

The Valley Profile

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Tears for Tonga

Alby Tukia broke down when his family in Tonga was finally able to send footage of the devastation caused by the Hunga Tonga–Hunga Ha’apai volcanic eruption in his homeland. KELLEY TANTAU sits down with the local Tongan community president to find out more about the emergency appeal that followed.

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

The Tongan community of Paeroa and Thames has already been enveloped with “so much love” following the Hunga Tonga–Hunga Ha’apai volcanic eruption.

But the attention now has to turn to ensuring the island nation is well equipped for at least the next six months, as a

community leader reports of plantations being “wiped out” by the destruction.

In January, the explosive eruption of Hunga Tonga–Hunga Ha’apai set off an atmospheric shockwave and generated metres-high tsunamis.

The Tongan government has so far confirmed three deaths, and says all structures on the island of Mango were destroyed.

Alby Tukia, the president of the Tongan Community of Thames and Paeroa, has three older siblings, a niece, and cousins living in Tonga.

“They are safe, our land is inland, so we say: we are not the tsunami, we are the ash.”

Alby, who owns Grafton Cottages in Thames with wife Rachel, said when he heard of the eruption and tsunami on Saturday, January 15, he “didn’t

really take any notice of it”.

The volcano had earlier erupted on December 20, 2021, and volcanic activity had continued throughout that week.

“I rang my mum [in Auckland] and asked if she had any news, but she said the [phone lines] were cut off. It wasn’t until Sunday morning when I woke up, and my niece in Tonga had sent me a video, when I

broke down,” Alby said.

“When I saw my niece videoling at 6.30 at night, and the video was black and raining with rock... hearing her voice scared the sh*t out of me.”

Everything was brown, he said, and plantations had been “wiped out”.

“So, any help that Kiwis can give us is valuable, but we’re also asking [for help] for six

CONTINUED ON P2



Alby Tukia (centre) performs with the Tongan Community at the Thames Santa Parade. File Photo: KELLEY TANTAU

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The *Valley Profile* is a community newspaper that delivers 100% local news in the Thames Valley region. We deliver 13,000 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.

NEWS/EDITORIAL

Editor Teresa Ramsey

Ph 0204 0944 853

editor@valleyprofile.co.nz

Senior Reporter Kelley Tantau

Ph 022 619 4889

kelley@valleyprofile.co.nz

Reporter Gordon Preece

Ph 022 174 3988

gordon@valleyprofile.co.nz

ADVERTISING

Ad manager Nikki Sanders

Ph 022 1303 885

Email: nikki@valleyprofile.co.nz

MISSED PAPERS/ADMIN

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'So much love' after eruption

CONTINUED FROM P1

months' time and 12 months' time, too. All of the harvest is out now for the next six months, and 80 per cent of Tongan people get their income from the land and the sea."

Alby, who lived in Tonga until he was 13, had fond memories of the island's "fertile land".

"Put it this way, when I ate watermelon there, I'd spit it outside of the door and I would have a watermelon there in the next two or three weeks. In New Zealand, you spit it out and nothing happens." He said the country was "resilient", and its people would "pick ourselves up and move on with a big smile on our face".

Alby is the youngest of nine children, and after completing his schooling in Auckland, he moved to Palmerston North to play rugby. It was there he met his future wife, Rachel. The couple moved overseas, where Alby picked up rugby contracts in both North America and London.

They ended up living in the United Kingdom for 10 years. But after arriving back in New Zealand and choosing Thames to settle down, he realised there was a small but strong Tongan community in the area. What started as just three families had since grown to 11, all residing around Thames and Paeroa, and all passionate about sharing their culture, Alby said.

"Since the time we got the Tongan Community running, it has turned into one amazing roller coaster." The community participated in local Christmas parades



Alby Tukia has three older siblings, a niece, and cousins living in Tonga, who are "all safe".

Photo: KELLEY TANTAU

for 2019 and 2020, showcasing the traditional dances tau'olunga and kailao. They also perform at cultural shows around the district.

"People ask us: 'How do you make it look so big?' - especially when you look at the Christmas parade. But we're just loud and proud; we're proud of who we are," Alby said.

They're now asking for residents to give back by donating what they can through Facebook.

They also put on a fundraising stall at Little Toke in Thames over the weekend, where they sold Tongan food and drink, and per-

formed island songs.

"Everyone asks me: are you Kiwi, are you British, or are you Tongan? In my heart, I'm always going to be Tongan... but I am blessed to have New Zealand and England as my adopted countries, too," Alby said. "And there's so much love here from the community."

DETAILS: To donate, visit the Tongan Tsunami Fundraising - Thames/ Paeroa' Facebook page.



Covid-19 cases in Paeroa, Waihi

Two positive cases of Covid-19 were reported in Paeroa, and one in Waihi, on Saturday.

A Paeroa case visited One3One Restaurant Cafe & Bar in Paeroa on January 24 between 6:16pm and 8pm. The Ministry of Health said anyone who visited the restaurant during those times must self-isolate and test immediately.

In a social media post, the restaurant said all staff working that night were in self-isolation and the restaurant had been deep cleaned as per Ministry of Health advice.

The staff member serving tables during that time had returned a negative test result, and other staff members were waiting for their test results.

"We would like to thank all of our customers who visited us today despite knowing we were the location of interest earlier," the post said on Sunday.

"We understand this news may concern our customers within the Paeroa and wider community."

"We are asking you to continue to support your favourite local eatery, one3one, during these uncertain times."

