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‘Grounded in gratitude’

Dad’s marathon fundraiser motivated by daughter



Gio Polinko and his family: daughter Amalia, son Alonzo, and wife Paloma. INSET LEFT: Amalia’s arrival into the world eight years ago was anything but ordinary. Photos: SUPPLIED

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

Eight years ago, Amalia Polinko came into the world in dramatic fashion.

A life-threatening complication during labour led to an emergency caesarean, and the team at Auckland Hospital had to act fast to stabilise both mum and baby.

Amalia’s dad, Gio Polinko, was later told that if they had arrived at surgery even 10 minutes later, he could have lost them both. In the weeks and months that followed, Amalia faced further complica-

tions, including respiratory issues that saw her admitted to Starship Hospital multiple times in her first year of life.

But now, she is a strong and thriving big sister, and is fueling her dad’s perseverance as he prepares to run his first marathon - all in support of the hospital that helped save her.

Gio, from Thames, has signed up for the 2025 Auckland Marathon, taking place in November.

He is hoping to raise \$4200 - \$100 per kilometre - for Starship, and will be donating

\$100 every month leading up to the run.

Amalia is literally our miracle baby,” he told *The Profile*. “I used to think a lot about the scenario of being late to the hospital or surgery, and the possibility of not having Amalia or both her and Paloma today. I have so much gratitude for the staff that supported us at Auckland and Starship hospitals. They truly are amazing people.”

In 2017, Amalia was born via emergency c-section due to a placental abruption at 41 weeks and four days.

In her first year of life, she had issues with recurrent bronchiolitis and silent reflux, potentially due to the trauma she experienced from the life-saving operation.

She was admitted to Starship “countless times”, Gio said, including one stay at the Paediatric Intensive Care Unit due to dangerously low oxygen levels.

“Amalia came into the world in pretty dramatic fashion, and as a first-time parent, there was a lot of uncertainty, helplessness, and frustration around not

CONTINUED ON P2

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Drugs, firearm found in Waihi bust

Waikato Police uncovered methamphetamine, cannabis, a firearm, ammunition and a homemade taser during search warrants in Waihi on June 18.

Police, including the Armed Offenders Squad and drug detector dogs, executed two search warrants in the early hours of Wednesday morning.

Drugs, drug paraphernalia, firearms and ammunition, stolen property and a homemade taser were found. A firearm was also found in a concealed cavity in a wall.

"We see the harm that drug dealing causes to our communities daily," Inspector Mike Henwood said.

"These warrants represent local police's ongoing commitment to tackling drug offending in our rural towns and the associated crime that follows.

"Drug dealing takes a huge toll on our local communities and leads to other offending like thefts and burglaries from innocent residents and hard-working businesses.

"I am really proud of the work



Police executed search warrants at sunrise.

Photo: SUPPLIED

the teams did investigating this offending – being able to hold these offenders to account shows our commitment to stamping out drugs in our community. Recovering the drugs and dangerous weapons that were present, alongside evidence of dealing, is a great result."

A 33-year-old man and a 33-year-old woman were due to appear Hamilton District Court on drug dealing and weapons charges on June 19.

DETAILS: If you have concerns about illegal drug use in your community, please call 111 if there is an immediate public safety risk or contact Police via 105 online or by phone.

'Grounded in gratitude'

CONTINUED FROM P1

being able to do anything other than to trust the doctors and nurses at Starship," Gio said. "The care she received there honestly meant so much. Seeing how she is now and the type of person she is becoming, Paloma and I are so grateful."

Gratitude is a great motivator for Gio. That, alongside the support of his family and his desire to test his own limits, is what drives him to tackle the marathon.

"I'm definitely excited, and a bit nervous too. Before I started running, I'd never really run more than 2.5km nonstop, so 42.2km felt pretty out of reach at first," he said. "But I guess that's part of the reason why I wanted to do it. I've always leaned into things that were challenging as a way to build resilience. I think that doing things that truly challenge you, by choice, teaches you a lot about yourself, and helps you show up stronger in other areas of life too."

Seeing Gio's hard work has also encouraged Amalia to give the run a go - and she's told her dad she wants to participate in the 2.2km Kids Marathon, held on the same day.

"Amalia definitely motivates me, not just with this but with everything. Both her and her little brother Alonzo do," Gio said. "They're always my why in life, and I learn so much from them."

Gio is currently on top of the fundraising leaderboard for Team Starship - with \$1750 raised out of the \$6132 Starship has in total. And with a few months left to train, Gio is passionate about extending that lead and inspiring others to support Starship's work.

"Mentally, I've been trying to stay grounded in gratitude. I've got my health and the ability to move the way I currently do, and I know not everyone has that," he said. "So I feel a real responsibility to make the most of it, and to do something meaningful with it. And for me, that's raising funds for Starship Hospital. They supported our daughter Amalia in her early years, and this is a small way I can give back."

DETAILS: To donate, visit: aucklandmarathon2025.grassrootz.com/starship/gio-running-for-starship.

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Thames Tides

Wed Jun 25	Thu Jun 26	Fri Jun 27	Sat Jun 28	Sun Jun 29	Mon Jun 30	Tue Jul 1
 Morning: 12:08am 0.6, 12:34pm 0.3, 6:20am 3.4, 6:57pm 3.6 Afternoon: 1:03am 0.5, 1:28pm 0.3, 7:20am 3.4, 7:50pm 3.6 Sun: 7:32am 5:09pm Best At: 11:53am New Moon: Rise 7:19am, Set 4:28pm	 Morning: 1:03am 0.5, 1:28pm 0.3, 7:20am 3.4, 7:50pm 3.6 Afternoon: 1:57am 0.5, 2:18pm 0.3, 8:16am 3.4, 8:41pm 3.6 Sun: 7:32am 5:09pm Best At: 12:26am 12:58pm New Moon: Rise 8:22am, Set 5:36pm	 Morning: 1:57am 0.5, 2:18pm 0.3, 8:16am 3.4, 8:41pm 3.6 Afternoon: 2:50am 0.5, 3:07pm 0.3, 9:10am 3.4, 9:30pm 3.6 Sun: 7:32am 5:10pm Best At: 1:28am 1:58pm New Moon: Rise 9:12am, Set 6:49pm	 Morning: 2:50am 0.5, 3:07pm 0.3, 9:10am 3.4, 9:30pm 3.6 Afternoon: 3:41am 0.6, 3:54pm 0.4, 10:00am 3.4, 10:19pm 3.5 Sun: 7:32am 5:10pm Best At: 2:26am 2:53pm New Moon: Rise 9:52am, Set 8:02pm	 Morning: 3:41am 0.6, 3:54pm 0.4, 10:00am 3.4, 10:19pm 3.5 Afternoon: 4:31am 0.6, 4:40pm 0.6, 10:48am 3.3, 11:07pm 3.4 Sun: 7:32am 5:11pm Best At: 3:18am 3:42pm New Moon: Rise 10:24am, Set 9:10pm	 Morning: 4:31am 0.6, 4:40pm 0.6, 10:48am 3.3, 11:07pm 3.4 Afternoon: 5:19am 0.7, 5:27pm 0.7, 11:34am 3.2, 11:54pm 3.3 Sun: 7:32am 5:11pm Best At: 4:05am 4:27pm New Moon: Rise 10:51am, Set 10:15pm	 Morning: 5:19am 0.7, 5:27pm 0.7, 11:34am 3.2, 11:54pm 3.3 Afternoon: 6:03am 0.8, 6:11pm 0.8, 12:01pm 3.3, 12:21pm 3.3 Sun: 7:32am 5:11pm Best At: 4:48am 5:09pm New Moon: Rise 11:14am, Set 11:14pm

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	Mn	Low	Mn
Coromandel	-0	04	-0	04	
Whitianga	-0	01	-0	05	
Tairua	+0	10	+0	21	
Whangamata	-0	03	-0	05	
Waihi Beach	-0	12	-0	12	

Swimming the Big Swim for Coastguard

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

Steve Russek doesn't just talk the talk, he's swimming the swim.

Last year, the president of Thames' Coastguard unit remarked that if a fellow volunteer could complete The Big Swim, he'd do it too.

Now he's making good on that promise, leading by example and clocking up the kilometres for a good cause.

The Big Swim is a nationwide fundraising initiative taking place throughout June, in support of Coastguard New Zealand.

Participants nominate the distance they think they can swim in the month and gain donations. The funds raised will be used to help train and equip Coastguard's 2000-plus volunteers as well as fuelling and maintaining its rescue vessels.

Steve, who has been utilising the free use of the Thames Centennial Pool, set himself the challenge of swimming 10km in June, and has already raised more than \$1400 of his \$1500 goal. As at June 16, he had very nearly completed what he set out to do, with 9.3km swam in total.

The task, Steve said, was going "surprisingly well".

"[It] started slow with a few



Stephen Russek has been involved with the Thames Coastguard unit for around 25 years and is one of three local skippers. Photos: SUPPLIED

practices in May... it soon got from 500m in the first practice to around 1100m-1300m per go.

"I can't swim every day due to other commitments and life in general, but I try to do at least three swims per week around 5pm-6pm at Thames Centennial Pool."

Steve said he grew up around the water - swimming, snorkelling, scuba diving, fishing - but was never a trained swimmer or had practised in pool swimming.

