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Mayor barred in vax mandate

By KELLEY TANTAU, Public Interest Journalism funded by NZ On Air

Come next week, Thames-Coromandel's Mayor Sandra Goudie will be excluded from attending council meetings in-person, following her council's decision to mandate the Covid-19 vaccine.

Mayor Goudie faced national backlash after telling *The Profile* in October that she refused to have the Covid-19 Pfizer vaccine, instead favouring the unapproved Novavax vaccine.

When earlier asked if her delay in getting vaccinated would be contentious among her constituents, she said she was "not saying no to vaccinations".

"Everybody has to make their own decision," she said.

Since then, Mayor Goudie has faced criticism about her decision, with people calling to make vaccinations mandatory for elected officials. Thames-Coromandel District Council this month considered making that call, meaning Mayor Goudie will be excluded from attending council meetings in person.

On Monday, council confirmed that by December 20 - or sooner if there was community transmission in the district - all staff and elected members would need to have had their first dose of the Covid-19 vaccine to enter council workplaces. By January 17, they all need to be fully vaccinated.

Mayor Goudie refused to comment when approached by *The Profile* on Monday. According to a council communications officer, a survey of its staff indicated

that of the 80 per cent who responded, 92 per cent were fully vaccinated and a further five per cent had received one dose or were intending to be vaccinated.

Employees and elected members who did not have proof of vaccination will be required to work remotely while council considered its options.

Across boundary lines, Hauraki District Council has not mandated the Covid-19 vaccine for its staff and elected members; however, it encouraged unvaccinated and vulnerable elected members, staff, and members of the public to attend council meetings remotely.

"We are currently updating our business continuity plans to align with the traffic light system, ensuring that our services continue should Covid-19 make its way into the Hauraki District communities," Mayor Toby Adams said.

"These preparations include splitting teams into bubbles to minimise spread in essential frontline services and remote working options."

Meanwhile, both councils were expecting positive Covid-19 cases throughout the region over summer. Both councils were also ready to welcome Aucklanders to the region when the border lifted on Wednesday, however, TCDC urged Aucklanders to follow the government's requirement to be fully vaccinated or have a negative test result 72 hours before leaving the super city.



Susie Goodall and Barry Robinson perform with the Kerepehi Brass Band in Ngatea on Friday evening during the town's late night shopping night, organised by a hard-working team of passionate volunteers and sponsors. There was a great turnout for the festivities, which included live street music and a visit from Santa. The jolly man in red also visited Thames in a horse-drawn carriage on Saturday, turn to P3.

Photo: GORDON PREECE

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The *Valley Profile* is a community newspaper that delivers 100% local news in the Thames Valley region. We deliver 12,600 copies each Wednesday to every letterbox, reaching approximately 30,000 readers in Hauraki Plains, Paeroa, Thames, Thames Coast and surrounding rural areas, plus bulk distribution around the Coromandel Peninsula.

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Thames Autos

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New car park to make gorge safer

By KELLEY TANTAU, Public Interest Journalism funded by NZ On Air

The Karangahake Gorge as it is a “death waiting to happen” and Hauraki District Councillors don’t want that on their conscience.

They unanimously voted at a recent meeting to develop the gorge in a staggered approach, including creating a car park off County Rd to alleviate safety concerns on the state highway.

Between 2010 and 2019, there were 21 deaths and 95 serious injuries along SH2, Mangatarata to Katikati. Back in July, the Karangahake Gorge was closed for more than seven hours after a crash critically injured two people and seriously injured another. The same month, a pedestrian was seriously injured after being struck by a car along the same stretch.

Council’s development would see an entrance way created off County Rd into Cornes Paddock, located on the corner of Crown Hill Rd and County Rd.

Under stage one, it would install a metal carpark, a perimeter fence, and planting. Stage two would see the car park sealed. It will have around 30-40 car parks and be open seven days a week.

The cost to do this work will be around \$160,000.

Currently, the reserve has been open to a grass car park during the spring through autumn periods, and ‘no parking’ yellow lines have been painted on Crown Hill Rd to mitigate dangerous parking practices.

But the gorge was growing in popularity and “something needs to happen” to solve its safety issues, Mayor Toby Adams told staff at the meeting.

“There are cars parked on the side of the road going up to the car park, there are cars parked on the side of the main road, there are cars all over the place.

“There’s no happy way to say this: it’s just a death waiting to happen, and there’s no way I want that on my conscience,” he said.

Mayor Adams recognised the creation of another car park could upset some residents, but with visitors flocking en-masse to the historic area, more permanent parking was needed.

“I know the residents like it because of what it is, but that’s also why people want to come,” he said. “It’s not easy having something so spectacular in your backyard and not being able to share it, and at the end of the day, it is New Zealand’s to share.”

The Karangahake Hall Committee put forward an option to develop the Mackaytown Reserve car park, off State Highway 2; however council staff said the option faced significant challenges in providing access to the Hauraki Rail Trail.

The staggered approach at County Rd received support from councillors and was passed unanimously at the vote.

“I can’t wait to see this happen,” Paeroa ward councillor Jo Tilsley said.



Hauraki District Council concept drawings of the new car park near Crown Hill Rd, in the Karangahake Gorge.

