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Town stands behind teen in medical battle

By KELLEY TANTAU

At 15-years-old, Denzel Taylor should be worrying about homework, playing rugby, and what he's doing with his mates on the weekend. Instead, he is facing a battle no teenager should have to fight.

For the past six weeks, the Paeroa College student has been locked in "brutal battle with a virus that just won't let go".

Denzel lives with Dermatomyositis, a rare autoimmune disease that causes the body's immune system to attack its own muscles and skin, leading to severe weakness and inflammation.

After weeks of being unwell and spending time in hospital, his condition suddenly worsened on February 3. His kidneys and liver began to fail, and his organs are now under immense strain as his body fights against itself.

Family friend Corrie Anderson said the situation became so serious that Denzel was urgently flown from Waikato to Starship Hospital in Auckland.

His whānau were taking things "day by day", she said.

"Denzel's mum is his rock, but being there for him has meant she can't currently work. Having exhausted all her sick leave and facing the mounting costs

CONTINUED ON P2

Fighting for Denzel

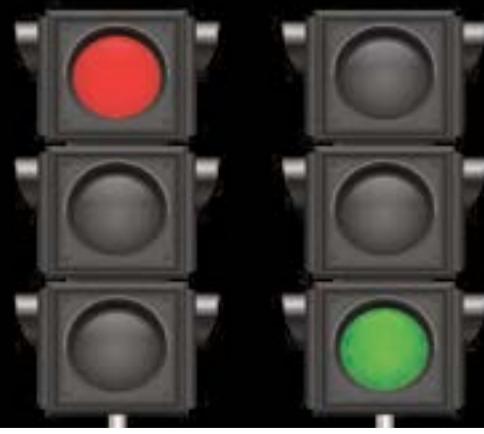


For the past six weeks, Denzel Taylor has been locked in 'brutal battle with a virus that just won't let go'.
Photos: SUPPLIED



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Here's a good one:
Being a parent is like constantly cleaning up after a party you weren't invited to.
So true.

Being able to relate.

Hi, my name is Pete the Pukeko and I'm here to help you. Find me in one of the display advertisements in The Valley Profile, then email admin@valleyprofile.co.nz with your full name & postal address, and the business name and page number of the ad by the following Monday to go in the draw to win a Lotto ticket. Last issue it was in the Forsyth Barr ad.

Slow uptake for Hauraki Mayoral Relief Fund after January storm

By ALICE PARMINTER

The Hauraki District Council is urging people financially affected by the January 21 storm event to apply for help from the Mayoral Relief Fund before it closes on February 27.

The fund was established to provide immediate hardship grants for people in the district faced with significant financial, health, or welfare effects following the storm, who were unable to secure funding elsewhere.

The fund includes \$100,000 from the government, along with other donations from the public, Mayor Toby Adams said.

Group manager of community and regulatory Peter Thom told the council at its February 11 meeting that only three applications had been received so far, and he knew of another two which were still to come.

Mayor Adams said he encouraged those in need to come forward and ask for help. "We just want to make sure that everybody's living as comfortably

"Sometimes people feel too proud or too embarrassed... to ask for help. We just really want to make sure that we're helping those that are in need."

- Toby Adams

as they were prior to the event as much as we can," he said. "Sometimes people feel too proud or too embarrassed that they might need to ask for help, but rest assured that everything that comes in is held confidential... We just really want to make sure that we're helping those that are in need."

The Mayor said any unused funds after the first round of applications could potentially be used to help businesses facing flow-on effects from the storm, but his first priority was residents.

"We want to look after those that are really, really struggling and that's what the fund's there for."

DETAILS: Visit www.hauraki-dc.govt.nz for more information. Applications close February 27.

Fighting for Denzel

CONTINUED FROM P1

of being away from home, the financial pressure is adding a weight no parent should have to carry during a medical crisis."

Corrie, who helped manage the Paeroa College U15 Youth rugby team Denzel played for last year alongside her husband, described Denzel as kind and cheeky - a true fighter.

His mum, Tarryn, said he was tenacious, witty, audacious, and a charmer.

And at home, Denzel's siblings were missing their mum and brother deeply.

A Givealittle online fundraising page has been set up to support the family, and has so far raised more than \$17,000 of its \$20,000 goal. The funds will help cover essential living costs, including rent and household bills, travel expenses, and daily necessities.

The wider community has also rallied around the family, with fundraisers and raffles being organised with the support of local businesses, including Harcourts Paeroa, where Tarryn works.

Corrie said setting up the fundraiser was about parents supporting one another during a difficult time.

"No parent should have to go through this," she said. "I just did what any other mum would do - help her out in any way I could see might."

DETAILS: To donate to Denzel's fight, visit givealittle.co.nz and search for 'Denzel'.



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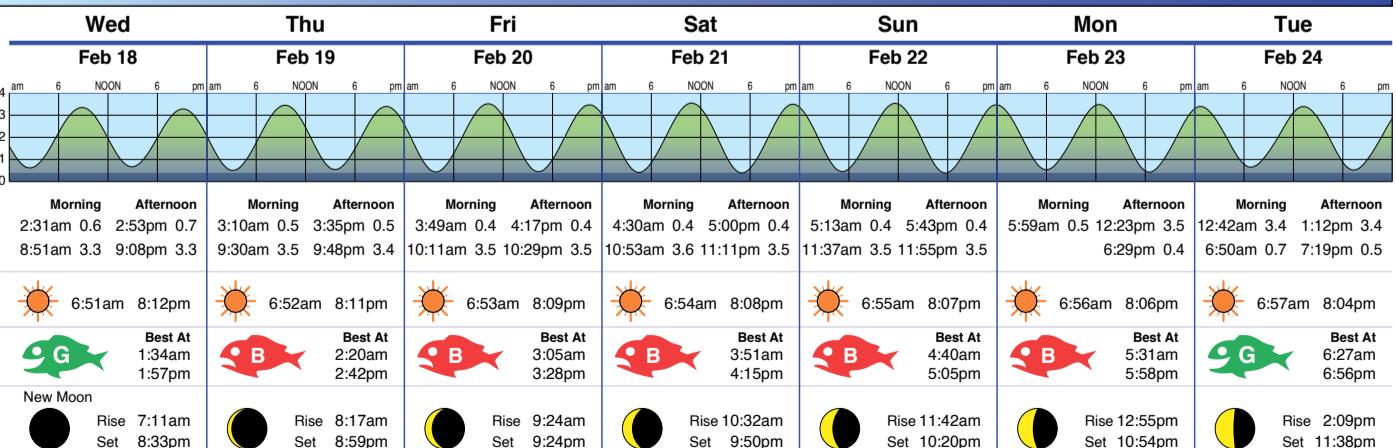
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Thames Tides



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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	HIGH	LOW		
	Hr	Mn	Hr	Mn
Coromandel	-0	05	-0	03
Whitianga	-0	01	-0	05
Tairua	+0	10	+0	20
Whangamata	-0	03	-0	06
Waihi Beach	-0	21	-0	16

Brazen break-in hits Battery after storm

By KELLEY TANTAU

After January's heavy rains left sections of the Hauraki Rail Trail severely damaged and access to the Victoria Battery Site difficult, the historic location is now facing another setback - a brazen theft.

Victoria Battery Tramway Society chairperson Kerry Single said volunteers had worked tirelessly for several days to tidy up the site and rail tracks for Waitangi Weekend, but their efforts were damped by a recent break-in and the theft of essential tools.

Kerry said during the evening of February 4, the lock on the site's main gate was removed, and a DOC-owned container was ransacked.

Thieves then broke into the Transformer House Museum, cutting and wrenching open heavy doors secured with high-security padlocks.

Valuable tools were stolen, including MIG/TIG arc welders, a Stihl brush cutter, battery-powered Milwaukee drills, spanners, socket sets, a green canvas tool bag with tools needed for emergency repairs, and 20 traction engine batteries weighing around 20kg each.

"[These are] all tools that are used frequently to repair, maintain, and construct displays and machinery held by



The smashed lock to the container, right, which housed essential tools stolen during a break-in and theft on February 4 at Victoria Battery in the Karangahake Gorge. Photo: SUPPLIED

the Victoria Battery Tramway Society at the museum," Kerry said.

"These tools are now long gone, and the worst of it is you do not realise what else is missing until you come to need it."

Kerry said Police had been notified, with the estimated cost to replace the stolen tools around \$10,000, which also includes repairs to the damaged doors.

While volunteers were able to carry out the repairs themselves, the expense of replacing padlocks and cutting new keys added to the time and effort required to source replacement



tools, he said - crucial for continuing their work in preserving the history of the battery site.

"Our volunteers spend around 400 hours a month at the site maintaining the exhibits and upgrading the trams,

"To have people come in and take away tools and equipment that we have collected over the years to do this work is frustrating."

- Kerry Single

carriages, and rail lines and grounds around the museum, so they can be seen and enjoyed by the visitors that come through.

"To have people come in and take away tools and equipment that we have collected over the years to do this work is frustrating."

Kerry said most of the tools had been donated, gifted, or bought with specific funding, and many held special meaning, making them difficult to replace.

He believed the stolen items had already been taken out of the district and sold, and while efforts were underway to monitor online marketplaces, this was time-consuming, alongside the day-to-day work of running the museum.

DETAILS: To contact the battery with any information about the stolen items or break-in, or to help with donations, email info@vbts.org.nz or find the museum via Facebook.

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Education

ADVERTISING FEATURE

HPC head students lead with confidence

By DAVIDDA HIKATANGATA

The key to being a leader is simple: be a good role model and help students toward their goals.

It's something the Hauraki Plains College head students for 2026 believe as they kick off the new school year with a goal to encourage their fellow students.