It wasn't until a fellow Coastguard volunteer took part in The Big Swim in 2024 that he "foolishly" said: 'If he can do it,

I will do it next year'. "And here we are. So, yeah, he motivated me, and as I'm the president of the Thames unit, I was trying to lead by example."

Steve has been involved with the Thames Coastguard unit for more than 25 years and is one of three local skippers.

The unit averages around 50-65 callouts per year and covers the entire Firth of Thames and Lower Hauraki Gulf, up to the top of the peninsula, across to Kaiaua, and up to Waiheke.

This year, he's being joined in The Big Swim by new Thames Coastguard volunteer Paul Studer - who has also pledged



Stephen, who has been utilising the free use of the Thames Centennial Pool, set himself the challenge of swimming 10km in June.

to swim 10km throughout June.


"This nationwide campaign has become very popular, with volunteers and public outside the organisation also participating," Steve said. "There are 2500 participants and they've surpassed \$480k in donations - so they are likely to exceed \$1 million for the month. It is a great cause as the Coastguard runs on volunteers and donations. It is only partially gov-

ernment funded," he said.


"All the volunteers give a huge amount of their time and effort. Doesn't matter whether it's actual time on water doing rescues, or training, maintenance, first aid, fundraising, or admin - it's all important."

DETAILS: For more details or to donate to Steve's Big Swim, visit: bigswim.org.nz/s-russek





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Thames theatre tech teen triumphs

By DAVIDDA HIKATANGATA

If Jacob White knows one thing to be true of his Thames Music and Drama (MAD) crew it's that "we pull off some pretty cool stuff".

The 16-year-old told *The Profile* his official role in the group was technical crew member but he could also be referred to as production technician, who worked in the areas of wardrobe, props, set design, lighting design and/or operation and sound design and/or operation.

The young tech said he often reminded his crew they pulled off excellent work considering the size of their theatre.

"We're surrounded by a great team of people at each event making sure everything is done on time. MAD is often referred to as one big family and everyone would be able to agree that everyone is always looking out for one another."

It's what makes his recent achievement so special.

The year-12 Thames High School student was nominated by a few "secret squirrels" in his crew for the Entertainment Technology New Zealand (ETNZ) Community Technical Achievement Awards for 2025, where he snapped up the Technical Achievement Youth Award.



Jacob White receives the 2025 Technical Achievement Youth Award from Martin Rodley. Photo: SUPPLIED

Former Thames MAD technical liaison Tina Haakma said society president Diane Connors and vice-president Martin Rodley approached her with the idea of putting Jacob's name forward for the award.

"We wanted to nominate Jacob because we see how he puts in effort above and beyond what is expected, and whenever

there is a task that needs doing he will be on hand to help.

"Jacob's ability to plan ahead with programming and design work and work with the team for the benefit of the show/event is amazing to watch and we wanted to acknowledge that behemoth effort."

Tina said the award was an opportunity to recognise all the

hard work the young technicians put into each show, and there was a massive pool of people nominated, which made it "even more special" when Jacob won.

The award-winning teen said he was quite surprised but also grateful when he heard the news.

But it was more than just a

win.

Jacob was in his fifth year at Thames MAD and he said the award was an overview of his time involved there.

"It hasn't only given me a boost of encouragement but also the chance to reflect on the years that have passed and how much I've grown since I started."

One thing Jacob was currently learning was how MAD could improve in the organisation aspects of their events, he said. "This has included creating different types of documentation and learning how we can better manage our equipment."

His dream was to pursue a career within the entertainment and event production industry, and it was evident he was on the way to making it happen.

He recently signed up to do the NZ National Certificate in Entertainment & Event Operations level three course through ETNZ, which he will complete through Thames High School and different events with MAD.

"There are some pretty cool events and projects out there."

Even though he hadn't set his sights on any specific areas in the industry just yet, one thing was certain - "I'll be staying ambitious".

Te Kura Tuarua o Te Kauaeranga
Thames High School

Kia kōtahi ai te piki ake, kia ikeike rawa ki te taumata
We grow together to achieve ones true potential

CELEBRATING SUCCESS

Chess Champs Headed to Nationals

On Wednesday 4 June, Thames High School proudly hosted the Hauraki Plains Regional Chess Tournament in our library.

We welcomed 38 students from 9 different schools, along with their teachers, librarians, and whānau — creating a fantastic atmosphere of strategy, focus, and friendly competition.

Our chess team – **Alex Atrill (Year 9), Jay Majurey (Year 13), Immanuel Huwald (Year 12), Kim Ju Taing (Year 11), Cleo Challis (Year 10), and Byron Johnson (Year 9)**– were the top senior team of the tournament! Thames High has qualified as a team of five for the National Teams Final on 25 October 2025, and individual players Alex, Jay, and Kim Ju have also qualified for the Champions Trophy on 26 October.

Community Contribution Award

A huge congratulations to Thames High School Service & Welfare Student Leader **Brooklyn Jiang (Year 12)**.

Brooklyn has been recognised at the Rangatahi Voices Awards, hosted by Rangatahi Voices – a youth-led initiative supported by the Waikato Regional Council. These awards celebrate young leaders, creatives, and change-makers from across the region, and Brooklyn truly stood out among a huge number of inspiring nominations.

We are so proud of Brooklyn's incredible mahi and the positive impact he continues to make in our school and wider community. Ka mau te wehī!

The awards ceremony took place on 24 May 2025 at the Waikato Regional Council in Hamilton.

Virtual Reality gets Students Active

As part of our Active As programme, Thames High School has purchased 20 Virtual Reality headsets to help get students moving in new and exciting ways.

Active As is all about encouraging physical activity to support mental and emotional wellbeing.

These Virtual Reality headsets are a game-changer—especially for students who might feel shy or lack confidence in traditional sports settings.

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Music Competition Wins

Luca Yamamoto (Year 10) recently competed in the NZ Modern School of Music Counties Annual Competition, entering five guitar categories.

He won **GOLD** for "Pica Pica" (Own Choice) and "Guitar Boogie" (Test Piece), and **SILVER** for "Distant Memories" (Instrumental Composition) and Sight Reading.

His outstanding performance earned him the Davis Cup Trophy for top under-16 guitar player. A talented performer, Luca also represented us proudly last year and often plays at our important events.

Ka pai, Luca!

Visit Thames High School website www.thameshigh.school.nz ~ Thames High School Events and Celebrations ~ Ph +64 7 868 8688

Matariki celebrations in Hauraki-Coro

By ALICE PARMINTER, Public Interest Journalism funded by NZ On Air

Paeroa will be marking Matariki with a free community event this year.

The community day, running at Ngahutoitoi Marae on June 26, will be a relaxing day full of entertainment and activities for the whole whānau.

The inaugural event is being put on by Nga Iwi FM.

“We thought, well, what better place to do it than at the marae,” the station’s general manager Hara Karu said.

“It’s an event that celebrates the Māori New Year, but it’s also an opportunity to teach people about Matariki within our space.”

“We’re just trying to keep it very community, pulling community members in to facilitate and teach all these wonderful spaces.”

Various stalls will be onsite, including face painting, mosaics, kai, and community information spaces. There will be dedicated spaces for rangatahi [youth] and kaumātua [elders], and interactive workshops on arts and crafts, kono raranga [basket weaving] and waiata [song]. Ngā Wai Tāpara a Rangatahi will be running kī-o-rahi games, and a Matariki presentation will take place at 1pm.

There will also be a kapa haka performance from Paeroa Central School, music performances, and spot prizes to be won.

The event is open to all, and will run from 10am-2pm with a pōwhiri around 8am to kick things off.

Matariki ki Hauraki will be held from 10am-2pm at Ngahutoitoi Marae, 100 Ngahutoitoi Rd, Paeroa. Pōwhiri at 8am. Entry is free.

Meanwhile, Matariki Whangamatā celebrations returned this June, running from June 19-22.

The community came together with kai, workshops, and activities to reflect on and honour the Māori New Year. The event is supported by the Creative Communities Scheme, with \$1300 in funding awarded through Thames-Coromandel District Council and backed by Creative New Zealand.

Other celebrations throughout the Hauraki-Coromandel region included a Pāuanui Volunteer Fire Brigade bonfire on June 20, and a series of Matariki Stargazing events held by Kūaotunu Dark Sky Community at the Kūaotunu Domain.



The Ngāti Tamaterā Digital Technology and Innovation Workshops fuse cutting-edge tech with tikanga. Photo: SUPPLIED

Digital innovation led by Ngāti Tamaterā

More than 800 students across 11 schools in Tāmaki and Hauraki have been immersed in a “powerful” learning experience driven by Ngāti Tamaterā, one that the iwi describes as “a bold step forward in shaping the digital future” of rangatahi.

In partnership with the Sir Peter Blake Trust, Young Animators, and Pou Rāhui, the Ngāti Tamaterā Digital Technology and Innovation Workshops fuse cutting-edge tech with tikanga, empowering tamariki and rangatahi to explore the digital world through a uniquely Māori lens.

From augmented reality tools to assess the health and

well-being of Tikapa Moana, to learning the cultural and environmental importance of rāhui, students have been building their capacity to not only understand, but shape the future of their communities.

One activity saw students create and animate their own digital narratives; storytelling brought to life through coding, animation, and mātauranga Māori.