Photo: HDC/SUPPLIED

Public Interest Journalism





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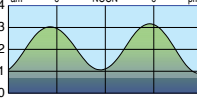
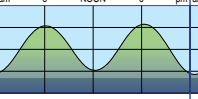
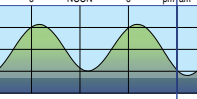
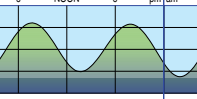
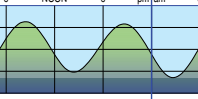
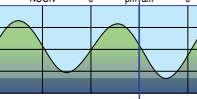
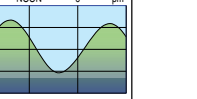
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Thames Tides

Wed Dec 15	Thu Dec 16	Fri Dec 17	Sat Dec 18	Sun Dec 19	Mon Dec 20	Tue Dec 21
 <p>Morning 5:11am 3.0 5:30pm 3.2 11:23am 1.1 11:43pm 0.9</p> <p>5:52am 8:34pm Best At 10:02am 10:23pm</p> <p>Set 3:19am Rise 4:55pm</p>	 <p>Morning 6:08am 3.1 12:13pm 1.0 6:19pm 3.1</p> <p>5:53am 8:34pm Best At 10:45am 11:07pm</p> <p>Set 3:46am Rise 5:53pm</p>	 <p>Morning 12:32am 0.9 12:58pm 1.0 6:58am 3.1 7:07pm 3.1</p> <p>5:53am 8:35pm Best At 11:29am 11:52pm</p> <p>Set 4:15am Rise 6:53pm</p>	 <p>Morning 1:18am 0.8 1:40pm 1.0 7:42am 3.2 7:53pm 3.1</p> <p>5:53am 8:36pm Best At 12:16pm</p> <p>Set 4:49am Rise 7:51pm</p>	 <p>Morning 2:00am 0.8 2:21pm 1.0 8:23am 3.3 8:37pm 3.2</p> <p>5:54am 8:36pm Best At 12:40am 1:05pm</p> <p>Full Moon Set 5:27am Rise 8:48pm</p>	 <p>Morning 2:40am 0.7 3:01pm 0.9 9:01am 3.3 9:18pm 3.2</p> <p>5:54am 8:37pm Best At 1:30am 1:56pm</p> <p>Set 6:12am Rise 9:40pm</p>	 <p>Morning 3:18am 0.7 3:40pm 0.9 9:39am 3.3 9:59pm 3.2</p> <p>5:54am 8:37pm Best At 2:21am 2:47pm</p> <p>Set 7:04am Rise 10:28pm</p>

MOON AND FISH KEYS

New Moon First Quarter Full Moon Last Quarter

Good Fishing Fair Fishing Not So Good

TIME DIFFERENCES FOR OTHER PLACES

To determine tide times at the following places, add (+) or subtract (-) the given time difference from the Thames times listed in the calendar.

PLACE	Hr	Min	High	Low
Coromandel	-	05	-	04
Whitianga	-	02	-	06
Tairua	+	10	+	21
Whangamata	-	07	-	07
Waihi Beach	-	12	-	12

Rejoice and concern as Auckland opens

By KELLEY TANTAU, Public Interest Journalism funded by NZ On Air

It'll be four months to the day since Woodturners Cafe was visited by a Covid-positive Aucklander when the city's border will finally come down. Owner Blair Mattock couldn't believe how long it had been. "Who would've thought that four months ago we were sitting down, saying we'd been identified as a place of interest - one of the very first of the resurgence... who would've thought that it'd take four months before we'd get back to work?" The cafe on State Highway 2, Mangatarata, was named as a location of interest following a visit by a Covid-positive man on August 15. What followed was a spate of Covid-19 tests, a "severe" lockdown, and the cafe being closed for around 120 days. But the cafe doors will finally open - to double-vaccinated customers only - on Wednesday, the same day Auckland's border gets dismantled. "If last year when we came out of the [first] lockdown is any indication, it will just be like someone hit pause, and then play again," Mr Mattock said. "It was all stop, and then all ballistic, so I think it's going to go crazy." It was not just Aucklanders needing that taste of freedom, he said, but locals, too. "Everyone's chomping at the bit now and are wanting to get back into a routine, which is great. It financially hasn't been ideal for us, but you've got to make the best of a bad situation." Both Hauraki and Thames-Coromandel district councils were anticipating an influx

of travellers akin to any other summer holiday period, and Age Concern Hauraki Coromandel manager Glenis Bell said there would likely be concern throughout the population, as well as rejoice for those reuniting with family members. The organisation has heard from many older people who were expressing their concerns about going out, saying it felt safer to stay home, she said. "There is already a lot of fear which will definitely increase if cases get announced locally or when the town gets busy with holiday makers." She advised the region's elderly demographic to enjoy spending time with friends and family over the holiday season, getting outside in the garden or walking along the beach, while staying alert for any Covid-19 symptoms. "Get tested if sick, then stay home to recover; have a plan in place so you can stay home safely and have a plan, or people to phone, if you don't have transport. [And] don't be afraid to ask for help." Meanwhile, there are no ICU beds at Thames Hospital, however, Waikato DHB will manage patients requiring hospital-level care with two dedicated isolation rooms, and staffing has been increased ahead of the holiday period, a spokesperson says. "Any patients requiring a higher level of care than what can be provided at Thames would be transferred to Waikato Hospital as per our current practice."



In a one-horse open sleigh



Santa Claus made his way down Pollen St with his helpful elf Pearl on Saturday. The pair were led down Thames' main street in a grand horse and carriage from Meike's Carriage Rides, as Coromandel's CFM controlled the traffic and blasted out Christmas tunes. The route was planned by Goldfields Shopping Centre manager John Freer, in order to celebrate the holiday season despite Covid-19 cancelling the town's main Christmas Parade. Santa and Pearl also made a pitstop for a photo at Thames Small Gauge Railway before visiting kindy kids at Turua Hall. Reporter KELLEY TANTAU captured the Christmas cheer.



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Food waste strategies mooted

Coromandel Youth MP 2022 announced

By KELLEY TANTAU, Public Interest Journalism funded by NZ On Air

Worm farms and composting systems were two of the schemes put forward to council staff last week as a way to divert the district's food waste from landfill.

