech about St Martin's Church.



Denise is speaking early on in the reopening celebrations.

He spent time talking about the Parable of the Talents (Matthew 25, verses 14-30), which could be wisely upheld or otherwise. "You wicked and lazy servant," one man was chastised by his master. Father Tom made the connection that we are divinely given various talents such as generosity, faithfulness, compassion, healing, mercy and peace and we are expected to observe them wisely.

After the service Andy Whitehead presented Denise with a bouquet of flowers, with the words, "I thank you from the bottom of my heart for all you have done for St Martin's Church – your energy, your time and the emails I didn't always answer." The last item got a good laugh.

Finally, everyone enjoyed a wonderful supper.

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Homes for sale or rent now available in Okato for whanau

Built by Wano Building (headed by Wiremu Wano) in conjunction with the Profound Group (headed by Isiah Reynolds) are 22 brand new homes in Okato, the creation of the Te Katonga Nui housing development. They are located on Carthew Street, opposite Coastal Taranaki School. The land now occupied by these quality homes was once the site of the Okato Primary School, which was closed by then Minister of Education Sir Trevor Mallard.

The housing development has been the initiative of Taranaki Iwi Holdings LP in partnership with Nga Mahanga hapu who have created these housing opportunities for the whanau of Taranaki iwi and Nga Mahanga in an attractive setting close to all amenities, including Okato Skatepark, playground, shops and sporting clubs. Framed in the background is Taranaki Maunga in all its lofty splendour.

As an environmental sideline the adjacent Te Mangaone Stream, which had been neglected, has been upgraded as a wetland site, with pathways, sculptures and seating under the expert attention of Blac Landscape Architecture.

On offer are 16 stand alone one storey whanau homes with three or four bedrooms, as well as an addititional one and two bedroomed Kamatua units. All homes are fully fenced and landscaped with internal access garages.

The homes are all fully insulated with double glazing to enhance warmth when it is colder. The quality fitout includes 100% New Zealand wool carpets, roller blinds, silica safe stone benchtops, as well as a full high Panasonic appliance package (washing machine, dryers, fridge/freezer, high wall heat pump, oven and ceramic hob). Also established is energy efficient low flow plumbing, fixtures and a hot water heat pump.



Quality homes built to the highest standards.

Following a well-attended blessing on October 10 the first people have moved . The name Te Katonga Nui historically refers to a tidal flood which made its way inland in ancient times However, the current meaning upholds the flood of people returning home to their land. As one person commented, "Our land was taken, but is now restored – we are getting our whenua back because it is ours."

The pricing is relatively competitive and affordable because of the bulk buying power of Hapai, a collective property investment fund of 33 iwi. Commented one spokesperson, Daniel Harrison, "We were able to bring the costs down to a point where our smaller whanau builders were able to compete with larger corporate builders." He pointed out that about half of the contractors employed were local Maori businesses. Closely involved with the project is Ka Uruora a housing and finance trust, owned by an iwi collective, who can help whanau to purchase a home, including setting up mortgages, where required.

Last word goes to Tane Manukonga, the hapu resource consents representative:

"Whanau returning home would be enriched, not just housed. Te Katonga Nui was a place where we could find our identity."

We wish the new occupants of these homes all the very best as you settle into your new destination.



Another view of the superb housing development.

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Mangatoki WI

Wednesday November 4 saw 12 members head out for a day around some gardens. The morning started a bit damp so there were umbrellas and rain coats all around.

Our first call was at Beechwoods, Tariki, a beautiful and very big garden with lots of things to look at. The garden along the road side is very interesting, but the plantings along the stream sides have a lot of different plants to look at. If you like a beautiful lawn this garden has a very big one.

Second up was at the Norfolk Hall and here we saw a lot of beautiful art, pottery and photography. A few purchases were made here.

Onto the Inglewood Potters Shed where we saw some very colourful pottery. There was also some beautiful children's clothing for sale.

A very nice lunch was had at an eatery in the Merrilands Shopping Centre.

The afternoon saw us at two very different gardens on Branch Road. One was a small town garden so full of all sorts of plants and bushes and beautiful roses.



Mangatoki ladies enjoying the open gardens.

The other, which was right next door, went down a very long drive to a huge area with native bush, gardens, walkways, a cafe and some very interesting cars.

The next two gardens are new to the Festival. The first was a small town garden on Hine Street. Once again this was a lovely garden with some different plants and a showing of what you can do in a small area.

The final garden for our day out was on Barrett Street. What a very neat garden it was, which felt very relaxing and in parts nice and cool as the afternoon had become very hot. The espaliered trees made a lovely picture against a concrete block wall and an espaliered apple tree as a diversion in a part of a garden. The bigger trees in this garden helped with the plantings below them.

Our day was over for another month and what a lovely day we had enjoyed - great gardens, great food but more importantly great company.

Denise (secretary)

Grave concerns for dogs left in hot cars as strong El Niño summer approaches

SPCA is urging the public to spread the word on the dangers of leaving dogs inside cars, as temperatures are set to surge.

Every year, SPCA receives hundreds of calls relating to dogs that have been left inside hot cars. These calls make up approximately 10% of all welfare reports made across the summer months.

SPCA has long campaigned to raise awareness on this issue, as hundreds of New Zealanders continue to leave their canine companions sweltering in the heat – many assuming that cracking the windows, or parking in the shade, eliminates the risk.

With a particularly strong El Niño weather pattern confirmed for summer 2026/2027, temperatures in New Zealand are expected to be some of the hottest on record, and SPCA's concerns are heightened.

"We're in for an extremely hot and dry summer, and some dog owners simply aren't grasping the dangers," says Jason Blair, SPCA Inspectorate Regional Manager.

"Even if a car is parked in the shade and the windows are cracked, temperatures can shoot up within minutes.

"Dogs don't sweat like humans – they rely on panting to regulate their body temperature, which doesn't work when they're in a hot car. They can suffer quickly from heat stroke, and the mortality rate is between 50-64%. It's that serious."

"We hope that local businesses and shops especially will display these posters, as carparks are often a place where dogs are left waiting inside cars," Jason says.

"People think they're only going to be a few minutes, not realising that that could be enough for their dog to suffer from heatstroke, or worse."

In a recent case, SPCA Inspector Gawrav and his colleague attended a callout after two dogs had been spotted inside a parked campervan left in direct sunlight.

"We saw two adult dogs inside the van when we first arrived," says Gawrav. "One was locked in the driver's compartment without access to water. The other was in the back. Both dogs were panting and barking.

"We managed to get in touch with the owner on the phone, but at the same time a relative arrived. After explaining the dangers and urgency with them, they removed the dogs and gave them water.

"It was then that they showed us they also have three small puppies inside the van, who were being kept inside a small metal crate. The crate was covered in a thick blanket, and they had no access to water," Gawrav says.

"I'm so relieved we got them out when we did – the results could have been tragic."

After further discussions, the three puppies were taken into SPCA's care, where they were well looked after and eventually adopted.

"We can't be everywhere at once. We need dog owners to take responsibility, and put their pets' health and safety over convenience."

It is an offence under the Animal Welfare Act to leave a dog in a hot vehicle if they are showing signs of heat stress such as excessive panting, drooling, hyperventilation, and trying to seek shade.

Pet owners whose animals are found in this state can be issued with a $300 infringement.

If you find a dog left inside a hot car, call 0800 SPCA NZ or the Police.



Some dog owners simply aren't grasping the dangers.











Te Kaunihera ō Taranaki ki Te Tonga
South Taranaki District Council

Tuia Taitonga Southlink

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

Rates Payment Reminder

The due date for the second instalment of 2026/2027 rates is Wednesday 25 November 2026. Payments received after this date may incur a penalty.
For more information or to pay online, visit ***www.southtaranaki.com/rates***

New Manaia Walkway Bridge Open

The new Manaia Walkway footbridge over the Waiokura Stream is now complete, marking the successful delivery of an important community infrastructure project.

The bridge provides a safe, durable crossing for users of the popular Manaia Walkway, which passes through Manaia Domain and the adjoining golf course. Designed to serve the community for decades, it improves accessibility, safety and resilience while enhancing the overall walking experience for residents and visitors.

The project replaces the original bridge built by the Manaia Lions Club, which served the community well for many years before reaching the end of its service life.

Construction has been completed to a high standard, with only minor site reinstatement work remaining. The new structure is an attractive addition to the walkway and strengthens a key link within one of Manaia's most popular recreational assets.

Council's Community Development Advisor Fran Levings says the project had been a great success.

"We're extremely pleased with the result. It's rewarding to see the community already enjoying the renewed connection across the Waiokura Stream and the benefits it brings to the wider walkway network."

The project reflects Council's ongoing commitment to maintaining and improving community infrastructure that supports recreation, connectivity and wellbeing.

With the bridge now open, residents and visitors are encouraged to explore the walkway and enjoy the newest addition to Manaia's outdoor recreation network.



Temporary Water Restrictions as New Pātea Treatment Plant is commissioned

Pātea residents are being asked to conserve water while South Taranaki District Council begins commissioning the town's new $5.92 million water treatment plant.

Commissioning is the final stage of bringing the new plant into service. It involves testing the equipment and treatment processes to make sure everything is operating properly.

The testing and changeover require more water than usual. Temporary water restrictions are therefore needed to protect reservoir levels and ensure there is enough water to continue treating and supplying the town while commissioning takes place.

Council spokesperson Rahul Sharma says reaching the commissioning stage is an important milestone for Pātea.

"This plant represents a significant investment in Pātea's future. It will improve the quality, reliability and resilience of the town's drinking-water supply," says Mr Sharma.

"Commissioning is a necessary part of bringing the new plant into service, but it uses a considerable amount of water. We need the community's help to reduce demand while we complete this work."

While the restrictions are in place, residents are asked to avoid non-essential water use, including: watering lawns and gardens, washing vehicles, water blasting, filling baths if a short shower can be taken instead and leaving household taps running unnecessarily.