“These workshops aren’t just about tech,” Ngāti Tamaterā Treaty Settlement Trust chief executive Michelle Wilson said.

“They’re about preparing our rangatahi for the future of work, building their confidence with innovation, and connect-

ing their skills to the whenua and moana that sustain us.”

With the future of employment increasingly digital and global, Ngāti Tamaterā said the workshops were a vital part of its vision to strengthen iwi resilience, rangatahi leadership, and climate-conscious tech careers.

“This kaupapa demonstrated what was possible when iwi, educators, and innovators worked together: rangatahi who were culturally grounded, digitally equipped, and ready to lead.”

DETAILS: For more information or to bring these workshops to your kura, contact: michelle.wilson@tamatera.iwi.nz or 021 568 708.

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Puriri picnic party indulges in ‘kiss-the-ring’



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

1903

Picnic parties to Puriri’s mineral water springs were greatly enjoyed, particularly one when the old game of ‘Kiss-the-ring’ was enthusiastically revived.

When sending out the invitations to the picnic, strict instructions were given that there could be ‘no gooseberries,’ and they must come in pairs.

In heady anticipation of the good time they were going to have, the Thames party forgot that they would get very hungry feeding on love alone, and arrived at Puriri without a billy to boil the water.

This difficulty was overcome by borrowing from the Paeroa party, and while the billy simmered over the fire the game of dropping a handkerchief behind a chosen person in a circle, then racing to kiss them before they completed a run around the circle was indulged in. So much did they enjoy this that they thought they would try it again after their meal,



A picnic party at Puriri mineral springs.

Photo: SUPPLIED

and entered eagerly into the spirit of the game.

As a fitting finale, the picnickers in a state of embrace posed for a photographer. It was not known if the photo was going to be reproduced in the *Auckland Weekly News*, but if so it would cause great amusement at Thames where all boys and girls were said to be ‘so proper.’

At Karangahake, shopkeepers met in Montgomery’s Hall to form an association for protection against bad debts.

There was a full attendance, rules were formulated, and everyone was supportive, which was shown in the way they paid up their subscriptions; it also showed how the credit was abused in the town.

Over at Waihi, the School committee asked the Auckland Board of Education to provide

them with a second school or an infants’ school.

There were 159 children of school age residing over one mile from the present school, of that number about 60 lived two miles away, and 40 of them were under 10 years of age.

There were 24 children between the ages of five and seven not attending school at all, and a number of other children attending the existing Catholic school, paying a small fee, because it was nearer to their homes.

Some of the children had to pass over three tramway crossings of the Waihi Mining Company putting their lives in danger. The site proposed for the new school was 1.5 miles from the present school, in the centre Waihi.

Meanwhile, the steamer

Waimarie when entering the Waihou River was met by a very heavy mist which thickened as progress up the river was made.

After leaving Turua, the fog became so dense that it was impossible to see the bow from the bridge, and they moved at dead slow. The rudder then gave way altogether making navigation extremely difficult.

This state of affairs continued for many miles up the river, Captain Bettis having a most anxious time.

A scow was then struck by the steamer, the fog being so thick that the scow was not seen until the collision occurred.

Eventually the *Waimarie* stuck on one of the banks, and the passengers and mails were brought by a pulling boat to McKee’s landing and then on to Paeroa.

Chris’ Quiz

Weekly quiz compiled by Chris Par-minter

1. Which country has the highest wine consumption per capita in the world? a) France, b) Portugal, or c) Vatican City?
2. Who is the only driver to win a Formula One championship behind the wheel of his own car (that he had designed himself)? a) Jack Brabham, b) Jacques Villeneuve, or c) Mika Häkkinen?
3. The flag of Sri Lanka features which animal?
4. In which movie does a lonely Hawaiian girl adopt a blue alien experiment (Experiment 626), unaware of his dangerous nature or his escape from a laboratory?
5. The now unused Tui Mine is close to which New Zealand town? a) Te Aroha, b) Thames or c) Waihi?
6. Jesuits or Jesuit Priests are associated with which denomination of Christianity?
7. The Disney creation *Dumbo* uses what to fly?
8. Which brand contains stars from the Matariki cluster as part of its logo? a) DC, b) Starbucks, or c) Subaru?
9. True or false: the southernmost point of the South Island is Bluff?
10. A Pomelo is what type of fruit? a) berry, b) citrus fruit, or c) stone fruit?



ANSWERS: 1. c) Vatican City - mainly due to the use as communion wine; 2. a) Jack Brabham; 3. A lion; 4. Lilo and Stich; 5. Te Aroha; 6. Catholicism; 7. His ears; 8. c) Subaru; 9. False. Slope Point is the southernmost point of the South Island and is 51km east, and 2km south of Bluff; 10. b) citrus fruit.



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The Burton family outside their new Burton's Butchery location in Matatoki.

Photo: SUPPLIED

New digs, same chops

The storefront may be new, but the heart of Burton's Butchery remains exactly the same.

After nine years of serving the community from its familiar spot in Paeroa, Burton's Butchery has packed up their cleavers and counters and shifted to 9224 State highway 26, Matatoki - the former Thames Valley Bacon building.

"We're still in the community - we're just in a different location," owner operator Elliot Burton told *The Profile*.

It may not be "the full whack" like the previous spot in Paeroa, but the fourth generation butcher said they're happy to be able to open up as a small country butcher shop.

"It's really well set up for what we do. And we've done a full rebuild on it, pretty much. It is more custom-placed compared to where we were. For our compliance, it's

going to be a lot easier," he said.

The new space comes with larger capabilities for their home kill processing too, he said.

Despite the change in scenery, Burton's will continue to serve its loyal and new customers with the same quality meats and the same staff, along with the wide range of barbecue meat rubs.

One change to the schedule though was that Burton's would be closed on Saturdays.

"We've got three kids that do a lot of sport and things like that, so it's just making a change for ourselves a bit as well."

But his goal for this year was to just re-establish themselves in the new premises, and keep serving the community the best way he knows how: with friendly service and top quality meat.

- By Davidda Hikatangata

Students wear yellow for Harold

By ALICE PARMINTER, Public Interest Journalism funded by NZ On Air

Students at Kopuarahi School were treated to a visit from Harold the giraffe on June 13.

The visit was in recognition of Wear Yellow for Harold Day, a fundraising event for the Life Education Trust.

Harold was accompanied by Frances Nicol from the Life Education Trust Waikato East region, along with some Hauraki Plains College students, two of whom were former Kopuarahi School students.

The tamariki danced and chatted with Harold, and discussed some of the life lessons

they had previously with him, such as “rock and feather” feelings. Harold brought along prizes and worksheets to award the students for all their hard work over the school term.

“The looks on their faces when Harold came through the door... They just love Harold,” Frances said.

“And they can remember what they’ve been taught [by him].”

Harold also visited Te Rerenga School and Coromandel Area School for the event.



Kopuarahi School students with Harold the Giraffe. Photos: ALICE PARMINTER



Dance party time with Harold the Giraffe and student volunteers.



Harold greets the kids with high fives.



Frances, left, with Harold and the Hauraki Plains College volunteers.

Local radio the tops

Coromandel CFM is the most listened to radio station across its Coromandel Peninsula and Hauraki audience, according to a recent Curia Research poll.

The poll of 500 Thames-Coromandel residents aged 18 and above was conducted between June 3 and 10 this year, and revealed CFM’s “dominant” 35 per cent share of the radio market.

Station owner and manager Lynda Grant said the result was “far ahead” of other stations such as Newstalk ZB (eight per cent) and Radio NZ (seven per cent).

The result came with a ±4.2 per cent margin of error at 95 per cent confidence, which Lynda said was “unparalleled in recent radio rating surveys”. “This 35 per cent share among listeners [aged 18-plus] is humbling. We feel a huge responsibility to be the conduit for community messaging, supporting everything from fundraising, to local events,” she said. “Our dedicated team is proud of what we’ve achieved in just six years.”

Since launching from its Whitianga studios, CFM had grown rapidly, Lynda said.

By 2020, it expanded to five transmitter sites across the Coromandel Peninsula, which helped cement its community-driven focus. With local news and a music playlist featuring more than 20 per cent New Zealand content - earning them two NZ On Air awards - Lynda said CFM had become “the voice of the Coromandel”. It is now planning to launch CFM Retro, targeting listeners aged 60 and above.

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Net-zero emissions goal on the cards

Thames-Coromandel District Council is working towards its goal of net-zero carbon emissions by 2050.

On June 5, the council's sustainability and community resilience committee was presented with a proposed climate change strategy and proposed greenhouse gas emissions reduction plan.

Both plans aim at better futureproofing the district, the council said in a recent press release.

"The climate change strategy sets a net-zero emissions target for 2050 and includes adopting a greater risk management approach, alongside programmes for climate change adaptation and mitigation.

"It also recognises the impacts of climate change on the district and on Māori as well as many potential opportunities from working with a collaborative approach," council said.

"The greenhouse gas emissions reduction plan, which ties in with the climate change strategy, identifies council's emission volumes and how much these need to be reduced to meet long-term reduction goals."

The council said some of the most effective ways it could achieve this goal would be by continuing to move its vehicle fleet to electric and continuing its water conservation programme of leak detection.

This was broken down into three-yearly targets and would achieve zero-net emissions incrementally.