They hoped to reach a place where all students "feel a sense of belonging" at the college, the young leaders told *The Profile*.

Head of academic and hospitality council Georgia Green, 16, said she was excited to encourage students to "strive for excellence" and support them in all aspects of their learning, while also making sure every event is properly catered for.

One dream the young leader hopes to achieve personally is to reach her full potential and never give up.

When faced with challenges, the young academic said: "I just work to get it done, [and] never give up until I succeed".

Meanwhile, fellow leader and head of arts and environmental council Selwin de Haast, 17, said he hoped to live a life full of different experiences.

He was excited to run some of the big events, such as HPC's annual outdoor musical event One Autumn's Night, and to start some new events to offer arts students more opportunities to show their work, he said.



Hauraki Plains College head students have a desire to succeed in their leadership.

Photo: SUPPLIED

her Poūa (grandfather).

"He is someone who I have always looked up to and admired through his hard work," the leader said.

She looked forward to influenc-

ing students to try new things and "feel supported" while doing so, as well as promoting cultural awareness and education.

Having a positive mindset really helped her get through challeng-

ing times.

Meanwhile, fellow leader and head of sports and service council Amber Perry, 17, said she always faced challenges "head on" and strived to do her best.

Amber's goal was to help uplift school spirit and make it a fun environment through the school events, she said.

One dream she hoped to achieve was to live life to the fullest.

Fellow leader and head of technology and hapū council Hamish Paterson, 17, said he aimed to continue the winning streak for the Waihōu house group and support the interests of students through technology and engineering.

The thing that encouraged him to press on and do his best even when there were challenges came down to the fact that "I am very stubborn and driven to always give 110 per cent in everything I do", he said.

The group of young leaders believed they had a strong set of strengths and skills amongst them.

"We think we are all confident, approachable and understanding."

"We all have the desire to succeed in our leadership and leave a lasting impression of awesomeness across the school, leaving an unforgettable legacy," the head students said.

Their advice for fellow students was to work hard and "don't forget to have fun".

Honouring NEW BEGINNINGS

More
Than
A School



Hauraki Plains College

On Thursday 29th January, we welcomed 205 new Year 9 students and their families to our school. Thank you to Matua Rón from Kerepēhi for speaking on behalf of our manuhiri. Thank you to Year 12 student Gustav van Niekerk and Matua Frank who both spoke on behalf of our kura. It was wonderful to see our local principals, grandparents, and community members supporting our incoming Year 9 students.



Thames residents rally for handbag appeal

By KELLEY TANTAU

Thames locals are stepping up to support women escaping domestic violence through the Love Grace Handbag Appeal, a nationwide initiative that delivers handbags filled with essential items to women in need.

This year, Norelle Broughton has picked up the baton to be the Thames-based co-ordinator, and has organised Pamper Me MediSpa as a local drop-off point to make it easier for the community to contribute.

"I've donated a handbag in the last two campaigns, and last year there was no drop-off point in Thames, and the co-ordinator was in Matarangi.

"So I decided we really needed to have someone in Thames this year and applied," Norelle told *The Profile*.

"I approached Pauline DeThierry at Pamper Me MediSpa and she was really enthusiastic about being involved."

The Love Grace Handbag Appeal, created in memory of Grace Millane, a British traveller murdered while backpacking in New Zealand in 2018, combines Grace's love of handbags with helping women in crisis.

Grace's family in the United Kingdom launched the initiative to honour her memory by providing handbags filled with



Mia Holmgren from Pamper Me MediSpa is supporting the Love Grace Handbag Appeal this year. Photo: SUPPLIED

essential items to women escaping domestic violence.

The appeal is running until International Women's Day on

March 8, and donated handbags can be filled with essentials such as shampoo, conditioner, body wash, deodorant,

toothbrushes, and toothpaste.

Now in its fifth year in New Zealand, the appeal has seen more than 15,000 handbags

“Domestic violence is a huge issue in New Zealand, and a lot of it goes ‘under the radar’ as it takes a lot of courage and usually many attempts for a woman to leave successfully.”

- Norelle Broughton

gifted to women through Women's Refuge services.

"Domestic violence is a huge issue in New Zealand, and a lot of it goes 'under the radar' as it takes a lot of courage and usually many attempts for a woman to leave successfully," Norelle said.

"Often they walk out with nothing, so a handbag with some essentials, given with love, can make a huge difference."

Handbags don't need to be brand new, just in good condition, Norelle said, and donors can drop them off at Pamper Me MediSpa in Thames before March 8.

DETAILS: For more information on the Love Grace Handbag Appeal, find [lovegracehandbagappealnewzealand](https://www.facebook.com/lovegracehandbagappealnewzealand) on Facebook.

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Plans mooted for Hauraki mountain bike park

By ALICE PARMINTER

Hauraki District councillors are considering whether to develop a mountain bike park on a council-owned forestry block south of Waitakaruru.

A report tabled at the council's general meeting on February 11 said a decision was due on the future of the West Water Forest Block, a 69.9ha section of land adjacent to the Steen Rd quarry. The pine trees currently planted on the site have reached maturity, and harvesting is due to finish in March.

The report said the site could be "re-imagined into a recreational reserve for the enjoyment of the community" with bike trails, and recommended public expressions of interest be sought for private enterprises willing to develop and maintain such a facility.

Councillors debated the report, questioning whether there would be enough public interest to justify the costs of reclassifying the block as an active reserve and building a bike track.

Councillor Ray Broad said the idea was worth pursuing, but suggested it should be privately run to avoid ongoing costs falling to the ratepayer.

The councillors chose to seek registrations of interest in a mountain bike park, and will review the feedback at a later date.

The forestry block also needs replanting, whether or not a mountain bike park goes



Six new citizens were welcomed to the Hauraki District at a citizenship ceremony on February 11. The newly-minted New Zealanders hail from around the district - two from Ngātea, two from Turua, one from Waihī and one from Paeroa. There was a range of countries represented in the ceremony, with the new citizens coming from England, United Kingdom, South Africa and India. From left: Mayor Toby Adams stands with Harpal Singh, Joseph Choppin, Christopher Stuttard, Mary Adams, Abigail van der Watt, and Lucy Gibson.

Photo: HDC

ahead, councillors were told.

Most of the councillors were in favour of replanting the area with native trees rather than pine.

Māori Ward councillor Des Tyler emphasised the need for soil testing to ensure native plants could survive in an area previously populated with pine, and councillors agreed to look into the comparative costs of each option before reaching a decision.

Meanwhile, another report tabled at the meeting confirmed variable speed limit signs will be installed outside all schools in the Hauraki District during the April school holidays.

The installation of the signs is a Ministry of Transport requirement and will cost around \$167,000, with 61 per cent of the cost being funded by Waka Kotahi New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA).

The council will also be un-

dertaking \$950,000 worth of work along East Coast Rd in Kaiaua over the next two years, for upgrades and coastal protection.

The report also identified a section of unsealed road in Komata which needs urgent maintenance. The 1.15km section at the end of Goble Rd services five rural properties, and is currently an "unsafe driving corridor", the report said.

Council records stated main-

tenance of the section was not the responsibility of the property owners nor of council, the meeting heard. However, due to the current state of the road and its status as the only way to access the properties, the council has now added it to its maintenance network.

Service delivery manager Adrian de Laborde said the oversight in responsibility was likely an anomaly from past software system updates.

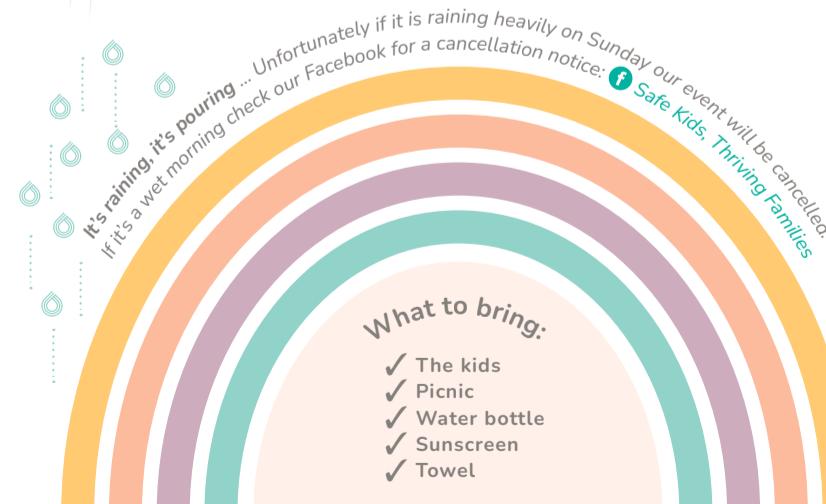
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Irishman plunges to his death down mine shaft

Dead Cert

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

The big Irishman came into Thames' Prince Imperial Hotel a little after 8pm on a mid-December night in 1884.

He seemed dazed, and wanted to know if he was in Napier or Wellington, or somewhere else.

He had a small glass of beer, and sat down, staying there for some time. He said he had been having a sleep in a garden where there were some orange trees.

The puzzled proprietor concluded that he was not drunk, but seemed somewhat light-headed. He was troubled about his wife, who he said was paralysed.

"I might get seven years for what I've done," he said.

"Why, you haven't murdered anyone, have you?" asked the publican jokingly.

The man then went out for a few minutes, coming back with a boy, for who he got a glass of sarsaparilla and ginger beer, having also a small glass of whisky himself.



The steamer *Patiki*.

Photo: SUPPLIED

He then said he would go to Shortland and get his portmanteau (large travel bag) from a steamer.

A few minutes later the man plunged 570ft feet to his death down the Prince Imperial mine shaft opposite the hotel. The doors had been left open so the miners could lower timber.

