

The Valley Profile

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Widow fears deportation

The photos of Carrie Geng’s wedding to Henry Lin bring tears to her eyes but also a smile.

They evoke memories of little more than two years ago, getting married at Settlers Country Manor in Auckland in a white dress with a stunning train.

Henry wore a blue suit and bow tie.

Carrie lost her husband, aged just 31, in a multi-vehicle crash on State Highway 1 at Lichfield, south of Putaruru last month. Carrie was injured in the crash but has since recovered.

Now, the Paeroa woman is fearing deportation, with her New Zealand residency application suddenly “in limbo”.

Henry and Carrie own Coin Save on Paeroa’s main street. Carrie started work there six years ago, after studying business in Auckland.

She’s lived in New Zealand for eight years, but told *The Profile* her partnership visa was set to expire in April.

Her residency application was also in its “final few steps when Henry was taken”.

“Paeroa needs her to stay. New Zealand needs her to stay,” her aunty, Kathy Sun, said, calling the pair a “loving couple”.

She brought forward another wedding image - this one showing Carrie in a red traditional Chinese dress being carried down a flight of stairs by Henry. “It was a beautiful wedding.”

Carrie, originally from northern China, said the possibility of getting deported was “beyond imaginable” as Henry was buried in Aotearoa. To leave would be to rip her heart apart a second time, she said.

“A lot of people have come in [to the

CONTINUED ON P2



Carrie Geng lost her husband Henry Lin in a horrific crash last month. Now her future in New Zealand is uncertain. **KELLEY TANTAU reports.**

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Marine precinct minus mangroves gets approval

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

A future business and marine precinct that has been granted consent to build a commercial working wharf and recreational boat ramp in Kōpū has been called “gobsmackingly fantastic” by the district mayor.

The Thames-Coromandel District Council applied for resource consent under the Covid-19 Recovery (Fast-track Consenting) Act for a new marine precinct at Kōpū, outside of Thames.

However, roughly 125 metres of mangroves could have made the difference in the precinct getting built without a recreational boat ramp.

An independent panel, on behalf of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), approved the project works last week, including recreational and commercial wharves, for

the banks of the Waihōu River and for specified infrastructure within an area of mangrove wetland.

The panel granted resource consent with conditions, including for pre- and post-construction management, wetland enhancement, and pest control.

The decision came 67 working days after the project was lodged with the Environmental Protection Authority, and Thames-Coromandel Mayor Sandra Goudie thanked the panel for “making a sensible decision”.

“This decision is incredibly positive and uplifting,” she said.

“This course of action is going to make a real difference to Thames, our district and the region.”

- Sandra Goudie

“This course of action is going to make a real difference to Thames, our district and the region.”



Henry and Carrie own Coin Save on Paeroa's main street. Photo: KELLEY TANTAU

Community rallies after fatal crash

CONTINUED FROM P1

shop] to show their love to me. They've told me that I'm a part of the Paeroa community.”

She showed *The Profile* a piece of cardboard that had on it a list of people's phone numbers.

“They told me if they can help, to call them,” she said.

She's also been given flowers, cards, and chocolate from locals, and there was a remembrance service for Henry on February 25 outside the Coin Save store, in which the pavement was crowded with mourners.

Carrie, Kathy, and their friends are asking people who know the family to write a letter of recommendation on behalf of Carrie, to help with her residency application.

They're also inviting people to call into the shop on Normanby Rd to share their support.

Police reported that one person in the car died at the scene and two other people were transported to hospital with serious injuries, after the February crash involving a car, a campervan, and a milk tanker.




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Thames Tides

Wed Mar 16	Thu Mar 17	Fri Mar 18	Sat Mar 19	Sun Mar 20	Mon Mar 21	Tue Mar 22
 Morning: 12:30am 1.0, 12:54pm 1.1 Afternoon: 6:46am 3.1, 7:12pm 3.0 Sun: 7:17am 7:36pm Best At: 11:46am (F) Set: 4:33am, Rise: 6:51pm	 Morning: 1:16am 0.9, 1:39pm 0.9 Afternoon: 7:30am 3.2, 7:59pm 3.2 Sun: 7:18am 7:34pm Best At: 12:10am (G), 12:33pm (G) Set: 5:37am, Rise: 7:20pm	 Morning: 1:58am 0.7, 2:21pm 0.8 Afternoon: 8:12am 3.4, 8:41pm 3.3 Sun: 7:19am 7:33pm Best At: 12:56am (G), 1:19pm (G) Full Moon Set: 6:42am, Rise: 7:47pm	 Morning: 2:39am 0.6, 3:04pm 0.6 Afternoon: 8:53am 3.5, 9:22pm 3.5 Sun: 7:19am 7:32pm Best At: 1:42am (B), 2:05pm (B) Set: 7:48am, Rise: 8:14pm	 Morning: 3:20am 0.5, 3:46pm 0.5 Afternoon: 9:35am 3.6, 10:03pm 3.6 Sun: 7:20am 7:30pm Best At: 2:29am (B), 2:52pm (B) Set: 8:54am, Rise: 8:42pm	 Morning: 4:01am 0.4, 4:28pm 0.4 Afternoon: 10:18am 3.6, 10:45pm 3.6 Sun: 7:21am 7:29pm Best At: 3:16am (B), 3:41pm (B) Set: 10:03am, Rise: 9:12pm	 Morning: 4:45am 0.4, 5:12pm 0.4 Afternoon: 11:03am 3.6, 11:29pm 3.6 Sun: 7:22am 7:27pm Best At: 4:07am (B), 4:33pm (B) Set: 11:14am, Rise: 9:46pm

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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	Mn	Hr	Mn
Coromandel	-0	05	-0	04
Whitianga	-0	02	-0	06
Tairua	+0	10	+0	21
Whangamata	-0	07	-0	07
Waihi Beach	-0	12	-0	12

Purr-fect new home for Max the cat

By GORDON PREECE

Urgent veterinary treatment was the catalyst for Max becoming the official Hauraki Plains College cat. Teacher Brian Woolcock, who spent a lot of time with the black and white feline, told *The Profile* Max had wandered the college grounds for five years but only recently became the official college cat after they wanted to treat an “ugly” abscess on her neck.

“One of the school counselors said that looks really bad, she needs to get to a vet,” he said.

“So we decided we’ll get somebody to pay for the vet fees but we needed to get permission from the owner who lived across the road.”

Brian said the owner was “quite happy” for it to happen and said if the school wanted to be responsible for Max’s treatment, the school could keep her.

The college soon announced on Facebook Max was the official college cat and set up a food fund for Max, which has so far raised more than \$340.

An anonymous donation of \$90 paid for Max’s veterinary treatment and the treasured female feline is now on the mend.

Brian said Max had developed a habit of coming into his office each morning to feed and sleep.

“One holiday I was [in the office] and she sprang on me while I was sitting down to draw attention to the fact she wanted some food, so I fed her and now I can’t get rid of her,” he said.



Year 9 students Stevie Selby, left, Maia Greene and Mercedes Basevi pat Max the cat. INSET: Max received veterinary treatment for a nasty abscess.

Brian said the students were fond of Max being around the college.

“In learning support we have kids who may be a bit anxious and we had a student last year who you couldn’t get to talk,” he said.

“But one day she looked through the window and saw Max sitting on the chair and I opened the door and she walked

in. Without having said anything to me for about six weeks, she stroked the cat and said: ‘I really like cats, I’ve got one at home’.