Residents should also fix leaks on their properties and report any leaks on the public water network to Council.

"Every bit of water saved will help us maintain the town's supply and complete the commissioning work safely," says Mr Sharma.

As the supply changes from the older treatment system to the new plant, some residents may notice periods when their tap water looks discoloured.

This can happen when the changeover disturbs material that has settled or built up inside the water pipes.

If water looks discoloured, residents should run a cold tap for a few minutes until it clears. If it does not clear, they should call Council on 0800 111 323 so localised flushing can be arranged.

Residents may also notice a slight chlorine taste or smell as the new treatment system is introduced.

Chlorine is used to help keep treated water safe after it leaves the treatment plant and travels through the town's pipes to people's taps. Residual chlorine provides continued protection within the water network and it is a requirement from the water regulator, Taumata Arowai.

"A slight chlorine taste or smell may be noticeable, particularly during the changeover," says Mr Sharma.

"This is the treatment working to keep the water safe as it travels through the network. We will continue to monitor the supply closely throughout commissioning."

Residents concerned about an unusual or strong taste or smell should contact Council on 0800 111 323.

The new plant includes biological filtration, ultraviolet disinfection, chlorine disinfection and improved monitoring systems. These upgrades are designed to improve treatment capacity and help provide Pātea with a safe, reliable and high-quality drinking-water supply.

Council will keep residents informed about the commissioning work and advise when the temporary restrictions can be lifted.

"Thank you to the Pātea community for conserving water and supporting us while we complete this important investment," says Mr Sharma.

Upcoming Meetings

Extraordinary Environment and Hearings Committee
Wednesday 2 December, 10am

Workshop: Alcohol Policy and Bylaw
Wednesday 2 December, 1.30pm

Ordinary Council
Wednesday 2 December, 4pm

Workshop: Long Term Plan Budget Outcomes
Tuesday 15 December, 8.30am

Extraordinary Environment and Hearings Committee
Wednesday 16 December, 10.30am

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

Arts IN THE PARK
KING EDWARD PARK | HĀWERA

On Saturday 5 December, Hāwera's picturesque King Edward Park will once again come alive with the ever-popular Arts in the Park.

Stalls with various homemade arts and crafts will be scattered throughout the park along with a variety of food trucks and entertainment.

If you are looking for that perfect Christmas gift or a new piece of art, then this is just the day for you. With everything from handmade jewellery to garden art, woodturning to knitting, there is sure to be something for everyone.

Artists, crafters and food vendors wanting to hold a stall on the day must register with the council Events Coordinator before 27 November.

Register your stall online at ***www.southtaranaki.com/artsinthepark*** or email ***events@stdc.govt.nz*** for more information.

Eltham RSA celebrates 100 years

On November 8, two centenaries were being celebrated at Eltham. It was 100 years, almost to the day that the Memorial gates at the Eltham School were dedicated on Armistice Day 1926, and it was also the centenary of the Eltham Returned and Services Association (RSA).

The Eltham RSA had celebrated their 80th anniversary in 2006, and although there were no minute books available going back that far, the centenary of the memorial gates seemed an appropriate time to mark the RSA's own centenary said Eltham RSA vice-president Karl Osten.

"There would have been a group of returned servicemen who would have put up the school gates," he said.

There was a brief ceremony at the gates, which has also been the regular venue for the ANZAC Day Civic ceremony. Eltham is unusual in that they have two ANZAC Day ceremonies. As well as the Civic ceremony, the Eltham RSA have their own ceremony at the Eltham Services Cemetery. Among those attending were RSA national president Tony Hill, Wellington-West Coast-Taranaki district president Tom Cormack and representatives of RSAs from around Taranaki.



Eltham RSA life members Patsy Lawson and Gavin Bennett laying a wreath at the Eltham School Memorial gates.

Eltham RSA president Llew Eynon welcomed everybody. South Taranaki District mayor Phil Nixon spoke about the dedication of the gates on Armistice Day 1926 by Agriculture minister and MP for Egmont O.J. Hawken. Originally the gates commemorated those who had served in World War I. Since then the names of those who served in World War II and more recent deployments have been added.

He congratulated the Eltham RSA on their centenary.

"The RSA have kept alive the stories and traditions that will never be forgotten. May the next generation understand that the freedoms they fought for carried a cost."

Eltham RSA padre Lindsay Maindonald voiced similar sentiments.

"The tranquility and sombreness we experience today belies the absolutely stark reality that these men and women went through to ensure the peace we have in Eltham and surrounding districts."

Llew led everyone in singing the national anthem, which was followed by a waiata. There was a promised surprise at 11.30am with a flyover.

After the ceremony there was lunch at the Eltham Fire station. Eltham RSA former president and life

Continued page 19.



Eltham ANZAC Day parade 1957. ***Photo. Eltham & Districts Historical Society.***



Scouts, Cubs, Boys' Brigade march through town on ANZAC Day 1960.
Photo Eltham & Districts Historical Society.

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Eltham RSA celebrates 100 years

Continued from page 18.

member Gavin Bennett had put together a display detailing the history of the New Zealand RSA from the time of its founding in April 1916 to look after wounded soldiers from Gallipoli, through receiving royal recognition in 1920, the first Poppy Day in 1922, and beyond, as well as memorabilia from conflicts which New Zealanders have served in. Displays such as these have become a regular part of ANZAC Day commemorations in Eltham.

Gavin has held most offices in the RSA, and although he now lives in Bell Block he still comes back to Eltham on ANZAC Day to act as parade marshal, a role he also filled at the centenary ceremony.

"The Eltham RSA has always been strong," says Gavin. "It was particularly strong after the war when camaraderie was to the fore. We always used to say in the military that we were brothers, but we had different mothers.

"We always had parades at 9 o'clock as most RSA members were cockies and had morning milking, so dawn parades were out of the question."

RSA national president Tony Hill has Taranaki connections of his own. Growing up in the 1960s and 1970s, "born and bred" in Waitara, his father was a Malaya veteran who had the Waitara Hotel.



RSA members stand to attention in front of the Memorial Gates. At the fore is RSA National President Tony Hill.



Mayor Phil Nixon speaking at the gates with Eltham RSA president Llew Eynon and padre Lindsay Maindonald.

After doing his schooling at New Plymouth Boys High School Tony joined the army, where he stayed for 30 years.

"It was absolutely fantastic, it was like a paid adventure being in the military," he said. "To me it was such an eye opener, being a kid from small town New Zealand, seeing places I'd never heard of."

In his speech after lunch he talked about the changing nature of the RSA. He said when he was younger there were still World War I veterans and "lots of World War II veterans."

"Now we have a younger cohort coming through," he said. These include those who have served in the likes of Timor Leste, Iraq and Afghanistan. The challenge facing RSAs around the country was how to adapt and stay relevant for these younger veterans. Tony says things aren't helped by there being different definitions of veteran.

"We in the RSA say that if you have served we consider you a veteran."

District president Tom Cormack also spoke about his Taranaki connections. His father, a career soldier had been born in New Plymouth and remained a lifelong supporter of Taranaki rugby, and Tom himself was living and working in New Plymouth in 1996 when Taranaki uplifted the Ranfurly Shield from Auckland.

He recalled last year being at the Manaia RSA 90th anniversary celebrations which had included riding in an army vehicle as part of that town's Christmas Parade. He said he was pleased to be back in Taranaki, this time helping the Eltham RSA to celebrate their centenary.

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Riverlea WI



Market Day Stall - Leonie West, President Lynette Gargan and Julie Gargan.



Festival Garden outing - Riverlea WI Members at Abstract Signs Garden Art Gallery, Stratford

Riverlea WI held their monthly meeting in Stratford on Wednesday November 4 whilst out and about during The Garden Festival. The members finalised the details for our 'card table competition' for International Day on Thursday November 12 in Kaponga. After the meeting members finished checking out the lovely Garden Art before heading to Portia's Place, a lovingly revamped old garden with 100-year-old 'bones'.

We had a picnic lunch under the trees along from King Edward Park before wandering through to the McCullough Rhododendron Dell and the Three Bridges Trail. Next, was Jackson's Garden, Cordellia St, which was packed with colourful plants, shrubs and vegies.

An enjoyable day out for some Riverlea WI Members.

Then on Saturday November 7 (Voting Day!) Riverlea WI had a successful stall at the Riverlea Markets. Members donated and sold loads of plants, posies, produce, baking and knicknacks.

Leonie West, Secretary

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Georgina Beyer honoured with lawn in Pukekura Park



The Georgina Beyer Lawn plaque.

A lawn in Pukekura Park has been officially named in memory of Georgina Beyer.

The Georgina Beyer Lawn, formerly known as the Boatshed Lawn was celebrated at a public event on Sunday 15 November, marking the first recognition of Beyer in a public space in Taranaki.

Born in 1957, of Te Āti Awa, Ngāti Mutunga, Ngāti Raukawa and Ngāti Porou descent, she spent part of her early childhood with her maternal grandparents in Lepperton, Taranaki.

She went on to make history as the world's first openly transgender mayor, elected in Carterton in 1995, and the world's first openly transgender Member of Parliament in 1999.

A passionate advocate for equality, human rights and Māori communities, Beyer became an internationally recognised figure whose courage, humour and determination helped pave the way for generations to come.

Pride Taranaki spokesperson Chris Herlihy says the naming is a fitting tribute to a woman who challenged conventions and changed lives.

"Georgina was an extraordinary person who broke down barriers that many people thought could never be broken. She was unapologetically herself, she stood up for what she believed in, and she made an enormous difference to the lives of so many people, particularly within the rainbow community.

"To have a place in the heart of New Plymouth named in her honour is incredibly special. It's a permanent reminder of her legacy, but it's also a statement about the importance of visibility, acceptance and belonging."