The mine manager and Constable Dunn proceeded down the shaft in the cage.

They brought the body to the surface and it was taken to the Imperial Hotel.

Papers found on his body pointed to him being 33-year-old Walter Adair and he was identified by two men who knew him at Wairongomai, Te Aroha where, until just recently he had worked as a storeman at Wells' and Souter's.

He was in search of new employment and had only just the morning before left by the

steamer *Patiki* for Thames. His wife, Annie, was in a very feeble state of health, being partially paralysed the year before. The couple had four young children and the family would now be in almost destitute circumstances.

Walter and Annie had lived for several years at Waipawa, in Central Hawke's Bay. Walter was the landlord of various hotels in the district, including three years at Kaikora (now Otane).

Two daughters were born at the Kaikoura Hotel where one of them also died in April 1881 aged six months.

Around the same time Walter suffered business trouble and became insolvent.

Seven months later he announced he was to open a grocery store at Waipawa but in March, 1882, he decided to leave and sold all his stock and

trade and furniture. He did not leave though, becoming a hotel keeper again. In 1883 another calamity struck when Annie, aged 28, became partially paralysed.

By 1884 the family had moved to Te Aroha, but things appeared to still go wrong for Walter. By the time he reached Thames he had become unhinged with worry.

Walter had been a member of the Oddfellows - a society which provided aid and support to working-class people. They visited the sick, educated orphans, relieved the distressed and buried the dead.

Now Thames members arranged Walter's funeral, laying a large wreath and Oddfellows regalia on his coffin. At Shortland cemetery after the service, the brethren draped bunches of thyme on the coffin, a tradition tied to a belief that the souls of the dead linger in the scent of the herb.

A subscription list was taken round the district soliciting financial aid for Annie and the children. It was heartily responded to, a sum of from £20 to £30 being raised.

Not long after the accident Annie's brother and sister arrived from Waipawa and took the little family back with them.

Annie died eight years later, aged 38, at her sister's home. She had been a great sufferer of paralysis for nine years.

Throughout her long illness she had displayed the greatest fortitude and the end, it was said, came to her as a happy release.

Chris' Quiz

Weekly quiz compiled by Chris Parmenter

- In which country are the 2026 Winter Olympics currently being held?
- What percentage of citizens in the US have worked at McDonald's at some point in their lives? a) Four per cent, b) nine per cent, or c) 14 per cent?
- Which of these deities has the same name in both Greek and Roman mythologies? a) Apollo, b) Artemis, or c) Athena?
- True or false: all three of the first Star Wars movies to be released (1977-1983) were directed by George Lucas?
- Richard Pearse is a New Zealand pioneer in which industry? a) Aviation, b) filmmaking, or c) nuclear physics?
- Which American sitcom TV show ran from 1970 to 1974, following a fictional pop music band family including Shirley, Keith, Laurie, and Danny?
- 90 per cent of New Zealand's plantation forests are what species?
- Which musical artist was the headliner at the Superbowl LX half-time show, held February 8, 2026? a) Ariana Grande, b) Bad Bunny, or c) Camila Cabello?
- Which metal element melts at 29.8°C at normal atmospheric pressure, allowing a "disappearing spoon" magic trick where a normal spoon will dissolve in boiling water? a) Gallium, b) mercury, or c) nickel?
- The shortest possible plane trip to Johannesburg from Auckland would be a) directly west from Auckland, or b) directly south from New Zealand passing over Antarctica and then heading north?

9. a) Gallium; 10. b) Directly south from New Zealand and passing over Antarctica; 11. b) Directly south from New Zealand; 12. a) Ariadne; 13. b) Bed Bunnies; 14. c) Bed Bunnies; 15. a) Ariadne; 16. The Partridge Family; 17. George Lucas directed the first movie, but did not direct the following two films in the original trilogy; 18. a) Apollo; 19. Artemis; 20. The Partridge Family; 21. a) Apollo; 22. Artemis; 23. a) Apollo; 24. Artemis; 25. a) Apollo; 26. Artemis; 27. a) Apollo; 28. Artemis; 29. a) Apollo; 30. Artemis; 31. a) Apollo; 32. Artemis; 33. a) Apollo; 34. Artemis; 35. a) Apollo; 36. Artemis; 37. a) Apollo; 38. Artemis; 39. a) Apollo; 40. Artemis; 41. a) Apollo; 42. Artemis; 43. a) Apollo; 44. Artemis; 45. a) Apollo; 46. Artemis; 47. a) Apollo; 48. Artemis; 49. a) Apollo; 50. Artemis; 51. a) Apollo; 52. Artemis; 53. a) Apollo; 54. Artemis; 55. a) Apollo; 56. Artemis; 57. a) Apollo; 58. Artemis; 59. a) Apollo; 60. Artemis; 61. a) Apollo; 62. Artemis; 63. a) Apollo; 64. 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A helicopter assists with firefighting efforts at Tirohia Landfill and Energy Park.

Photo: Te Aroha Volunteer Fire Brigade

Firefighters battle blaze at landfill

Smoke was seen over the hills behind Paeroa on February 11, as fire broke out at the Tirohia Landfill and Energy Park.

A Fire and Emergency New Zealand spokesperson confirmed the agency was alerted to the fire at 11.34am. Ten crews from Paeroa, Te Aroha, Pūriri, Turua, Waihī, and Ngatea responded to the incident. Among the firefig-

ers was Hauraki District Council Mayor Toby Adams, who had to call an early recess to the council meeting he was chairing. A helicopter was also sent out to assist. The fire was burning in around 100m x 50m of rubbish, the spokesperson said, and the cause was undetermined. All Fire and Emergency personnel had ceased operations and left the scene by 5pm.

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Painting Thames purple for first poppy day

By KELLEY TANTAU

Animals whose courage and service shaped wartime history will be remembered on Saturday when the Thames RSA and Thames Museum Te Whare Taonga o te Kauaeranga host the town's first Purple Poppy Day.

The day of remembrance, to be held on February 21, shines a light on the often-overlooked role animals played on the battlefield and beyond - from carrying messages and supplies, to offering comfort and companionship to soldiers enduring the hardships of war.

"The museum is honoured to have been chosen by Thames RSA as the venue for their first Purple Poppy Day," Thames Museum Society chair Carolyn McKenzie said.

"The museum site features the Thames Central School World War I Memorial Arch and is overlooked by the Peace Monument, so it is a very fitting place to hold this event."

The day will officially open at 10.30am with a guest speaker, followed by a range of activities suitable for all ages. Until 1pm, visitors will also have the opportunity to meet Rusty the Red Cross Donkey.

There will be a 'People and Pets Wear Purple and/or Khaki' competition, with pets of small-to-medium size welcome



The day of remembrance will be held at the Thames Museum with its stone memorial arch. **RIGHT:** Donkeys and other animals played an important role in wartime, which will be remembered during the first Purple Poppy Day. FILE PHOTOS

to take part. Prizes will be announced at 1pm.

"Personally, I feel Purple Poppy Day is a great way to introduce children to the fact of thousands of animals being involved in war efforts," Carolyn said.

"The animals worked really hard and because of their intelligence, were able to learn important tasks like carrying mes-

sages and supplies or looking for survivors in the rubble of a bomb attack."

She said being involved in the RSA's first Purple Poppy Day was an exciting step for the museum, and there was hope it would become an annual event.

"Thames RSA and the museum have worked together before, so this is another important step in our relationship."

Carolyn said it was important to recognise animals at war, for both the practical roles they played and the comfort they provided to soldiers.

"They played key roles on the frontline as workers, but also behind the scenes as company mascots and 'comfort' friends for men who were far from home and enduring terrible events."



"Most people can relate to the soothing effect of cuddling a cat or stroking a dog," she said.

"Many New Zealand soldiers took their own farm horses to World War I - 10,000 in total - and only four returned. Even glow worms and carrier pigeons played a part."

"Animals' intelligence, loyalty and bravery took them into dangerous situations and without them, the soldiers themselves would have had to face these dangers."

DETAILS: Purple Poppy Day will be held this Saturday at the museum on the corner of Pollen and Cochrane Streets, Thames. More information can be found via the Thames Museum's Facebook page.

LEFT BANK THEATRE

Ph: 07 868 3142 www.leftbanktheatre.co.nz 659 Pollen St, Thames

Movies from Thursday 19 February to Wednesday 25 February

For times, see our website, pick up a brochure by the cinema doors, or email or phone us.

Fackham Hall (97 mins) M. A spoof that crosses Downton Abbey with Flying High and Monty Python, it follows a lovable pick-pocket Eric as he lands a job at a unique English manor house. He quickly rises through the ranks, and a forbidden romance with lady-of-the-house Rose blossoms. But when an unexpected murder occurs, Eric gets framed - leaving Rose and her family's future perilously uncertain.

Wuthering Heights (136 mins) M. 2026 film. A passionate and tumultuous love story set on the Yorkshire moors, exploring the intense and destructive relationship between Heathcliff and Catherine Earnshaw.

Mārama (89 mins) RP16. Mary, a young Māori woman, is summoned from NZ to Yorkshire. She becomes the governess at Hawkser Manor under Sir Nathaniel Cole, who made his fortune in the South Seas. Cole speaks Te Reo and insists he can help her. But the walls of his home are hung with Māori taonga, and by night Mary finds herself haunted by memories that are not her own.

Nuremberg (148 mins) M. The Allies, led by an unyielding chief prosecutor, have the task of ensuring the Nazi regime answers for the unveiled horrors of the Holocaust while a US Army psychiatrist is locked in a dramatic psychological duel with former Reichsmarschall Herman Göring (Russell Crowe).