"The interim targets acknowledge the potential upcoming changes to council's future water services delivery as part of Local Water Done Well.

"It was noted that this is a matter that will need to be worked through with relevant parties once there is more clarity around who will be providing future water services for council," council said.

The committee approved both documents.

The council said it would now recommend the climate change strategy for adoption at its June 24 meeting, and the greenhouse gas emissions reduction plan at its August 5 meeting.



A celebration of Thames volunteers was held on June 18. BELOW: Guest speaker Andrew Connaughton of Never Surrender Boxing Gym talks to the crowd at the event. Photos: SUPPLIED/TCDC

Thames volunteers celebrated

Nearly 50 people turned up to the Thames War Memorial Civic Centre on June 18 to celebrate the impact of volunteering in Thames.

It was a time to thank the hundreds of people who contribute volunteer time to filling the gaps in services and creating a more supportive community.

The ripple effect of volunteering in inspiring societal change was the theme of the guest speech.

Guest speaker Andrew Connaughton, of Never Surrender Boxing Gym and a volunteer in the fields of youth activities, sport and community fundraising, told the audience volunteering had a massive effect



beyond just the few hours an individual contributes.

"Volunteering shapes our culture where helping each other is seen as normal. Young people grow up and see kindness in action, and feel empowered to do the same.

"It starts with one small act, but before you know it, you've touched thousands of lives," he said.

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Let's talk

Share your thoughts on enhancements for Railway Reserve

Paeroa's Railway Reserve Playground is due for an upgrade and expansion.

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Sunday 29 June - 10am to 12pm
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We'll be at the event to assist in survey submissions or scan the QR code to share your thoughts and find out more.

The survey is live until Monday 30 June 2025.

Punky parlour games

By ALICE PARMINTER, Public Interest Journalism funded by NZ On Air

Steampunk enthusiasts gathered in Thames on June 14 to celebrate International Steampunk Day.

The day kicked off with parlour games at the Salvation Army Hall, with participating clubs vying for the inaugural Steampunk Parlour Games Championship Trophy. Members from The Air Krackens in Auckland, Kraken's Lair in Whangārei, Cambridge's Treetown Steamers, Steampunk Tauranga and Hamilton's Waipa Steamers joined the Thames club to participate in the "silly" games.

Steampunk the Thames president Caroline Thomas said the parlour games were chosen for their fun and silliness. Tokens

were awarded to winners of the games, which included Banana Joe, Bedbugs, air hockey, giant dominoes, Pictureka, Bucking Broncos, Tiddlywinks, Hungry Shark and more.

The day was rounded off with Glowing Escapades at 5pm, a promenade down Thames' Pollen St in illuminated costumes.

Caroline said the event was a fun way for steampunkers to get together mid-year.

The committee is now looking ahead to its November Steampunk Festival, which will also mark the group's 10-year anniversary. The theme for November's event is "Steampunk It Your Way".



Val tackles a tabletop game during the event to celebrate International Steampunk Day.

Photos: ALICE PARMINTER



Perusing Pictureka for hidden images.



Ray and Ruth play air hockey.



Simon, aka "Atticus Pickles".



A game of Banana Joe.



Diana, left, Kathryn and Alan are visitors to Thames for the parlour day.



Raewyn Crawford shows off her steampunk outfit.

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	Boyd Park, Te Aroha 2pm Kick Off
	The Lyons Den, Whitianga 2pm Kick Off
	Centennial Park, Paeroa 2pm Kick Off

Quarter Final 1

	Waitakaruru INTL Stadium 1pm Kick Off
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Paeroa will play the winner of Quarter Final 2 and Coromandel will play the winner of Quarter Final 1

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SENIOR B - Championship Round 5 - June 28th

	Centennial Park, Paeroa 1pm Kick Off
	Cory Park Domain, Tairua 12.25pm Kick Off
	Boyd Park, Te Aroha 12.25pm Kick Off

SENIOR C - Championship Round 5 - June 28th

	Hayward Domain, Ngatea 12.25pm Kick Off
	Kenny St, Waihi 12.25pm Kick Off
	BYE

Quarter Final 2

	Boyd Park, Te Aroha 1pm Kick Off
--	--

Scott Simpson

MP for Coromandel

Contact me anytime
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TVRFU CLUB RUGBY

AND THEN THERE WERE FOUR
From Tighthead Ted's crystal ball
Club Wrap Round 11 : June 21, 2025
And then there were four. But ole Tighthead Ted still needs his abacus to work out where Waihou, Mercury Bay and Paeroa are going to finish on the ladder after next week's games. Thames have dropped out of the race after going down to Mercury Bay this last weekend at Whitianga - always a hard task against the Marlins on the coast! Out with the abacus then, let's see what's going to happen. Mercury Bay hosting Hauraki North, and the Bay should win. Paeroa hosting Whangamata, and again, the home side should win.
This is the battle for the silver and bronze, with Paeroa a point ahead, a win with no bonus point is all they need, as they are a point ahead of the Bay on the log already, so a tie puts Paeroa into second on who beat who. So me old mates at Whitianga will be hoping that Whangamata can upset the Green Machine, giving the Bay second spot on the ladder. Waihou will be hoping for a triple upset, North taking out the Bay and Whanga doing the business on Paeroa, while they beat Waihi, which would catapult the Mongose into second.
So the weekend's results. First up a visit to the coast was in order, and the mighty Marlins tamed the Thames Taniwha. Not an easy task at the best of times as the behemoth Thames pack takes a lot of taming, with their ball carries always gaining the advantage line and beyond it always a tough task. Mercury Bay played the long game though, relying on their superior fitness to bring them home, and it did. The Thames pack tired, errors started to creep in, and discipline started to slip, along with set piece accuracy, and the 13-5 halftime lead turned into a 29-25 loss after 80 minutes. Thames were well served by tryscorer Koen Liddell, a young lock who needs the weights, not the fitness, as the young bloke has a V8 motor attached to his bicycle like frame. Paeroa was the other match of the round with 'all to play for' the Green Machine hosting Waihou. Paeroa, though, played one of their best halves of rugby in a long time - looking very similar to the champion Paeroa Peace Cup side of 1982. With tighthead prop Johnson McKain becoming the first centurion for the club, the team hit the ground running, and had blown Waihou off the park 29-0 at the turn. Waihou though, are one

of those teams that THT used to hate playing. You're thumping the buggers, taking them to the cleaners, giving them an old fashioned hiding, but they just don't give up, they don't know when they're bloody well beaten. And so it was, Waihou won the second spell 19-12 as Paeroa reverted to form with ill-discipline allowing the Mongoose back into the game. Two Waihou tries while Paeroa were resting players in the bin with yellow cards told the tale - if Paeroa can stop the silly penalties, they'll be hard to beat in the coming weeks. The home team were well served by young lock Korbin Chwesik, who is growing into his game each week, and McKain in his 100th was a rock at the set piece.
Onto the Surf 'n' Turf Cup played between Whangamata and Hauraki North. It turned out to be a cracking match too. With neither team in contention for a top four place, the match could have been a dead rubber, but with Myles McDuff looking down from on high, the two teams went hammer and tongs in the battle for the Cup. After 15 minutes it looked like Whangamata was going to run away with the game, with a couple of training ground specials providing tries, and a penalty throwing the score up to 17 zip for almost zero expenditure of energy! North though, snared a try just before the break for oranges, and 5-17 was the score after 40.
The second spell turned into a see-saw affair, North clawed their way back to 13-17, carried on the back of some rampaging runs from their big tighthead prop Kol McCaskill. Whangamata then woke up and scored a trademark close quarter try, and then from the kickoff almost, put up an old fashioned bomb that North let bounce, and boom, 14 points in two minutes put the score out to 31-13. Game over one would think, but two late tries to North, one a just reward for McCaskill, saw the home side trailing by six with five minutes to go.
No miracle like last week's win against Thames this week though, much to the delight of Corby's liver, and Whangamata held on to win by six points.
Cracking game, the Red 'n' White's kept the Cup, with the team led from the front by skipper Jacob Chaplin, Zach Clarke at number eight in fine form and Maradona O'Halloran playing his trade well at hooker.
There was another match for the round, but COBRAS defaulted to Waihi. Not ideal for Waihi two weeks out from finals, and not a great look for COBRAS defaulting late.