“So it gives the kids a focus and if they’re feeling under the weather, the cat’s almost like a therapy animal.”

Brian said the college had posted photos on Facebook of Max around the school including a “very neat one” staff member

Amanda Fitzpatrick took of her sitting on the stage staring at the crowd during one of the college’s assemblies.

Photos of Max also included her in the bus bay, on top of a photocopier and sleeping on top of a bookshelf.

Amanda said Max even managed to set off the college’s fire alarm during the summer holidays.



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Our team are locals supporting locals

Dogs learn art of kiwi avoidance

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

Twenty-four dogs were taught how to avoid attacking our national icon when Thames Coast Kiwi Care (TCKC) held its annual summer kiwi avoidance training in Te Mata recently.

Run with the support of the Department of Conservation, trainers Christine Friis and Sheila Westley underwent first-time and annual refreshing training with a mix of canines.

TCKC co-ordinator Sheena Beaton told *The Profile* individual collars were fitted around the dogs' necks before they were led by their owners past a taxidermy kiwi.

Fresh kiwi droppings and feathers, all freshly collected from the Kiwi Encounter hatchery in Rotorua, were placed around the imitation kiwi to ensure the strong, distinct smell of the native bird was present.

If a dog showed an interest in the kiwi, a short shock was administered by the trainer, with the size of the shock customised to the size and temperament of the individual dog.

It was then taken off its lead and walked with the owner

past the kiwi again.

"Usually, the one shock is enough to deter the dog from going anywhere near the kiwi, and they give it a wide berth," Sheena said.

"If the dog shows interest again, they will get another shock and the process is repeated."

Sheena explained that if dogs were kept under strict control, kiwi avoidance training was an effective tool for helping prevent dogs from attacking kiwi, but it was not a "silver bullet solution".

"The smell of kiwi is irresistible to any dog, big or small, and just one investigative bite or push against a tree can easily crush the fragile breastplate of a kiwi."

"All dogs need annual refresher kiwi avoidance training until they are showing strong avoidance, and then they only need a return training after two years."

"All dogs, even [trained dogs], should be kept on a lead in areas known to have kiwi."

Mustelids, including stoats, ferrets, and weasels, are the number one killer of kiwi chicks under 1kg.

Kiwi protection projects such as Thames Coast Kiwi Care spend volunteer time, money, and effort to trap out these kiwi predators; however,



dogs are the top killer of adult kiwi. Sheena urged all local and visiting dog owners to get their dogs trained every year and to keep their dogs under control within the project area in Te Mata, which includes the suburban areas of Bennett Rd and Te Mata Creek.

For info, visit: www.thames-coastkiwicare.org.



TCKC volunteer and photographer RACHEL HOLMES captured the essence of the training process with a series of before and after photos.



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Te reo and fresh designs for children’s book

By GORDON PREECE

A Thames author who has published more than 40 New Zealand nature books hopes his “multi-layered” newly republished book engages with both children and adults.

Andrew Crowe, who has lived in Thames for 15 years, republished his book *Nature’s Alphabet* due to popular demand, with additional te reo Māori and fresh designs for a new generation of Kiwi kids.

Andrew said the book was first published 25 years ago and was shortlisted for the New Zealand Post Children’s Book Awards in 1999.

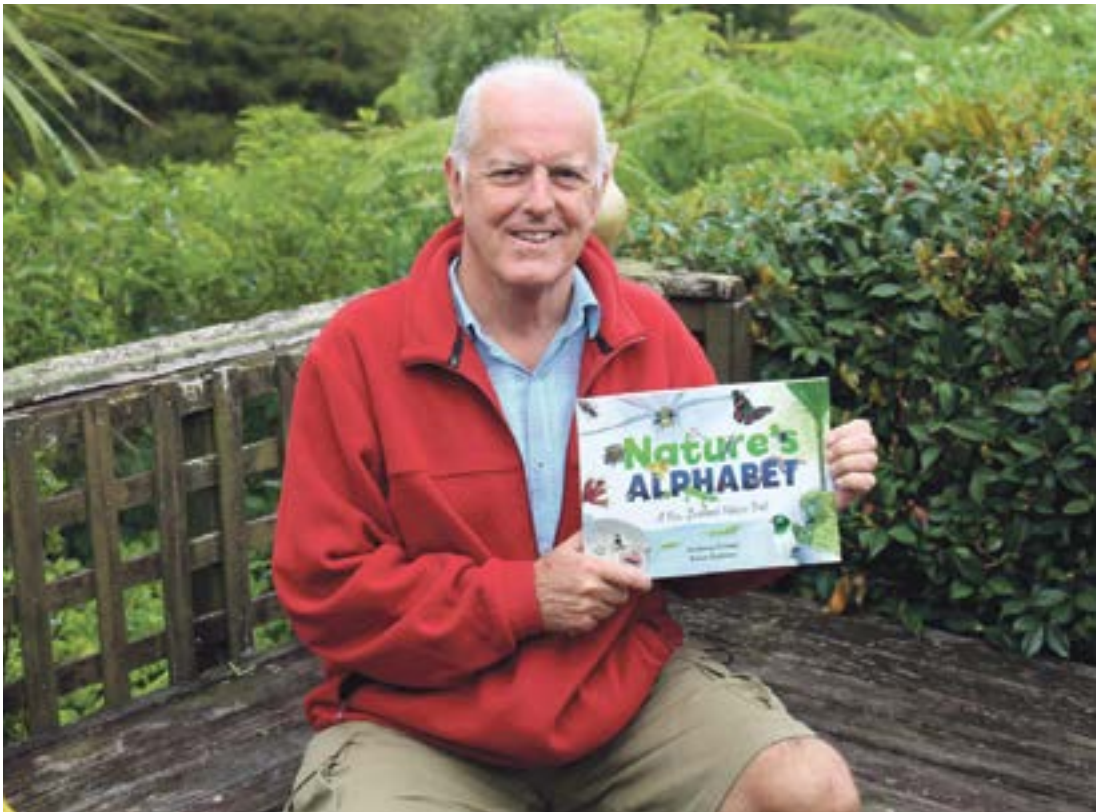
“We’ve added Māori words like aihe, which is Māori for dolphin, which was not in the original book, so you could even compare the two and see the extra artwork and text,” he said.

“In the original edition, we had the original Māori alphabet like Ng and Wh... but now we’re adding macrons, which weren’t used a lot in schools.

“Teachers would say children wouldn’t understand what a macron is and it’s significance, but now that more schools are teaching Māori it’s easy to add those things.”

Andrew said his new book also helped children learn the alphabet.

“On one page you’ve got A is for albatross and there’s other



Andrew Crowe with his republished nature book, *Nature’s Alphabet*.

Photo: GORDON PREECE

things in the picture beginning with the same letter,” he said.

“You’ll have ants walking across the page so a child can see ants begin with A as well and there’s a list on the back with all the things on each page.”

Andrew also hoped the book also engaged adults.

“I like to have enough new information that an adult may not know so they can share their sense of curiosity, explorations and sense of enjoyment of the book so they and the children can share the same experiences,” he said.

“That’s the philosophy I’ve had with a lot of the children’s books I’ve done.”

Andrew told *The Profile* the first book he wrote after moving

to the Coromandel Peninsula was about New Zealand’s edible native plants.

“That came about after getting lost in the bush and learning how to survive and then [later] experimenting with living in the bush eating native berries and leaves,” he said.

“Then people would say why don’t you write a book and I’d

say I wouldn’t know how to do that so I had a go and I enjoyed the process and just carried on writing books.”