Hamnet (126 mins) M. From Academy Award® winning writer/director Chloé Zhao, HAMNET tells the powerful love story that inspired the creation of Shakespeare's timeless masterpiece, Hamlet. Award winner.

Song Sung Blue (132 mins) M. Based on a true story, two down-on-their-luck musicians (Hugh Jackman and Kate Hudson) form a joyous Neil Diamond tribute band, proving it's never too late to follow your dreams.

Next week: Elvis Presley in Concert Elvis sings and tells his story like never before. A new cinematic experience. **Holy Days** A hilarious, heartwarming Kiwi dramedy. Three nuns and a Māori boy on a road trip.

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dynasty.holtz@eves.co.nz
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This relocated, renovated home offers open-plan living with a fireplace and polished floors, plus indoor-outdoor flow to a covered deck. Set on a flat section with future potential, and an easy walk to town.

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86B Bradford Street

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This charming four-bedroom, two-bathroom home (including a handy ensuite) has been lovingly renovated and is ready for its next chapter. Featuring wooden floors, aluminium joinery, and a heat pump for year-round comfort.

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Sounding the pipes

Continuous rain wasn't enough to deter participants at this year's Paeroa Highland Games and Tattoo. Despite the dreary conditions, the events proceeded mostly as normal, although the Highland Dancing competition was relocated to the nearby Scout Hall. The crowd of onlookers was smaller than expected, but there was plenty for them to see, including the heavyweight field events, the Axemen's Chopping Carnival, solo pipers and pipe bands. The Evening Tattoo also went ahead, and those who braved the weather were treated to a Scottish-themed three-hour extravaganza featuring the massed pipe bands, caber toss, and farmer's walk. **ALICE PARMINTER** headed along to watch.



A heavyweight competitor pitches his shot in the 14lb Sheaf Toss.



Axemen race to complete a chopping challenge.

Photos: ALICE PARMINTER



The winners of the Irish Dancing under-9 category take the stage.



The Papakura Pipe Band strut their stuff.

The Bay of Plenty Pipes and Drums band.

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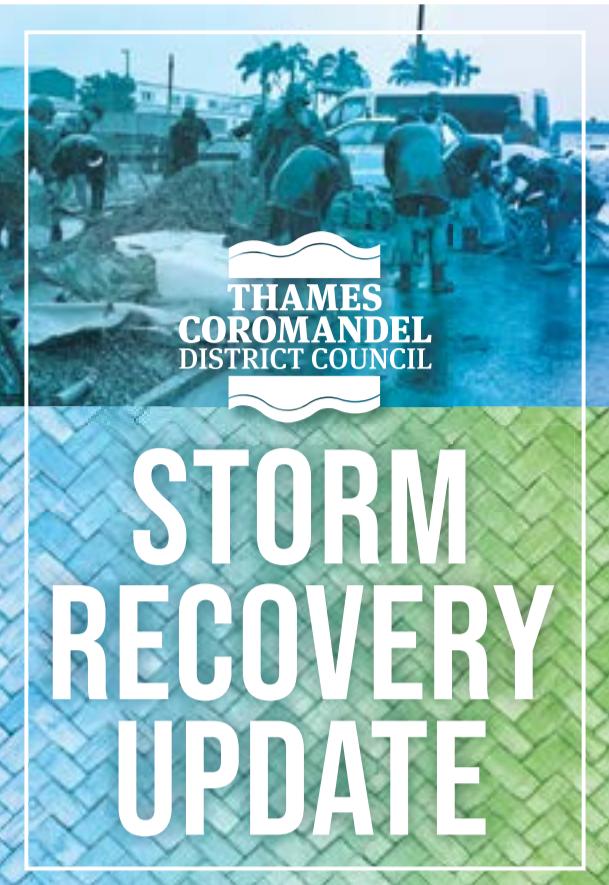
Terms and Conditions Available to properties exclusively listed with EVES until 28 February 2026. During the campaign period, vendors are liable for the \$500 vendor contribution within the EVES Summer Spotlight Campaign. Sole agency agreement required (minimum 90 days). If withdrawn early, the vendor must reimburse EVES for campaign costs (less any vendor contribution). Campaign components are non-transferable and non-refundable. One Summer Spotlight campaign per property. Not available for properties already listed with EVES. Available through EVES Katikati and EVES Waihi. Prices include GST and are valid until 28 February 2026. Marketing will not commence until payment is received.

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THAMES COROMANDEL DISTRICT COUNCIL

STORM RECOVERY UPDATE

Building back from the January storm

A couple of weeks after the severe rainstorm hit our district, Mayor Peter Revell declared the Coromandel open and back in business in time for the Waitangi Day long weekend.

The weekend was a great success, pulling in thousands of visitors to supply our hospitality businesses with a much-needed shot in the arm.

Our Council's roading and water services teams, as well as NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi and the Department of Conservation, have moved mountains – of slip debris – to reopen roads, get water flowing and reopen tracks and campgrounds.

But the damage to roads, parks, water infrastructure and dozens of properties will take some time to be fully put right. Our recovery programme is mobilising considerable Council resources, our contractors, partner agencies like Waikato Regional Council, NZTA Waka Kotahi, the



Department of Conservation, other government agencies and the Coromandel community.

After the storm, our district was faced with eight weeks of initial clean-up on our roading network including clearing slip debris and contractors carrying out simple repairs on scores of sites.

About 40 sites need longer-term work requiring a designed approach, such as earthworks and retaining walls.

Our recovery work encompasses not just the rebuilding of damaged infrastructure but also the physical and emotional wellbeing of our people. We will be liaising with government ministers and officials as much as possible to advocate for central government funding for a long-term roading resilience programme for the district.

For more information on our storm recovery work, go to tcdc.govt.nz/stormrecovery

RAPID BUILDING ASSESSMENT AND PLACARD INFORMATION



After any weather event or emergency that affects property, our Council's carries out rapid building assessments in the areas affected. These are done to determine whether buildings are safe to occupy and whether they pose a safety risk to others.

Following a rapid building assessment, a property will receive either a white, yellow, or red placard.

Only authorised officials can place, change, remove or advise on removing the placards, which are legal instruction and categorised into three levels.

WHITE Safe to occupy but keep an eye out for any damage.

YELLOW Limited access only. Some areas may be restricted and used under supervision.

RED Do not enter due to damage or land risk. This doesn't always mean the building will be demolished.

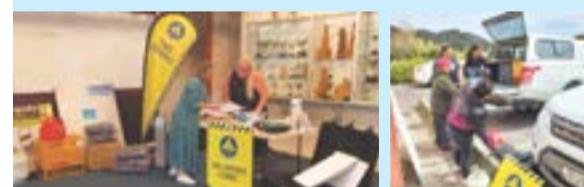
White placards are an exception as they expire 21 days after they are issued.

Once we issue a placard, you will need to arrange a more detailed assessment of the property.

For more information visit tcdc.govt.nz/placards or call us on 07 868 0200.



Don't worry, support is here



Recovering from an emergency can be tough and you don't have to go through it alone.

If you or someone you know in Thames-Coromandel needs help, here are the services available:

- **Ministry of Social Development (MSD)** – Financial assistance, welfare support, accommodation help. Call 0800 559 009 or visit your local MSD office.
- **Rural Support Trust** – Confidential support for farmers, growers, and rural whānau dealing with stress, damage, or loss. Call 0800 787 254.
- **Here to Help U** – One-stop support for food parcels, financial hardship, mental health, social services and more. Visit: heretohelpu.nz
- **1737 – Need to Talk?** – Free counselling by phone or text, 24/7. Call or text 1737.
- **Temporary Accommodation Service (TAS)** – If you are unable to return to your property and think you may require help with securing temporary accommodation, register with the TAS as soon as possible. Further information is available on their website: tas.mbie.govt.nz
- **Community & Iwi Providers** – Local services offering food, shelter, emotional support and recovery assistance. Check in with:
 - o Local marae and iwi providers
 - o Salvation Army
 - o Red Cross
 - o Local churches and community hubs
- **Thames-Coromandel District Council** – tcdc.govt.nz for updates on road closures, water services, cleanup, and recovery assistance.

MAYORAL DISASTER RELIEF FUND



Our Mayoral Disaster Relief Fund is available to anyone in the district financially affected by the January storm.

The fund provides one-off financial support in cases of genuine hardship, including help with clean-up costs, basic needs, uninsured or underinsured losses, and support for small businesses. It is intended as a last-resort option when other assistance has been exhausted.

We are calling for donations to help build the fund so meaningful support can be provided once applications are assessed.

Thanks to all who have donated, especially these significant donors:

- Central government (National Emergency Management Agency) – \$100,000
- IAG (owner of State, AMI and other insurance brands) – \$100,000
- Suncorp (owner of Vero Insurance) – \$50,000

Applications close Friday 6 March 2026.

Find out how to donate or apply: tcdc.govt.nz/MDRF

LAND INSTABILITY

Our weather can be unpredictable. Heavy rain can cause landslips or flooding.

Check with MetService for the latest forecast before you travel. Check your route on NZTA's Journey Planner for State Highway conditions and visit our TCDC website for Council road updates.

Our Council has assessed land instability at approximately 40 locations at the time this ad went to print, with requests for more assessments still being received. We're encouraging everyone to keep an eye out for land instability – check for signs at getready.govt.nz/emergency/landslides

This doesn't necessarily mean there's an issue, but please report them through the Request for Service (RFS) system so our Council can follow up.

Our team, including GIS specialists and geotechnical engineers, is actively reviewing reports to support our community. Your observations play an important role in this work and are always appreciated.

More information on how to fill out an RFS can be found on our website under the 'contact us' tab.

\$17k boost for playground upgrade

Netherton School students, families and the wider community will soon have something new and improved to explore.