A new food waste group, dubbed Re-Source, presented during the public forum of Thames-Coromandel District Council's meeting on December 7.

Coordinator Shakēd From asked councillors to consider pushing back awarding its new solid waste contract by a few months, so that a strategy that keeps minimisation in mind can be developed.

According to Shakēd, the district council had adopted a Waste Management and Minimisation Plan in 2017; however, not much was being done to minimise waste heading to landfill, including food and organic waste.

"There is simply no incentive for the private company that has the contract to minimise [waste]," he said.

"We were hoping that this could change when signing a new solid waste contract."

The current contract with Smart Environmental ends in August, 2023, with council awarding a new solid waste contract in June next year.

"Council has recently started the tendering process without any public consultation or even awareness. The new contract will be signed for ten years," Shakēd said.



Re-Source members Shakēd From, left, and Tony Winter pitch their ideas to council.

Photo: KELLEY TANTAU

"Separate from the contract process, the council is also initiating a 'waste strategy study'.

"The council has not yet determined a timeline to conclude the study, and they do not intend to finish the study before signing the new 10-year contract."

According to the Seagull Centre in Thames, 60.9 per cent of rubbish bags left on the district's kerbsides were full of food and organic waste.

Shakēd said Re-Source hoped the council would take its proposals for food waste seriously. They have since set up a petition which has gained around 370 signatures.

He said delaying the contract by just a few months could give the council sufficient time to finalise the strategy, and include the results in the contract.

"Once food waste is separated, there are multiple options: com-

post, worm farms, bio digestion, black soldier flies..." Shakēd said.

"And these could be done outside the district, in one location in the district, or at each transfer station."

"These are simple decisions that can be considered and agreed upon based on financial, community, and environmental criteria."

"We prefer composting or worm farming at each transfer station - but that's not the most critical part - without separating food waste at the source, and including it in the contract, none of the options are possible."

DETAILS: For more information, visit: our.actionstation.org.nz and search for Thames-Coromandel.



Hauraki Plains College student Anna Tukuitoga will represent the Coromandel electorate at Youth Parliament 2022, MP Scott Simpson says.

"Anna is a terrific candidate who is really passionate about the issues facing youth in our communities," he said.

"She has experience advocating on behalf of her peers through her role as New Zealand Country Music Association Youth Ambassador."

"Anna is particularly interested in drawing attention to and improving youth mental wellbeing."

The Youth Parliament pro-

gramme provides an opportunity to hear from young people around the country about what is important to them, and for Youth MPs to actively work on topics and issues they are passionate about.

Anna's tenure as Coromandel Youth MP covers the period March 1 to August 33, 2022, and is highlighted by a two-day event at Parliament in Wellington on July 19-20.

"Youth Parliament is an incredible opportunity and I know Anna will make the most of her time representing the Coromandel," Mr Simpson said.



Coromandel MP Scott Simpson with Anna Tukuitoga, who has been selected as Coromandel's Youth MP for 2022.

Photo: SUPPLIED

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High demand for vaccine pass help

By GORDON PREECE

More than 550 people in Thames asked for help to get their vaccine passes in the first few days of the new Covid-19 traffic light system. Under the new framework, which came into effect on December 3, vaccine passes are now required to enter many venues and events, including cafes, restaurants and hairdressers.

Thames-Coromandel District Libraries manager Ania Biazik said Thames Library staff were surprised that prior to December 4, 566 people from as far away as Cambridge and Paeroa came to them for help to set up their vaccine pass.

Some people struggled with remembering their password to apply for the vaccine pass, or didn't have an NHI number, proof of identity, or an idea of how vaccination passes worked digitally, she said.

"If people aren't equipped with their vaccination passes, they're being excluded from so many commercial facilities and services, so libraries are contributing to the well being of our community," she said.

"Libraries have become the destination for those people who want to print and laminate their vaccine passes at a low cost or download them on their phones, but also many people come to the libraries for



Thames librarian Nicole Thorburn demonstrates with Michael Dobie how she would assist a customer with their vaccine pass.

the human touch and reassurance that we're here to help and support you.

"Once we've helped a customer, there's been an overwhelming attitude of being grateful for the service."

Many customers were first time visitors to the library, even after living in the area for a long time, she said, and many had no idea that a service like this would be provided by their local library.

But the high number of people needing help had put pressure on staff.

"We have only a limited number of staff so we had to reach out to our casual library assistants to come in because demand just exceeded staff expectations.

"We're very thankful in advance for all the customer kindness and patience as the library staff just don't know on the day who's going to come, what information customers already have and how much support

"Once we've helped a customer, there's been an overwhelming attitude of being grateful for the service."

- Ania Biazik

customers need."

Ania thanked library staff for their work helping customers with their vaccine passes.

"I'm really proud of our team in Thames-Coromandel Dis-



Unichem Thames' Tamsin Armstrong, Jessica Guo and Anas Wadood have been helping customers with passes. Photos: GORDON PREECE

trict Libraries who stood up to the challenge and how they managed to get through that first wave of very very high demand and the sudden switch from our planned work to putting our customers and community first," she said.

"I think the staff have reached the depth of their empathy levels because it can be demanding and draining with the surge of customers."

In a statement, Age Concern Hauraki Coromandel manager Glenis Bell said fear about the virus could be coming from people's inability to obtain a vaccine pass, even if they were vaccinated.

"So messages about who can support getting one are really reassuring," she said.

Members of the public can also get help with vaccine passes at selected pharmacies.

Unichem Thames pharmacist Anas Wadood said a lot of people wanting help with their vaccine passes experienced digital difficulties.

"A lot of them don't have emails or computer or phone access, so we provide a hard-copy for them so they can access places like cafes and hairdressers and they're very appreciative of that," he said.