Andrew said over the years he’s enjoyed being in schools and seeing kids reading a book in front of their class for the first time with one of his books.

“They’re able to do it because it’s a very simple language but the content is interesting enough and they’re learning something.

“Those breakthrough moments are such an exciting and empowering moment and I loved to feel that I can be part of that,” he said.

Andrew said all his books had been about natural history for children and adults with one exception, *The Dalai Lama Story*, which involved meeting the spiritual leader in his North Indian residence.

“I went to Tibet as well for that book to learn more about his childhood and see the environment in which he was brought up,” he said.

Andrew said he was also working on a children’s version of his award winning book, *Pathway of the Birds*, which is about the skills Māori and their Pacific ancestors needed to find their way across the Pacific.

The children’s version will be illustrated by Puriri artist Rick Fisher and published later this year.



Programme gives hands on experience

St John's hands-on training programme designed to get volunteer ambulance officers and paramedicine students work ready is gaining success in the Hauraki-Coromandel.

The programme began as a pilot in Ngātea in May last year, and despite the Covid-19 pandemic creating some obstacles along the way, to date 77 people have completed the training with 49 of those going into employment.

St John project lead Ngātea Training Station Julia Te Huia said the programme was set up as part of St John's Double Crewing Project to give volunteers and paramedicine students "hands on" experience.

"The Ngātea programme expands on the model we've used in Hauraki-Coromandel for the past decade to be inclusive of local volunteers, staff, and Auckland University of Technology (AUT) paramedicine students and graduates," she said.

"We've had really great success with it in Ngātea and hope to roll it out in other parts of the country in future."

Julia said the programme put the "book knowledge" students gained at AUT into real life practice by allowing them to provide cover for the community in a first response capacity and then later as a transporting ambulance.

Other benefits of the programme included helping boost the volunteer pool for first response stations and allowing St John to intermingle metro and



St John Ngātea Training Programme recruits.

Photos: SUPPLIED

rural, to help with exposure and enhance training, Julia said.

"We have precepted two staff to paramedic, and also provided training to our district volunteer team managers."

Farren McGregor-Smyth, a paramedicine student at AUT, joined the programme last year.

She loved the experience of being exposed to "real life" situations and the opportunities of being able to apply the theory learned in the classroom into action, she said.

"It has really enhanced my

understanding and because we're teamed up with actual paramedics on the frontline – we get the best insight about the world of paramedicine that you don't gain from a textbook," Farren said.

She said the programme also provided the opportunity to enhance her people skills and strengthen her emotional intelligence.

"You are learning how to care and treat people in times where they can often be at their most vulnerable. I've found that not

only is this helping me to become a better future paramedic but also a better person."

Farren hoped to build on those skills in the form of promoting and encouraging paramedicine as a career option for young Māori and Pasifika.

"I am highly passionate about increasing the numbers of Māori and Pasifika paramedics into the St John workforce so one day, I would love to mentor and promote paramedicine as a future career pathway for Māori and Pasifika students."

Petition opens

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

A petition to reopen Thames' Mary St has had "a good response so far", its organisers have said.

On March 4, two friends launched a petition to reopen the high-traffic road after Thames-Coromandel District Council closed it in order to create The Vibe - an open space with festoon lighting, tables, and garden planters.

The friends said the road closure cuts off access between the town's eastern and western sides, and has arranged hard-copies of the petition to be available at Carson's Bookshop, Snipz Hair Dressing Salon, Land for Books, and Four Square at 527 Pollen St.

"We appreciate these businesses helping us, and also our friends for taking copies to their neighbours and community groups," a petition spokesperson said.

Thames-Coromandel District Council earlier told *The Profile* it encouraged those opposing the Mary St closure to attend a community board meeting, and present any petitions or other documents during the public forum.

"Public feedback is one source of information to be considered as part of any decisions that are made, so any feedback, either positive or negative, is welcomed," council said.

Since March 2021, one person has attended the Thames Community Board public forum to speak about Create the Vibe.



St John Thames

Demands on the Ambulance Service.

Covid has impacted the demands on our Ambulance Service throughout the country. While the number of critical calls has not changed, the number of non-urgent calls continues to grow. People who wanted health advice on Covid-19 or other issues should first call their GP or Healthline before trying St John, unless it was an emergency. Please only call 111 in an emergency.

Weaving Wellbeing initiative introduced in our schools.

Following a successful pilot in response to the Governments Child and Wellbeing Strategy, this initiative is being introduced to some of our local schools around the Hauraki Coromandel, including Thames and Whangamata, with Kerepehi and Netherton and others to follow soon.

Children are taught valuable coping mechanisms and strategies to increase their resilience and help them deal with their physical, mental, spiritual and family wellbeing. This is particularly relevant now as our children deal with the pressures of Covid on their families and with their school routines.

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‘So much love’ shown for Tonga

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

The Tongan community have been so taken aback by people’s donations following the devastating Hunga Tonga–Hunga Ha’apai eruption, that its president has had to “slow them down” in paying it forward.

The January eruption and subsequent tsunami killed three people across the island nation and completely destroyed structures and plantations.

Tongan community president Alby Tukia said fundraising to aid his home country’s relief efforts was “ticking along nicely” - thanks to the love from people around Thames and Paeroa.

They’ve so far raised \$6000, with the hope of gathering enough donations to fill a shipping container with food to send to Tonga for those in need. And an evening of traditional Tongan food and entertainment planned for the end of the month should get them across the line.

“We’re hoping to get \$20,000 from the two dinners which will definitely do the job,” Alby said.

“But the job isn’t just about sending the container home to Tonga. It is also kick-starting the Tongan community here in



The Tongan community has received overwhelming support after the Tongan eruption. File Photo: SUPPLIED

Thames and Paeroa; what else we might be able to help with. “We will use [the money] wisely.”

The event, called Pō Ula, will feature cultural performances, auctions, guest speakers, including New Zealand Olympic weightlifter David Liti, and a Tongan multicourse feast prepared by professional chefs.

“It’s a Tongan experience... and we all know that when you go to the islands, you experience the island food,” Alby said.

Menu items on offer will include raw fish, taro, yam, a Tongan dessert, and a roast pig.

“We’re big people and we love our food,” Alby joked,

“we’re just sharing the culture and entertainment and hope everybody else will come to join us.”

Throughout the Valley, schools, businesses, and members of the public have rallied to support the tsunami relief.

This includes nine-year-old Matatoki School student Chelsea Cooper, who raised

more than \$700 for Tonga by creating and selling concrete cactuses. Also, Thames High School pulled in \$577 from its swim carnival in February, while Pārāwai School raised \$555 in support.

The community also sold hundreds of plants and handmade bead accessories, and Alby said they could not wait to “pay it forward”.

“I have to slow my Tongan community down because they just want to give the [donations] back straight away.

“They want to go and say thank you, because when people give so much love, we feel like we need to return it straight away. We’re trying to learn the value of giving it back in a different way,” he said.

“Because if the people give out that much, myself and the Tongan community have to be aware of using that in a beautiful manner to give back to the community.”

DETAILS: Pō Ula, a night of food and entertainment, Paeroa Memorial Hall on March 26, and Thames Civic Centre on April 2, 5:30pm to 8pm. Cost \$100pp, limit to 100 people each night. To book, email bookpoula@gmail.com. Vaccine passport required.



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Rural Life

Harvest time ahead for orange giants

First-time giant pumpkin grower Arya Sutherland got a surprise when the orange veggie decided the best place to flourish was in a drain on her family's rural property.