That's because Netherton School was awarded a grant of \$17,000 by the New Zealand Community Trust (NZCT) to go towards a renovated and upgraded playground, including extensive earthworks, resulting in a safer, more engaging outdoor space.

Principal Brook Bowman said the generous funding from NZCT would allow the school to complete their new playground and associated earthworks to create a safe and stimulating space to enhance the physical, social and emotional development for students.

"The upgraded playground aligns strongly with the school's vision and values, providing year-round opportunities for exploration, creativity, and active learning. As a small, rural primary school near Paeroa, Netherton School recognises the important role that play and physical activity have in supporting student wellbeing," she said.

The upgraded playground will also benefit the wider community.

The school often hosts birthday parties and family gatherings and acts as a stopover



Students of Netherton School will soon have an upgraded playground.

point for travellers. The new play area will serve as a community asset, which offers families a safe and accessible place outside of school hours.

It's clear the students of Netherton School are looking forward to what's on the brink.

Year seven student Braxton Kennedy said a new play-

ground would attract more people to use it - "it's a bit boring at the moment", while year five student Sophia Searancke said it was important for the school to get a new playground as the current one was very old and rusty.

NZCT's general manager of grants, marketing and com-

Photo: SUPPLIED

munications Ben Hodges said it was wonderful to help build infrastructure to "let kids do what they do best - play".

"NZCT can fund this community good thanks to the fundraising partnership we share with the Paeroa Hotel via their host responsible gaming lounge."

Funding for festival

The Coromandel will once again host the Whitianga Oceans Festival in September with funding from the \$70 million Major Events and Tourism Package, Coromandel MP Scott Simpson said.

Although the amount of funding for the festival hasn't yet been announced, the event is expected to attract visitors from across New Zealand and overseas.

Mr Simpson said the government's latest investment in major events would support local jobs and businesses. "Major events are critical for our hospitality and tourism sectors, especially here in the Coromandel. Accommodations fill up, restaurants and cafés thrive, and local businesses see more customers, creating jobs and lifting incomes," he said.

"Across New Zealand, tourism directly contributes \$17 billion to national GDP and just under 200,000 jobs. Tourism makes up almost 12 per cent of Coromandel's GDP. The economic ripple effect of major events is huge, supporting our local businesses and growing our economy."

Events such as the Whitianga Oceans Festival didn't just bring visitors; they also brought energy to the region and its towns, helping to create vibrant communities, he said. "This funding is a significant boost to Whitianga and the wider Coromandel, and I'm looking forward to our region hosting another great event which encourages locals and visitors to celebrate all we have to offer."

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Brett Bell-Booth
Investment Adviser

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100 Kirkwood Street, Thames

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FORSYTH BARR
INVESTMENT ADVICE

On the Land

Surprise catch for 6-year-old trapper

By DAVIDDA HIKATANGATA

When six-year-old Eliza Dance went on a guided night walk and learned how to tell the difference between weasels and stoats - she never imagined what it would lead to the following morning.

Eliza and her parents, Becks and Blair of Coromandel, spent some time holidaying at Waikawau Bay Campground in mid January.

"We try and get up there as much as we can. It's such a beautiful place to go camping and it's only an hour away from us," Becks said.

Eliza's interest in protecting wildlife started last year when she got to paint a rat trap box as part of a school summer holiday programme at the campground which was hosted by Moehau Environment Group.

"Eliza's one she painted last year, we just kept at our place in town in Coromandel."

The young trapper, who is a student at Coromandel Area School, was often awake before her parents, and charged across the lawn in her pajamas each morning at around 6am to check her trap.

"But it's been a while since



Eliza was surprised to catch a weasel in her brightly-painted rat trap.

she's caught anything in town, which we kind of took as a good sign."

Following the educational night walk last month, the young wildlife protector said she put her new trap box out at the campground and the next morning she discovered something unusual.

When Eliza saw a tail hanging out of the trap box, her first thought was "that's not a rat's tail".

Eliza identified the perpetrator as a weasel, who was lured in by Pic's peanut butter.

"So the weasels have wig-



Eliza Dance, 6, of Coromandel finds a weasel in her trap while on holiday at Waikawau Bay Campground.

Photo: SUPPLIED

nut butter. "But Eliza and her dad spent a bit of time figuring out where the best place to put the trap was because we were staying up for another few nights, so we thought we might as well set it," she said.

"When we were camping up at Waikawau last year, there were baby kingfishers nesting in the tree that was right by the weasel catch.

"So [we're] really glad that we took a weasel out up there because there's so many cool baby birds and stuff nesting up there as well."

When the family got back to Coromandel, Eliza set the trap in their backyard and caught a rat, and also set up a trap at her granny's house where she caught two more rats.

"The rats we get in town, we just feed back to the eels because we're quite close to a creek," Becks said.

While the young trapper was also an avid lover of bush walks, making art and looking up at the stars and moon through a telescope, it was clear she was passionate about taking care of the wildlife around her.

Eliza's advice for other people was to "go out and get a trap and protect our birds".

gly lines on their tummy, and the stoats have straight lines," Eliza said.

"And the stoats have black

tips on the tail, and the weasels' tails are quite skinny.

Becks said she didn't think weasels usually went for pea-

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Touch rugby legends wanted

Nominations are open to celebrate the unsung heroes whose dedication and generosity help their touch rugby communities thrive, with selected recipients receiving \$5000 to reinvest in grassroots sport.

Bunnings Home Ground Heroes is inviting touch communities across Aotearoa to recognise the volunteers who make the game possible. From organisers and coaches to those working tirelessly behind the scenes, the initiative celebrates the unsung individuals whose passion, commitment and mahi keep touch thriving at a grassroots level. Over the past five years, 20 recipients from communities nationwide have been recognised for their outstanding contributions to touch.

Bunnings NZ general manager Melissa Haines said touch communities thrived because of everyday New Zealanders who gave their time and energy to others.

"Home Ground Heroes lets us support that impact in a meaningful way, helping local volunteers do even more for their players and whānau," she said.

Past recipients used the support to expand local initiatives, reduce barriers for families and invest in equipment that strengthens participation.

Among the past winners of the program, Jenny Turner shared the impact of the fund in her community.

"The funding has made a genuinely meaningful difference to how we deliver our junior module," Jenny said.

"It's enabled us to invest in essential infrastructure, from new referee shirts and refreshed equipment to a golf cart that helps our small volunteer team set up quickly and safely, along with a media wall that makes our championship finals feel truly special."

"With just four volunteers running the programme, these upgrades have



Past recipient Jenny Turner used the grant for her junior touch team. Photo: SUPPLIED

taken real pressure off our committee and helped us create an experience where kids feel valued, proud, and excited to be part of their local club."

Meanwhile, Ani Nock has been a cornerstone of the Waikato touch community for more than 25 years. Starting out as a player, she has gone on to represent New Zealand at the 2015 Touch World Cup. Ani plays a key role in coaching teams for the Women's Touch NZ module.

"The financial grant helped us invest in resources and equipment for the teams which has made a big difference and made life so much easier," she said.

"We've also been able to invest heavily in our women's module. We're incredibly grateful to Bunnings for all their support."

The initiative invites touch communities nationwide to nominate those who embody this same dedication. Nominees will need to outline how their nominee positively impacts the touch community and how a \$5000 grant would further strengthen their efforts.

DETAILS: Nominations close on March 14, with winners to be announced in mid-April. For more information on the 2026 Bunnings Home Ground Heroes programme, visit www.touchnz.co.nz/bunnings-home-ground-heroes.

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Cleanup continues at Kūaotunu

More than 1000 cubic metres of unstable material was removed during a three-day closure of State Highway 25 on Kūaotunu Hill last week.

This section is now cleared for two-way traffic under a speed restriction, Waka Kotahi New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA) advised. However, the highway is down to a single lane at another slip site a few hundred metres along the road, with temporary traffic lights being used to manage traffic through the underslip site.

The agency said the sites will continue to be monitored as further investigations are carried out to determine what further work is needed.

Meanwhile, clean-up and recovery work is continuing around the Coromandel and on State Highway 2 through the Karangahake Gorge following the January storms.

There are more than 20 sites along SH25 and through the Karangahake Gorge needing significant repairs, NZTA said, with several remaining reduced to a single lane until that work is done.

"We expect to have work underway at the most urgent sites by the beginning of March, once designs, consenting and other approvals have been completed," the agency said in a press release.

"All these sites will continue to



A digger removes unstable material at one of the Kūaotunu slip sites.

be closely monitored.

Anyone travelling around the Coromandel or through Karangahake Gorge is advised to allow extra time for their journey, and to expect traffic management and speed restrictions at some locations. This includes on SH2 in the gorge and on SH25 for a two kilometre stretch on Pumpkin Hill north of Tairua."

NZTA thanked the Coromandel community and visitors for their patience during the works.



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The Valley
Profile

Summer of discovery at School of Mines

During the summer school holidays, the Thames School of Mines welcomed tamariki (children) and their whānau (families), along with visiting whānau groups, into the Education Community Room for a range of hands-on activities.

Throughout January, visitors explored the Mineralogical Museum, learned about different specimens, created posters about their favourite minerals, and decorated smooth stones using natural materials.

Artist and friend of the Thames School of Mines Jenny Hawkeswood also returned to share her knowledge of creating mineral paints, which tamariki used to make postcards, paintings, and bookmarks.

The holidays wrapped up with friendly vintage games and the popular "Archaeologist for a Day" programme, where tamariki dressed as archaeologists and learned about tools, techniques, tikanga (customs), and the difference between simulated investigations and real archaeological work in Aotearoa.

"Ngā mihi (thank you) to all the whānau who joined us over summer," organisers said.