"The staff have been amazing in quickly adopting this whole system in such short notice from the Ministry of Health, who've only given us a day or two for pharmacies to assist patients with their vaccine passes."

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Climate change vote goes newcomers' way

By KELLEY TANTAU, Public Interest Journalism funded by NZ On Air

If seasoned councillors Murray McLean and Tony Fox were “beating the same drum” about their Mayor signing a local climate change declaration, then it was the newcomers to local politics that snatched the sticks away.

Thames-Coromandel District Council has agreed to approve Mayor Sandra Goudie in signing the Local Government Leaders' Climate Change Declaration; however, it remains her prerogative whether she does so or not. Two years ago, the council decided not to approve Mayor Goudie signing the declaration.

Hauraki Coromandel Climate Action challenged this decision, and following a hearing in the High Court in August, 2020, the judge quashed the council's decision and directed it to reconsider.

In 2019, however, a local body election saw newcomers take to the council chambers, and it was three of them - Martin Rodley, Robyn Sinclair, and Gary Gotlieb - who encouraged councillors to “respect the decision of ratepayers”.

The issue was put to public consultation in October - 187 submissions received, with 95 per cent approving the Mayor signing the declaration.

“The thing that persuaded me finally to stand for council was the performance I saw by this council and [its refusal] to sign the declaration. I have to say, it sounds like the same drum is being beaten by

Murray and Tony from way back in the beginning,” Cr Gotlieb said at last week's meeting. “In the end, all these court proceedings have cost us over \$145,000... We're now back to where we should have been.

“We as councillors need to respect the decision of our ratepayers. We didn't respect it last time.”

Councillors Fox and McLean, alongside Mayor Goudie, have been consistent in their concerns about signing the document, with Cr McLean unsure if the declaration was legally binding, and whether there would be any financial implications arising from it.

Cr Fox said the document was “a politically motivated piece of work”, and when Cr Rodley brought to attention the lack of any court cases taken against other councils following signing the declaration, Cr Fox noted that “other councils didn't sign it” - Mayors did. Cr Sinclair objected to that.

The council voted 6-3 to approve the Mayor signing the Local Government Leaders' Climate Change Declaration, with Mayor Goudie, and councillors Fox and McLean against.

When agreeing with the guiding principles and actions in the declaration, and committing to continue developing an ambitious climate change emission reduction work programme, Mayor Goudie abstained from the vote.



Floods hamper Christmas cheer



As part of a Valley Profile series, MEGHAN HAWKES searches through old newspapers to bring you the stories Thames Valley locals once read about themselves.

1928

A Kopuarahi farmer was left feeling flat instead of festive after taking a carload of shoppers into Thames on Christmas Eve.

As the payout for butterfat had been particularly good they were all in a spending mood. Thames, with its generous display of goods and most affable manner, wheedled out of them close to 40 pounds.

After a busy day they were content to get away home to the cows, thinking that Thames Town would be well pleased with their spending spree.

But “dash my buttons” cried the farmer, if it didn't have another go at his much-depleted pocket, through the medium of the Borough Council, who nabbed him, not so much for speeding, as for disturbing the smooth surface of Jellicoe Crescent.

‘Bethlehem’ was the work chosen by the Methodist choir for their Christmas presen-



A New Zealand Christmas, 1905. Photo: SUPPLIED

tation. This was a Cantata - a vocal composition with an instrumental accompaniment, in several movements.

It was a work entirely new to Thames, recognised in musical circles as a classic. It opened with a scene on a starlit night on the plans near Bethlehem, where a shepherd was attending his flock.

Part Two began with a scene by an old well in the desert, and the sounds of an approaching caravan - a very descriptive organ effect. Part Three began in front of the Inn at Bethlehem. Soprano solos, distant choruses of angels singing, baritone solos and hymns magnificently illustrated the story.

The Cantata, which took over two hours, was of outstanding beauty, full of descriptive vocal work seldom heard outside the

large cities. A phenomenal rainfall in the Thames Valley which began late on Christmas Eve was considered both a blessing and nuisance.

It was beneficial to farmers initially but then became too much of a good thing. Paeroa was swept by almost continuous rain for three days.

At Thames, rain fell in increasing volumes making prospects for holiday outdoor sports grim. Market gardeners, especially strawberry growers, sustained losses.

Dozens of camping parties at Thornton Bay were flooded out and the roads were filled with cars returning to Hamilton and other distant points. The rain was followed by a hot spell of exceptional temperatures.


For a week the area sweltered under a moist heat from which there was little or no escape. At Thames, unusually high temperatures were registered when the thermometer stood at 87 degrees Fahrenheit (29.444 degrees Celsius).

In the absence of a public swimming bath, a proposed loan to build one having been rejected, residents found it difficult to keep cool. The beaches and river pools were crowded. The hottest day was experienced at Paeroa when the thermometer climbed slightly above 89 degrees Fahrenheit (31.667 degrees Celsius).

The recently built public swimming baths there were crammed every day.

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That's a wrap!

Santa's helpers met at the Paeroa Baptist Church on December 9 to wrap presents as part of an annual Christmas Toy Appeal. Around 200 gifts were donated, and after being wrapped, they were delivered to organisations to distribute to families in need. One of the helpful elves, Doris Beisly, joked about her poor present-wrapping skills: "but it's what's underneath that counts," she said. Another, Denise Young, said she'd helped out with the appeal for a number of years, and that it was important for children to have something to open on Christmas Day. Among the gifts donated were books, toys, basketballs, watches, board games and more. Appeal coordinator Glenys Lewis earlier told *The Profile* the need was even greater this year. "It has been a year of anxiety and uncertainty for many children," she said. "I would like to think that by continuing to support families through this appeal, that in some small way we are able to alleviate some of the heartache of the past year." Reporter **KELLEY TANTAU** snapped the volunteers hard at work.