The six-year-old Turua Primary School student is taking part in her school's giant pumpkin growing competition, and her attempt has proven bountiful, with 26 pumpkins sprouting within one patch.

By far the biggest contender is the one growing in the drain.

"I don't know how we're going to get it out of there," Arya's mum Rachael Wenzlick said.

"Down the other end are edible pumpkins that we grow for ourselves, and we usually have a harvest of about 70 pumpkins for our family.

“We thought: ‘Well, it might be the perfect place for Arya’s pumpkin to grow’, but we didn’t realise the prized one would end up in the drain.”

They have a back-up in case the beast can't fit into the car when it comes time to weigh-in on March 26.

The Turua Giant Pumpkin Competition begins in October, with the participating families buying seeds that are sown by the students at school.

Within five months, the giant pumpkins are ready for harvesting, and at the weigh-in, prizes are awarded for the top three heaviest squash.

Turua School garden co-ordinator Anikha Sanders said due to Covid-19 restrictions, this year's weigh-in would work a little differently, using a staggered time-slot approach and no spectators allowed.

Last year, close to 400 people attended the carnival-like event.

“It has been a tough growing season this year, due to the lack of rainfall and very hot days, but



Photos: KELLY TANTAU

it looks like we have some large pumpkins amongst the entries," she said.

"There have been losses to the usual pumpkin predators, such as puppies, kittens, chickens - and even beefies this year."

More than 60 pumpkin plants were sold for the friendly competition, and Anikha estimated either a third or a half of those plants were still growing.

However, only 15 growers had registered for their weigh-in slot, so she encouraged people

to book their weigh-in as soon as possible, in order to avoid missing out on breaking last year's heaviest record of 49.5kg.

"It's been a family affair, because none of us know what we're doing," Rachael said, "but we'll just still water it and keep it covered, and try and get it into the car."

DETAILS: To register for the weigh-in, email anikha@turua.school.nz



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Rural Life

Smart use of water critical on farm to cut costs

OPINION



By Russ Rimmington

As I write, areas of the Waikato region are still cleaning up after record rainfall and devastating winds from Cyclone Dovi.

Waikato Regional Council’s river and catchment management staff were out over that weekend to assess damage resulting from the event.

They’ve since been providing assistance to landowners with damage to streams and rivers, including bank erosion and blockages, and hill country erosion. Despite the recent rain, stock welfare is a critical issue for many farmers due to the potential shortage of feed.

Unfortunately, the situation will have been exacerbated by the winds. While out and about, I’ve seen a lot of damage to maize crops which were getting close to harvest, adding another stress to farmers who rely on this as a supplementary feed.

The cyclone comes on the

back of a very dry January, and predictions from NIWA that there’ll be a number of dry weeks to follow.

For a long time now, I’ve been passionate about the importance of water storage – whether you’re on farm or living in an urban area – and now is the time to start planning for next summer.

Smart use of water is also critical. Getting it right can reduce pressure on the environment, and on farm it can help to cut pumping costs.

There’s some useful information around this prepared by staff on the council website, at waikatoregion.govt.nz/drought.

Many organisations rely on the goodwill of others to keep operating. That’s the case for most of the 25 or so community transport groups. They offer a lifeline, ensuring our ageing rural populations have a vital connection to services like health and education, where no other suitable public transport options exist.

But the sector is fragile. They told us during our long term plan consultation last year that funding was unreliable.

We couldn’t do anything to help address the issue at the time, but regional councillors did agree, with funding sup-



Ex-Tropical Cyclone Dovi comes on the back of a very dry January, and predictions from NIWA that there’ll be a number of dry weeks to follow.

File Photo: GORDON PREECE

port from Trust Waikato, to recruit a dedicated regional co-ordinator to better support existing providers, encourage the formation of new community transport initiatives where there is community need and a lack of transport options, and partner with and work across multiple organisations to develop shared transport solutions.

We also agreed to investigate a regional grant funding framework.

So setting up a contestable \$200,000 fund from July 1, 2022, was a no-brainer when it came before councillors at

our annual plan budget setting meeting in February. It amounts to around \$1 per property and will be charged by way of a uniform annual general charge.

I’m especially pleased that we’ve been able to do this within the threshold of the 7.9 per cent rates rise we signalled 12 months ago. Based on our proposed budget, the annual plan for 2022-23 will see total rates revenue of \$121.9 million and a proposed increase from current ratepayers of 7.8 per cent.

There’s still some work to be done on the criteria for the fair

allocation of the community transport fund, but I anticipate it will help with vehicle, technology and administration costs.

I’m proud of this council’s commitment to supporting community-based transport initiatives and I know this fund will make a tangible difference for people in this region. But we couldn’t have got to this point without our partnership with Community Waikato, Trust Waikato, Waikato DHB and others.

- Russ Rimmington is chair of Waikato Regional Council. The views are his own.

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Rural Life

Survey shows low confidence

Farmer confidence is the lowest it has been since Federated Farmers began twice-a-year surveys in 2009.

The Federated Farmers Farm Confidence Survey in January showed that of responses from nearly 1000 farmers from around the country, a net 7.8 per cent considered current economic conditions to be good. This is a decline of 10.1 points from the July, 2021, survey, when 17.9 per cent considered conditions to be good.

Looking forward, a net 64 percent of farmers believed general economic conditions would worsen over the next 12 months, a 25-point deterioration from 39 percent in the July survey.

Sentiment about general economic conditions is at the lowest level since the Feds surveys began in July, 2009, surpassing the previous low in July, 2020.

"The results are even more disturbing when you consider farmers were answering the survey before the surge of Omicron cases in New Zealand and Russia's invasion of Ukraine, both of which will weigh on economic growth," Feds president and economics spokesperson Andrew Hoggard said.

While a net 61.1 per cent of farmers reported making a profit - a 5.5-point increase on

July, 2021, a net 11.2 per cent expected their profitability would decline in the year ahead, 16 points down on six months earlier when a net 4.4 per cent expected profitability would improve.

"We're getting strong returns on meat and dairy right now thanks to high global demand and food security concerns but clearly farmers are seeing a lot of that revenue going right back out again with higher fuel and fertiliser prices, rising labour costs, and the hot inflation that is affecting every other New Zealander," Andrew said.

The survey showed a net 52.7 percent of respondents expected their spending to increase over the next 12 months (up from 32.6 per cent six months ago), "but this will be due to higher expected input costs rather than farmers feeling confident to spend and invest".

A net 1.8 per cent of respondents expected their production to increase over the year ahead, a 13.4-point drop from July 2021 when a net 15.3 per cent expected it to increase.

"This finding is another substantial drop and it was before February's heavy and unseasonable rain, which caused a lot of damage and loss for many arable farmers."

Smart water meters to be installed

One hundred high end water users on the Plains will receive a smart water meter add-on in the latest round of Hauraki District Council's water meter renewals.

Council group manager service delivery Adrian de Laborde said council had been trialing smart water technology to add to existing meters for high volume users like farms and for those with tricky or unsafe access to meters.

Smart water technology means real time monitoring, which was a huge plus for identifying high volume leaks as soon as they happen, he said.

"During these dry times, every drop counts, so minimising water wastage through leaks is one way we can help to conserve and manage water. That's great news for the users and the community," he said.

Council will be ready to roll out smart meter technology in the coming months.

In the meantime, general water meter renewals across Hauraki will begin with around 300 meters in Turua, as these are some of the oldest meters in the district.