"We look forward to welcoming everyone back next school holidays."

DETAILS: The Thames School of Mines is open Wednesday to Saturday, 10am-4pm. Enquiries, Ph: 027 417 0425.



Young visitors to the School of Mines create natural collages, measure the artefacts, and crush the ore to make mineral paint.

Photos: SUPPLIED



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Authorised by Scott Simpson, Parliament Buildings, Wellington.



Vision before reality - feed your imagination

OPINION

By MICHAEL WILKES

Some people just seem to see it. Not what is, but what could be. Visionaries. They talk about what's coming as if it's already arrived. And more often than not — it does.

There's science behind that. But before we get there, let me tell you a story.

Years ago, I was living up the coast at Te Mata Lodge. There's this winding bush path that hugs the river and leads down a fallen log with rough steps carved into it.

At the bottom — your own private swimming hole. Sounds idyllic, right? Until one of those rotten steps gave way. I slipped. Crashed my way to the bottom, splinters and all. The whole thing was a mess — and unusable.

But where I saw wreckage, my father-in-law Murray saw possibility. He looked at the slope, the bush, the mighty totara tree below — and he saw a new staircase, carved from the rock.

It was brutal work. And we were the labour force. Some holes took days to dig. We were chipping at solid rock with crowbars and scraping it out with a Milo can duct-taped to a stick. I saw sweat

and setbacks. But Murray? He saw the finished thing.

Guests walking down. Sitting on the bench halfway. Hearing the river flow past. He saw the reward before it existed.

That's what vision does. We eventually sat on that bench together, staring out over the river, proud and sore. He'd seen it in his head — long before we saw it with our eyes.

Michaelangelo once said, "I saw the angel in the marble and carved until I set him free."

And Solomon said it even earlier: "Where there is no vision, the people perish."

Science is just now catching up

with that ancient wisdom.

Your amygdala — that emotional safety system in your brain — doesn't know the difference between what's real and what's imagined. That's why movies can make us cry. Why horror films haunt us. And why imagined failure can stop us before we start.

But the opposite is also true. When you see with hope... when you imagine a better future... when you feel the joy of what's possible before it exists — your brain begins to pave the way.

So here's the challenge: What are you feeding your imagination? Fear and failure?

Or purpose and possibility?

Because what you imagine, you start to feel — and what you feel begins to shape what you do. It's true for our kids. It's true for us.

And if your inner vision is clouded, borrow someone else's for a while. Surround yourself with people who see more. Who remind you of what's possible.

Because vision always sees the bench — even when you're still holding the crowbar.

Michael Wilkes is a youth worker with Thrive Trust, supporting mentoring and resilience programs across Thames and Paoera. To support his local youth work or follow stories and insights, find him on social media @michaelwilkes.kiwi. Enjoy these articles: Grab his book *The Unschoolled Life at michaelwilkes.kiwi*

Foodies

A great place for connection: Waihī Beach RSA

Perched above the sweeping coastline, Gunners View at the Waihī Beach RSA is a place where good food, warm hospitality, and community spirit come together.

With panoramic views across the Pacific, the restaurant offers a relaxed dining experience that feels equally at home for locals and visitors.

The menu celebrates honest, well-executed fare - from classic Kiwi favourites to seasonal specials - all prepared with care and generosity.

Whether it's a casual lunch after a beach walk or a shared dinner as the sun sets, Gunners View delivers comfort, flavour, and consistency.

What truly sets it apart is its welcoming atmosphere.

Open to members and non-members alike, the Waihī Beach RSA prides itself on being inclusive, friendly, and community-focused.

Gunners View isn't about pretension; it's about connection - good food, good company, and one of the best views in town.

A visit here is more than a meal - it's a reminder of what local dining does best.

- Supplied by Waihī Beach RSA



Enjoy a meal prepared with care and generosity at Gunners View at the Waihī Beach RSA.
Photos: SUPPLIED



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Pet Profile

Give Mochi the second chance he deserves

Mochi is just four months old, but he has already endured more than any puppy ever should.

He arrived at Thames SPCA with serious injuries consistent with a severe dog fight, along with fleas, ticks, and worms.

Despite everything he has suffered, Mochi's gentle, loving nature shines through. He greets everyone with a soft tail wag and a heart still full of trust.

Sadly, Mochi also has an eye condition that requires surgery.

The procedure, which will cost around \$1000, extends beyond our current budget, and we are now reaching out to our compassionate community for help. We are determined to give this

sweet boy the second chance at life he truly deserves — to heal, to grow, and to one day be healthy enough for adoption.

If you can assist with donations towards Mochi's surgery and veterinary care, please contact us on 07 868 6830 or email thames.office@spca.nz for bank account details. Donations can also be made in person at our centre.

Mochi is kind, sweet, and so deserving of a brighter future. Together, we can help make that future possible.

UPDATE: Previous Pet Profiles Dewy the kitten and China the dog have been adopted after being spotted in The Profile, and there's been interest in the white dog, Cookie, who is currently still available.



Thames SPCA is calling for donations for Mochi's eye surgery.
Photo: SUPPLIED

Thames Autos



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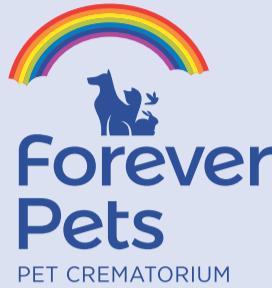
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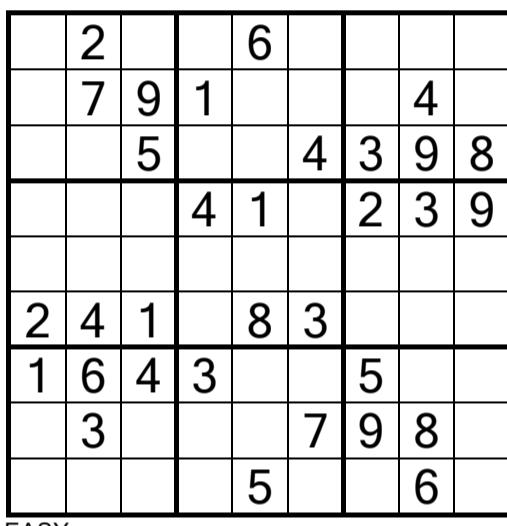
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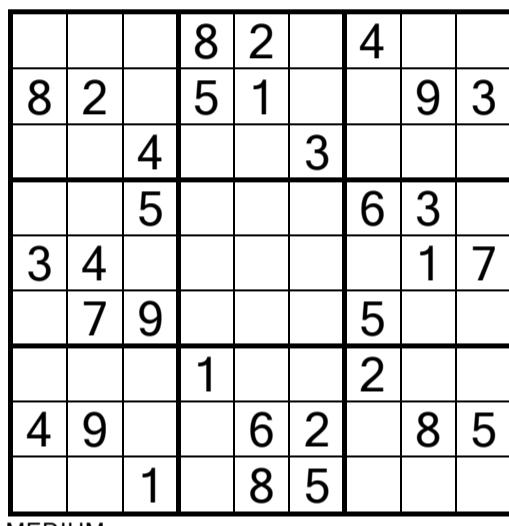
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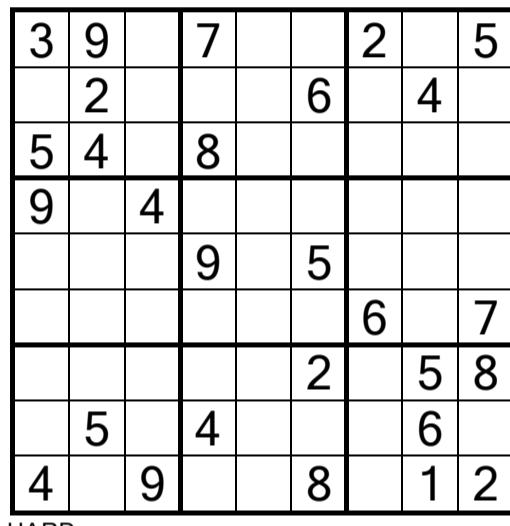
Fill the grid so every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the numbers 1-9



EASY



MEDIUM



HARD

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

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

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

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258

ACROSS

- 1 Competitor (5)
- 4 Declares approval of (8)
- 9 Homecoming (6)
- 14 Wreck (5)
- 15 As chance decides (3,4,2,3,4)
- 17 Hot drink (5)
- 18 Organ of balance (3)
- 19 Beer plant (7)
- 20 Pal (9)
- 21 Mountaineer's pegs (6)
- 24 Wife of King Arthur and paramour of Lancelot (9)
- 25 Off course (6)
- 26 Reliable (6)
- 29 Synthetic (10)
- 31 Small shelter (3)
- 32 Elevated (6)
- 33 Doorway side post (4)
- 35 Cancel ruthlessly (3)
- 37 Lend a hand (4)
- 39 Pain-killing drug (9)
- 40 Debut (9)
- 41 Dull brownish-yellow colour (5)
- 42 Negligent (8)
- 47 Garnish (8)
- 51 Skin holes (5)
- 55 Double meaning (9)
- 56 US state (9)
- 58 Win over (4)
- 59 Wonder (3)
- 60 Error (4)
- 61 Muggy (6)
- 62 Mistruth (3)
- 63 Written works (10)
- 66 Underside (6)
- 67 Fill with consternation (6)
- 69 Large deep stewing dish (9)
- 72 Send for sale overseas (6)
- 73 Sluggish and apathetic (9)
- 75 Dangers (7)
- 77 Levy (3)
- 80 Path (5)
- 81 The most satisfactory substitute (3,4,4,5)
- 82 Courage (5)
- 83 Panda food (6)
- 84 Counterpoison (8)
- 85 Said further (5)
- DOWN
- 2 Heir (9)
- 3 Permit (5)
- 5 Inert gas (4)
- 6 Result (7)
- 7 Horse race over an obstructed course (12)
- 8 Warning device (5)
- 9 Dinghy (7)
- 10 Stitch temporarily (4)
- 11 Gun kick (6)
- 12 Pay (5)
- 13 Soon (7)
- 14 Flavoursome (7)
- 16 Diploma (11)
- 22 Light-sensitive layer within an eyeball (6)
- 23 Pasta envelopes (7)
- 24 Brief look (7)
- 25 Assail (6)