Denise Young gets into the Christmas spirit.



Appeal coordinator Glenys Lewis, centre, with her 'main elves' Jan Martin, left, and Heather Browne.



Lois Waugh helps out with the wrapping.



Doris Beisly jokes about her poor present-wrapping skills.

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Tree Shapes cuts above the rest

By GORDON PREECE

It's been 17 years since Matt Elliot established Tree Shapes in Thames, an arboriculture business offering high standard residential and commercial tree work by qualified arborists for a competitive price.

Matt, who's originally from Hamilton, gained an arboriculture certificate in 1997 and an arboriculture diploma in 2000 before working for Asplundh in Dunedin managing powerline and council contracts in the lower South Island.

In 2004, he moved to Thames, where his wife Te Ana is from, and was commuting to Auckland for work at a tree company where he managed staff and helped build their business.

It was during this time he realised there wasn't anyone based in Thames offering arboriculture services.

"There was a gap in the market and I thought it was worth a go so I then set up the business [Tree Shapes], started advertising and talking with different contractors and it gained momentum over time," he said.

There was a well-established tree business based in Ngatea, Peninsula Tree Surgeons, which Tree Shapes bought out in 2006, which helped the business grow.

While Matt said his customers loved Tree Shapes services, he loves the industry and "can't not be involved" with it, but he's now cutting back his work and has sold the arboriculture business to Hikutaia-based Splintas



Matt Elliot has sold Tree Shapes after 17 years of trimming and chipping.

Photo: GORDON PREECE

Firewood.

"My back and other parts of my body aren't the best anymore so I'd rather get out while I'm still able and my body's still willing, just to try to make it last a bit better," he said.

"We've had the business on the market for two years, and have been looking for the right people to take it on, and about a

month ago we were approached by Splintas Firewood interested in buying it."

Matt hopes with Splintas Firewood's database and workload, on top of Tree Shapes extensive customer base, there will be a more consistent workload for his staff, allowing the business to grow.

"We complete 20 to 30 jobs

per week but businesses in provincial towns can have a hard time balancing and getting a consistent workflow," he said.

"But summer's usually very busy and flat out due to more people getting back out into their gardens, changing the use of their property and having more houses going on the market so we do more work tidying proper-

ties that are up for sale.

"Our workload also increased after Covid-19 due to more people focusing on their properties while at home."

Matt will still be involved in the pricing of work where necessary, and will also work alongside Splintas Firewood to carry out any necessary stump grinding.

"There's not a huge demand for stump grinding but once a week we'll go into a property and remove trees for a new lawn or concrete pad and need the stumps gone, and our machines deal with those," he said.

It is a little-known service Matt is keen to promote, having bought the local stump grinding business two years ago, aptly named Stumpgrinding Services.

It will be the only locally based Peninsula-wide stump grinding business, hoping to cover the loop weekly from Thames to Coromandel, Whitianga to Tairua, and back.

From January 1, Splinta's Firewood will take over Tree Shapes' arboricultural operation, retaining Tree Shapes staff and continuing to run all tree work, delivering the same level of service in conjunction with their firewood supply and onsite wood splitting.

"I want to let my customers know we've sold the business and thank them for using and supporting us for the past 17 years," Matt said. "Through supporting our small business, we in turn have been able to provide job opportunities for local people, and provide work to other local service providers."

I would like to thank all my clients, suppliers and contractors who have supported us over the last 16 years.

All the best to Colin and Janella from Splinters Firewood for the future.

Matthew, Finn and Junior will still be on board with their expertise for all your tree care requirements. *Matthew.*



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Rural Life

Earthworms essential to improve soil health



By Bala TikkiSETTY

Earthworms improve the general condition of farming soils, reduce surface runoff of contaminants from pasture and prevent soil erosion. Soils without enough of the right type of earthworms are usually poorly structured and tend to develop a turf mat or thatch of slowly decomposing peat-like material at the surface. Old dung and dead plant material lie about the surface. These factors can naturally inhibit pasture and crop production. Introduced earthworms are essential to the development of fertile productive soil. They act as biological aerators and physical conditioners of the soil, improve soil porosity, structure, aggregate stability and water retention. Earthworms also increase the population, activity and diversity of soil microbes, such as actinomycetes and mycorrhizal fungi. These microbes play a vital role in the supply of nutrients to pasture, digesting soil and fertiliser and unlocking nutrients such as phosphorus

that are fixed by the soil. Lower producing grasses are often more evident than ryegrass on these types of soils as well. Pasture growth is slow to start in spring and stops early in autumn. Plant nutrients tend to remain locked in the organic layer and there is poor absorption of applied fertiliser. Plant roots in such soils are relatively shallow and pastures are therefore susceptible to drought. Water also runs off this type of pasture more easily rather than being absorbed into the soil, increasing water quality problems. To help avoid these types of problems, soils should have a good diversity of relevant earthworm species. The most common introduced earthworm in New Zealand is *Aporrectodea caliginosa*, a topsoil dweller. This earthworm grows up to 90mm long and may vary in colour from grey to pink or cream. Another very common introduced earthworm is *Lumbricus rubellus*, a surface dweller. Often found under cow pats, this earthworm will grow up to 150mm long. It is reddish-brown or reddish-purple, with a pale underside and flattened tail. *Aporrectodea longa* live in burrows as deep as 2-3 metres below the surface. Undertaking an earthworm