The project began in May 2024, when Pride Taranaki made a submission to New Plymouth District Council's Long-Term Plan proposing the renaming of the Boatshed Lawn.

The site already holds significance for the rainbow community, with an existing HIV memorial and memorial tree. New Zealand's first recorded HIV-related death occurred in New Plymouth on 21 April 1984.

Council approved the renaming in May 2024, with the new name to be determined by Pride Taranaki in consultation with the council and Ngāti Te Whiti.

The project has involved extensive engagement with Ngāti Te Whiti, Puketapu Hapū, Georgina's whānau, trustees of her estate, friends and associates, as well as representatives of Pukekura Park and the Friends of Pukekura Park.

Herlihy says the process has been a rewarding one, bringing together people who shared a desire to see Beyer's contribution recognised.

"This has been a real journey of connection and learning. Every conversation has given us a deeper appreciation of Georgina, her whakapapa, her achievements and what she meant to so many different people.

"We're incredibly grateful to her whānau and hapū, the trustees of her estate, and everyone who has supported this project. It's taken a lot of people working together to make this happen, and we're proud to see it come to fruition."

Beyer, who died in March 2023, was a Member of the New Zealand Order of Merit and a Justice of the Peace. During her political career, she championed prostitution law reform, civil unions, anti-discrimination legislation and Māori rights.

While her political achievements earned her international recognition, she was equally admired for her straight-talking nature, quick wit and remarkable personal courage.

Herlihy says the new lawn will provide a lasting opportunity to share her story with future generations.

"Public spaces tell stories about who we are and who we choose to remember. For the rainbow community, seeing someone like Georgina recognised in such a prominent and much-loved place sends a powerful message.

"At Pride Taranaki, our purpose is to connect our community, and this is a wonderful example of what that can look like. We hope people will visit the lawn, learn about Georgina and feel inspired by the difference one person can make."



Tim Barnett Long time Parlimentary friend, speaking.

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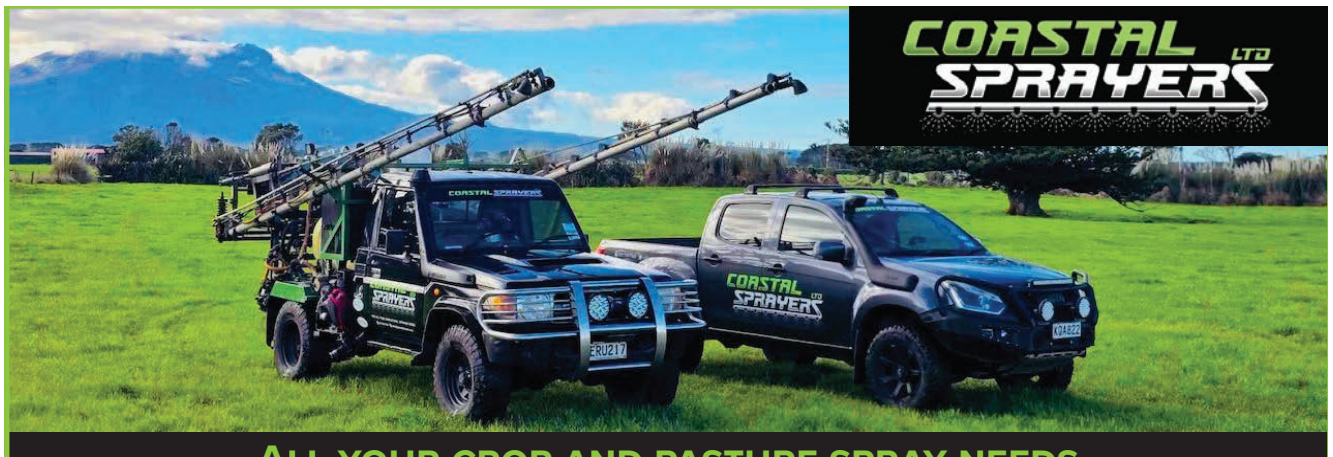

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The Mountain That Left

This short story was awarded first place in the Lysaght Watt Ronald Hugh Morrieson Literary Awards - Secondary School section.

The author Lucy Crowley attends Te Paepae o Aotea. Lucy also was awarded second and third place.

Additionally, she was placed second in the Poetry section.

The first thing I learnt about South Taranaki was that it had a name.

I heard it long before I ever saw it.

The words slipped through a chain-link fence somewhere on the far side of the world, passed between frightened mouths like contraband.

South Taranaki. The name sounded wet. Green.

Impossible.

At that point I had not seen grass in weeks. Only concrete. Only wire. Only floodlights bleaching colour from the night.

Back then, before the mountain, before Ataahua, before I understood that loneliness can survive every border ever drawn around it, I lived beneath a sky the colour of rusted steel.

I will not name that place.

Its name does not matter anymore. What matters is the sound the front door made.

Not when it opened.

When it shattered.

Men in black uniforms filled the house before dawn.

My mother's fingers crushed my wrist.

My father's voice vanished beneath shouting.

Then language left us.

Everything became noise.

Boots.

Orders.

Sirens.

Metal.

The taste of blood spread across my tongue. I was sixteen years old.

Old enough to recognise fear, young enough to keep blaming myself for it.

Years later I would learn that guilt behaves like mould, give it darkness and it grows.

The detention centre smelled of bleach, sweat and stagnant air. Fluorescent lights hummed day and night. Nobody slept. Nobody spoke much either.

Fear developed its own language.

A twitching hand, shoulders shrinking inward. Plastic spoons scraping plastic trays. The silent arithmetic of survival.

At night I whispered for my parents.

"Mami?"

"Papi?"

Only the fluorescent lights answered.

Sometimes a woman cried three beds away, sometimes somebody prayed in a language I did not understand. Sometimes a fist hammered a wall until the guards arrived.

The sounds travelled through the building like trapped birds. Every morning the lights hummed. Every morning we woke, then one afternoon I heard it.

South Taranaki.

The name moved through the room like a match struck in darkness.

People spoke of rain travelling sideways across paddocks.

Of black volcanic soil.

Of cows outnumbering people.

Of a mountain standing alone at the edge of the world.

I carried the name with me because I had nothing else left to carry.

Months later, after interviews, forms and decisions made by strangers, I arrived. The bus travelled south beneath a sky so large it made me uncomfortable.

The land seemed unfinished.

Paddocks stretched towards the horizon.

Shelter belts cut the countryside into giant green squares.

Silage bales sat in fields like pale cocoons.

The further south we travelled, the emptier everything became.

Then I saw the mountain.

It rose so suddenly from the plain that it looked unreal, not placed upon the earth.

Growing from it, snow caught the sunlight along the summit.

Cloud wrapped around its shoulders.

It stood alone.

The mountain looked less like a landmark than a survivor.

I could not stop staring.

The closer we travelled, the more it seemed to watch. Road signs passed. Farm gates passed. Hills slid by the bus windows.

The mountain remained. Unmoving. Certain.

As if it had been waiting.

The whānau who took me in lived at the end of a muddy gravel road.

The house smelled of woodsmoke, damp wool and fresh bread. After months of concrete and fluorescent light, it felt like stepping into somebody else's memory.

That was where I met Ataahua.

The thing I noticed was her smile.

Then her habit.

Whenever she was thinking, her thumbnail tapped against her mug.

Tap.

Tap.

Tap.

By the end of the first week the sound was as familiar as a birdsong. One evening we sat beneath the veranda watching fog slide across the paddocks. The cows became shadows, their breath remained visible.

"What do they call you?" she asked.

"Elena."

Tap.

Tap.

Tap.

She smiled.

"Light."

I laughed. The sound arrived cracked around the edges.

"You've got the wrong person."

Ataahua considered this.

Then shrugged.

"Maybe."

South Taranaki wasn't beautiful.

It was stranger. More honest. The wind smelled of salt, silage and mud.

Driftwood lay scattered across beaches, white as bone. Dead possums swung from farm fences, rainwater filled tractor ruts until they resembled wounds carved into the paddocks. The Whareroa plant exhaled steam over the town. Milk tankers rolled through drizzle before sunrise, everything felt wild. Unfinished. As though creation and decay had agreed to share the same landscape, I loved it. Not because it was welcoming.

Because it wasn't.

The coast looked as though it had survived a war. Black cliffs crumbled into a violent sea, tangles of kelp rotted along the shoreline. Storms hurled driftwood the size of tree trunks onto the sand. Rusting machinery crouched in paddocks beneath blankets of moss. Fence posts leaned at impossible angles, creeks carved ugly scars through fields. Even the beauty felt rough around the edges, nothing here pretended to be perfect.

Somehow that made me trust it.

Sometimes Ataahua and I rode our bikes to the coast after school. The Tasman Sea thrashed itself against the rocks below. Gannets drifted overhead, the air tasted of salt. We found sheep skeletons tangled in flax. Pufferfish washed ashore, bloated and silver. A dead stingray lay half buried in black sand, its skin shining like wet leather. Neither of us looked away.

South Taranaki taught you that life and decay were neighbours.

Grass grew beside bones. Calves were born while storms uprooted trees. Fields glittered green above ancient volcanic stone. Everywhere I looked something was ending. Everywhere I looked something else was beginning.

School was harder.

My accent entered rooms before I did. Teachers slowed their sentences after hearing my surname. Students asked where I was from, then asked where I was really from.

One lunchtime a boy knocked my exercise book into a puddle. Pages burst apart across the asphalt.

White birds drowning in brown water.

"Go back where you came from."

His friends laughed.

For a moment every version of myself returned.

Sixteen.

Fourteen.

Twelve.

Small.

Afraid.

Temporary.

Then another shadow stepped beside me.

Tap.

Tap.

Tap.

Ataahua's thumbnail struck her keep-cup. She didn't yell. She didn't swear. She simply looked at him, the silence stretched.

Eventually the boy looked away first.

He left without another word.