Eli Fale makes his Thames senior debut. Photo: MARK BROWN

FOOTBALL

Thames dig deep for hard-earned point at Northern United
After a weather-enforced break last week, T&R Interior Systems Thames FC Mens hit the road again, heading east to take on Northern United Humblebees in another Hamilton-based clash, fresh and eager for a positive result.
With the morning mist clearing, Thames began the match at Ashurst Park strongly, dictating the game's early tempo despite injuries thinning their ranks in recent weeks. Twelve minutes in, the early dominance culminated in the opening goal. Fernando Bassem Souilem collected the ball wide left, linking neatly with Michael Sogo. The tricky winger jinked into the box and crossed to 17-year-old Troy Costello, who glanced an unorthodox but effective header into the net for his first senior goal. Thames continued to hold the upper hand, with Sam Cox going close from a trademark free-kick on the left before Souilem was gifted a chance by a poor goalkeeper clearance, only to drag his shot wide.
Northern United regrouped and gained a foothold, with Joseph Loeffen cutting inside and curling a shot just wide of Matt Burchell's goal. Thames held firm to take a pleasing 1-0 lead into

half-time. The controlled first half transitioned into a frantic second, with the game becoming stretched as the depleted squad began to tire. Xavier Brown dug deep, bursting from midfield and setting up Sogo, whose shot narrowly missed the post.
Northern United had several chances to equalise, including a fierce volley brilliantly saved by Burchell, who reacted expertly and parried one-handed down to his right. The Thames goalkeeper again came to the rescue as a Loeffen shot was tipped over.
With only 15 minutes remaining, Thames' brave defence finally cracked. A lofted cross into the box triggered a melee, with the ball fortuitously falling to Craig Jessep, who tapped into an empty net to level the game.
Thames finished the match strongly, pressing for a late winner. Mike Kim's mazy run from the left created space for a right-footed rasping drive that narrowly missed the top corner. The 1-1 result brought plenty of positives, including a glimpse into the future, with 14-year-old Eli Fale making his senior Thames debut.
"We showed good grit, especially after losing key players to injuries," defender Sanket Gurung said. "A win would have been the cherry on top, but it was a well-fought draw nonetheless."



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Rural Life

Kaihere Hunt ‘bigger and better’

A fundraising initiative kicked off across the week-end of June 6- 8, raising \$6700 to go towards Project Active Turf, a community initiative to cover the front courts at Kaihere School with sports turf.

The Kaihere Hunt saw more than 70 hunters bring in a count of 813 possums, 500 kg of deer and pigs, and 302 pests such as peacocks, magpies, rabbits and rats.

The event brought the community together in a way that was unique to rural New Zealand, the school said.

As the spoils of hunting were being counted and weighed, the event featured a variety of activities for everyone to enjoy including bake sales, a colouring competition for children, face painting, a pig run for the adults and possum throw for the kids - as well as the opportunity to watch possum plucking.

Maureen Coleman and Brian Neilson, of the Thames Valley Deerstalkers Association, oversaw the judging alongside the Kaihere Parent Teachers Association.

The hunting and local community gathered at Kaihere School in good numbers to watch the results come in.



People pluck the possums at this year’s Kaihere Hunt. BELOW: Face painting was a big hit. Photos: SUPPLIED

Event organiser and PTA spokesperson Clare Ward said: “every year the Kaihere Hunt gets bigger and better and none of this would be possible without the amazing support of the community, so a massive thank you to everyone who put their hand up to help or sponsor the event”.

Major prize winners were Max Skiffington for the most possums; Gary Wharton for heaviest deer and Frank Ward for most overall pests.

The Kaihere Hunt is set to become an annual fixture.

DETAILS: For more updates follow Kaihere School or search for the Kaihere PTA on Facebook.



Restrictions on carbon forestry

Federated Farmers’ ‘Save our Sheep’ campaign has taken a major step forward recently with the government introducing legislation to stop carbon forestry on productive farmland, Federated Farmers says.

“This legislation is a really positive step forward - but from a farmer’s perspective, it’s long overdue,” Federated Farmers meat & wool chair Toby Williams said.

The ‘Save our Sheep’ platform has been getting plenty of traction in recent weeks with a viral social media campaign and a strategically placed billboard directly opposite the Beehive.

“The Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) has been screwing the scrum in favour of forestry over farming by subsidising pine trees to offset fossil fuel emissions,” Mr Williams said.

“These new restrictions will put the squeeze on wholesale pine planting driven by carbon returns but won’t hinder genuine production forestry or smaller farm woodlots.” Farmers would be raising serious questions about 15,000 hectares of LUC 6 farmland being allocated by a ballot process each year, he said.

“That is a huge amount of land still going into pine trees and that’s what farmers will currently be using as breeding country.”



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Rural Life

Wool carpet decision a ‘parachute’

Kāinga Ora’s decision to use wool carpet in its social housing is a massive win for wool growers but won’t be enough to save the industry on its own, Federated Farmers says.

“Our wool industry is in major freefall, and this move from Kāinga Ora is the parachute we desperately need,” Federated Farmers meat and wool chair Toby Williams said.

“This will slow our drop a bit but, in reality, what we really need now is an updraft to lift wool back up into being the number-one fibre globally.

“It’s certainly a massive step in the right direction, though, and we’re very pleased with the announcement.”

Williams said Kāinga Ora was New Zealand’s largest landlord, so its contract has the capability to soak up large volumes of wool, which in turn will help drive up prices. As well as transitioning to using wool carpet in its new social housing, Kāinga Ora will also use wool carpet in existing homes if the whole house needs recarpeting, such as when renovating older properties.

The decision comes after a recent Request for Proposal (RFP) inviting both wool and nylon carpet providers to tender for the supply of carpet and underlay in its properties.

“Last year Federated Farmers slammed Kāinga Ora for initially deciding to categorically rule out using woollen carpets in its social housing,” Williams said.

“Our homegrown wool is an incredible product and it beggared belief that Kāinga Ora weren’t even giving wool the chance to compete against nylon products. That was

a total slap in the face for struggling Kiwi sheep farmers and rural communities, and we made it very clear it was a ridiculous, short-sighted decision. It’s great they saw sense and allowed wool to have a crack – and even better that a wool provider has won the contract.

Williams says the decision is the result of a massive collaborative effort across the entire wool industry.

“Federated Farmers and other groups have been working really hard for years to get the government engaged with, and listening to, wool growers.

“We recently launched our SOS: Save Our Sheep campaign to hammer home the message that we need urgent action if we’re to keep our sheep and wool industry from collapsing entirely. Farmers are sick of woolly ideas – they want solid actions like this.

“It just shows that strong leadership from the government can be a factor in restoring confidence to our embattled wool industry.”

Williams said the housing agency’s decision is also a big step forward for environmental sustainability.

“If Kāinga Ora had picked a fossil fuel-derived synthetic carpet over a sustainable New Zealand-grown woollen product, just because it’s cheaper, it would have been a disaster.”

Williams says he’s also really pleased that high-quality, sustainable Kiwi wool will be in the homes of some of New Zealand’s most vulnerable tenants.

Kāinga Ora will transition to using wool carpet in its new homes from July 1, when the supply arrangements come into effect.

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Keeping Cosy

ADVERTISING FEATURE



Get cosy and stay cosy this winter in the Hauraki-Coromandel.

File Photo: PIXABAY

Get warm, stay warm

It's not unusual for people in the Hauraki-Coromandel to wake up in the morning to thick fog or an ice-laden windscreen.

This is winter in our neck of the woods, and it's about to get even colder.

Not indoors though. That's about to warm up. The simple joy of feeling cosy becomes a top priority for many people throughout our region.

Whether it's wrapping up in woolly clothes, sipping hot drinks and snuggling with loved ones and pets - staying comfortable through the colder months is essential.

The Keeping Cosy feature in *The Valley Profile* is the guide to all things cosy.

From heat pump solutions at Comfort Group, effective window coverings at Guthrie Bowron Thames, to warm wool carpets at Flooring Xtra Kōpū and heaters and heat pumps at 100% Thames - there are options close-to-home for locals who want to get cosy and stay cosy this winter season.

If you're planning a full home upgrade or just looking for small ways to boost your warmth and comfort, this feature is full of inspiration and trusted local businesses ready to help.

Winter doesn't have to be something we get through - with the right tools and touches, it can be a season filled with comfort, connection and the simple pleasures of home.

Take a peek through the following pages to find out what experts in our regions have to say about keeping cosy.

- By Davidda Hikatangata

Warmth all season long

As the winter chill kicks in and temperatures drop, staying warm isn't just about turning up the thermostat: it's about creating a home that truly feels cosy.

Blankets and fireplaces offer quick relief, but the key to consistent warmth and real cosiness lies in choosing effective window coverings such as curtains and blinds.

That's where Guthrie Bowron at 448 Pollen St, Thames, comes in - a specialist in curtains and blinds that do more than just dress your windows.

Led by owners Bruce and Eleanor Birrell, Guthrie Bowron's products are carefully chosen and custom-made with warmth and style in mind.

Their thermal-lined curtains and insulating blinds help retain heat during colder months, reducing energy loss through windows - which is one of the biggest culprits for indoor heat escape.

Layered window treatments, such as pairing sheer curtains with thicker drapes, add both design depth and an extra thermal barrier. And it's not just about blocking the cold. The right fabrics can absorb and reflect warmth from the sun during the day, helping to naturally heat the rooms.

Guthrie Bowron has for many years been a trusted brand in Thames, Hauraki Plains and the wider Coromandel Peninsula, and aims to help customers find the best options for their home that not only look and feel great - but keep the home warm and welcoming all season long.

- By Davidda Hikatangata



Visit Guthrie Bowron Thames for window covering solutions.

Photo: SLENDER MORRIS

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Keeping Cosy

ADVERTISING FEATURE

Wool carpets warm, beautify

Flooring Xtra Kōpū works closely with our partner Victoria Carpets to supply and install a very high quality range of wool carpets made with New Zealand wool to warm and beautify your home, that are aligned to our values of sustainability for the future.

Victoria Carpets is committed to minimizing the company's impact on the environment. In the past two decades, Victoria Carpets has already significantly reduced energy consumption and greenhouse emission per linear meter of carpet produced, across its manufacturing facilities.