Introduced earthworms are essential to the development of fertile productive soil, acting as biological aerators and physical conditioners of the soil. Photo: SUPPLIED

count will let farmers know if they have enough of the right type. Counts are preferably done in late winter to early spring when soil moisture and temperature conditions are ideal. Counts can be done by taking out a 20cm cube of soil with a spade. Around 30 earthworms would be ideal in a spade cube. If soils are scoring way below that there are a range of ways to increase their populations: Ensure soil calcium levels are near 7, as calcium promotes earthworm reproduction. Maintain soil pH between 5.8 and 6.3. Limit use of agri-chemicals. Reduce ammonium-based fertilisers, as they make soils acidic. Moist soils promote earth-

worm spread and activity and more will remain active in topsoil during summer under irrigation. Direct drilling and no tillage cultivation methods is another way to promote earthworm numbers. Use a mould board or disc plough rather than a rotary hoe. Cropping farms should include a phase of pasture in their cropping rotation to increase organic matter returns. Earthworm ecological diversity is also critical to ensure soil functions are optimised. For example, the single species of *Aporrectodea caliginosa* alone was not able to improve water infiltration or pasture production. However, when this species was found in combination with *Aporrectodea longa*, there was positive influence on soil

functions despite the abundance of *A. longa* itself not increasing. This study highlights the importance of including a measure of ecological diversity alongside a measure of abundance to assess soil biological health. The earthworms play a great role in farm productivity and lessen the contaminant impact on water quality. Remember, weight of earthworms below healthy productive pastures is approximately equivalent to the weight of animals grazing above ground – a thought provoking fact. **Bala TikkiSETTY is a sustainable agriculture advisor (technical) at Waikato Regional Council. For more information contact him on 0800 800 401 or bala.tikkisetty@waikatoregion.govt.nz.**

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Santa comes to town

Even the sudden rain couldn't dampen the Christmas spirit at Pukekos Educare in Totara, where Santa stopped by on December 3 for photos with the children and their caregivers. Reporter **GORDON PREECE** headed along to see who was naughty and nice.



Thomas and Marlo are delighted to see Santa.

Photos: GORDON PREECE



Denzel, left, enjoys catching up with Santa.



Thomas and Fergus wear Santa shirts for their photo.



Irah is stoked with his treat from Santa.



Aiden, left, didn't want to get too close to Santa.



Caleb and Lacey wear candy cane PJs.

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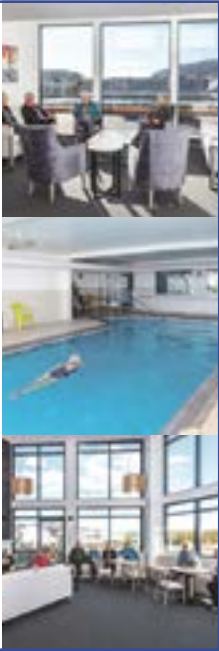


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2	1	8	6	9	4	5	3	7
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6	5	4	3	8	7	2	1	9

EASY

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JUMBO CROSSWORD

50

- ACROSS
- 1 Perplexed (7)