That afternoon we walked home beneath the mountain. Its summit floated above the clouds.

Bright.

Remote.

Watching.

"People used to say things about me too," Ataahua said.

"Why?"

She laughed.

"You've met people before, right?"

I smiled despite myself.

She kicked a stone into the ditch.

"Because I'm Māori. Because my nana teaches Te Reo. Because some people panic whenever somebody



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The Mountain That Left

belongs somewhere they don't."

We walked a little further.

Then she pointed towards the mountain.

"You know the story?"

I shook my head.

"Taranaki once lived beside the other mountains. Then he fought. Then he left."

I looked up at the summit.

"He ended up alone."

"Yep."

I thought about that for a while.

Then I asked,

"Do you think he misses home?"

Ataahua glanced towards the peak.

"I think some things carry home with them."

For weeks afterwards, I kept thinking about that.

Carrying home.

The idea followed me through the district. Into classrooms. Onto muddy roads. Across paddocks silvered by rain.

I started noticing things I had missed before.

The macrocarpas leaning inland from decades of coastal wind. The way fence posts wore coats of lichen the colour of old bones. The way creeks carried branches after storms, transporting fragments of one place into another. Everything seemed to be carrying something.

One Saturday, Ataahua's Koro took us eel fishing beside a stream hidden behind blackberry and flax.

The track wound through wet grass that soaked our shoes. Mud sucked at our boots. The stream itself looked black beneath the overhanging trees. Not dirty. Bottomless. The water moved without appearing to move.

Koro pointed towards the current.

"They remember the way."

"The eels?" I asked.

He nodded.

"Thousands of kilometres."

I stared at the water.

"They leave."

"Yep."

"And then come back?"

He smiled.

"Most do."

The answer sat inside me long after the conversation ended.

Above us, tūī bounced through the branches. Their calls sounded mechanical. Broken. Beautiful.

The stream smelled of earth and rotting leaves. Something pale protruded from the bank nearby. For a moment I thought it was driftwood.

Then I realised it was the weathered skull of a sheep exposed by floodwater.

An empty eye socket stared towards the current.

South Taranaki was full of things like that.

Beauty beside decay.

Life beside loss.

Nothing staying buried forever.

The longer I lived there, the more I understood why the landscape felt familiar. Not because it resembled where I came from.

Because it contained contradictions.

A coastline being broken apart by waves while new land grew from old volcanic stone. Fields feeding thousands while storms flattened fences overnight. A mountain carrying stories of departure and belonging at the same time.

One afternoon I stopped on the roadside while walking home alone. Rain clouds drifted across the lower slopes of Taranaki Maunga. The summit appeared. Disappeared. Returned.

Again.

Again.

Again.

Like somebody breathing beneath a blanket. For a moment I imagined the mountain standing there before roads. Before farms. Before borders.

Before people argued over who belonged where.

The thought made me feel smaller. Strangely, it also made me feel less alone.

The wind carried the smell of rain across the paddocks. Somewhere in the distance, a cow bellowed. A hawk circled above a field. Everything around me kept moving. The clouds. The grass. The birds. The wind.

Even the mountain, hidden beneath passing weather, seemed to change without ever leaving.

I watched until the summit emerged once more.

Then I kept walking.

Spring arrived. Grass erupted from every hillside. Calves stumbled through paddocks on awkward legs. Yellow flowers crowded roadside drains. Starlings swarmed above pasture in clouds of black wings. From a distance they looked like smoke. Then cloth, then water. Changing shape faster than the eye could follow.

Ataahua and I spent evenings searching for my parents online. The laptop whined across the kitchen table. Rain rattled the windows.

Tap.

Tap.

Tap.

Forms. Lists. Records. Dead ends.

Again.

And again.

And again.

Neither of us said what we were thinking. Hope survives evidence.

That is its most dangerous quality.

One evening we climbed a hill overlooking the Tasman Sea. The sunset poured copper across the water. For a long time neither of us spoke.

Then Ataahua asked,

"Do you still wait for them?"

"Yes."

Tap.

Tap.

Tap.

The mug rested between her hands.

I stared at the mountain darkening against the sky.

"I think I'm forgetting their voices."

The words hurt more outside my mouth than inside it. Ataahua was quiet for a long time.

Then she said,

"Maybe voices aren't the important part."

The wind lifted her hair.

"Then what is?"

She looked towards the mountain.

"The part that stays."

That night a storm rolled inland. Rain hammered the roof. Lightning flickered across the paddocks. Unable to sleep, I stood beneath the veranda. The world smelled of wet earth and salt.

For a moment lightning illuminated the mountain.

White.

Scarred.

Glorious.

Then darkness swallowed it again. I kept watching. Eventually it emerged once more. Not healed. Not gentle. Not whole. Just standing. Still standing.

I thought about detention centres. About accents. About names people stumble over. About languages treated like warnings. About girls who blame themselves for surviving. The rain soaked through my clothes. Cold mud pressed between my toes. Living earth. Real earth.

For the first time, it felt like mine.

Another flash of lightning crossed the horizon. The summit appeared again.

A lonely mountain at the edge of the world.

A mountain that left.

A mountain that remained.

Far out beyond the storm, somewhere between memory and hope, my parents were either alive or they were not.

I did not know.

I still do not.

The mountain stood in silence.

So did I.

And for the first time, neither of us looked away.

by Lucy Crowley

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Efficiency separates top dairy farmers as costs keep climbing

New analysis from DairyNZ highlights the growing importance of efficiency and cost control in maintaining profitability, with a widening gap between New Zealand's highest and lowest performing dairy farms.

DairyNZ's latest Economic Survey shows average operating profit for owner-operator farms increased 70% during the 2024-25 season to $4,849/ha, driven by a $10.02/kg milksolids payout and increased production. The result marks the strongest return in a decade, giving many farmers an opportunity to reduce debt and rebuild equity.

However, DairyNZ Head of Economics and Insights Mark Storey says the average result doesn't tell the whole story.

"The survey shows that while most farmers benefited from favourable conditions, the highest-performing farms were substantially more profitable than others. Across the sector, average return on equity reached a record 20.9%, the highest level in a decade," Mark says.

"Farms in the top 25% for operating profit earned around $4,886/ha more than farms in the bottom 25%. Importantly this wasn't because they received a better milk price. What set them apart was efficiency: the ability to produce more milksolids from their inputs while keeping a close eye on costs."



Mark Storey.

The survey found farms in the top quartile produced 76% more milksolids/ha, 29% more milksolids/cow, and 26% lower operating expenses/kg milksolids respectively.

"As milk prices increase, those performance differences become more pronounced. High-performing farms can get more benefit from strong market conditions when they already have efficient systems and good cost management practices in place," Mark says.

The findings come as farmers continue to face increasing overhead costs.

While some variable costs such as interest and freight eased during the 2024-25 season, other expenses continued to rise. Feed costs increased 15% year-on-year, while rates, insurance and administration costs all reached their highest levels in a decade.

"Fixed costs are becoming a growing challenge for many farm businesses," Mark says.

"Unlike production-related expenses, costs such as rates, insurance and administration don't contribute directly to milksolids production and are difficult to reduce when farm income falls. Over time, they can put profitability under pressure, particularly in lower payout seasons."

DairyNZ says the strong financial performance achieved over recent seasons has given farmers an opportunity to strengthen their businesses and prepare for tougher conditions.

Looking ahead to the 2026-27 season, DairyNZ is cautiously positive, although rising farm operating expenses amid ongoing volatility in global input markets could put further pressure on farm margins.

"Recent seasons have provided farmers with a valuable opportunity to build resilience," Mark says.

"Using stronger years to reduce debt, build financial buffers and invest in productivity can help put farms in a stronger position for future challenges and maintain profitability in lower payout seasons."



Additional domestic student places for veterinary science at Massey University

"An increase in the number of funded domestic places in Massey University's Bachelor of Veterinary Science programme from 125 to 140 per year from 2027 onwards will help address demand for veterinarians in the future," says Minister for Tertiary Education Penny Simmonds.

Minister Simmonds made the announcement during her visit to the university's Palmerston North campus on Friday, 9 October.

"The veterinary workforce plays a key role in our biosecurity, animal welfare, food safety, and export industry. Increasing the number of places for veterinary science will help strengthen New Zealand's domestic veterinarian workforce pipeline.

"This Government is focused on ensuring more New Zealanders have the opportunity to train for the skilled jobs our country needs, right here at home."

"Currently, Massey University is the only institution in New Zealand that trains veterinarians through its Bachelor of Veterinary Science. The additional places will enable the university to enrol up to 15 additional domestic learners each year from next year."

The university is currently accredited to enrol up to a total of 175 domestic and international students in the programme each year. With the increase to 140 domestic places from next year, the university will need to reduce its international student intake from 50 to 35.

To support this transition, the Government will provide Massey University with a $6 million grant, phased across five years under section 556 of the Education and Training Act 2020.

The grant will offset the temporary loss of international fee revenue associated with increasing domestic enrolments until the university can return to higher international capacity.

Funding for the additional places and the grant will be reprioritised from within existing delivery funding in Vote Tertiary Education, with final investment decisions made by the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC).



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ITC decision disappoints

The United States International Trade Commission (ITC) has issued a split decision (3-3) on whether lamb imports have caused serious injury to the US lamb industry. Despite this, the process will still move to a remedy stage where the commissioners will make recommendations to the US Administration.

"While this outcome is disappointing, it is positive that half of the commissioners agreed with our case that New Zealand lamb is not causing harm to the US industry," says Beef + Lamb New Zealand Chair Kate Acland.

"This strengthens our case for the next phase and supports our view that the evidence collected during the investigation does not justify imposing import restrictions.