Paeroa Medical Centre was open for Covid-19 testing over the weekend, and recommended those wanting to be tested call first as they anticipated long queues. "After our experiences on Saturday - make sure you bring a drink to keep hydrated while you are waiting for your test - it gets very hot sitting in your car in a queue," the centre said.

PREPARE FOR OMICRON, P4

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Thames Tides

Wed Feb 2	Thu Feb 3	Fri Feb 4	Sat Feb 5	Sun Feb 6	Mon Feb 7	Tue Feb 8
 Morning: 2:28am 0.3, 2:55pm 0.5 Afternoon: 8:51am 3.7, 9:13pm 3.6 Best At: 1:53am 2:22pm Rise: 7:04am, Set: 9:29pm	 Morning: 3:18am 0.3, 3:46pm 0.4 Afternoon: 9:42am 3.8, 10:04pm 3.6 Best At: 2:49am 3:14pm Rise: 8:17am, Set: 10:02pm	 Morning: 4:05am 0.3, 4:35pm 0.4 Afternoon: 10:30am 3.8, 10:51pm 3.6 Best At: 3:39am 4:03pm Rise: 9:26am, Set: 10:32pm	 Morning: 4:50am 0.4, 5:22pm 0.5 Afternoon: 11:17am 3.7, 11:36pm 3.5 Best At: 4:26am 4:49pm Rise: 10:31am, Set: 10:58pm	 Morning: 5:35am 0.5, 12:04pm 3.6 Afternoon: 6:07pm 0.6 Best At: 5:11am 6:32pm Rise: 11:34am, Set: 11:24pm	 Morning: 12:20am 3.4, 12:50pm 3.5 Afternoon: 6:21am 0.7, 6:52pm 0.7 Best At: 5:54am 6:15pm Rise: 12:35pm, Set: 11:49pm	 Morning: 1:05am 3.3, 1:36pm 3.3 Afternoon: 7:09am 0.9, 7:37pm 0.8 Best At: 6:37am 6:59pm Rise: 1:36pm

*Not for navigational purposes. Graphic supplied by OceanFun Publishing Ltd. www.tidewiz.com www.tidespy.com www.ofu.co.nz

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	High	Low
Coromandel	-0	05	-0 04
Whitianga	-0	02	-0 05
Tairua	+0	10	+0 21
Whangamata	-0	07	-0 07
Waihi Beach	-0	12	-0 12

HDC Mayor: Prepare for Omicron



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

Hauraki's mayor says Omicron could spread rapidly through the "tight-knit" community, and is asking residents to "do the best they can" to protect themselves.

As of January 28, there were 105 active Omicron cases throughout New Zealand. The Ministry of Health said all of the evidence so far pointed to Omicron being the most transmissible Covid-19 variant yet.

"It's out there in parts of New Zealand now, and all the modelling we've seen around the world is showing us that it will spread and spread fast, so everyone should make sure they're doing the best they can to protect themselves," Hauraki Mayor Toby Adams said.

"We're a tight-knit community and we hang out together a lot, so there is a real risk that it gets here and spreads through... and the more people you've got off work, the less things are getting done, and it has an impact on everyone."

The council has not mandated vaccines for its staff and elected members, nor for use of its facilities. Mayor Adams

didn't believe there were any unvaccinated councillors in the organisation.

"We struggle to see how you can [mandate it] at a council. It doesn't seem right to me to stop people coming in or using the facilities when there are other measures you can put in place," he said. "We know there are people that are vaccinated and are unvaccinated, so we just go with that cautious approach. While under red and orange, we're not going to hold

"We struggle to see how you can [mandate it] at a council. It doesn't seem right to me to stop people coming in or using the facilities when there are other measures you can put in place."

- Toby Adams

large gatherings and put people at risk."

Meanwhile, Thames-Coromandel District Council has reviewed and updated their recently-adopted Covid-19 Policy in the midst of Omicron's arrival into the community.

Back in December, all staff and elected members were told they needed to have had their first dose of the Covid-19 vaccine to enter council workplaces.

That meant unvaccinated mayor Sandra Goudie would have to chair meetings remotely.

The first public meeting utilising the new regulation was held last week, but was over within three minutes.

Mayor Goudie, who tuned in via video call, told The Profile the meeting was "absolutely fine" and did not impact on her abilities "at all".

She declined to comment on Omicron's arrival into the community.

Following her council's Covid-19 policy review, unvaccinated staff must continue to work remotely; however, they are now allowed to attend critical meetings if they provide a negative Rapid Antigen Test (RAT) result.

For a meeting to be deemed critical, a group manager or the chief executive must provide approval.

"Our aim during a period where there is not yet any community transmission in our district is to keep all of our staff connected and monitored for their well-being and performance," chief executive Rob Williams - who has recently resigned from the post - said.

"If we do have confirmation of community transmission in our district, then we'll review our policy again."



Red light for region's events

By GORDON PREECE

St George's 150th celebrations are among a growing list of postponed events after New Zealand's shift to the red setting on January 23 to combat Omicron.

Under the red traffic light framework, events can only take place with gatherings of up to 100 people with vaccine passes, or 25 without.

St George's Church on Thames' Mackay St planned to have a thanksgiving service on January 28, a public opening between January 31 and February 4, and a church service on February 5 for their 150th celebrations. Paul Jennings, who's heading the celebrations, said he was 'terribly disappointed' they've had to postpone them. "Under red we're only allowed 100 people at the most and we've got many more who wanted to attend," he said.

"So we feel it's better to postpone the celebrations indefinitely until we can have more people," he said.

Paul said another reason for the postponement was because the committee had put a lot of work into the celebrations and they didn't want to waste it on a peeled back service.