4 Larkspur (10)

9 Own (7)

13 Absent (4)

14 Eye centres (6)

15 Well-stuffed cushions (6)

16 Close at the end of a session (7)

19 Study of insects (10)

20 Unending time (8)

21 Call on (5)

24 Optical (6)

25 Hypothesis (6)

27 Speed (9)

32 Bone structure (8)

33 Verse (6)

34 Eccentric, unconventional (7)

38 Assassin (8)

39 Long pace (6)

40 Hankering (4)

41 Eagle's nest (5)

42 Nozzle (5)

45 Intensive, even brutal interrogation (3,5,6)

52 Wilt (5)

55 Saying (5)

56 Board game (4)

57 Ban (6)

58 Spotless (8)

61 Please (7)

62 On edge (6)

63 Gin on tap (anag)(8)

66 Choir member (9)

68 Vow (6)

69 Paltry (6)

73 Feather pen (5)

74 Unmarried man (8)
- 76 Closely associated with (10)

81 Fleet commander (7)

82 Unfolded (6)

83 Concavity (6)

84 Portent (4)

85 Seeking charity (7)

86 Smother (10)

87 Back (7)
- DOWN
- 1 Stopping device (5)

2 Flute player (8)

3 Twofold (6)

4 Performing (5)

5 Deprivation (4)

6 Stockings, socks (7)

7 Queasiness (6)

8 Metropolitan (5)

10 Probability (4)

11 Rosiest (anag)(7)

12 Rick (6)

17 Artificial ridge for confining a waterway (10)

18 Employees (5)

22 First-rate (3-5)

23 Powdered tobacco (5)

24 Books (7)

26 Popular successes (4)

28 Going (7)

29 Customer (6)

30 Decapitate (6)

31 Cotton cloth (6)

33 Earlier (5)

35 Purchaser (5)

36 Therefore (4)

37 Throb (4)
- 43 Small pool (6)

44 Encouraged (5)

46 Drag (4)

47 Defeat utterly (7)

48 Weather map line (6)

49 Simple song (5)

50 Instances (8)

51 Wayward (6)

52 Reject as one's heir (10)

53 Leave out (4)

54 Go before (7)

59 Salty drops (5)

60 Sovereign (4)

64 Ore analysis (5)

65 Miniature hourglass (3,5)

67 Portion of food (7)

68 Self-contradiction (7)

70 Mix up, confuse (6)

71 Column support (6)

72 Energy (6)

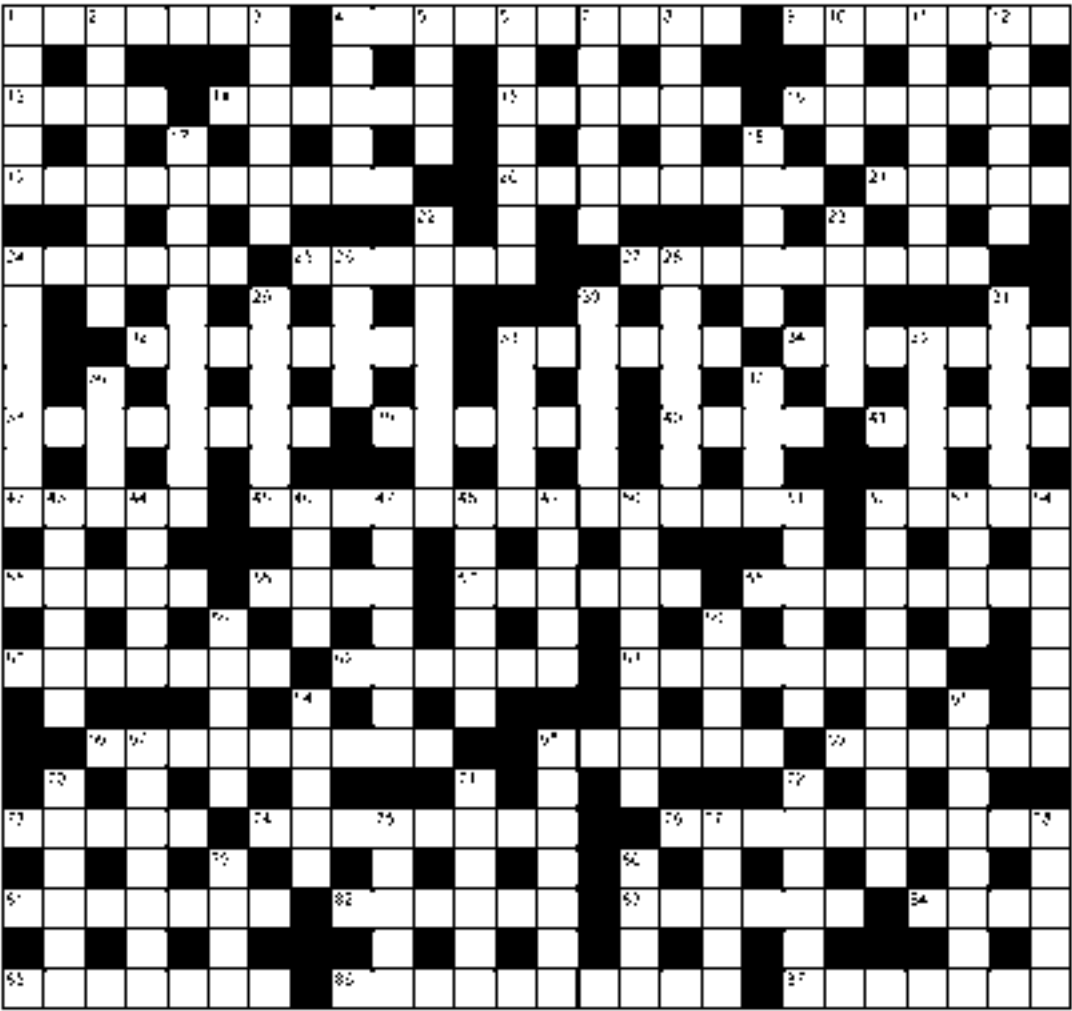
75 Expectations (5)

77 Deceitful (5)

78 Solid (5)

79 Principal (4)

80 Stop! (4)



PREVIOUS SOLUTION

ACROSS: 1 Stick, 4 Soft-soap, 9 Method, 14 Oiled, 15 Generous to a fault, 17 Coast, 18 Out, 19 Stupefy, 20 Withholds, 21 Museum, 24 Successor, 25 Cornet, 26 Blanks, 29 Contraband, 31 Cue, 32 Facial, 33 Miss, 35 Eel, 37 High, 39 Ironworks, 40 Endeavour, 41 Enter, 42 Dialogue, 47 Arriving, 51 Cargo, 55 Incognito, 56 Plentiful, 58 Ripe, 59 VIP, 60 Exam, 61 Survey, 62 Obi, 63 Phenomenal, 66 Pocket, 67 Prague, 69 Marquetry, 72 Eulogy, 73 Paralysis, 75 Burglar, 77 Dad, 80 Canoe, 81 By leaps and bounds, 82 Speak, 83 Pallid, 84 Skeleton, 85 Slide.

DOWN: 2 Twenty-two, 3 Cheap, 5 Oust, 6 Tropics, 7 Off the record, 8 Pluto, 9 Matador, 10 Tick, 11 Opaque, 12 Bloom, 13 Editors, 14 Othello, 16 Officiating, 22 Legato, 23 Teacher, 24 Satchel, 25 Cheese, 27 Nairobi, 28 Ladder, 30 Down, 32 Flats, 34 Sprig, 36 Taxi, 38 I I I, 42 Drive, 43 Archaic, 44 Orgy, 45 Unique, 46 Gravy, 48 Rule of thumb, 49 Variety, 50 Nap, 51 Convert, 52 Oppose, 53 Devil-may-care, 54 Step, 57 Fetus, 64 Applauded, 65 Hemlock, 66 Prudish, 68 Grabbed, 70 Reissue, 71 Agenda, 72 Edges, 74 Atlas, 76 Gruel, 78 Weal, 79 Into.

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LETTERS

Send your letters to the editor to editor@valleyprofile.co.nz or PO Box 550 Thames, 3540. Letters must include your full name and address, be 250 words or less and may be edited, abridged or rejected at the editor's discretion.