We continue to focus and invest heavily in ways to reduce waste, decrease our carbon footprint and produce more sustainable products.

Our signature and well-known wool carpet ranges are made using high quality New Zealand wool, which is a natural, biodegradable, renewable and organic fibre.

The wool yarn is spun locally, at our state-of-the-art wool spinning mill in Bendigo - country Victoria, allowing for an effective quality control, reduction in waste and emissions.



-Supplied by Flooring Xtra Kōpū

Post-Industrial recycling practices are in place for raw materials, packaging and marketing material, to name a few. Victoria Carpets has various ongoing projects to achieve further milestones in our journey to decrease our carbon footprint, working internally across different areas of the business, primarily on reducing further waste to landfill.

We are continuously working with our suppliers to ensure that collectively we improve our green credentials, reduce energy consumption and increase the use of recycled content.

Sustainability statistics: Recovering, repurposing and recycling practices in place; Internal waste reduction by 53 per cent; Waste to landfill reduction by 23 per cent; Gas and electricity usage down 22 per cent; Green gas emissions reduced by 5 per cent; and Upgrades across manufacturing processes.

To help you warm your home this winter with beautiful new wool carpet, we are also offering free underlay with any purchases over 55 sqm until June 30, 2025.



100% Thames and Whitianga has a wide range of heat pumps and heaters on offer. Photo: SUPPLIED

Stay warm all winter with 100%

For many, making the leap to installing a heat pump is an expensive gamble.

However, "understanding the pros and cons of heat pumps versus portable heaters can save users money in the long run," says Mark Milmine, owner of 100% Thames and Whitianga.

Portable heaters have their place. Understanding the basic costs and benefits of each type of portable heater could avoid a disappointing result. Heat pumps are now well-established as the primary heat source for kiwi homes. Further, a heat pump can cool a room as well as heat it, allowing you to use it as an air conditioner.

Before choosing a size, style or model of heat pump, you need to consider their pros, cons and cost-effectiveness. Pros include: warm, dry and comfortable; lower heating costs (usually); dehumidifying; air filtering; cooling.

Cons include: noise; not so good in low temperatures; draughts/breeze; initial dollar outlay.

100% Thames and Whitianga only stock reputable brands of heat pumps, including Panasonic, Mitsubishi Electric and Fujitsu.

A free, no-obligation quote is the only way to ensure the right model is selected to heat the target space efficiently.

Electric heaters can be expensive to run and aren't usually powerful enough to keep living areas warm.

However, their low purchase price means they're often the best value for money in small spaces like the bedroom or study, or to provide a short-term boost for spaces heated by heat pump or wood fire. Oil column heaters provide efficient and cost effective heating for longer term use. Ideal for medium to large rooms needing constant temperature, but not useful for quick, targeted heating.

Oscillating tower fan heaters offer fast, even heating thanks to fan, large element and oscillation.

Good for quickly heating an office or rumpus room.

Panel heaters are fast and quiet, they are ideal to warm up all objects and people in line with the radiant waves, providing a pleasant warmth. Convection heaters provide fast heating for medium to large-sized rooms and are perfect for rooms where occasional heating is required.

Personal fan heaters deliver instant directional heat. Ideal to quickly heat a space and/or provide directional warmth. Cheap to buy, often expensive to run long term.

The staff at 100% Thames and Whitianga are trained to assist customers in identifying their underlying needs and choosing a heating solution that is right for them. Leading brands include Dimplex and Delonghi – both recommended by Consumer NZ.

"Understanding the goals of the purchase - heating what? How quickly? For how long? - is critical in avoiding an expensive mistake," Mark says.

- Supplied by 100% Thames and Whitianga

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What to do in the garden in July

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Keeping Cosy

ADVERTISING FEATURE

Winter tips to keep cosy

Here are some top tips for keeping cosy and warming your home.

Layer up indoors: Wear warm clothes like jerseys, socks, and slippers.

Use blankets: Keep soft throws on the couch and bed for extra warmth.

Close curtains at night: Keep heat in by closing curtains or blinds after sunset.

Let sunlight in: Open curtains during the day to let natural heat warm your rooms.

Block draughts: Use draft stoppers on doors and seal gaps around windows.

Use rugs: Place rugs on bare floors to stop heat escaping.

Warm up your bed: Use a hot water bottle, electric blanket, or extra duvet.

Cook at home: Baking or cooking warms the kitchen and adds comfort.

Close unused rooms: Keep doors shut to focus heat where you need it.

Use heaters and heat pumps: Great for warming the room.

These small changes make your home feel warmer, cosier, and more energy-efficient.

Gardening

ADVERTISING FEATURE

Enjoy your winter garden

The coldest days of winter often occur in the month of July. In many areas it is bleak, frosty days make gardening difficult.

Yet it is not all gloom, for there are many cheerful flowers beginning to emerge in the garden. They do help to lift our spirits. Snowdrops, daffodils, freesias, lachenalia and many flowering shrubs. One of my favourites is Leptospermum or Manuka. Cheer up, spring will arrive soon. It is a time of planning for the busy months ahead.

Tasks for July: Late sowings of broad beans can still be made, but hurry. It is late but worth still doing. Stake or support broad beans as they grow. Sow main season onions. Many seedlings can be raised in containers under shelter in the coldest district.

Continue to make successive sowings of spinach, cabbages, cauliflowers and broccoli. Prepare the vegetable beds for spring sowing. Late winter and early spring flowering annuals and bulbs begin to bloom. Cultivate carefully.

Complete pruning of deciduous fruit trees. Start planting new shrubs and trees. Check out our local nurseries for choice specimens. For all of you who have been itching to get those rose bushes tidied up, well it's your time. July is the time to prune the roses and spray with lime sulphur and then again in two weeks.

Sow your favourite veggies like beetroot, lettuce, mizuna, silverbeet, and kale. Cover where possible to protect. Continue harvesting beetroot, carrots, cabbage, kale, leeks, rocket, silverbeet if lucky enough to have all this produce in your garden.

When planting new crops make sure you put plenty of slug bait and derris dust around the

Harvest citrus carefully, cut them instead of pulling the fruit off.

File Photo: PIXABAY

seedlings to protect from pests.

In the flower garden: Now is the time to plant winter sweet, camellias, viburnum, winter roses, hellebores, dianthus, leucadendrons, violets, daphne, kowhai and flowering kale.

In the fruit garden it is all about planting new season fruit trees. Check for earliest signs of bud movement on early season plums and peaches. Inspect terminal leaf buds critically. Green tip sprays are vital for control of leaf curl and bladder plum infections. Apply copper spray or similar.

Harvest citrus carefully, cut them instead of pulling the fruit off.

This helps protect the trees from infection. Cold temperatures are responsible for intensifying skin colour, but it doesn't necessarily indicate full maturity. Tasting the fruit is often the best way to check for ripeness. Be wary of possible frosts so make sure you have frost cloth to cover susceptible plants. Put tree prunings into the compost bin.

Enjoy your garden, stay warm.

- Supplied by Ngatea Garden Circle

Calendar Supplied by Gilmer Farms

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
1 Non planting Day	2 Plant above ground crops	3 Plant above ground crops	4 Plant above ground crops	5 Plant above ground Crops. Liquid Feed	6 Plant above ground Crops. Liquid Feed	
7 Non planting Day	8 Non planting Day	9 Non planting Day	10 Plant above ground crops	11 Full Moon	12 Non planting Day	13 Non planting Day
14 Non planting Day	15 Plant root crops. Liquid Feed	16 Plant root crops. Liquid Feed	17 Non planting Day	18 Non planting Day	19 Plant root crops, trees and shrubs	20 Plant root crops, trees and shrubs
21 Non planting Day	22 Non planting Day	23 Plant root crops. Liquid Feed	24 Plant root crops. Liquid Feed	25 New Moon	26 Non planting Day	27 Non planting Day
28 Non planting Day	29 Non planting Day	30 Plant above ground crops	31 Plant above ground crops	July 2025 Moon Planting Calendar		

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Exhibition to open for Thames artists

The first of the featured artists for July, at the southern end of the Thames Art Gallery, is local Ian Jones. Ian's interest in art was re-ignited when the most cherished person went out of his life, but the love he felt for her did not. He attempted to fill the void left with almost anything. He tried making things but that didn't work, but he persevered anyway, with grim determination.

Ian grew up in an industrious and busy household, where his mother managed to produce creative handicrafts as well as run a business and home, and his father encouraged their children to be "curious". Ian and his older brother took advantage of the freedom they were provided and were always exploring and making "things" and particularly in Ian's case, playing in the mud, which he said he has never stopped.

Through this play, he discovered patterns, shapes and colours he says has always been with him and still reflects in all he does.

The sociability Ian has found by joining the Thames Society of Arts (Thames Art Gallery) has heightened his awareness so he can explain and exchange ideas through objects as well as words. He has learned that to get inspiration, he needs to start a project and then his imagination would go into overdrive, sometimes feeling so overwhelmed with ideas that he would need to walk away, returning later, sometimes much later, often ending up with something totally different to what he initially started with.

The bulk of Ian's work is mixed media and occasionally he does acrylic painting, pottery and carving.

Meanwhile the second featured artist for July is Thames Coast resident Mike Tate.