Paeroa events have also been

postponed, including the Paeroa Twilight Markets that were scheduled for this month, and the Whisky and Haggis Evening set for February 12.

Paeroa Art in the Park, which was set to take place on March 5 at the former Paeroa Racecourse, is another event that's been postponed.

Organiser Lyn McHugh said she was "gutted".

"We've had 38 fantastic stallholders booked in, but with the Omicron variant winging through New Zealand, there's no way we can keep the event to 100 people and keep everyone safe," she said. "But it's one of those things, I think we had it in the back of our minds that something like this would happen."

Lyn said she hoped the event would go ahead later in the year.

Repeco Beach Hop 22, which includes days in Thames and Waihi, has been postponed from March to November 23-27, while the Thames Valley Chess Championships on April 9, and the Historic Kōpū Bridge Society train ride on February 6 have also been postponed until further notice.

The three-day Hootnanny Country Music Festival on February 25 hadn't been officially cancelled but organisers said it was highly unlikely to proceed.



Paul Jennings says St George's 150th celebrations could not go ahead in the red setting. File Photo: GORDON PREECE

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Drivers break rules due to testing backlog

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

Gavin Buchanan was waiting for his next pupil to pull up for a driving lesson.

When they did, he was surprised to find them driving by themselves, and without their 'L' plates stuck to the windows.

It wasn't the first time he'd witnessed it, either.

"And these are the honest drivers," he said. "They know they're not up to scratch, and that's why they're getting lessons, so that they can pass [a driving test] first time."

Mr Buchanan owns Thames Driver Training, which offers everything from learner licence courses, one-on-one in-car driver training, defensive driving courses, as well as preparation for restricted and full licence tests.

He said people were breaking the rules of holding a learner or restricted drivers licence because wait times for sitting a test through VTNZ in Thames remained "frustrating".

He believed the provider was supposed to offer a driving test to a person within 14 days, but VTNZ did not confirm that and instead said national wait times were sitting at around 51 days.

"Before Covid was even a thing, people of Thames have had to put up with a three-four month delay in sitting their driving test.

"I've got drivers coming through for their learner licence in their 50s and 60s, and regardless of who they are, once they're ready to do their test,



Thames Driver Training owner Gavin Buchanan says driver testing wait times are too long. Photo: KELLEY TANTAU

they should be able to do it while it's fresh in their mind so they can pass and drive legally. A lot of them are having to drive illegally," Mr Buchanan said.

"We want them to drive safely, and it's very frustrating that they're trying to do the right thing, but they're forced into a situation where they can't complete it due to something out of their own control.

"They need, not want, to have

their driver licence," he said.

Thames Police Community Constable Gareth Carter said Te Huarahi, an initiative developed by The Ministry of Social Development, in collaboration with the police, was currently focused on driver licencing in the Thames Valley.

"We understand that a high percentage of people we deal with who result in court action come through as minor traffic

offences as a result of driving unlicensed," he said.

"So, we see a huge value in assisting those youth to obtain their licences, which increases the chance of employment and personal growth."

Mr Carter believed the issue was nationwide, and needed to be remedied so offending drivers didn't fall into a "downward spiral".

"During my career, I've ob-

served that once a person goes down that track, it's a really hard cycle to stop. For example, if you were disqualified from driving for six months, which is often the minimum requirement for a lot of traffic matters, within those six months you may decide to go down the road to get a loaf of bread from the dairy.

"You'll get stopped again and get another six months, and that compounds. People may lose their licence for several years and that's something we don't want to happen."

VTNZ operations support manager James Law said the provider saw a "surge in demand" after each lockdown period throughout 2020 and 2021, and testing had been limited in part by ongoing Covid-19 health and safety restrictions. It was also experiencing the regular summer peak in demand.

"VTNZ has employed a new driver testing officer to be based in Thames. They are expected to begin testing at the end of March after completing a certification course. Seven additional driver testing officers for the Auckland and Waikato regions will also be participating in this course," Mr Law said.

"We know how important it is for people to get a driver's licence and we will continue to work with Waka Kotahi to clear the backlog created by the lockdown, but it will take some time."



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Death in childbirth causes outrage



As part of a Valley Profile series, **MEGHAN HAWKES** explores our local history by seeking out stories of life and death in the Thames Valley

“For God’s sake, Mrs Craig, what is the matter?” cried Theresa Molloy on seeing her Hape Creek neighbour.

It was a Monday morning in June, 1879, and Elizabeth Craig, who was pregnant, was in bed, shivering and very white in the face. Elizabeth’s eldest son was sent to get Eliza Jackson, midwife, who came at once. The midwife placed all the clothes she could find on Elizabeth, applied jars of hot water to her feet and gave her hot brandy and water. She was expecting Mrs Craig to be confined the next month and had been engaged for then. She went to Mr Bateman, the butcher, and asked him to go for a doctor.

Dr Robert Andrews arrived around 12.50pm. About 10 minutes before he arrived, haemorrhage had set in. He told the midwife to administer brandy. He asked Mrs Craig when she expected her confinement but she could not speak. Her husband Arthur told him she had arrived at full term. Dr Andrews then left and returned with tincture of ergot,



Ivy climbs over the headstone of Elizabeth Craig. Photo: SUPPLIED

which he administered at about a quarter of a teaspoon in half a tumbler of water. Half an hour later, he gave Elizabeth another dose and the haemorrhage stopped. He remained until 5.15pm and returning shortly after found her much better. He planned to remain all night in hopes of the confinement coming off.