27 Staying power (7)

28 Prove to be false (6)

30 Company's symbol (4)

32 Reimburse (5)

34 Military instrument (5)

36 Repeat (4)

38 Age (3)

42 Pandemonium (5)

43 Constructed again (7)

44 Felled trunks (4)

45 Moves (6)

46 Orderly arrangement, display (5)

48 Psychic, fortuneteller (11)

49 Supporter's badge (7)

50 Beverage (3)

51 May drip (anag) (7)

52 Stinking (6)

53 Riptide (12)

54 Exchange for money (4)

57 Beginning (6)

64 Abode (9)

65 Vie (7)

66 Flagrant (7)

68 Accomplished musician (7)

70 Went around (7)

71 Fleet of ships (6)

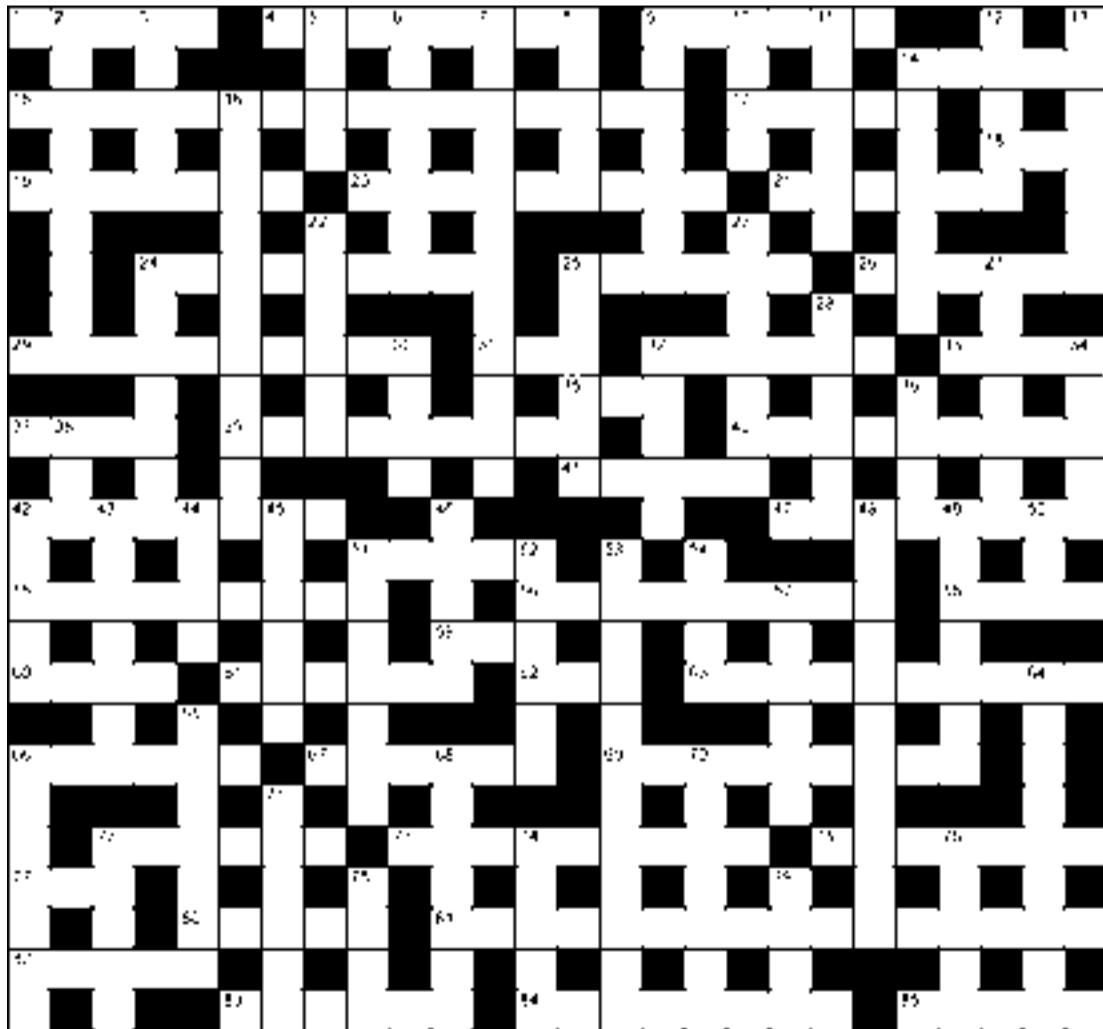
72 Accessory (5)

74 African scavenger (5)

76 Greenfly (5)

78 Bludgeon (4)

79 Remaining (4)



PREVIOUS SOLUTION

ACROSS: 1 Flock, 4 Leave in the lurch, 14 Civic, 15 Issue, 16 Disruptive, 17 Error, 19 Nip, 20 Nothing, 21 Vibration, 22 Intent, 25 Assistant, 27 Précis, 28 Hearse, 33 Politician, 35 Hot, 36 Jurors, 37 Stop, 39 Emu, 41 Dispute, 42 Sequel, 43 Buccaneer, 44 Lithe, 45 Mystical, 50 La, 51 Pedestal, 55 Ankle, 58 Clarified, 59 Circle, 60 Usually, 61 Mat, 63 Whim, 64 Give up, 65 Ebb, 66 Watermelon, 68 Ashore, 69 Beacon, 71 Sweetened, 76 Taiwan, 77 Freshness, 79 Blurred, 81 Rue, 84 Trade, 85 Irritation, 86 Probe, 87 Halve, 88 Hit below the belt, 89 Droll.

DOWN: 2 Lesson, 3 Crush, 5 Evil, 6 Version, 7 Impure, 8 Twist, 9 Eyesore, 10 Used, 11 Caring, 12 Event, 13 Sceptre, 14 Creeper, 18 Antibiotic, 23 Stain, 24 Disrobe, 26 Snippet, 27 Patella, 29 Retreat, 30 Notify, 31 Shrub, 32 Oracle, 34 Need, 36 Junta, 38 Peril, 40 Fake, 45 Macaw, 46 Spanish, 47 Ibis, 48 Acidic, 49 Skimp, 50 Lectern, 52 Discreetly, 53 Siamese, 54 Abloom, 55 Adhered, 56 Brie, 57 Flaw, 62 Steer, 67 Artiste, 68 Anarchy, 70 Cordial, 72 Washtub, 73 Salami, 74 Snatch, 75 Verbal, 76 Tells, 78 Straw, 80 Rarer, 82 Herb, 83 Fool.

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The high winds over the past couple of weeks have been a stark reminder that in weather events, trees can be extremely hazardous.

Tree and hedge growth has been immense this summer due to the extra rainfall accompanied with hot weather.

In some cases this can be a cause for concern, as with the extra growth comes more branch weight and during periods of bad weather this is the main reason for trees failing and uprooting.

If you identify a tree on your property you believe is getting too big for the area it was originally planted, or the branches look like they are heavily weighed down due to age or extra

growth, then pruning or reducing the size of the entire tree or just concentrating on problematic areas can be an ideal solution.

A 'reduction' has a great effect on the overall size of the tree and removes all the top weight, which reduces the chance of how your trees are affected by wind and rain.

A quick walk around your property can easily identify trees you believe may need attention.

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Profile

Regional and local voice 'critical'

Waikato Regional Council says the region's ability to manage growth, climate risk and infrastructure relies on strong regional leadership supported by a clear and accountable local democratic voice.

The statement follows the government's proposal to replace regional councillors with a board of mayors responsible for regional level decision-making. The government is currently undertaking work to determine which regional council functions this new proposed board would oversee.

Council chair Warren Maher acknowledged reform was needed but emphasised that any changes must strengthen – not sideline – regional leadership and the democratic representation to take a whole-of-system, catchment-based approach to planning, investment and advocacy.

"The Waikato is one of New Zealand's fastest growing regions, home to major urban centres, productive rural communities, nationally significant infrastructure and some of the country's most important assets," Cr Maher said.

"At its heart is the Waikato River Catchment – New Zealand's largest and most complex – which shows why co-ordinated, region-wide oversight is essential. Land use, water ways, flood protection, infrastructure and community wellbeing are all interconnected."

He pointed out effective flood protection, for example, requires decisions that consider whole catchments, from headwaters to coasts, and across the many communities and land uses they support.

"Regional council oversight is essential for co-ordinating across district boundaries, aligning in-

vestment, and ensuring that development remains productive, sustainable and resilient for generations," he said.

"This strategic function is particularly important in the Waikato, where flood protection, river management, transport networks and growth-related development all intersect across our river systems and catchments."

Cr Maher also highlighted the strong working relationships between the regional council and territorial authorities, which have enabled aligned planning, delivery and investment.

"Our work is strongest when regional and territorial authorities operate as complementary partners," said Cr Maher. "Reforms should build on those relationships, not fragment them."

At its February Strategy and Policy Committee meeting, councillors expressed concerns that reforms which centralise decision-making or fragment regional responsibilities could weaken the ability to manage complex systems, such as large catchments, and reduce accountability to the communities most affected.