Then work will flow on throughout the Hauraki Plains to replace 250 high user meters, with an initial 100 of those receiving the smart water technology add-on to their meter in the future.

"Most of the renewal work will happen at the berm, so



Hauraki District Council plans to roll out smart meter technology in the coming months.

Photo: SUPPLIED

there should be minimal disruption to households," Mr de Laborde said.

"Once a meter has been replaced, we'll drop a note in the mailbox to say we've been. Occasionally we'll need to come on to a property to access the water meter, so we'll check with the household before we start work."

Some meters in Turua were renewed recently when council upgraded two water main lines in Abattoir and Orchard East Roads. The replacement meters are in place temporarily and will be replaced eventually with the newer meters as council moves to one consistent type of meter across the district.

Water meters are generally read twice a year.

Households receiving a new water meter will not notice any change to their water invoice, although in some cases, it may appear that usage has changed. That will most likely be because the new meter is more accurate.

"We'll be working closely with high end users that receive a smart water technology add-on so that there are no surprises, but in the meantime, we'll make a start on replacing meters in Turua," Mr de Laborde said.

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Death and witchcraft at Kōpū mill



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

PART ONE

“There is a flax mill being put up at Kōpū... I hope it may succeed and prove a paying enterprise as there is plenty of the raw material in this district, which only wants dressing to be fit for export,” enthused a *Daily Southern Cross* reporter in 1865.

But things were never quite right at the Kōpū flax mill.

Established two years before gold was officially discovered at Thames, the New Zealand Company’s Kōpū mill was in an area sparsely inhabited by Europeans but home to the Ngāti Maru and Ngāti Tamatera iwi.

The Europeans called Kōpū “New London” or “Richmond” and the Waihou River the “River Thames” but the optimistic renaming belied much unrest.

In the end the Kōpū Flax mill left death, whispers of witchcraft and financial ruin in its wake.

The mill began with a capital of eight thousand pounds, five

Te Hauauru Hotereni Taipari kept Ngāti Maru neutral during land wars, avoiding land confiscations. His son, Wirope Hoterini Taipari, right, continued in his footsteps.

Photo: SUPPLIED



thousand of which was spent on machinery, labour and freight, leaving three thousand pounds to finish the works and build houses for the manager, directors, engineer, and workmen.

By December, 1865, it was almost ready to commence operations although there were difficulties over obtaining fresh water. Negotiations were made with Māori at Kirikiri to allow water to be conveyed from there to Kōpū.

Fresh water was vital to the mill – as part of the process flax was subjected to a constant stream of it.

Strong, active lads were invited to apply for positions and tenders were called for to supply forty tons of green flax to the works weekly.

Cutters from Auckland sailed for Thames with flour, potatoes, pork, and workmen for the Kōpū Flax Company.

By January 1, 1866, the mill was up and running but there were disagreements between the New Zealand Flax Company and Māori concerning the price of flax. James Mackay, Civil Commissioner, came

from Auckland to handle negotiations. The first cargo of 16 bales of prepared flax from the Kōpū mill arrived at Auckland by the cutter Éclair on February 21 where it was stored for inspection.

In March, ominous news reached Auckland. Paora Te Waitau, an elderly man who lived near the flax cutters camp at Hikutaia, had been killed, cut down by a flax hook by one of the white men employed at the Kōpū mill.

James Mackay lost no time in returning Thames, leaving in a five-oared whaleboat. He took with him Te Hauauru Hotereni Taipari, Māori land assessor of Thames, and five others belonging to the district.

The alleged murder was a disaster. The Thames area, which was being opened to European enterprise, could be closed indefinitely, and the money invested in the flax mill at Kōpū stood a great chance of being lost. Politically, it was regarded as the most important matter that had occurred since the Māori land wars, and a terrible outcome was expected.

PART TWO NEXT WEEK

SPORTS

Hauraki Bowls marks 75 years

It is not every day Hauraki Bowls gets to celebrate a 75th birthday but that is exactly what we did on December 18. It was a relatively low key event due to Covid-19 but memorable and enjoyable all the same. Combining the anniversary with our usual Christmas tournament proved to be a good move because after bowling in the morning, we sat down to a delicious lunch, all very fitting for such an occasion. And as you would expect, no day like this would be the same without the cutting of the

cake by our patrons, Ethne Barker and Frank Finlay. The Business House Bowls competition was a first for the club and proved to be highly successful. Over 10 weeks, ten teams battled it out to see who would emerge as winners. Hauraki Club was definitely the place to be on a Thursday evening. Thanks to the main organiser, Andy McCowatt, and helpers for getting this competition off the ground. RESULTS: Bayleys, 1; Williams Engineering, 2; Stickmen, 3. - Ruth Hitchcock



Ethne Barker and Frank Finlay cut the 75th anniversary cake.



The winning team, Bayleys: Karl Davis, left, Graham Heaven, Pixie Allen and Mark Harris.



Williams Engineering's Graeme Beasley, Brook Evans and Katie Williams.



Coming in at third place, Stickmen: Stephen Loft, Dane Hull and Brent Aitchison.

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SPORTS

Not your average motocross team

CLUB PROFILE

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

There are high-flyers in the world of motocross, but a school team knows that keeping your feet on the ground is what counts.

The Hauraki Plains College motocross team is not your average off-road racing squad. The riders once showed up to competitions with pink mohawks stuck on their bikes, and for the past 10 years, they've been donating money to the NZ Breast Cancer Foundation.

It attracts male and female riders from across Hauraki and beyond, excited about the prospect of "standing out from the rest" and dominating on the competitive stage.

Like most things, it had humble beginnings.

The team's early days saw Amanda Fitzpatrick putting on trail rides for a group of five boys, including her son, who wanted to get the sport started at the college.

It has since grown to encompass 27 male and eight female riders.

The team trains every fortnight at the Patetonga Motorcycle Club on Top Rd.



Motocross Dad Cody Clifton

The clay track was formed in 1982 on land owned by former stockcar racer Dayne Plummer, and began operating two years later.

Today, it boasts an impressive linkage of jumps and berms, and is well equipped for junior riders finding their feet amongst the more seasoned.

Parents also line the track on Thursday evenings, watching their children from a safe distance. Among them is Cody Clifton, whose son Carter, 13, has just picked up the sport.

"He rang me and he goes: 'Dad, I've joined the motocross team', and I was like: 'You did what?'"

"But I've got three kids and my daughter wants to get [a bike] now, and she's going to start next year," he says.

"It's only just the beginning."

The Cliftons are from Mangatāwhiri, and they're not the only ones making the drive



Coach Nigel Smith gives advice to a rider. Photos: KELLEY TANTAU

from north of the border to get to Hauraki Plains College, and, specifically, its motocross team. The squad has riders from around Hampton Downs, Pōkeno, and Bombay - which is where the team's new coach and its captain, Nigel and Reuben Smith are from. Reuben tells *The Profile* that one of the biggest appeals of Hauraki

CONTINUED ON P13

RIGHT: Reuben Smith, 14, has learned that level-headedness makes for a better sportsman.



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SPORTS

CONTINUED FROM P12

Plains College was its motocross team, with Amanda at the helm.

“I joined up and straight away put my name down,” he says.

Reuben’s dad Nigel was a New Zealand motocross champ, and Reuben, 14, says the sport is in his blood.

But he and Amanda joke that he would have never made captain if he’d vied for the position back in 2020.