He suggested the women change Elizabeth for the night. The midwife called for Theresa Molloy to warm the clothes and when things were ready the doctor gently drew Elizabeth on to his knee while they made the bed. The bed was nearly made when the midwife saw a sudden change in Elizabeth, and the doctor said: “Send for Dr Kilgour.” Dr Andrews lay Elizabeth down on the bed but within minutes she was dead.

At the inquest held at Granaty’s Hotel, Hape Creek, Dr Andrews said when he attended Mrs Craig he did not consider the

case dangerous as he succeeded in staunching the blood. Had he not had the bed cleaned, secondary fever would have set in, killing the woman in no time. He sent for Dr Kilgour but somehow he got the wrong message and did not come. Dr Andrews had a practice of 24 years in midwifery and had four similar cases since coming to Thames, all of which turned out safe.

The midwife said she had seen similar cases in India. She considered there was no danger in lifting the patient from the bed. Drs Kilgour and Payne gave evidence that labour should have been induced by artificial means. At the inquest the jury returned the verdict that if ordinary measures had been used Elizabeth would have survived.

The death of Elizabeth Craig caused great outrage with serious accusations being levelled against Dr Andrews. Infighting amongst Thames doctors was vindictive and continued for years with Dr Payne being the main agitator. Newspaper editorials and letters to editors were divided. One said: “Either Dr Andrews is morally guilty of the death of the woman, or he is the victim of a professional jealousy, which has taken a most dastardly course to exhibit itself”.

Elizabeth was buried at Shortland cemetery. She and Arthur had seven children aged one to 18 years. In an awful postscript, two years later Arthur, who had moved to Hamilton with the youngest of their children, became addicted to drink and deliberately burned himself to death. His brother took charge of the children. Dr Andrews left Thames six months after Elizabeth’s death.



Riana Manuel and her brother, Dr Martin Mikaere, at Wharekawa Marae in Whakatiwai, after Covid-19 was found in the community last year.

National job for Riana

CONTINUED FROM P3

performance of the system to reduce health inequities for Māori.

“If there is one thing I am sure of, it is that I have enough experiences of what poor health looks like to know where we don’t want to go, and this is an opportunity to be the change we want to see,” she said.

“I apologise in advance if we don’t get it right straight away, but the one thing I do know about myself is that I will push on until we get it right.”

Riana and her siblings grew up in Manaia, in the Coromandel.

Her parents, Harry and Ruth, raised them with a strong connection to their whakapapa

(genealogy), something Riana regularly reminds herself of.


“Mum was a registered nurse... she was the nurse on the ambulance, and dad was the driver,” she said.

“Dad is of Māori descent, mum is Pākehā; they are the ultimate expression of partnership, and they raised us children exactly like that.

“So, everything I do is to try and ensure that the footprints I leave behind are footprints our babies can follow and can be a guide for where to go,” she said.

“Everything that drives my decision-making here on in is being a good tupuna (ancestor)”.





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New website launched for The Treasury

By GORDON PREECE

The Treasury has launched a new website to allow members of the public more access to the region's historical artifacts.

The heritage research centre on Thames' Queen St, collects, cares for and shares diverse historical records from the Thames-Coromandel and Hauraki districts.

The new website's lead, Beth Mackay, said The Treasury's new website, which was launched on January 24, was needed after its former website was taken down early last year when the database was hacked.

"We wanted to make the new website future-focused and informative with a nice design because a lot of historical institutions are perceived to be dusty and old fashioned," she said.

The new website, which cost \$9000 and took six months to create, was made possible by a combination of many funding applications and hundreds of volunteer hours. "We had a very generous anonymous donation towards the website and a [\$6000] grant from Lotteries Environment and Heritage, and had wonderful web designers in Auckland who helped us with the design," she said.

The Treasury then approached a photographer who sold the rights to use a photo he took of the building at dusk with its lights on for the new website's home page.

"We've missed having our website because people from anywhere in New Zealand and



The Treasury manager Lucy Gable-Thom, left, and new website lead Beth Mackay are excited about the new website. Photo: GORDON PREECE

places like Australia, USA, UK and Canada would contact The Treasury with research enquiries and our volunteers would be able to do the research for them.

"So we're hoping the new website makes it so much easier for people to do this."

Users of the new website will also be able to find out about The Treasury's collections, purchase books from their online store and get involved in The Treasury.

Beth said one of The Treasury's biggest collections included the A&G Price Collection.

"The reading I've done is that when gold was discovered here, it regenerated Auckland because there was heaps of work needed and was why A&G Price was set up here," she said.

"During the peak of gold mining the population of Thames was around 20,000 and the population of Auckland was around 11,000," she said.

"That's why a lot of Kiwis have connections to the area."

Beth said after A&G Price went into liquidation in 2017, all their records came to The Treasury, including photos and books with the workers' names and their wages all written in ink.

Beth said The Treasury's next phase was digitally cataloging what was in their archives for the website.

"We only know a small portion of what's in there because

when The Treasury first opened, people flocked in with their family collections and records and all the volunteers could do with this influx of material was clean them and catalog them by hand," she said.

"So the website's part of a bigger strategy of digitally cataloging everything and making it available online."

DETAILS: The Treasury's new website can be found at: www.the-treasury.org.nz.



Rural Life

Wetlands on farm offer major benefits



By Bala TikkiSETTY

Wetlands are like giant kidneys, protecting the health of waterways by helping to dilute and filter harmful material.

With World Wetlands Day occurring on 2 February, it is a good time to reflect on these and other benefits that wetlands provide.