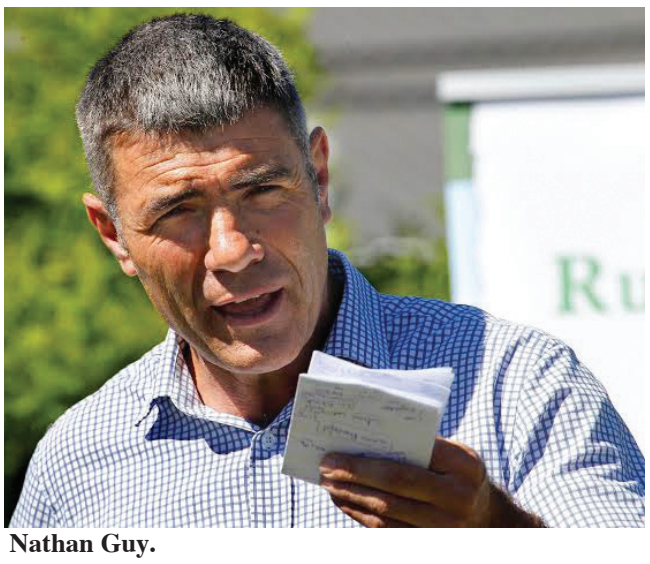
"The evenly divided decision by the Commissioners reflects the efforts of our industry throughout the process so far and we will continue to advocate strongly on behalf of farmers and exporters.

"There are still more steps in the process for us to make our case and the final outcome is not expected until early 2027."

Nathan Guy, Independent Chair of the Meat Industry Association, says the focus now turns to the next stage of the process, in which the commissioners will determine what remedy, if any, to recommend.



Kate Acland. *Image Toia Bailey. Image Central.*



Nathan Guy.

"The views of American businesses will remain an important part of the New Zealand case.

"At the hearings in October, the Commission heard directly from American businesses about the importance of imported lamb and how it serves different customer needs.

"They also highlighted the strong prices currently being received for American lamb and the potential consequences for US customers and restaurants if imports were restricted.

"Lamb imports enable year-round supply and if these are restricted, US customers, and ultimately consumers, will not be able to access lamb. This would lead to a drop in demand over time and stifle the US industry's growth, rather than support it.

"New Zealand has been a long-term, stable trading partner of the US, with consistent export volumes over the investigation period.

"MIA and B+LNZ have been working hard on this case, and we will continue to partner with the New Zealand Government and our US customers to make sure decision-makers have the full picture."

Acland says New Zealand farmers want to see a fair and evidence-based outcome.

"New Zealand farmers have faced the same challenges as the US domestic industry, such as declining sheep numbers, and have responded through sustained investment in genetics, research and farm management. These are pressures on the whole sector, not the result of New Zealand lamb imports.

"Our sector needs to have ongoing access to valuable export markets to help ensure strong returns, and we will continue to back the sector's interests."

Guy says there is room for both industries to grow in the important US market.

"New Zealand's complementary supply to the US market ensures stability for the local sector, and there is an opportunity for both industries to work together to grow demand for lamb in the US."

Members of the ITC that found injury will present their recommendation on any remedies to the President early in the New Year. The members who did not find injury will also provide their findings to the President to consider at the same time.

The President will make the final decision on whether to provide relief to the US industry and what kind of relief to provide. A final decision is not expected until March 2027.

What makes a good farmer-vet relationship tick?



Personal connection is most important for good relationships between dairy farmers and veterinary advisors, finds a study from a New Zealand vet company. Seven pairs of male dairy farmers and female veterinary advisors—who said they had good relationships—were interviewed separately. Most farmers said the gender of their advisor didn't matter, while some thought female vets were more considerate. Farmers valued trust most highly, whereas vets needed to be sure their knowledge was providing value to the farmer. The authors noted that emotional intelligence and self-awareness were key to these relationships, allowing open and honest conversations.

New Zealand Veterinary Journal

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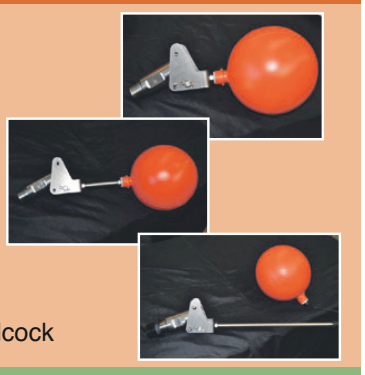

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Fed Farmers welcome backtrack on teaching agriculture and horticulture

A proposal to remove Agriculture and Horticultural Science as a standalone subject in Year 11 and blend the topics into general science teaching, has been ditched by the Government.

"Minister Stanford has listened to clear feedback from farmers and rural communities - and she's acted on it," Federated Farmers education spokesperson Greg Anderson says.



Greg Anderson.

A Government back-track means students will be able to study agriculture and horticultural science from Year 11 right through to Year 13, Greg Anderson says.

"Federated Farmers, the Horticulture and Agriculture Teachers Association and rural high schools made a clear and compelling case to the Minister to save this subject.

"Teaching agricultural and horticultural sciences at Year 11 is of critical importance. That's when students begin choosing subjects that shape their future career pathways.

"It plays such an important role in opening students' eyes to the huge opportunities that exist in our primary sector on farms, in labs, or in supporting industries."

While it was always the Government's intention to include agriculture and horticulture components under general science teaching, Anderson says it wasn't good enough.

"It's fantastic the Government has recognised the importance of these subjects and will allow them to continue as standalone course options," he says.

"Curriculum reviews are important to keep content fresh and relevant, but removing agricultural and horticultural science would have been a significant misstep.

"For students interested in focusing on agriculture and horticulture content, it would have got lost among all the other topics if it had been combined into general science."

Anderson says Stanford has proven herself to be a Minister who is willing to listen to feedback and make changes when they're clearly needed.

"It takes a lot of guts to admit you've got something wrong, but what really matters is how you go about putting it right," he says.

"We are incredibly grateful the Minister has directed her officials to revisit this decision. It will ensure there's a clear pathway for teens keen to work in our primary sector.

"Students will now be able to study agricultural and horticultural sciences from Year 11, and through to Year 13, to get a real practical feel for the engine room of our economy.

"From 2029, senior students will also be able to move into the new industry-led Food and Fibre subject currently being developed for Years 12 and 13.

"Today's decision from the Minister is the right one and will give the primary sector a fair shot at recruiting talented students to power our export-led economy.

"It will also help create a clear pipeline of students from our secondary schools, through our universities, and out into the workplace."

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NZ dairy production reaches record high



Surpassing two billion kilograms of milksolids is a significant milestone for New Zealand dairy.

The New Zealand dairy sector set a record in the 2025/26 season, producing more than two billion kilograms of milksolids for the first time.

The latest New Zealand Dairy Statistics 2025/26 report, produced by DairyNZ and Livestock Improvement Corporation (LIC), shows the sector produced 2.02 billion kilograms of milksolids, up 4.5% on the previous season, from 21.8 billion litres of milk, up 3.5%.

The record also reflects a significant long-term improvement in milk composition.

Milksolids increased from 8.48% of milk in 2000/01 to 9.27% in 2025/26, making every litre more valuable to transport and process. At today's milk volume, the 2000/01 solids percentage would have produced about 171 million fewer kilograms of milksolids.

Meanwhile, the number of herds fell by 102 to 10,268, while overall cow numbers increased by just 1% to 4.72 million.

DairyNZ Chief Executive Campbell Parker says the results reflect farmers' continued focus on improving on-farm performance and producing high-quality milk.

"Surpassing two billion kilograms of milksolids is a significant milestone for New Zealand dairy. It reflects the skill, investment and day-to-day management of farmers, alongside long-term gains in genetics, reproduction, animal health and farm systems," says Campbell.

"The figures show productivity and milk quality moving in the right direction. This matters for the competitiveness and resilience of farm businesses and the wider dairy sector."

The report also shows strong farmer uptake of herd improvement tools. In 2025/26, 83.3% of cows and 78.7% of herds were herd tested – the highest proportions since the early 2000s.

Herd-tested cows achieved record results for milk volume, milkfat and protein yields, and milkfat and protein percentages. The national somatic cell count also fell to a record low of 149,000 cells/mL, indicating continued improvements in udder health and milk quality.

Artificial breeding reached its highest level in three decades, with 84.8% of cows mated through artificial breeding in 2025/26.

LIC Chief Executive David Chin says the results show farmers are recognising the value of data and superior genetics in understanding and improving herd performance.

"Record participation in herd testing and artificial breeding gives farmers more information and more options to accelerate genetic gain," says David.

"The lift in reproductive performance is particularly encouraging. The six-week in-calf rate reached a record 70.2% across seasonal and split-calving herds, up from 63.5% in 2008. Strong fertility supports herd efficiency, while better-quality information helps farmers breed cows that are well suited to New Zealand's pasture-based farming systems."The dairy sector produced 21.76 billion litres of milk containing 2.024 billion kilograms of milksolids, the first time the sector has passed the 2 billion mark.

Milksolids increased from 8.48% of milk in 2000/01 to 9.27% in 2025/26, making every litre more valuable and more efficient to transport and process.

Average milk production per cow was 428 kg of milksolids, up from last year's record 414 kg.

Cow numbers increased slightly by 1% to 4.72 million, while herd numbers fell to 10,268. The average herd size is 460 cows.

A total of 3.94 million cows were herd tested (83.3% of cows and 78.7% of herds), its highest level since the early 2000s.

Herd test production reached record levels, including 4,999 litres and 452 kgMS per cow.

Artificial breeding reached a 30-year high, with 4 million cows (84.8%) mated through AB and a record 1.41 inseminations per cow.

Milk quality improved, with average somatic cell count falling to a record low of 149,000 cells/mL.

Reproductive performance strengthened, with the 6-week in-calf rate reaching a record 70.2%.

Sixty percent of cows are Holstein-Friesian/Jersey Crossbreed.

The average dairy payout was $10.44/kg MS, the second highest on record, although only slightly above the five-year average after adjusting for inflation.