“In Year 9, I wasn’t really humble. I liked to gloat a lot... I liked to make sure everyone knew that I was fast,” he admits. “I remember one thing Fitzzy [Amanda] telling me... in the motocross team, she said it isn’t a one-man sport, and I walked away and thought to myself: ‘No, it is a one-man sport’.

“I now realise, with all this support around us, it is a team.”

It was an injury that provided the motocross up-and-comer with a new perspective.

During his build-up for the Nationals, Reuben fell off his bike in the final lap of his final race and snapped his collar bone and wrist on opposite sides, sending him to the sidelines for three-and-a-half months.

He spent that time helping out at trainings, and Amanda says that experience



Team manager Amanda Fitzpatrick

“humblised” him a lot.

“He has grown immensely... and I’m extremely proud of him,” she says. “In the motocross world, there’s a lot of high-flyers, but when you come down to a school team, it’s us and we’re one.”

Even Reuben says he’d tell his younger self to “pull his head in”.

Because being a good person is what makes a good rider, Amanda says. Paying it forward and raising funds for breast cancer, for example, has always been the team’s ethos.

New coach Nigel Smith, who has taken on the job this year, says the positive, grassroots atmosphere has been a “win-win” for him, too.

“I’ve been involved in the sport for most of my life. I raced competitively for probably 20 years, so when my kids started going to Hauraki, we came into it from quite a competitive side,” he says. “What it’s done for me is it’s taken me back a little bit, seeing these 35 kids come together who are loving riding their bikes regardless of where they get



Reuben Smith flies over the course at Patetonga. BELOW: Riders make their way around the track.

Photos: KELLEY TANTAU

or how much money the bike costs... “I think it’s been really good for me and the boys to strip the sport down and see it for what it is.”

And what is it? According to Reuben, it’s the “best sport in the world”.

CLUB PROFILE: Want to be part of the Valley Profile’s new Club Profile series? Email details to kelley@valleyprofile.co.nz for consideration.



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SPORTS

Thames netballers face cancelled season

By GORDON PREECE

The upcoming netball season may be in jeopardy for Thames Netball Centre as it struggles to attract new committee members.

Outgoing president Kathy Ngamane said the season would “most likely” be cancelled if their vacant president, secretary, treasurer and junior co-ordinator roles weren’t filled before the season started in April.

The centre would “hate” to cancel their netball season because there were many young girls and boys in Thames keen to play the sport, she said.

“Last year we had around 200 juniors and a similar number of seniors,” she said.

“We’re also very fortunate we’ve had a lot of our netball players represent Thames Valley and we also have teams coming down from Manaia so the opportunities open for them.

“If our season doesn’t go ahead, we would need to direct our teams to play netball over in Ngātea.”

Kathy said the centre had been fortunate to have a “well oiled” committee team for previous seasons but suspected some of them had resigned since they had held their roles for many years.

“But it’s always good to have new blood... there’s all these young mums who have great ideas and it would be great if they can apply to run the cen-



Thames Netball Centre may have to cancel the upcoming season if vacant committee roles aren’t filled. File Photo: SUPPLIED

tre,” she said.

“There’s things a lot of them see which could make things better like providing a refreshing outlook of the game to grow it even further and attract younger netballers.”

Kathy said the key committee roles they need filled were club secretary and treasurer.

“We’ve had interest from some people wanting to be part of the committee but to them it seems like a pretty hard job, but it really isn’t,” she said.

“It’s just turning up on the night, making sure the two nights run well, making sure everything is available for what

teams require on the night and locking up.

“All the resigning committee members are more than happy to walk alongside the new ones who come on board and show them the ropes.”

Kathy said junior teams would normally play on Thursday evenings and senior teams on Wednesday evenings.

The current Covid-19 situation could also have impacted their season, she said.

“Covid has put a damper on most sport codes and there’s uncertainty of whether or not your season could start,” she said.

“The issue around unvaxxed

and vaxxed people, because the sport has a position where all players need to be vaccinated, is going to be another sticking block for our code.”

Kathy said the club could start its season at a later date or shorten the season to accommodate what’s happening in the community.

Sport Waikato spokesperson Lisa Bishop told *The Profile* Covid-19 had caused significant disruption to sports clubs for the past 18 to 24 months.

“Various alert level restrictions have meant clubs are navigating territory they have never been in before and as a result there has been pressure on administrators and volunteers,” she said.

“Some clubs and codes have experienced minor disruptions, while others have faced cancellations of entire seasons.”

Lisa said Sport Waikato was administering the Regional Covid Hardship Fund to support Waikato clubs struggling financially from the effects of Covid-19, and particularly the lockdowns last year.

Sport Waikato also distributed funding on behalf of Tū Manawa Active Aotearoa Sport NZ, which is designed to activate children and young people.

“Over and above this funding support that Sport Waikato administer, we also partner with Volunteering Waikato to try and connect volunteers to local sport and recreation organisations.”

CRICKET

Much improved display of self discipline by Nihindu Wickramathunga and Daniel Sproul coupled with their skill in finding gaps in the field and sharp running between the wickets, was the highlight of the match between Hauraki Plains seniors and Hamilton Boys High School development XI recently.

Perfect weather and field conditions at Ngātea added to the enjoyment for players and spectators on the day, which saw Hauraki win by a wide margin. When Wickramathunga joined Sproul after a steady start to the Hauraki innings, the tempo of the game changed immediately as both players placed shots into gaps and ran purposefully while dispatching loose deliveries powerfully.

Sproul’s best ever knock ended after a rare false shot with his first ever century beckoning but his partner completed his second “ton” for the season which was the first by a Hauraki College player, on the school’s recently developed number one field. The remaining batsmen also enjoyed the run fest, which saw a possible record runs total for a Hauraki Plains College team in the score book.

Leg spinner Xavier Anderson then showed his potential as a match winner with the ball ensuring the winning margin for Hauraki was also possibly a record. The local lads must now re-focus for their two remaining fixtures to ensure a place in the competition’s play-off match at the end of this month.

RESULTS: March 5: Senior Division 1 (50 overs) HPC, 330 for 7 wks, Nihindu Wickramathunga 120, Dan Sproul 97, defeated Hamilton Boys High School XI, 76, Xavier Anderson 3/10, Matthew Tegg 2/10. Yrs 9-10 Division: Matamata College defeated Hauraki Plains College. Yrs 9-10 Division February 26: Hauraki Plains College 160 for 5 wickets Jackson Smith 71, Hayden Aitchison 32 defeated Hamilton Boys High School Grey Warblers XI 159 for 4 wickets.

- Mike Cotter

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BUILDING & RENOVATING

The Valley Profile will be running an advertising feature in our March 30 edition, which will have advice and tips for our readers on building a new home and renovating existing homes.

If you would like more information on how you can promote your products and services to an audience of approx 30,000 readers, contact **Nikki on 022 130 3889** or email **nikki@valleyprofile.co.nz**

Booking deadline is Friday, March 18





The Valley Profile

SPORTS

In the ring

Ngatea Pony Club was presented with a clear autumn evening for the second week of its twilight showjumping series at the Kerepēhi Domain last Wednesday. Three rings were set up with jumps at various heights, and participants could compete in up to three rounds. Reporter **KELLEY TANTAU** witnessed the action.



Mara Gumbley, from Hikutaia, competes on her horse Sama.



Charlotte Taylor, 7, is proud as punch after making a jump with Tilly.



This smartly dressed duo is Hannah van der Struys, 13, and Cookie.

Photos: KELLEY TANTAU



Lee Gumbley and Charlie are the first in the ring.