His extremely varied and interesting past has led him on a journey to becoming the unique artist he is today. His proficiency



Thames Coast artist Mike Tate. RIGHT: The work of artist Ian Jones. Photos: SUPPLIED

in carving recycled native timbers did not happen overnight but began years ago with his pursuit of the outdoors, whether ocean swimming, diving, sailing and tramping around New Zealand and the Pacific Islands, to name a few.

Mike says he can't keep still, and that seems to be the way his head works.

Retirement has not seen an easing up of his outdoor activities and trapping for the Thames Coast Kiwi Care has enabled him to get out into the rainforest around him and "go mad" with videoing and photographing of his surroundings. He even dabbled in rock art for a while and collected rocks from all over New Zealand.

Mike's move into carving began when he inherited an old bandsaw that his great



New films released for school holidays

POP CULTURE

By ALI KOIA-HAMLING, Paeroa College student

From superheroes to Formula 1 racing cars and dinosaurs, this upcoming school holiday offers some exciting big-screen outings. Whether it is with the whānau or on a romantic night out - get ready

for great movies.

F1: The Movie
Formula 1 is officially getting a movie! Led by Oscar-winning actor Brad Pitt, the film will follow Pitt as a driver named Sonny, who is called back into business after retiring 30 years ago. The movie, in cinemas June 26, was filmed at real life Grand Prix weekends, adding to the film's authenticity. Big artists, including Ed Sheeran, Doja Cat, Don Toliver and Tate Mcrae, just to name a few, will also provide songs on the movie's soundtrack.

Superman
Superman is returning! Superman is undoubtedly the most recognisable superhero of all time, and after more than 10 years, the hero is being brought back to the big screen in his own solo film. David Cornsweat has been cast in the lead role, and from the set photos so far, he looks amazing! James Gunn, the director of Marvel's funny and hugely successful *Guardians Of The Galaxy* films, will helm this film, which he also wrote the screenplay for. This film will also mark the beginning of the new DC universe, in cinemas July 12.

Jurassic World: Rebirth
Jurassic world has had several different remakes and reboots, and here comes yet another. Arriving in the middle of the school holidays, *Jurassic World: Rebirth* will follow Scarlett Johansson, Jonathan Bailey and Mahershala Ali as they return to the original Jurassic Park, and chaos ensues. The film promises to be very realistic and feel more like the original films, instead of the newer Chris Pratt-led *Jurassic World* films. Releases July 2.

Thames Art Gallery

604 Tararu Road, Thames Coast

www.thamesartgallery.co.nz

July Featured Artists

IAN JONES

Exhibition Opening
Friday July 4th 5.30pm
Drinks & nibbles provided, All Welcome

Ian mostly works with mixed media
He is very passionate in his creativity,
never short of unusual and inspirational
ideas

MIKE TATE

Mike loves nature and cares deeply for
the environment where he finds a lot of
his artistic inspiration, finding a balance
between land and sea

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Kōkā (100 mins) M. Māori elder Hamo and local delinquent Jo form an unlikely bond on a road trip. Confronting their demons and traumas, they begin a journey of healing, community and reconciliation.

F1: The Movie (156 mins) M. A Formula One driver comes out of retirement to mentor and team up with a younger driver. From the filmmakers from Top Gun. Stars Brad Pitt. Shot during actual Grand Prix weekends.

The Great Lillian Hall (110 mins) M. Lillian Hall, a Broadway actress, has never missed a performance throughout her long, illustrious career. Yet in the rehearsals her confidence is challenged. People and events conspire to take away her ability to do what she loves most.

How To Train Your Dragon (125 mins) PG. As an ancient threat endangers both Vikings and dragons alike on the isle of Berk, the friendship between Hiccup, an inventive Viking, and Toothless, a Night Fury dragon, becomes the key to both species forging a new future together.

Lilo & Stitch (108 mins) PG. One for the kids. The wildly funny and touching story of a lonely Hawaiian girl and the fugitive alien who helps to mend her broken family.

OCEAN with David Attenborough (97 mins) PG. Through spectacular sequences of coral reefs, kelp forests and open ocean, David shares why a healthy ocean keeps the entire planet stable and flourishing. Stunning, immersive cinematography showcases the wonder of life under the seas and exposes the realities and challenges facing our ocean, yet the story is one of optimism: the ocean can recover gloriously.

The Salt Path (115 mins) M. Based on the best-selling book. A couple embark on a year-long trek along the coast of Cornwall after losing their home and later discovering the husband has been diagnosed with a terminal illness. An honest and life-affirming true story of the healing power of the natural world.

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Hauraki Tyre and Battery owners Tania and Craig. Photo: SUPPLIED

Tyres, batteries, wheel alignment

Brrr! The winter chill can be tough on your car tyres and battery.

Make sure you're ready to face the season safely by calling in to see Craig and Tania at Hauraki Tyre and Battery on Pollen St, Thames before the ice cold mornings arrive. Free tyre tread, pressure and battery checks and full wheel alignments are some of the services on offer by the team. But that's not all.

Whether it's choice of budget, mileage, comfort or performance - the tyre and battery experts can walk you through the massive range in their workshop, they said.

Their Exide range of batteries also come with extended warranties.

Not only are they a one-stop shop for all things tyres, batteries, wheel alignments and good honest advice - Craig is always happy to discuss different options to suit customers' needs. WINZ quotes are available alongside the awesome afterpay option, they said - "so pop in for your quote".

Call in to see Craig and the team at 'The big Yellow Tyre & Battery shop' at 314 Pollen St, Thames.

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Perception versus intention

OPINION
By MICHAEL WILKES



We're not judged by our intentions — we're judged by how people perceive us.

It's a hard truth, but one I've seen play out time and time again.

In youth work, this shows up in all sorts of ways. Sometimes we say things that are meant to encourage, guide, or support — but they land wrong. The tone is off. The timing's not right.

Or the person's in a different headspace altogether. And suddenly, we're on the back foot, trying to fix something we never meant to break.

But instead of sharing a story from youth work — where confidentiality matters — let me take you back to a moment from my early 20s.

I was down in the South Island on a rock climbing trip and bumped into a guy I hadn't seen in years. He was older than me, someone I really looked up to. A bit of a role model. And to be honest, I was probably a

little starstruck. We got chatting. I asked how he'd been.

He said, "I've been in Christchurch nursing my sister who was dying."

Now, I've never been good at handling news like that. I freeze. And this time was no different. So I asked, "Oh... how is she?"

He looked at me and said, "She died two weeks ago."

My stomach dropped. I panicked. And in a totally fumbled moment of trying to acknowledge his pain, I blurted out, "So... are you getting over it?"

He just looked at me — straight in the eye — and said, "Bro, she died two weeks ago." I felt sick. That's not what I meant. At all.

I wanted to check in. I wanted to care. But it came out all wrong. And here's the thing — sometimes we say stupid things. Not because we're careless or heartless, but because we're human. We react too quickly. We're not thinking straight. We miss the mark.

But what about when the tables turn?

When someone else says something that cuts deep — are we quick to assume the worst?

Do we lash out?

Or do we pause long enough to ask: Is this how they meant it?

Is it possible I've misunderstood their heart?

Because the reality is, most people aren't out to hurt us. They're just not always great at communicating what they feel.

So maybe — just maybe — if we could stop for a moment before we fire back...

If we could learn to look beyond the clumsy delivery and see the heart behind the words...

We'd save ourselves a whole lot of hurt.

We don't get to control how others perceive us. But we do get to choose how we respond.

And sometimes, grace goes a whole lot further than judgment.

Michael Wilkes is a youth worker with Living Well Trust, running mentoring and resilience programmes across Thames and Paeroa. To support local youth work or follow more stories and insights, find him on Facebook, Instagram, or TikTok @michaelwilkes.kiwi. If you'd like to connect about a speaking engagement, community initiative, or supporting youth work, email michael@livingwell.org.nz.

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Creatures celebrated at art awards

Paeroa Society of Arts held its annual art awards on May 28, celebrating works around the theme of "Creatures". Awards were presented in painting, pottery, other media, and an overall "theme" category. Artworks are on display until June 29 at Paeroa Society of Arts, 109 Normanby Rd, and voting is still open for the "People's Choice" award.

AWARD WINNERS: Heather Dobson Creativity Award: Lady of the Forest by Angela Brutnall. Dawn Elliott QSM Encouragement Award: Creature of the Forest by Jan Clark; and Rooster by Nancye Player.

Most Improved in Pottery Award: 1st Place Janet Barrass; 2nd Place Gideon Clewlow.

Painting Category: 1st Place Farm Scene by Dennis Baker; 2nd Place Frost Bite by Valarie Subritzky; Highly Commended Cat's Eye by Jan Clark; Commended View of the Southern Alps by Millicent Wyllie; Commended Cornish Street by Gary Wells-Lakeland.

Pottery Category: 1st Place Round Agateware by Gideon Clewlow; 2nd Place Garden Bowl by Janet Barrass; Highly Commended Kokorami-An Attempt by Kari Benninghasu; Commended Red Capped Mushroom by Robyn Wilson.

Other Media Category: 1st Place Seaweed Picture by Jennifer Rope; 2nd Place Floral Flow - Photography by Kathy Bland; Highly Commended Autumn Series by Faye Tutahi; Commended Shell Balls by Jennifer Rope.