Wetlands once covered large areas of the country. Now they are some of our rarest and most at-risk ecosystems. They contain a diverse range of plants and animals and are home to many rare and threatened species that are remnants of the original biodiversity of the area. It is estimated that about 90 per cent of New Zealand's wetlands have been drained over time, with wetlands now occupying only about two per cent of the country's total land area. This is one of the largest wetland losses anywhere in the world.

Wetland is a generic term for the wet margins of lakes, ponds, rivers, streams, estuaries, lagoons, bogs and swamps.

Natural wetlands have been appropriately termed the 'kidneys of the landscape', because of their ability to store, assimilate and transform contaminants lost from the land before they reach waterways.

One of the practices for reducing the effects of intensive agriculture is to strategically incorporate wetlands into farming systems. Sometimes it may be as simple as fencing out existing wet areas, or it might involve creating one with a low bank. Many farms have low-lying and wet areas that can be managed as small wetlands with minimal impact on farm production, but potentially major benefits for water quality and biodiversity.

Nitrogen, phosphorous, sediment and pathogens enter waterways through groundwater and surface runoff. Wetland vegetation uses these nutrients for growth. Research indicates that wetlands remove up to 90 per cent of nitrates from groundwater through a process called denitrification. Wetland plants trap sediment suspended in water, improving water quality. In riparian areas, their roots hold a stream bank together, reducing erosion.

Nutrient loss from farms is greatest when the volume and speed of runoff water is greatest, either through surface runoff or through the soil profile. Therefore, slowing down and controlling water movements across farmland is a critical factor in reducing nutrient loss into waterways.

A series of small, shallow sediment traps or sediment retention dams can be constructed throughout the catchment to take some of the energy out of the water. If these are managed to remain wet for most of the year, they will replace those kidney-like functions and enhance the farm's environmental outcomes.

Wetlands will also regulate the flow of water by soaking up excess floodwater and then slowly releasing it to maintain summer flows or recharge groundwater.



It's estimated about 90 per cent of New Zealand's wetlands have been drained.

Photo: SUPPLIED/WRC

Bigger is generally better, but within a farm, small areas are good because you can create more of them, they are generally well-suited to fit into a farm's budget and topography, they

treat the contaminants close to where they come from, and they can generate a more widespread biodiversity benefit across your farm.

Waikato Regional Council can offer free advice to landowners on managing wetlands, including information on fencing, planting and weed control.

It's important to check the rules and regulations, and to seek good quality advice to ensure our wetlands are properly cared for as complex, delicate ecosystems in a productive agricultural landscape.

Before undertaking any excavation work, always check with your local council on regulations regarding earthworks in and

around natural waterways and wetlands. Councils generally have rules regarding the height of embankments and dams, the size of the catchment impounded and the total volume or area of earthworks. Fish passage may also need to be maintained where areas of suitable habitat occur upstream.

I also suggest all farmers and landowners read the recently updated informative document called Farmer's Guide to Environmental Rules on our website: waikatoregion.govt.nz/for-farmers.

Bala TikkiSETTY is a sustainable agriculture advisor (technical) at Waikato Regional Council: bala.tikkisetty@waikatoregion.govt.nz.

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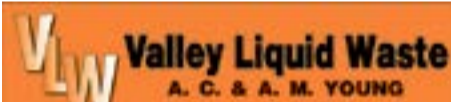
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Rural Life

Rural homeowners' 'defensible space' against fire



Puriri Volunteer Fire Brigade's station officer Leanne Cryer dampens down a reignited smouldering fire. Photo: SUPPLIED

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

Native trees kanuka and manuka are two of the high flammability species Fire and Emergency NZ don't recommend planting close to home, while kapuka and karaka are among those more resistant to fire.

This summer, rural residents who are at greater risk of wild-fires, are being reminded to take precautions to protect their lives, homes, and property.

With the Thames Valley in a prohibited fire season, and with little rain on the horizon, Puriri Volunteer Fire Brigade chief fire officer Wayne Cryer said it wouldn't take much for a fire to start.

"It's been five years since we had the Coromandel Comers Rd fire, where several structures were lost in a wildfire... It is getting really dry out there, [and] even a stone from a lawn mower being used on a hot, dry day has the potential to start a fire," he said.

The prohibited fire season for the Thames-Coromandel district came into effect on December 20, and was expanded into the greater Waikato region on January 19.

"So far, the residents in the Puriri and surrounding areas have been adhering to the fire season restrictions," Mr Cryer said.

"We ask anyone who had a

PROTECT YOUR PROPERTY

Reduce the threat of fires by establishing and maintaining the following two safety zones around your home:

Zone one (extends to 10 metres on all sides of the house) - convert to lawn and plant fire-resistant plants and trees; remove flammable material and debris;

Zone two (from 10 to 30 metres around the home) - remove scrub and thin excess trees; evenly space remaining trees so they aren't touching; prune large trees and remove all branches within two metres of the ground; remove dead or dying trees; remove overhanging branches near power lines.

land clearing burn, or outdoor fire anytime in December to go back and check it is totally out.

"We say this as we have been called to check on a fire that was burnt back at the beginning of December, and even though it appeared to be out, the hot, dry weather conditions, with a bit of wind, reignited a stump that was amongst the burn pile."

According to Fire and Emergency, creating a safety zone around your home - also known as a defensible space - is one way rural homeowners can be prepared in case of fire this summer.

The defensible space is the area around a home where vegetation has been modified, reduced, or cleared to create a barrier and slow the spread of fire.

A safety zone also allows space for firefighters to fight the fire safely.