Molly Wickett, 11, makes it look easy with Kez.



Brittnee Morrison makes her way through the course on Thunder.



Adyson Sa, 12, clears a jump on her horse Tyson.



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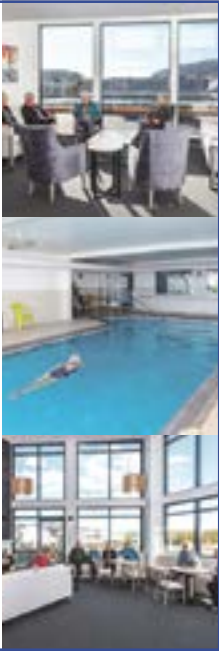


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41

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EASY

Puzzles © The Puzzle Company
www.thepuzzlecompany.co.nz

JUMBO CROSSWORD

61

- ACROSS
- 1 Consumers (5)

4 Scornful loathing (8)

9 See-through section in an envelope (6)

14 Carpenter's tool (5)

15 Initial difficulties in an enterprise (8,8)

17 Grinding tooth (5)

18 Small round mark (3)

19 Maybe (7)

20 100th anniversary (9)

21 Quick light meals (6)

24 Wormlike pasta (9)

25 Of cats (6)

26 Stick (6)

29 Being contrite about (10)

31 Age (3)

32 Looked as if (6)

33 Pirouette (4)

35 Large vase (3)

37 Level (4)

39 Two-hulled sailboat (9)

40 Immunise (9)

41 Two times (5)

42 Unmarried man (8)

47 Spellbind (8)

51 Shatter (5)

55 Off the cuff (9)

56 Plenitude (9)

58 Unfold (4)

59 Quantity of money (3)

60 Needle, incite (4)

61 Black-and-white bird (6)

62 Garland (3)
- 63 Tried out for a role (10)

66 Yearly book (6)

67 Financial plan (6)

69 Spreader of sleeping sickness (6,3)

72 Illuminates (6)

73 Boat users (anag) (9)

75 Fine glassware (7)

77 Mined rock (3)

80 Leg bone (5)

81 Fully investigate and find out the truth about (3,2,3,6,2)

82 Rot (5)

83 Official language of Israel (6)

84 Quirks (8)

85 Very strange (5)
- DOWN
- 2 Dock worker (9)

3 Gag (5)

5 Wild sex party (4)

6 Anguish (7)

7 Climbers (12)

8 Claw (5)

9 Spendthrift (7)

10 Identify (4)

11 Rectangular (6)

12 Hired helpers (5)

13 Planet (7)

14 Go before (7)

16 Not workable, unrealistic (11)

22 Frugality (6)

23 Daunt, disconcert (7)

24 Pull longer (7)

25 Display ostentatiously (6)
- 27 Make clear and comprehensible (7)

28 Canoeed (anag)(6)

30 Match (4)

32 Shelled creature (5)

34 Female relative (5)

36 Jetty (4)

38 Meadow (3)

42 Fetch (5)

43 Team leader (7)

44 Love god (4)

45 Parentless child (6)

46 Bring about (5)

48 Milestone birthday (6-5)

49 Expression of regret (7)

50 Signal (3)

51 Unneeded extra (7)

52 Small village (6)

53 Ignored, excluded (3,2,3,4)

54 Concept (4)

57 Cult of nakedness (6)

64 Attempt (9)

65 Misbehaving (7)

66 Marzipan ingredient (7)

68 Scottish city (7)

70 Hearing-distance (7)

71 Subject to little fluctuation (6)

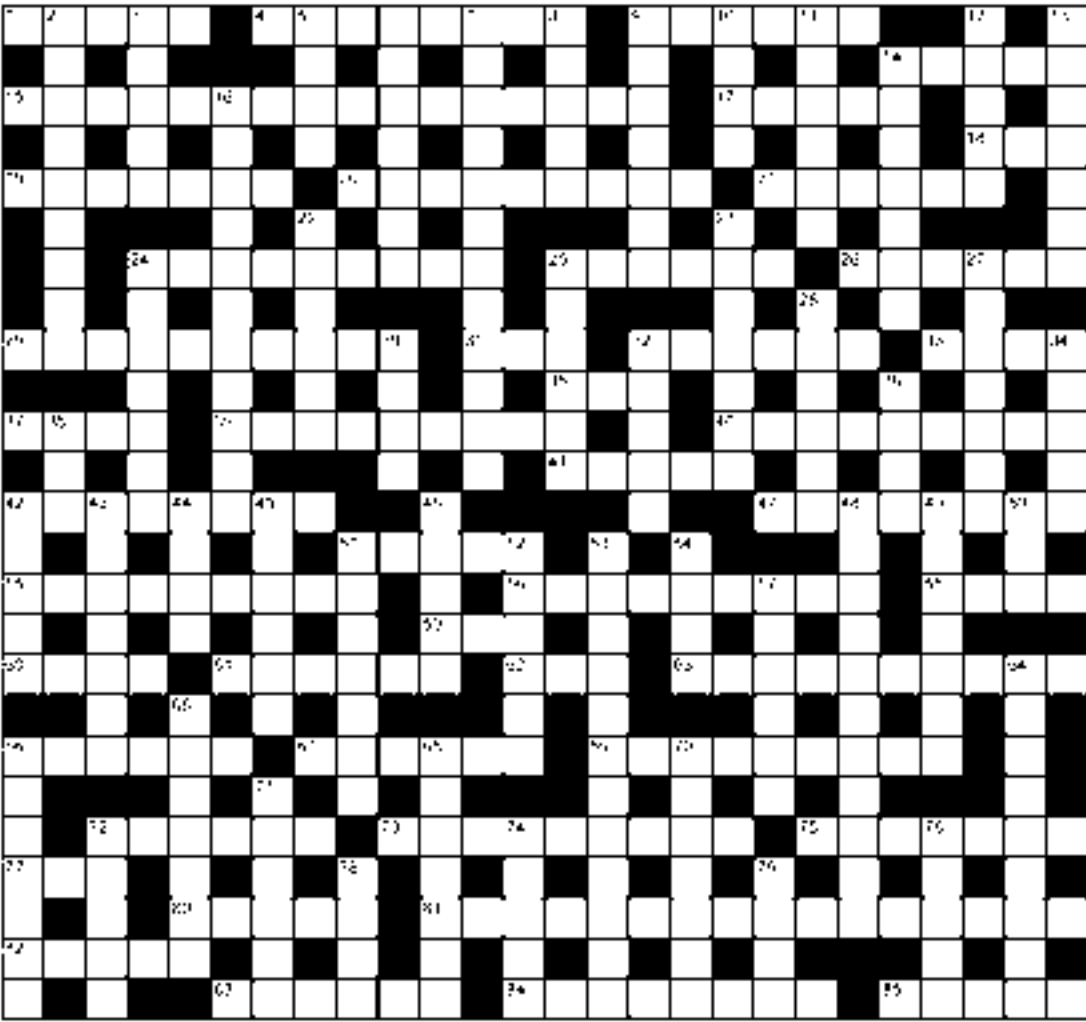
72 Bloodsucking worm (5)

74 Go one better than (5)

76 Range (5)

78 Equitable (4)

79 Competent (4)



PREVIOUS SOLUTION

ACROSS: 1 Bound, 4 Shrinking violet, 14 Inane, 15 Stage, 16 Proportion, 17 Clown, 19 Run, 20 Costume, 21 Bluebells, 22 Cherry, 25 Scheduled, 27 Scanty, 28 Zipper, 33 Aftershock, 35 Lob, 36 Elbows, 37 Calf, 39 Lax, 41 Convent, 42 Scampi, 43 Enlighten, 44 Needs, 45 Startled, 50 Ag, 51 Esteemed, 55 Magic, 58 Liability, 59 Argued, 60 Amassed, 61 Pad, 63 Obey, 64 Beetle, 65 Eat, 66 Discovered, 68 Target, 69 Frisky, 71 Ballerina, 76 Caesar, 77 Meteorite, 79 Anarchy, 81 Boa, 84 Vodka, 85 Transcribe, 86 Drill, 87 Theme, 88 Burn one's bridges, 89 Pluto.