"Creatures" Theme Category: 1st Place - Painting Into the Unknown by Gillian Hamilton; 2nd Place - Painting Three Not so Blind Mice by Sandy Burdon; Highly Commended - Painting Three Monarchs by Shirley Davis; Commended - Pottery Ollie Owl by Jenni Taris; Commended - photography Australasian Coots by Kathy Bland.



Farm Scene by Dennis Baker, left, and Lady of the Forest by Angela Brutnall.




Photos: SUPPLIED



Creature of the Forest by Jan Clark, left; Rooster by Nancye Player; Seaweed Picture by Jennifer Rope.



Into the Unknown by Gillian Hamilton, left; Round Agateware by Gideon Clewlow.



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206

Fill the grid so every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the numbers 1-9

7	9	8	2		4	3		
			5			9	1	8
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EASY

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HARD

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206

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

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9	1	4	6	5	8	3	2	7

MEDIUM

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

EASY

JUMBO CROSSWORD

226

ACROSS

1 Toss (5)

4 Took fright (8)

9 Tarry (6)

14 Suspicion (5)

15 Live for a long healthy time (4,1,4,7)

17 Revolution (5)

18 Fish (3)

19 As a rule (7)

20 Weather instrument (9)

21 Stiffen (6)

24 Incomparable (9)

25 Handgun (6)

26 Relic repository (6)

29 Think about carefully (10)

31 Feel ill (3)

32 Specimen (6)

33 Blacken (4)

35 Cold (3)

37 Roadway edging (4)

39 In its nest (anag)(9)

40 Active at night (9)

41 Burst (5)

42 Building ornament (8)

47 Plan of action (8)

51 Disposes of (5)

55 Inadvertent mistake (9)

56 Doctor's forecast (9)

58 Fool (4)

59 Mineral spring (3)

60 Threesome (4)

61 Adolescents (6)

62 Gearwheel (3)

63 Set of beliefs (10)

66 Fly larva (6)

67 Compelled (6)

69 Entrusts tasks to others (9)

72 Fence board (6)

73 Immediately (5,4)

75 Hold (7)

77 Amazement (3)

80 Body (5)

81 Very apprehensive (7,2,1,6)

82 Turning machine (5)

83 Australian city (6)

84 Pleasure seeker (8)

85 Discontinue (5)

DOWN

2 Grave marker (9)

3 Sung drama (5)

5 Tiny particle (4)

6 Mimic (7)

7 Black playing card (4,2,6)

8 Move to music (5)

9 Pays attention (7)

10 Pleasant (4)

11 Arouse (6)

12 Chew (5)

13 Arena (7)

14 Swindle (7)

16 Adorn unnecessarily (4,3,4)

22 Clippers (6)

23 Anguish (7)

24 Post office sack (7)

25 Civil (6)

27 Heighten (7)

28 Call forth (6)

30 Effortless (4)

32 Sweet liquid (5)

34 Pass on (5)

36 Caribbean country (4)

38 Age (3)

42 Spectre (5)

43 Fetid (7)

44 Expel (4)

45 Atoll lake (6)

46 Tumbler (5)

48 Happy prospects (4,7)

49 Humdrum (7)

50 Narrow opening (3)

51 Post (7)

52 Set at intervals (6)

53 Uncouth but good-hearted person (5,7)

54 Cut (4)

57 Oscillates (6)

64 Joy (9)

65 Make impure (7)

66 Reclaim (anag)(7)

68 Flue (7)

70 Secret meeting (7)

71 Vigour (6)

72 Trivial (5)

74 Severe (5)

76 Heading (5)

78 Cereal crop (4)

79 Applications (4)



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ACROSS: 1 Stick, 4 Much of a muchness, 14 Abuse, 15 Avian, 16 Administer, 17 Gifts, 19 Cue, 20 Pretend, 21 Contested, 22 Defame, 25 Fruitless, 27 Mutiny, 28 Revamp, 33 Optimistic, 35 Was, 36 Wooden, 37 Real, 39 Ore, 41 General, 42 Column, 43 Necessity, 44 Rigid, 45 Seat-belt, 50 By, 51 Betrayal, 55 Ulcer, 58 Got the pip, 59 Employ, 60 Harbour, 61 Tea, 63 Toss, 64 Troupe, 65 Kin, 66 Blacksmith, 68 Clever, 69 Eggcup, 71 Acquiring, 76 Salute, 77 Concluded, 79 Cohabit, 81 Let, 84 Rider, 85 Bankruptcy, 86 Speed, 87 Rouge, 88 Corner the market, 89 Satyr.

DOWN: 2 Tavern, 3 Coast, 5 Undo, 6 Heinous, 7 Faints, 8 Moths, 9 Current, 10 Nigh, 11 Suffer, 12 Juice, 13 Develop, 14 Ashamed, 18 Intimidate, 23 Slate, 24 Unsound, 26 Raiment, 27 Masonry, 29 Amenity, 30 Sphere, 31 Awful, 32 Rescue, 34 Clog, 36 Weigh, 38 Loyal, 40 User, 45 Sight, 46 Artiste, 47 Baht, 48 Lepers, 49 Acute, 50 Break up, 52 Tracker dog, 53 Albumen, 54 Adults, 55 Upsurge, 56 Spine, 57 Bomb, 62 Value, 67 Declare, 68 Cutlery, 70 Crow-bar, 72 Creeper, 73 Studio, 74 Quorum, 75 Lively, 76 Stout, 78 Conch, 80 Alpha, 82 Grin, 83 Acme.

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Backing onto bush, this coastal setting delivers the best of both worlds—peace at home with fishing, boating, and beaches just minutes away.

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3 1 3 3

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Matatoki 244 Matatoki Road

Two Homes - Multi-generation or income

After 35 years with one family, this 1.69 ha (more or less) property offers charm, flexibility and multi-dwelling appeal. The refreshed weatherboard bungalow features matai floors, a farmhouse kitchen, and French doors to the garden. A wood burner adds winter comfort. Privately set back, the second dwelling is a modern black steel-clad unit with clean interiors and a covered pergola—ideal for guests, extended family or income. Flat, fenced land includes mature trees, fruit trees, sheds and a metal driveway. Both homes are well kept, offering space and lifestyle versatility. Close to schools, townships and the Hauraki Rail Trail, with vendors ready to move—don't miss this opportunity.

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Ngatea 114 Pipiroa Road

Rural charm, urban convenience

Perfectly positioned where township convenience meets country charm, this 220sqm (more or less) home offers flexible living ideal for families, professionals, or entertainers. Originally built in the 1960s and extensively modernised, it features multiple living areas, an open-plan kitchen with island bench, and four spacious bedrooms (or three plus office). The master includes an ensuite and walk-in wardrobe. Comfort is ensured with two heat pumps and HRV system. Set on a flat 1,205sqm (more or less) section with a 3-bay garage, sheds, and fruit trees. Located in family-friendly Ngatea near top schools and community amenities. A spacious, stylish lifestyle awaits—view today!

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4 1 2 3

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Mangatarata 120 Mahuta Road South

Elevated setting, everyday ease

Set on (more or less) 4.3ha of gently rolling pasture, this Ngatea property offers classic comfort with space to move. The three-bedroom brick home is warm and well-kept, with a modern kitchen, woodburner, and sun-filled conservatory that opens to sweeping rural views. A tidy bathroom, separate laundry and good storage round out a practical layout. Outside, the home is sheltered by established trees, with several paddocks ready for grazing or hobby use. There's a standalone garage, water tanks, and scope to add your own touch. Located on a quiet country road, just minutes from Ngatea, this is a place to live simply and well—connected to the land, and the things that matter.

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4.37 3 1 2

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Pump track makeover for Pārāwai School

Arbor Day and World Environment Day collided this month, with Pārāwai School students, community members, Bupa Tararu residents, and Thames High School's Student Volunteer Army getting stuck in on a planting project.

Over the course of June 5, 220 Pārāwai school students got their hands dirty helping to plant 1180 plants around their new pump track, built earlier this year on the school grounds.

NZ Landcare Waikato Catchment co-ordinator Ric Balfour organised the event as part of a partnership between Bupa and the Landcare Trust.

Additional support came from Trees for Survival, a nationwide environmental education programme that helps students learn how to raise seedlings and plant them out when mature.

Rachael Cheeseman, the enviroschool facilitator for Waikato Regional Council, was also on hand to help.

Pārāwai School teacher Eleanor Lee said she was very happy to see the plants the students had raised being planted into a site on the school grounds.

"Normally, the school has to organise an off-site location to plant their seedlings.

"This time it was so much easier to have almost the whole



Pippa Jackson, Rachael Cheeseman, and Tim Cruichshank. Photo: RIC BALFOUR

school get involved without having to bundle them into vans.

"It was a great day," she said.

A van-load of Bupa residents joined staffer Emma Smith, who made sure intergenerational interaction featured during the day.

Pippa Jackson from Bayleys Real Estate also volunteered for a few hours in the afternoon.

"It was a real community effort," Ric said.

"Luckily, the weather was mostly kind and the pump track is now set to grow a beautiful surrounding of native plants.

"They will make a nice soft landing if the occasion arises."

Pārāwai School's Alex Nemburt and Declan Palmer, from Room Kahu, get to work planting. Photo: BRENT COURTNEY





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