Creating a safety zone involves reducing fuels around the home and using fire-resistant plants for landscaping. These plants aren't fireproof but they do not readily ignite. They have characteristics such as: moist, supple leaves; watery sap that doesn't have a

strong odour; and low levels of sap or resin.

Kapuka, karaka, kawakawa, and marbleleaf are examples of low flammability species.

"Throughout New Zealand there have been a number of cases where owners have followed our advice by planting low flammability plants, and keeping gutters clear of needles and leaves," Mr Cryer said.

"During a wildfire, it is an 'ember attack' which causes most houses to ignite, with embers landing in gutters and voids. Embers can travel up to two kilometres from a wildfire.

"We encourage our communities to remain vigilant, and if they see smoke or fire to ring 111 immediately, especially those in the rural areas where there is limited or no reticulated water."

DETAILS: The Fire and Emergency NZ website www.checkitsalright.nz has useful tips on how to reduce the risk of wildfire, and the importance of having an escape plan.



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HEALTH & WELLBEING



Vaccination boosters help reduce transmission, Ministry of Health says. File Photo: KELLEY TANTAU

Getting prepared for Omicron

As Covid-19's rapidly-spreading variant Omicron makes its way around the country, the Ministry of Health has released its advice on how to prepare for the virus.

Omicron was first identified in mid-November, 2021.

It is much more transmissible than previous variants of the Covid-19 virus, including Delta; however, the same measures which kept the country safe against Delta were still effective against Omicron, the Ministry said.

"Vaccination and boosters help to reduce transmission of the virus. Remember, if you don't get the virus, you can't give it to someone else."

The Ministry is encouraging eligible New Zealanders to have their booster shots, for better protection against the latest variant. Children aged 5-11 are

also now able to receive the paediatric Pfizer vaccine.

People are also encouraged to prepare a kit for their home and make a plan if they, or someone in their household, becomes a positive Covid-19 case.

"If travelling around the country over summer, have a plan in place if you become unwell or test positive. It will also be important to continue to protect ourselves and our whānau and stop the transmission of the disease by following health habits."

These include: keeping indoor rooms well ventilated; wearing masks and face coverings; keeping a physical distance of 2 metres where possible; and keeping a record of places visited, and scanning the QR codes.

More information is available at: www.covid19.govt.nz.



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408 Tararu Road, Thames Deadline Sale

DEADLINE SALE - Offers to be received no later than 4pm Weds 16th February. May be sold prior. Offers in excess of \$620,000. This 2 bedroom, compact, low maintenance home is located in Kuranui Bay. Modern kitchen & bathroom with Kauri tongue & groove floors throughout. Close to Thames town centre.

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RN1408 2 beds, 2 baths, 1 living, 1 garage

320 Ngati Maru Highway, Thames Deadline Sale

Deadline Sale 9th February (unless sold prior). Offers in excess \$780,000. Here is an exceptional opportunity to own this 4 bedroom, 3 bathroom home and to look into the options that are offered here. Vendors have recently subdivided (awaiting title) giving 320 Ngati Maru now 686 m2 more or less.

RT5677 - EVELYN LOWRY 021 828 384 4 beds, 3 baths, 2 living, 2 garages

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

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HARD

35

HARD

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MEDIUM

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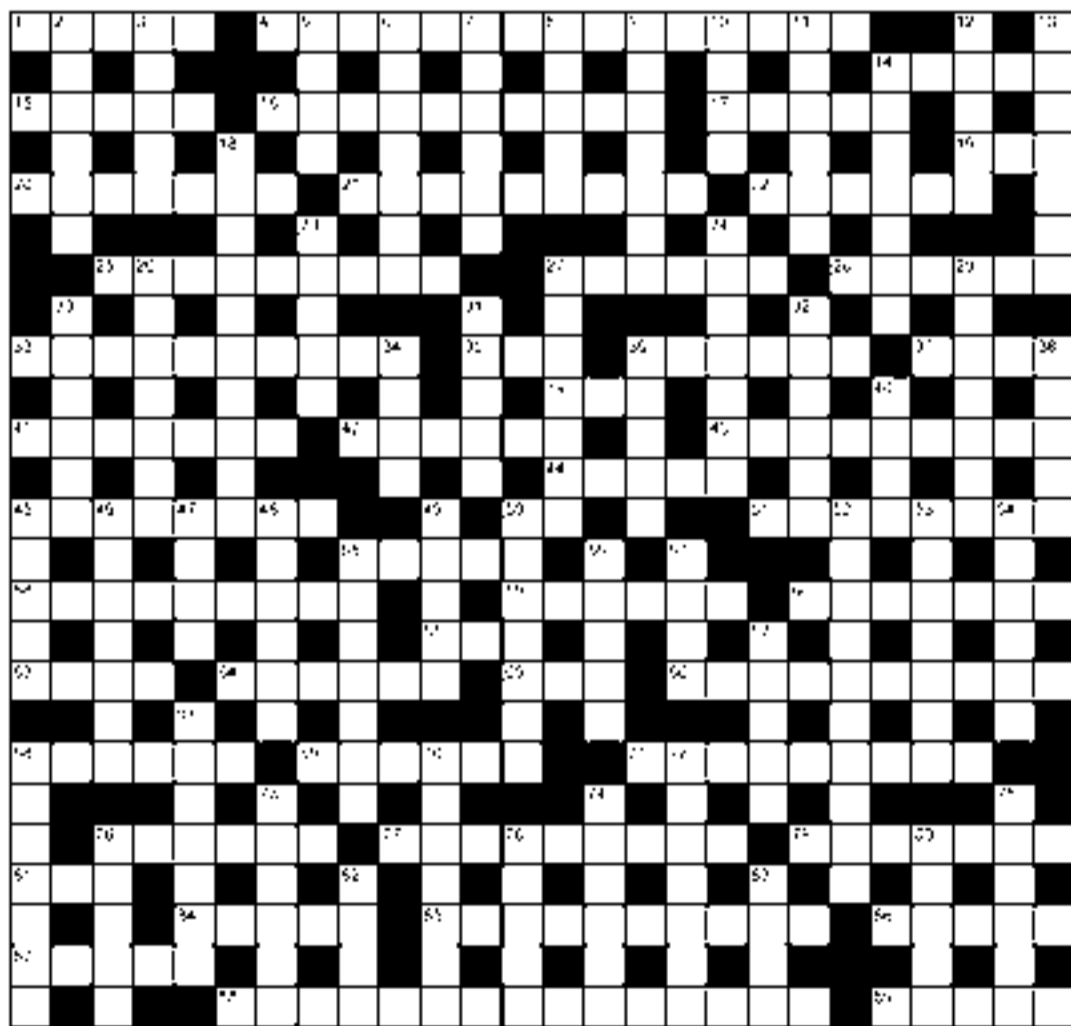
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4	1	6	1	2	5	8	9	7	3