LIC Chief Executive David Chin.





Daryl Lilley made big contribution to Taranaki rugby

One of the heroes of Taranaki's historic 1996 Ranfurly Shield win against Auckland passed away on November 9, aged 52.

Daryl Lilley who played mainly as a fullback was first selected for Taranaki in 1993, making 41 appearances between then and 1996. He made 20 appearances for Canterbury between 1997-9, before returning to Taranaki.

He made a further 43 appearances for Taranaki from 2000-3. His tally of 779 points for Taranaki is second only to that of Kieran Crowley.



Daryl Lilley.

Taranaki was not fancied to lift the Ranfurly Shield when they faced off against Auckland at Eden Park on August 24 1996. Auckland was at the time the dominant force in New Zealand provincial rugby, but

Taranaki came away with a 42-39 win, giving them their first Ranfurly Shield win since the halcyon days of the 1960s. Seventeen of Taranaki's points came from the boot of Daryl Lilley.

He played 29 matches for the Crusaders between 1997 and 1999, which included their first ever Super-12 championship winning season in 1998. The Crusaders made it to the final against the Blues after dispatching the Sharks 36-32 in the semifinal, with Lilley scoring one of their tries. He later played 26 matches for the Hurricanes between 2000 and 2002.

His overseas rugby career included a season at the Newcastle Falcons as injury cover for Jonny Wilkinson. He then played two seasons for Rugby Vladana in Italy.

Daryl Lilley was born in New Plymouth, educated at New Plymouth Boys' High School and played for New Plymouth Old Boys. He has coached at the New Plymouth Old Boys, Southern and Tukapa Clubs, and was Director of Rugby at New Plymouth Boys' High School.

He lived in Australia for a time and helped the Melbourne club the Harlequins Colts team win a premiership in 2024. He also coached the club's first-grade team to consecutive grand final wins in 2025 and 2026. He returned to New Zealand in August.

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Uhlenberg claims first Taranaki Superstock title at Fireworks Spectacular



Stratford Superstock driver Blair Uhlenberg.

A large crowd, strong fields of competitors and an impressive fireworks display made for a successful Hinton Contracting Fireworks Spectacular at Five Star Liquor Stratford Speedway on Saturday night.

The evening's headline performance came from Stratford Superstock driver Blair Uhlenberg, who claimed his first Repco Taranaki Superstock Championship after thirteen years of competing in the class.

Having previously finished on the podium several times without securing the title, Uhlenberg finally reached the top step following a dramatic championship run-off against former winner Hamish Booker.

Fourteen Superstocks contested the championship, with Uhlenberg showing plenty of speed throughout the three heats and using his bumper effectively to work his way through the field.

A crucial last-lap pass on Matt Picard in the final heat saw Uhlenberg finish tied on points with Booker, forcing a four-lap run-off to determine the champion.

Uhlenberg made his move early, spinning Booker on the opening lap before racing away to claim the victory and his long-awaited title.

Booker finished second overall, while defending champion Wayne Moss, who produced an impressive drive to win the opening heat, completed the podium in third.

The King of the Mountain Stockcar Championship also provided plenty of entertainment, with a near-full field battling for honours.

Heat victories went to Chris Shingleton, Ryan Nolly and Palmerston North contracted driver Caleb Coxhead, but it was Coxhead's consistency that ultimately secured the championship.

Combining his final heat victory with eighth and fifth-place finishes in the earlier races, Coxhead accumulated enough points to claim the title.

Fellow Palmerston North driver Tyler Walker looked to be in contention for the championship when he worked his way to the front of the field in the final heat, only to be sent into the wall by Nic Smith.

Despite the setback, Walker continued racing and collected enough points to finish second overall.

Third place required another dramatic four-lap run-off after Karl Giddy, Phil Gargan and Brodie James finished tied on points.

The run-off featured plenty of action, with James spinning Gargan, and Giddy being pushed up the wall. Giddy managed to survive the battle and secure the final podium position.

Sixteen Streetstocks contested the Best Pairs competition, with drivers combining their points across three heats to determine the winners.

Matt Hill and Brett Barron proved to be the strongest combination, claiming the title ahead of Dylan Smith and Ron Washer, while Jay Jay Dunn and Blair Ladd finished third.

The support classes also provided some entertaining racing, with Elliot Londt claiming one Adult Ministock victory and Boston Joblin winning the remaining two races.

In the Minisprints, Regan Ogle took two heat victories, while Karl Uhlenberg claimed the other win.

The evening concluded with a spectacular fireworks display, providing a fitting finish to a successful night of racing at Stratford Speedway.

The event, originally scheduled for the previous weekend before being postponed due to unfavourable weather forecasts, attracted a strong crowd and delivered plenty of action across all classes.

Jarrod MacBeth

NEXT EVENT
HERITAGE AND WINGS
SATURDAY NOVEMBER 21ST

A GREAT NIGHT OUT FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY!
GATES OPEN 4:30PM - RACING STARTS 6:30PM!
ADMISSION PRICES @ GATE
Adult $25
Child $10 (14 & Under)
Family $50 (2 Adults & up to 4 Children)
Student $20 (Must Present ID)
Pensioner $20 (Must Present ID)
Under 5's FREE
TICKETS CHEAPER ONLINE @ FLICKET
Find more info on our website or follow us on Facebook.
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Show Weekend Set to Shine in Stratford



Stratford is hosting the Royal Event in Beef.

The Stratford A & P Show returns this weekend, promising two days of entertainment, competition and community spirit as Taranaki's premier agricultural and pastoral event brings town and country together once again.

Livestock remains at the heart of the show, this year Stratford is hosting the Royal Event in Beef and the North Island title for the Holstein Friesian, with competitors travelling from throughout New Zealand to exhibit dairy and beef cattle, horses, pigs, sheep and sheepdogs. Young handlers can enter on the day, Sunday, for the pet calf and lamb competitions and share the spotlight with their four-legged friends.

Families are expected to flock to Old MacDonald Farm, where children can get up close to a variety of friendly farm animals, while the Matahio Kids Zone will feature a range of free activities including bouncy castles, face painting, glitter tattoos and interactive games. The Home & Garden & all things creative section offering hands-on competition for all ages.

Other crowd favourites returning this year include wood chopping, shearing competitions, vintage machinery displays, military vehicles, the Taranaki Excavator Operator competition and the Nationals for the Lawn Mower racing. Sunday includes the Honda Hub riders demonstration.

With more than 100 trade, craft and community exhibits, there will be plenty of opportunities to shop, explore and learn, while a wide range of food vendors and Mahon's Amusements, celebrating 80 years, with the rides will ensure there is something to satisfy every appetite for fun.

With children aged 12 and under admitted free and adults just $15, the Stratford A & P Show continues to offer one of the region's best-value family outings. Organisers encourage the public to come along and experience a showcase of rural excellence, community connection and classic show-day fun.



Cheery characters.



Equestrian events.

FIELDTORQUE TARANAKI LIMITED

STRATFORD A&P SHOW

28 - 29 NOVEMBER 2026

9am - 4pm

Adults $15
Children 12yrs & under FREE

Stratford A&P Agricultural & Pastoral Association (Inc)

Major milestone for Stratford Park equestrian

The Stratford Park Equestrian project has completed its new 80m x 90m all-weather arena, marking a major milestone towards a dedicated equestrian training and competition venue for Taranaki. The arena is the first major stage of the complex's longer-term development.

The arena's first use will be at the Stratford A&P Show, with public bookings opening afterwards.

The arena was officially showcased on Wednesday November 4, bringing together project supporters, funders, contractors, council representatives and members of the equestrian community to celebrate the achievement.

Led by the Stratford Park Equestrian Complex Charitable Trust (SPECCT), the project has been several years in the making. It represents a significant investment in the future of equestrian sport and recreation in the region.

Alongside the arena, the first stage has delivered essential supporting infrastructure, including parking, power, water, fencing and initial yards.



Show jumping rider showcasing the new arena *Photo credit C Blake Photography.*

Emily Perrin, Co-Chair of the Trust, said: "This is a really significant milestone for us, and for the wider equestrian community in Taranaki. There's been a huge amount of work behind the scenes to get to this point, and it's incredibly rewarding to finally see the vision becoming reality.

"We're not finished yet – there's still plenty more to do – but having this arena completed gives us a fantastic foundation to build on. We're excited about creating a facility that can support a wide range of equestrian activities, bring people together and provide opportunities for riders and organisations across the region."

The Trust acknowledges the significant support of its funders, contractors, suppliers, local businesses and the many volunteers who have contributed their time and expertise.

The completed arena is the first step in a wider development programme. Further development is planned to progressively establish equestrian facilities and operating areas independent of the Speedway and A&P activities at Stratford Park. This will give the equestrian facility its own identity, infrastructure and operations, while maintaining collaboration with the other organisations based at the grounds.

The longer-term vision is a well-utilised regional venue for training, clinics, competitions and events across a wide range of equestrian disciplines. It will provide opportunities for riders, clubs and organisations throughout Taranaki and beyond.

The Trust looks forward to welcoming clubs, groups and individual riders to the new facility.

Opunake Record Fair
Club Hotel , 100 Tasman St
Fri 4th Dec 4pm to 7pm
Small Towns Rock!

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Capacity: 1500L Oval



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Visit us at the Stratford A & P Show!
Come have a chat and let's plan your farm's needs for 2027!

Pukeiti's Rainforest Eatery set to reopen with top local chef



Freddie Ponder, the new operator of the Rainforest Eatery.

Pukeiti's Rainforest Eatery is reopening with a top local chef who has worked in Michelin-starred restaurants taking over as the new operator.

Freddie Ponder brings more than 23 years of culinary experience to the role, having worked in Michelin-starred restaurants overseas and popular Taranaki establishments including Salt Restaurant & Bar, the Nice Hotel and Shining Peak Brewing.