DOWN: 2 Option, 3 Night, 5 Hard, 6 Impulse, 7 Kernel, 8 Noise, 9 Vanilla, 10 Once, 11 Epochs, 12 Tarry, 13 Meander, 14 Inertia, 18 Impersonal, 23 Tutor, 24 Stables, 26 Cleaver, 27 Sibling, 29 Phantom, 30 Effort, 31 Blame, 32 Dwells, 34 Kick, 36 Expel, 38 Fined, 40 Ogle, 45 Salvo, 46 Amateur, 47 Toil, 48 Exited, 49 Agape, 50 Academy, 52 Tambourine, 53 Eastern, 54 Eleven, 55 Mystery, 56 Agate, 57 Mend, 62 Psalm, 67 Deserve, 68 Tribute, 70 Sweeten, 72 Altered, 73 Landau, 74 Eraser, 75 Chalet, 76 Caber, 78 Exams, 80 Rural, 82 Gain, 83 Oboe.

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| 2018 Toyota Rav4 GX 2.5P AWD SIGNATURE CLASS | \$34,290 |
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CALL THE EXPERTS



Simon Rodley owns and operates Rodley Cleaning Services (RCS). Photo: GORDON PREECE

RCS cleans up the Thames Valley

Rodley Cleaning Services (RCS) has cleaned across Thames Valley for a year offering both residential and commercial cleaning services.

Simon Rodley, who owns and operates the business, began with residential and commercial cleaning services through word of mouth.

“I was cleaning at the GBD and one of the customers said ‘you’re cleaning up nicely, do you want to clean my house too’ and I thought sure why not?”

“So I started doing that and thought this was a cool business to start so I started picking up some more clients through word of mouth,” he said.

“That’s important in a small town because everyone knows each other and you don’t have to focus so much on on-line advertising.”

RCS also offers window washing and dry carpet cleaning, and introduced interior wall and ceiling cleaning this year.

“I appreciate the *Valley Profile*, it’s a great newspaper, if you’re thinking of advertising I’ve had plenty of calls from people so far... so I would give it a shot,” Simon said.

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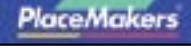
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Thames-Coromandel Mayoral candidate John Freer. File Photo: KELLEY TANTAU

Mayoral candidate advocates for change

Change and empowering local communities are two items already on the table for residents and ratepayers to consider when voting for a new Thames-Coromandel Mayor in October, a Mayoral candidate says.

John Freer, if successful in his bid for Mayor, said he would work with fellow councillors to establish a new way forward for the local council.

Included in the change will be providing more opportunities for local community organisations under his “communities matter” stance, he said.

“We need change for the good. Meeting and talking with members of our various communities, the change aspect comes through loud and clear.”

And Freer said it was not just residents who wanted change but also people who did business in the region, partners and stakeholders, who were looking for a proactive council demonstrating a highly planned, innovative and forward-thinking leadership.

“Then you have government, which is threatening to erode the ability for local communities to govern themselves,” he said.

“Some may believe this is a good thing - if so go and talk to people from smaller communities who have been absorbed into the Auckland Supercity – you may form a different opinion.

“The way to stop this is by example and by demonstrating we can successfully meet and achieve our obligations.”

Mr Freer said he would be presenting a realigned structure for council in coming weeks, which he was confident would meet the opportunities available.

“It will fully engage councillors’ governance across all council activities, better engage our local communities with council and incorporate a comprehensive planned approach across all relevant council activities,” he said.

“Council staff are key to this, and they will be required to adopt a process of change and new ways of going about their business. They will have to deliver the plans and as one staff member said to me, they must be the enablers.”

Mr Freer said he had approached council’s acting chief executive and requested a meeting with council staff to outline his ideas.

“They need to know what the potential Mayor is thinking, they need to provide feedback, and they must buy into potential new directions.

“Key to success is a committed active and trusted relationship between councillors and staff. And many of our council staff are residents and ratepayers so they also vote.”

Freer, who announced his decision to seek election late last year, welcomed the opportunity to meet and address groups over coming months while also hearing from residents.

He encourages everyone to get on the electoral roll, including holiday homeowners, and vote in October.

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ENTERTAINMENT

Debut album gets national recognition

By GORDON PREECE

A Thames High School year 13 student whose music delves into what it's like to be a teenager has released her debut album.

Beth Torrance-Hetherington's debut album, *Let's move to the seaside and never feel lonely again*, features eight tracks inspired by real life events.

Beth told *The Profile* the album had been two years in the making with all her songs written and mostly recorded in her Whakatete Bay bedroom in 2020.

"It's been pretty eventful, everyone really likes it [the album] and there's been a lot of positive feedback and response," she said.

"I think my music is quite relatable to an audience my age in that it covers some really key ideas of what it's like to be a teenager and what it means to grow up and the fears which come with it.

"I'm very drawn to lyricism, production, and the way poetry interacts with music I think is what's beautiful about song-writing."

Beth said two of her album's songs, *Let's move to the seaside and never feel lonely again* and *I really really really like u*, were about capturing different emotions.

"*Let's move to the seaside*



Beth Torrance-Hetherington recorded most of her songs in her Whakatete Bay home.

Photo: SUPPLIED

and never feel lonely again was written during [2020] lockdown and it's about feeling a bit isolated and a bit lonely, and missing people that you love," she said.

"*I really really really like u* was written a couple months earlier and it's about capturing a feeling of happiness.

"Version one at the end of the album is a real snapshot of that emotion... and version two at the top of the album is a more downbeat live version with rain to make it a bit melancholy."

Beth, who intends to study pop music and English at university next year, said she'd

been interested in music her whole life.

"I took piano lessons for a long time and then moved on to guitar when I was ten. Once I learnt some chords, I could hone my technique and I practiced and learnt songs that I loved," she said.

"We have these recordings of me singing songs like *Twinkle twinkle little star* when I was four and recently we found a tape when I was seven of me singing the first song I wrote and it's quite fun to listen to."

Beth's journey to her album's release included working with *Supergroove* frontman and award-winning soundtrack composer, Karl Steven.

"It was really great, we got along well and we had the same vision," she said.

The album's been reviewed by New Zealand-based music website *Under the Radar* and New Zealand music critic Matthew Crawley, who was stocking tapes of her album in his Flying Out Records store in Auckland.

Let's move to the seaside and never feel lonely again has also been played on RNZ.

Beth had also been able to show off her songs to live audiences while touring with New Zealander singer, Kendall Elise, recently.

"I've loved touring with Kendall, she's so lovely and it's been fun to get a taste of what it's like. I really appreciate her taking me under her wing," she said.

The pair have performed in Raglan, Wellington and Thames and are set to perform in Auckland, Whangārei and Tauranga in April.

Beth's debut album is available on Spotify, Soundcloud, iTunes and Bandcamp.

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