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JUMBO CROSSWORD

55

- ACROSS**
- 1 Hot water burn (5)
 - 4 Unflappable; calm in a crisis (4,2,1,8)
 - 14 Go in (5)
 - 15 Shelf (5)
 - 16 Worked properly (10)
 - 17 Eating utensil (5)
 - 19 Fabric scrap (3)
 - 20 Inflatable bag (7)
 - 21 Baby's seat (9)
 - 22 Powerful (6)
 - 25 Gristle (9)
 - 27 Motor fuel (6)
 - 28 Disloyal (6)
 - 33 Citrus fruit (10)
 - 35 Slippery fish (3)
 - 36 Disclose (6)
 - 37 Information (4)
 - 39 Female sheep (3)
 - 41 Art of clipping trees into decorative shapes (7)
 - 42 Bicycle built for two (6)
 - 43 Financial obligation (9)
 - 44 Cereal crop (5)
 - 45 Throw overboard (8)
 - 50 Mother (2)
 - 51 Malady (8)
 - 55 Around (5)
 - 58 Main (9)
 - 59 Poked with elbow (6)
 - 60 Disrespectful laugh (7)
 - 61 Donkey (3)
 - 63 Hammered pin (4)
 - 64 Help (6)
 - 65 Dudgeon (3)
 - 66 Sorry (10)
 - 68 Airstrip (6)
 - 69 Signal fire (6)
 - 71 Make worse (9)
 - 76 Jewellery item (6)
 - 77 Bibliothecary (9)
 - 79 Without assistance (7)
 - 81 Regret bitterly (3)
 - 84 Take place (5)
 - 85 Sleeping garment (10)
 - 86 Snake (5)
 - 87 Let (5)
 - 88 Insignificant amount (1,4,2,3,5)
 - 89 Cast out (5)
 - DOWN**
 - 2 Roman dictator (6)
 - 3 Allowed by law (5)
 - 5 Responsibility (4)
 - 6 Wiping with tongue (7)
 - 7 Lightly-built (6)
 - 8 Spiral seashell (5)
 - 9 Analgesic drug (7)
 - 10 Greatest part (4)
 - 11 Not native (6)
 - 12 Yarn (5)
 - 13 Brittle (7)
 - 14 Bewitch (7)
 - 18 Heraldic bearings (4,2,4)
 - 23 Photograph book (5)
 - 24 Obsequious (7)
 - 26 Officially assign to office (7)
 - 27 Predicament (7)
 - 29 See (7)
 - 30 Furrow (6)
 - 31 Power cables (5)
 - 32 Hunting expedition (6)
 - 34 Defrost (4)
 - 36 Gum (5)
 - 38 Bottomless pit (5)
 - 40 Glossy fabric (4)
 - 45 Asian country (5)
 - 46 Instruction (7)
 - 47 Prickling (4)
 - 48 Be against (6)
 - 49 Medicate (5)
 - 50 Grand house (7)
 - 52 Never act on (anag) (10)
 - 53 Be remiss about (7)
 - 54 Escalate (4,2)
 - 55 Alleged (7)
 - 56 Tacked on (5)
 - 57 Dread (4)
 - 62 Smug smile (5)
 - 67 Coloured arch (7)
 - 68 Military withdrawal (7)
 - 70 Italian wine (7)
 - 72 Vividly descriptive (7)
 - 73 Calm (6)
 - 74 Squirm (6)
 - 75 Erase (6)
 - 76 Beautiful woman (5)
 - 78 Prerogative (5)
 - 80 Alphabetic reference (5)
 - 82 Threesome (4)
 - 83 Opera solo (4)



PREVIOUS SOLUTION

ACROSS: 1 Barge, 4 Drink like a fish, 11 Anvil, 14 Stout, 15 Bow and arrow, 16 Obituary, 19 Amalgam, 20 Fewer, 21 Cataclysm, 24 Bloodbath, 26 Bridle, 27 Sparse, 31 Basic, 32 Estimate, 34 Psychiatry, 38 Insulin, 39 Intend, 40 Dainty, 41 Tram, 42 Essence, 45 Breathless, 50 Estuary, 54 Vary, 55 Attire, 56 Rascal, 57 Cutback, 60 Shamefaced, 61 Uprising, 62 Happy, 65 Avenue, 66 Grouch, 67 Committee, 72 Dark horse, 73 Haven, 74 Javelin, 79 Egg white, 80 Disobedient, 81 Putty, 82 Tweed, 83 Second thoughts, 84 Apple.