After searching for a new operator since May, Regional Gardens Manager Stuart Robertson said the team was thrilled to have someone of Freddie's calibre on board.

"We're really excited to welcome Freddie to Pukeiti. His experience, passion for food and local connections make him a great fit for the Rainforest Eatery," says Stuart.

"The Eatery is an important part of the visitor experience at Pukeiti and we're looking forward to seeing Freddie bring his own ideas and expertise to the space."

Ōkato resident Freddie says he can't wait to see the doors open and is looking forward to returning to café-style dining, bringing his own approach to the Rainforest Eatery.

"It's been a couple of years since I've worked in a café setting, so I'm excited to get back into it and bring a funky lunch experience to the menu," says Freddie.

It's such a beautiful place and it'll be great to show people what we can do."

Visitors can expect a focus on seasonal menus, locally sourced ingredients and freshly made food, with Freddie keen to hear what customers think.

"We want to create something people really enjoy and feedback will be a big part of that. We're looking forward to welcoming everyone in and hearing what they think."

The Rainforest Eatery reopened on November 14 , operating daily from 10am to 4pm.

Okato and District Historical Society

Half price senior citizens coffee

Come share your stories.

Every Wednesday afternoon 1.30pm

47 Cummings Street, Okato

We are selling 2027 Garden Calendars at the Wednesday markets or at the rooms, $30 each.

Positive feedback



Okato and Districts Historical Society has received positive feedback regarding the articles and photographs published in the Opunake & Coastal News, and we wish to say thank you for this opportunity to Bernice and the team.

This time of year many schools and groups are taking to the stage for Christmas shows. Here is a dress-up group. If you recognise anyone let us know.

We would like to say congratulations to Pungarehu Catholic church for re opening.

You may like to visit the rooms where Lesley has discovered many church documents from this church, with interesting recordings.

Lesley Dowding
Okato







'RITA' telehealth system brings specialist care closer to Taranaki patients

A mobile telehealth cart developed in Northland is being introduced in Taranaki, helping local teams connect patients at the bedside with specialist clinicians in other locations.

HealthX, Health New Zealand's innovation programme, is supporting the rollout of Rapid Information Telehealth Assessment, known as RITA Telehealth, beyond Northland.

RITA is a mobile clinical cart with cameras, a monitor, microphone, and speakers. It uses Zoom-based technology to connect local teams with specialists at other hospitals. The remote clinician can see a full-room view, zoom in on the patient or monitoring equipment, and work with other clinicians who join the same call.

The first HealthX-funded carts have been rolled out to Hāwera Hospital and Ward 2B at Taranaki Base Hospital. The initial focus is paediatric care, where timely specialist advice can help the local team decide how best to care for a child and whether a transfer is needed.



Hawera Hospital ED CNS Carolyn Meads and Consultant Dr Hannah Lawn.

RITA was developed in Northland and has been in use since 2018. Northland teams use it for acute assessment and transfer decisions, out-of-hours stroke support, specialist outpatient clinics, and care in aged residential care and corrections settings. These examples show how local clinical teams can adapt to telehealth to meet local needs.

HealthX supports practical innovations that address real problems for patients and frontline teams. For RITA, the value is not simply the cart. It is the network of rural and specialist clinicians around it, supported by clear clinical governance, agreed protocols, training, and ongoing service ownership.

RITA does not replace clinical judgement, and it is not an AI tool. Local clinicians assess the patient with input from specialist colleagues, while clinical responsibility and decisions about care remain with the local team.

The Taranaki team will begin with the paediatric clinical use case and will consider any future uses through local clinical governance. HealthX will work closely with local teams to capture insights and learnings from implementation, helping shape future opportunities to expand the benefits of RITA to more communities across Aotearoa.

Access to RITA has been welcomed by Hāwera Hospital Emergency Department Head of Department, Dr Hannah Lawn.

"For our small ED team based away from a main centre, RITA provides real-time specialist support, helping us deliver high-quality care close to home while streamlining retrieval when transfer is needed," says Dr Lawn.

The technology has also been welcomed by the paediatric team at Taranaki Base Hospital, says Paediatrician Dr Lisa Power.

"The direct access to tertiary specialists at Starship and Waikato Hospitals will improve outcomes and provide better care for our infant and paediatric patients," says Dr Power.

"RITA also enables us to support Hawera hospital when sick children present, mobilising the right resources in the fastest way."

Choose the right healthcare for you and your whānau

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

Healthline
0800 611 116
Free health advice and information 24/7 from trained nurses and other health professionals.

Pharmacy
Advice and treatment
Medicines and vaccinations, help to treat minor illnesses, over-the-counter treatment.

GP or Doctor
Appointments with a doctor for general wellness, high fevers and rashes, injuries, mid to long term healthcare and all vaccinations.

Accident urgent medical centre
Out of hours or urgent care if your GP isn't available, for urgent injuries or if you're feeling very unwell.

Emergency department
Call 111 if it's a life threatening emergency
Go immediately if you have chest pain, difficulty breathing, severe bleeding or severe pain.

Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Government

GO WELL

Health New Zealand
Te Whatu Ora

Some antidepressants may work better than others over long term

Some antidepressants, including escitalopram and duloxetine - sold under the names Lexapro and Cymbalta, respectively - could work better than fluoxetine - sold under the name Prozac and one of the most widely used antidepressants - at helping people with depression feel better and keep taking their meds over the longer term, say international researchers.

The team analysed data from 35 past trials, which included 21 antidepressants, and compared them with fluoxetine to find out the benefits over the long term. People taking escitalopram, duloxetine, or agomelatine were more likely than those taking fluoxetine to see their symptoms improve and stay improved, and those people taking escitalopram and duloxetine were also less likely to stop taking their medicine.

The next issue of OCN is on the 3rd December.
Ph 06 761 7016.



Local news, Local people, local businesses, local sport, local arts and events.
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OPUNAKE & COASTAL NEWS
06 761 7016

Send sooner for a smoother Christmas

If you're sending gifts across New Zealand or overseas, sending early gives them the best chance of arriving in time for Christmas. Check our recommended sending dates now and get ahead before the busiest weeks of the season.

	Economy	Courier	Express
New Zealand	Fri 18 Dec	Tue 22 Dec	-
Australia	Wed 9 Dec	Mon 14 Dec	Thu 17 Dec
US	Mon 7 Dec	Mon 14 Dec	Wed 16 Dec
South Pacific	Fri 4 Dec	Fri 11 Dec	Tue 15 Dec
UK, Canada, Asia & Europe	Tue 1 Dec	Tue 8 Dec	Fri 11 Dec
Rest of the world	Tue 24 Nov	Fri 4 Dec	Wed 9 Dec

NZPost CoastalCare Haumaru ki Tai Health and Community Centre

Hawera Record Fair
Senior Citizens Hall
81 Victoria St
Sat 12 Dec 11am - 3pm
Small Towns Rock!

Nexans
Fun Run & Walk Series
Sunday 29th Nov 2026, Opunake Beach
hosted by Opunake Lions Club
2.7km / 5.3km / 10.6km:
Start 10am (9.30am for 10.6km walkers)
Start above the beach on cliff top
Check out Opunake Lions Page for registration details

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Johnny the Grocer & Christine

CoastalCare
Haumaru ki Tai Health and Community Centre
Delivering essential community health and social services now and into the future....

CoastalCare – AGM and the last year in review

On Monday 21st September, Coastal Taranaki Health Trust held their AGM – Thank you to those who took the time to attend. The Trust now consists of Steve Corkill (Chairperson) Vacant (Secretary), Abbey Wakeling (Treasurer), Chris Young, Monica Willson, Corryn Pryce-Baxter, Stephenie Livingstone and Sarah Mullan. We are pleased to welcome Sarah Mullan on board as a new Trust member.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the AGM, especially Mayor Phil and noted that CoastalCare has now been operational for 11 years and has recently added the service of the Stoney River Midwife team as well as both Dental and Physio expending their available days. Also highlighted was the inaugural Book Fair over the Art review week which is the start of our fund-raising strategy as well as raising awareness of CoastalCare and what we do in the community.

Both Adrienne Hickey and Paul Bourke after years of service were both retiring from the Trust, the Chair and the Major acknowledge these years of service, and a presentation was made to each by Major Phil.

The Year End accounts were presented for adoption, and these had been reviewed by Conaugh Gibbs for which we are very grateful. A summary of this can be found below.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank TOI Foundation, Community Organisation Grants (COGs), Pub Charity and St Pauls Op Shop for their support.

We would also like to take this opportunity to thank you, the general public for your kind donations, towards our cull cow drive, this is raising funds for repainting the outside and later the inside of the building.

If you would like any further information. contact Aretha Macadam our Facility Manager on 06 761 8488.

	2026	2025
Revenue	$	$
Donations, koha, bequests and other general fundraising activities	1,010	3,696
General grants	31,851	10,700
Capital grants and donations	-	14,792
Non-government service delivery grants/contracts	304	309
Revenue from commercial activities	331,984	327,764
Interest, dividends and other investment revenue	749	1,508
Total revenue	365,898	358,769
Expenses		
Expenses related to fundraising	-	1,127
Expenses related to commercial activities	340,107	304,491
Other expenses	57,890	67,534
Total expenses	397,997	373,152
Surplus/(Deficit) for the year	- 32,098	- 14,383

What's On Listings

SUNDAYS:

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

CHURCH NOTICES



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

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

Okato Co-operating Parish
St. James, Oakura – Sunday Service every Sunday, 10.00am
St. Paul's, Okato – 1st and 2nd Sundays –Worship Service; 3rd Sunday – Communion Service and 4th Sunday at 7.00pm
4th Sunday at 2pm - Cake & Debate
Open church for silent reflection, Pew for You, every 3rd Wednesday of each month, 4-5pm

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

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

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

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

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

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

Okato Community Church
Meets 10.30am Sunday at Hempton Hall.
Everyone welcome

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

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

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

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church
90 Regan St., Stratford,
9:00am Sunday: Breakfast and Study
10:30am: Breakfast is followed by "Coming Together Worship Service"
Thursday: Study Group at 2 pm at 96b Brecon Rd., Stratford.
Contact: Ben (Dingo) Smith 027 2535526 or
Wendy Tolland 022 617 9413

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

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

MONDAYS:

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

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

TUESDAYS

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

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

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

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

WEDNESDAYS

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

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

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

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

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

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

Naumai Toastmasters: Every first and third Wednesday of the month. 6.30pm sharp start. St Mary's Anglican Church, 206 Princes Street, Hawera. Find us on Facebook. Guests always welcome. Contact Steve 021538101.