Constituents in the Thames-Coromandel District Council area are fortunate that Gary Gotlieb refuses to accept that Sandra Goudies' anti-vax stance has been 'resolved between parties informally' (NZ Herald 08/12/21). He does not accept this and the vaccinated people who are the majority in our area will not either. Stuff interviewed Sandra and her partner on October 20 where she made statements like: "I'm not going to be a leader on this issue for all of the people, but certainly I'm taking a leadership role in representing a view" and it went on to express anti-vax perspectives. This is on the back of another of her most controversial moments as mayor and her refusal to sign the Local Government New Zealand Declaration on Climate Change, a decision a High Court judge later found was unlawful. Sandra does not appear to care that her personal perspectives cannot be divorced from her role as Mayor when she expresses them within the public forum and splitting hairs between being a 'leader' and taking a 'leadership role' doesn't cut it. - M D Passmore, Thames

Mayor Goudie was offered right of reply but declined to comment.



Queen Ngaireanne, right, observes the cake cutting. BELOW: Members enjoy the event.

Red hats

Groups from Waikato and Bay of Plenty's Red Hats Society enjoyed a Christmas lunch at Ngatea Hotel on December 3. Thames Ruby Redz also celebrated 17 years at the event. The Red Hats Society is an international group for women over 50 to promote their dedication to fulfilling lifelong dreams and their passion of fun, friendship, and the freedom to express themselves positively. Reporter GORDON PREECE went along to get amongst the colourful craziness.

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SPORTS

Sports get green light

By KELLEY TANTAU, Public Interest Journalism funded by NZ On Air

Contact sports and swimming at public pools are some of the recreational activities allowed to take place under the country's new Covid-19 traffic light system.

But indoor and outdoor sporting events that don't check vaccine passports cannot go ahead.

Sport New Zealand has released its guidance on participating in, or spectating, sports and active recreation.

Thames Valley is currently in the orange setting, which means all outdoor parks, fields and playgrounds can be open for use. Gyms can also be open if vaccine passes are in use.

For sporting clubs and groups, the report said it was up to the venue or facility to make the choice to ask for proof of vaccination.

"In the first instance, organisations and venue owners should talk to each other about the plan to safely run the sport or recreational activities under the Covid Protection Framework.

"There can be multiple gatherings at one venue, however each gathering needs to take place in a defined space with distance maintained between groups."

According to the report, there are no requirements for physical distancing while play-

ing or participating in sports, and players do not need to wear a mask when taking part.

Indoor and outdoor sporting events that check vaccine passes have no participant or spectator limits; however the same does not apply to events that do not check vaccine passes. According to the report, these events cannot go ahead.

A Sport Waikato spokesperson told *The Profile* they had not been made aware of any situations in which unvaccinated players were not permitted to enter club grounds or premises.

They said clubs and sports, like most organisations, were being encouraged to do their own risk assessment and make decisions that were best for them.

"[It's] still very much a waiting game as we move into the new framework and information is processed by Sport NZ," they said.

In Thames, the Jack McLean Community Recreation Centre and the Thames Centennial Pool are both open.

Wharfs, jetties, playgrounds, skate areas, and fitness equipment are open, too, as well as park assets, including BBQs and drinking fountains, but social distancing and good hygiene practices are encouraged.



Andrew Rogers watches on as he bowls a ball for Valley Demons.



Aryan Patel, left, defends a ball;

The Valley Demons faced off with the Western BOP Falcons in a year 9-10 cricket match held at Hauraki Plains College on December 5. BEVIN JENKINSON from Bev's Cracking Shots caught some of the highlights.



Right: Jacob Cochrane makes an appeal.

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Family’s Christmas lights bring joy

By KELLEY TANTAU, Public Interest Journalism funded by NZ On Air

It takes four weekends of hard work to turn the Kyd family home into a Christmas wonderland. Every November, Trudi organises the display, while her husband Mark walks along the hot roof, laying down the lights. There’s 6000 of them on the roof alone.

The couple have been turning their Paeroa home into a Christmas spectacle every December for a decade. It’s become so popular that come Christmas Eve, cars line the typically-quiet Shaw Ave cul-de-sac.

“Last year there were way more [visitors], whether that was because of Covid, or because people were having a rubbish year... It doesn’t cost them to come for a drive or to walk up to show the kids.”

The pair, who have always been fans of the Yuletide season, started creating a Christmas display around their front yard after being inspired by a now-defunct ‘sights and sounds’ event in Paeroa.

“They’d fire a cannon and all the Christmas lights would come on in the main street,” Trudi said. “That was really cool.”

The couple also have two daughters, and they wanted to do something special for them.

The display includes thousands of colourful lights, twinkling shooting stars, eye-catching Christmas trees, and even inflatable decorations, including a dinosaur purchased this year.

Hundreds of hours goes into laying out the display, with the Kyd’s estimating four weekends of labour is what it takes to get everything ready in time for the first of December.

They said the first year was “trial and error” - but after a decade, they now had things down-pat.

“When we take the lights down, I mark them each year so I know what goes where,” Mark said.

“I roll them up as I go and label them.”

That wasn’t to say there weren’t some frustrating moments.

“I always test the lights before I put them up, because every so often you get one [that doesn’t work]. The other night, I’d finished the roof, and I turned them on, and there was a strip along the top of the garage that just wouldn’t go,” Mark said.

“I had to take that 60 metres [of lights] down and put a new lot up.”

The pair also said because of the low-voltage of the Christmas lights, the display didn’t make a difference to their power bill.

Last year, they entered the Paeroa Christmas Lights competition and placed second. They’ve entered again this year and hope to see people stopping by to witness a bit of the seasonal magic.

“Being our first Covid year last year, we had a family come by and [the mum] said we had made her year. It makes me emotional even now. That was really nice to hear,” Trudi said.


And her advice for anyone wanting to put up their own Christmas display? “Just start small.”



Mark and Trudi Kyd have adorned their Shaw Ave home with spectacular Christmas lights for 10 years. Photos: KELLEY TANTAU



Christmas trees, shooting stars, and even an inflatable dinosaur make up the Christmas wonderland at the Kyd’s.



St John Thames

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