DOWN: 2 Autumn, 3 Gruel, 5 Room, 6 Nearest, 7 Ledger, 8 Kirk, 9 Aromatic, 10 Hobble, 11 Antiseptic, 12 Veal, 13 Layette, 17 Baton, 18 Ballistics, 22 Abuse, 23 Criteria, 25 Leisure, 26 Breadth, 28 Taints, 29 Camera, 30 Scythe, 33 Inner, 35 Yummy, 36 Disc, 37 Edge, 42 Elves, 43 Streamer, 44 Extras, 45 Bridegroom, 46 Eden, 47 Through, 48 Lustre, 49 Slaps, 51 Sour, 52 Umbrage, 53 Recipe, 58 Bequeathed, 59 Enemy, 63 Question, 64 Atlas, 65 Ancient, 68 Obeying, 69 Skates, 70 Gazebo, 71 Pistol, 75 Equip, 76 Ogre, 77 Jolt, 78 Knit.

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"People can study locally with us and gain qualifications so they're work ready," she said.

"Quite often people who haven't finished their school education come in here and can get NCEA, plus something specific to their learning outcomes, so that's pretty life changing for them."

Andrea said Valley Education's open to anyone and they're all encouraged to do the best for themselves.

"We're happy to be a part of their learning process and see them on their way to wherever they want to go next," she said.

Valley Education also offers driver training and plans to launch defensive driving courses soon.

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Last month's winner of the Lotto Ticket was Mary Jamieson, who found Pete in the January 19 edition in the Hauraki Plains Motors advert. Go to page 2 for details on how to enter.

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The Valley Profile PAPER RUNNER

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Please apply to admin@valleyprofile.co.nz



The first Valley Lions cricket team competed in Hawke's Bay.

Photo: SUPPLIED

Local Lions compete in Riverbend cricket

The yawning 'holidays gap' in the middle of the cricket season which hinders the development of many young New Zealand players, has been partly offset in recent seasons by various school age tournaments being organized throughout the country.

The annual Riverbend programme under the control of the Hawke's Bay Cricket Association provides great opportunities for future stars of the game, as well as parents and supporters, to develop friendships in addition to the player's social and cricketing skills.

For the first time, a local team, called the Valley Lions, was entered in the Senior Secondary Schools division. Teams from Wellington, Hawkes Bay and Auckland provided older and more experienced opposition for the lads to test themselves against. Ironically, the team's only win came in a match

which was heading towards a loss. Three very narrow defeats resulted after very tight finishes, which should have been won. Hopefully mistakes made under pressure will prove beneficial for players' future cricketing careers. During the tournament, all Valley Lions players were given equal opportunities to display their skills, with everyone having a least one moment of glory with a major contribution to the team's performances and results.

The Valley Lions team includes captain Hunter Crowe, Trent Ball, Cullen Crowe, Cooper Green, Daniel Sproul, Nihindu Wickramathunga, (Hauraki Plains College) Shane Speed (Thames High School), Noah Clewlow, Richie Gemmell, Sam Storey (Te Aroha College) and Benji Bell (St Peters School Cambridge). Manager: Glenn Crowe (Tairua Stingrays).

- Mike Cotter

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Whether your club is a sports club, a social club or a service club you can use this opportunity to call for members and/or volunteers or to let our readers know more about what you are all about.

If you would like more information on this please contact *Nikki* on either 022 130 3885 or nikki@valleyprofile.co.nz by February 4th



The Valley Profile

Art awards set to celebrate local artists

By GORDON PREECE

This year's Annual Art Awards exhibition hosted by Paeroa Society of Arts this month aims to celebrate their members' work.

The awards, which were previously called the members exhibition, will take place between February 4 and 28 at the society's Normanby Rd art gallery.

There will be awards for painting, pottery and other media including mosaics, textiles and wearable arts.

There will also be a special category for spring-themed art because members have that artwork from when the awards were set to go ahead in September last year before being delayed by Covid-19 restrictions.

Paeroa Society of Arts director Jessica Lines said holding this year's awards was quite difficult due to the Covid situation but the event had been made possible by the society's hardworking committee.

"Normally we'd have a fancy opening ceremony and go all out celebrating our artists but this year we've decided it's better to advertise and celebrate our artists [with an exhibition]," she said.

"We have between 80 to 100 entries but that's probably not as many entries as there's been in the past."



Paeroa Society of Arts director Jessica Lines encourages members of the public to visit during the Annual Art Awards at the society's Normanby Rd gallery during February.

Photo: GORDON PREECE

For members to enter the awards, their artwork needed to be created within the past 12 months and not previously exhibited.

The awards will be judged by a local painter and potter on February 4 before informing the winners and posting photos of their artwork on

Paeroa Society of Arts' Facebook page.

Jessica also encourages the public to vote for their favorite artwork for the People's Choice Award to be announced at the end of February.

The society's also seeking donations to help with their

building fund, which includes a \$15,000 earthquake report and new facilities.

Jessica couldn't say exactly how much they had raised so far but said they raised around \$600 from a Christmas raffle last year and planned to hold another raffle later this year.

The society also uses part of

new member's subscriptions to go towards their building fund.

"We'll be trying to apply for funding this year and if anyone could make a voluntary donation or purchase artwork that would be a big help towards our building fund," she said.



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