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

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

THURSDAYS

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

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

FRIDAYS

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

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

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

OCTOBER 30 TO NOVEMBER 30

Stratford Scarecrow Trail, Stratford

NOVEMBER 19

Sentiments Flowers: 40 years celebration, St Aubyn Street, Moturoa, New Plymouth

NOVEMBER 22

Family Market: At Kapuni Hall, 10am - 3pm.

NOVEMBER 26 TO DECEMBER 5

What does the fox say? A production by the Opunake Players

NOVEMBER 28 & 29

Stratford A & P Show 2026: Stratford Showgrounds

NOVEMBER 29

Stratford A & P Show 2026 Calf & Lamb Champs: Waverley, 9.15am.

Nexans Fun Walk: Hosted by Opunake Lions. Start at the clifftop 9.30am.

DECEMBER 2

Manaia Golf Club AGM: At the Clubrooms, 7:30 pm



DECEMBER 3

Oaonui Water Supply AGM: At the Opunake Golf Club, 6.30pm.

DECEMBER 4

Opunake Record Fair: At the Club Hotel, 4-7pm.

DECEMBER7

Ngati Tara Oaonui Sandy Bay Society Inc AGM: Oaonui Hall, 6pm.

DECEMBER 12

Hawera Record Fair: At the Senior Citizens Hall, 11am-3pm.

PUBLIC NOTICES

Ngāti Tara Ōāonui Sandy Bay Society Incorporated

Annual General Meeting

Protection-Restoration-Enhancement

We invite you to join us at our AGM to be held:

Date: Monday 7th December, 2026
Venue: Ōāonui Hall
Time: 6pm

Agenda:

1. Karakia, whakatau.
2. Chairman's Annual Report.
3. Previous Minutes AGM 2 December 2025.
4. Matters arising from previous AGM.
5. 2025/2026 Financial Report.
6. 2026 Election of Officers.
7. General Business.
8. Whakakapi.
9. Karakia.

Ngā mihi,
The Committee

Andy Whitehead, Chairman
Debra O'Connor, Secretary
Adrienne Young, Treasurer

OKATO COMMUNITY MARKET

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

OAONUI WATER SUPPLY LIMITED

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Thursday 3rd December 2026 at 6.30pm

at the Opunake Golf Club
235 Namu Road, Opunake

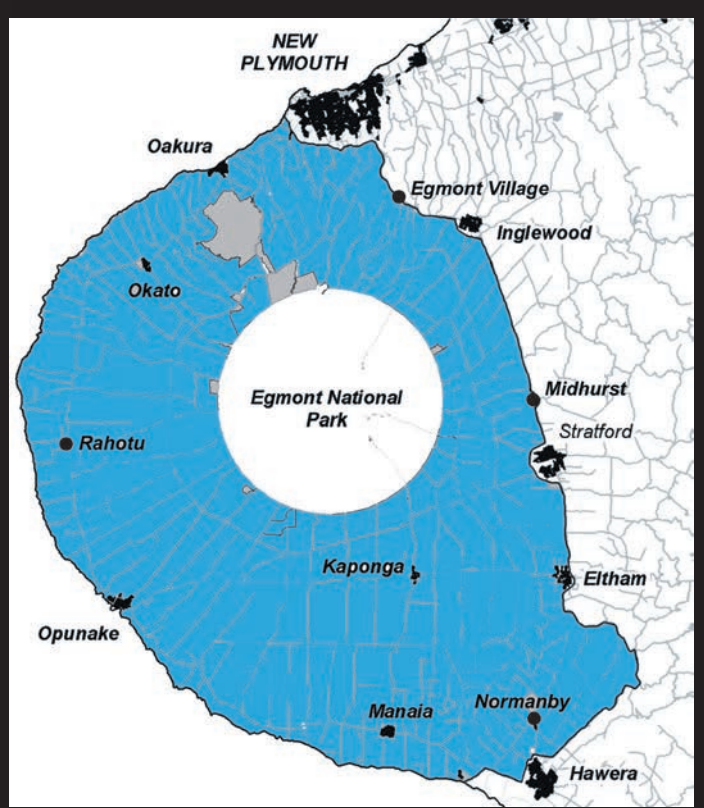
GARAGE SALE

FAMILY MARKET KAPUNI HALL

Sunday November 22,
10am - 3pm
Face painting, balloons, crafts, gifts and car boot sale.
Something for everyone.

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

WANT TO DO BUSINESS IN OUR AREA? TALK TO US



Opunake and Coastal News is distributed free to every home and business within the rural area, bounded in the north by the New Plymouth city border, extending east to Egmont Village, and around to the edge of Stratford, south to the Hawera city border and inland to Kaponga and through Eltham.

We are an independent newspaper based in Opunake, which is targeting both the towns and rural communities and we aim to have news coverage within all the areas of our distribution.

We want to be involved with your business call today and discuss your marketing options with the team.

COVERING THE COAST

Promote your business or event in our area call us on (06) 761-7016

OPUNAKE & COASTAL NEWS

· 23 Napier St, Opunake · Ph/Fax 761-7016
· email: ads@opunakecoastalnews.co.nz

The next issue of Opunake Coastal News is out on December 3. Our final edition for the year is the 17th of December

FOR SALE

DRY FIREWOOD. $80 per metre plus cartage. Ph 021 068 3700.

ARE YOU CONCERNED ABOUT YOUR MEMORY??? Come and try a sample of out Ginko alert, used for preventing memory loss etc, at The Health Shop Centre City. Ph 06 758 7553..

AB & DM SYBRANDY CONTRACTING LTD - Available Now - Firewood , Screened Topsoil & BRANDY'S BOTANICALS BARN- Indoor Plants, Home & Giftware, Seeds & More. October Special 6m3 Split Pine $500.00, 6m3 Split Mac $660.00, 6m3 Split Gum $720.00 supplied & delivered Hawera, Normanby, Manaia areas - other areas may incur small delivery fee. Orders and Payment can be made by phoning Andy 0274456464 or calling into Brandy's Botanicals Barn- 15 Livingston Rd Hawera.- WINZ Quotes, Afterpay & Eft-pos available at the Barn.

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POPULAR NZ NEW SEDAN
Traction Control, VVT-i, Cruise Control, Auto Headlights, 2.5, Petrol, Auto, 257kms



$8,995

2012 Mazda Axela 20S
LOW KMs SPORTY HATCH
i-Stop, Tinted Windows,, Blind Spot Monitoring, Driving Lights, Leather Seats, 2.0, Petrol, Auto, 118kms



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2018 Holden BARINA LS
Daytime Running Lights, NZ New, Alloy Wheels, Parking Sensors, Spoiler, 1.6, Petrol, Auto, 142kms



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2022 Kia Stonic GT-LINE+
STYLISH SPORTY HATCH
NZ New, Keyless Start, Parking Sensors, Tinted Windows, Turbo, Heated Electric Leather Seats, 1.0, Petrol, Auto, 33kms



$24,995

2013 Suzuki SWIFT SPORT
SPORTY NZ NEW HATCH
Factory Body Kit, Spoiler, Headlight Washers, Keyless Entry & Ignition, 1.6, Petrol, CVT, 62kms



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THIS WEEK'S SPECIAL:

2006 Ford FALCON BF FAIRMONT GHIA
V8 ATTENTION SEEKER
Electric Leather Seats, Auto Headlights, NZ New, Spoiler, Tinted Windows, Tow Bar, 5.0, Petrol, Auto, 221kms



$17,995

2016 Nissan X-Trail ST-L
NZ NEW 4WD
Keyless Entry & Ignition, Daytime Running Lights, Driving Lights, Heated Electric Leather Seats, Tinted Windows, 2.5, Petrol, CVT, 240kms



$12,995

2023 Honda Jazz E:HEV LUXE SPORT
NZ NEW HYBRID
Collision Avoidance, Monsoons, Tinted Windows, Half Leather Seats, Keyless Entry & Ignition, Heated Seats, 1.5, Hybrid, CVT, 33kms



NOW
$26,995

2014 Ford KUGA ECOBOOST
NZ NEW AWD
Driving Lights, Roof Rails, Turbo, Tow Bar, Tinted Windows, 1.6, Petrol, Auto, 203kms



$9,995

2021 Suzuki BALENO GLX
NZ NEW 5 SPD MANUAL
Reversing Camera, Tinted Windows, Alloy Wheels, Cruise Control, 1.4, Petrol, Auto, 61kms



$13,995

2017 Subaru Outback PREMIUM
ONE OWNER, NZ NEW
Driving Lights, EyeSight, Tinted Windows, AWD, Heated Elevctric Leather Seats, Tow Bar, 2.5, Petrol, CVT, 90kms



$23,995

2015 Mazda Cx-5 GSX
NZ NEW LOW KMs 4WD
i-Stop, Trsaction Control, Driving Lights, Keyless Start, Alloy Wheels, Tow Bar, 2.5, Petrol, Auto, 122kms



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2011 Suzuki KIZASHI LTDC
Alloy Wheels, Front & rear Parking Sensors, NZ New, Heated Electric Leather Seats, Headlight Washers, Sunroof, 2.4, Petrol, CVT, 100kms



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