Committee Chair Ben Dunbar-Smith said councillors engaged deeply with the implications for local voice, regional oversight and its partnerships with territorial authorities and iwi. "That discussion reflected our shared commitment to ensuring any changes strengthen outcomes for Waikato communities," he said.

Councillors noted the importance of governance stability during any reform process as they were elected to serve their communities through to the 2028 local elections.

Bridge replacement project progresses

Key stakeholders and community representatives came together this week for the first meeting of a group set up to involve locals in the Pepe Stream Bridge replacement project which gets underway this year in Tairua.

Waka Kotahi New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA) said work was expected to start in July on a two-lane replacement for the single-lane Pepe Stream Bridge on the southern side of town, subject to consents being in place by April.

A Community Liaison Group (CLG) has been set up involving NZTA, the contractor Fulton Hogan, and representatives from community groups.

"We want the community involved in the bridge project, and bringing together key stakeholders for regular meetings will enable us and Fulton Hogan to update people on progress and allow for discussion of any issues or concerns affecting the community," NZTA director of regional relationships Andrew Corkill said.

The agency said attendees will report back to and bring forward any queries or issues from their memberships and communities.

"There is a lot of interest in this project. It's happening right in town, and we need to keep traffic and people crossing the site as the new bridge is built, while causing the least disruption," Andrew said.

A public information drop-in session will be held at the Tairua Community Hall on February 26, and people can call in any time between 2pm and 6pm.

NZTA regional manager for infrastructure delivery Adrian Jones said there would be a lot of activity at the State Highway 25 work site leading up to July, as contractor Fulton Hogan works with consultants WSP to finalise consents and design. A temporary pedestrian bridge will be built upstream of



ABOVE: An artist's impression of the new bridge looking toward town. RIGHT: The current pedestrian and single lane road bridges will make way for a new two-lane bridge, with a shared path on the seaward side and a footpath on the Pepe Rd side.

SUPPLIED

the current single-lane bridge, and services like water, sewerage, and telecoms will be relocated to this bridge, then the existing pedestrian bridge will be removed.

Fulton Hogan will then build one lane of the new bridge and the shared path on the downstream (seaward) side of the old bridge. Traffic will use the new lane while the old bridge is dismantled, creating room to build the other half of the new bridge and a footpath.

Tairua Community Hall and its carpark will be closed to the public during the works, as the construction crew bases its operations there.

The new bridge is expected to be completed by December, 2027.

The current bridge crosses a tidal stream on SH25 south of the Tairua town centre. The narrow three-span bridge opened in 1943.

NZTA said the bridge replacement was part of a wider bridge programme to improve safety, efficiency and resilience on the state highway around the peninsula.

Planning for a new two-lane bridge to replace the single-lane Ramarama Stream Bridge on SH25 just north of Whiritoa is also ongoing, and subject to concluding land negotiations.

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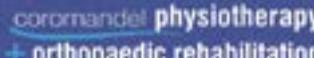
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MCCARTHY, Robina May (Robin) (nee Climo): Born 17th March 1930, late of Te Hoe, Thames and Thame Coast. Robin passed away peacefully on 11th February 2026 at the Ohinemuri Care Home in Paeroa, surrounded by her loving children. Dearly loved wife and pal of the late Trevor, and precious mother and mother-in-law of Michael and Vicki (Bethlehem), Suzanne and Ross Arthur (Paeroa), Valerie and Charles Meihana (Rotorua), Lynette and John Gordon (Kaingaroa North). Most loved and loving Gran of 7 and great-Gran of 6. Thank you so much for all of our treasured memories. Thank you to Ohinemuri Care Home staff over the past four years. Robin's funeral will be held in The Grahamstown Chapel, 102 Kirkwood Street, Thames on Wednesday 18th February at 11am, followed by private burial at Totara Memorial Park Cemetery RSA Section, Thames.	Person to shift stock, week on, week off, and some farm duties ie fencing, drenching, farm maintenance etc. 60 acres, 75 cows. Pay rent on week off. Matatoki area. Ph 07 884 8221 or ph/txt 021 156 8321.	An experienced handyman covering all trades with over 20 years exp building trade. Please contact Laurie King 021 251 0246 ktpropertyservice.com	FENCING CONTRACTOR Residential & Rural Retaining walls & more High quality workmanship Competitive prices <i>Call Matt 021 1727 148</i>	Ngahutoitoi Marae Trustees Special General Meeting 9.45am on 8 March, 2026 Ngahutoitoi Marae, Paeroa 9.45am Registrations 10.00am Karakia, Mihi 1. Apologies. 2. Ratification of Final Draft 2024 Ngahutoitoi Marae Charter 3. Karakia whakakapi Kai. All enquiries to the secretary at ngahutoitoimarae@gmail.com	Hauraki RSA Inc and the Hauraki RSA Poppy Trust Annual General Meeting to be held on Thursday 26th February at the Hauraki RSA Club, 14 Pipiroa Road, Ngatea at 7.00pm
For Sale	Firewood for sale. Pine. \$100 per cube. Ph 027 385 2806	Mowing, hedges, fencing, gardening, carpentry, painting, retaining walls, welding, waterblasting. Work is good quality and I will not attempt to work outside of my skills. Insured. Dennis Schuler 022 129 0169	Builders Reno's , decking, fencing. For free quote ph Phil 021 088 63559	Handyman Services	Office & Finance Administrator – Moanataiari School, Thames Part-time (15 hours per week). This role is central to Moanataiari School's smooth financial and administrative running and requires accuracy, initiative and confidentiality. Key duties: Accounts payable/receivable (Xero), payroll (EdPay), monthly financial reporting, budget support, general administration, Board minutes. Requirements: Finance/payroll administration experience, proficiency in Xero, strong organisational skills, accuracy, and confidentiality. Send a covering letter and CV to tumuaki@moana.school.nz Closing date: 25/2/26.
WILLETS, Raywin Naolene (Ray): Passed away peacefully on 4th February 2026 at Tararu Care Home, in her 99th year. Loved mum of Ken and Joanne, Nana of Greg and Stef, Sacha, Tania and Micheal. Great Nana to Pippi, Braxton and Ava. As per Ray's request her cremation has taken place.	Now taking orders Pine \$90 per cube Delivery to Paeroa, Thames, Ngatea and surrounds Shaun & Channele Neustroski Ph 027 938 0349	Land Wanted Wanted to Lease/Rent land while I look for another farm to buy anything considered Please call or text Richard 0279332015	Friendly licensed builder. 40 years exp. All aspects. No job too small. Ian 021 540 376	THAMES HANDYMAN & BUILDING SERVICES Building, home maintenance & general gardening services Phone: Fleur or Crighton • 0273 913 283	Due to our membership growth we are looking for an experienced bar manager and bar person to work at the Ohinemuri Club in Paeroa. Approximately 30 hours per week and must be able to work Saturdays. Please email CV to the Manager ohinemuriclub@xtra.co.nz or drop it into the club.
TWENTYMANS	Gardening	Personal Seeking male born 1967-68? (mother from Te Aroha area), who rang Robert Greenwood, Te Awamutu area 1980's - 1990's. Please ring 022 365 3758. Don't leave a message.	Painters HAURAKI REGIONAL PAINTERS Over 12 years experience, interior/exterior. Refs available. Free quotes. Phone Graeme for all your painting needs. 020 485 1312	Storage	Cook - Part Time Thames Bowling Club is seeking a person to fill the role of cook at the club on Friday nights. For more details please phone Paula or Karl 07 8686107 or 027 916 1284.
WILLETS, Raywin Naolene (Ray): Passed away peacefully on 4th February 2026 at Tararu Care Home, in her 99th year. Loved mum of Ken and Joanne, Nana of Greg and Stef, Sacha, Tania and Micheal. Great Nana to Pippi, Braxton and Ava. As per Ray's request her cremation has taken place.	STUMP GRINDING. All sizes, all areas. Thames based. Ph 021 060 7659	Wanted To Buy Small Aluminium dinghy up to 10 FT, must be in good condition. NO trailer wanted. TEXT OR PH 0211387860	Advertise with the paper that is being read Valley Profile P: 022 130 3885	TOTAL STORAGE LTD KEREPEHI / PAEROA We will beat any legit quote for storage in 10ft or 20ft containers T&C's apply 021 67 67 99 info@totalstorage.co.nz	PAPER RUNNERS We have a vacancy for paper runners in Waihi. Immediate start... Please contact Geoff: admin@valleyprofile.co.nz for more information.
For Lease	Grazing	Piano Tuner	Storage Unlimited 25 Ngati Maru Highway Kopu, Thames Clean, secure, dry Units available 7 x 3.6m and 7 x 5.5m Phone 07 868 9944	Storage KOPU, PAEROA "New Units" Ph 027 440 7101 07 868 3033 Safe n Sound Storage www.safestorage.co.nz	For Lease
Yards for lease, Thames and Kopu. Suitable for trucks, vehicles or trade business base. Ph 027 440 7101	Heifer grazing available. 26 / 27 season. Komata. Phone Keith Trembath MNZM 07 862 6833	Sharyn Clark Piano Tuner & Technician Fully Qualified and Covering all areas of Hauraki and Coromandel M: 0274 485 089 sharynclark22@gmail.com			

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The Valley
Profile

BAYLEYS



Pipiroa 1944-1982 State Highway 25

Two homes and two titles - options abound

Flat in contour, this 81.6ha (more or less) holding spans two titles with 360-degree views to the eastern and western ranges. A versatile block suited to grazing, investment, or a future home base. Regular in shape with extensive road frontage, fertile clay soils and strong pasture growth with limited reliance on nitrogen fertiliser. Both titles include a central race, metered water reticulated to troughs, and 47 paddocks. Fencing is 7-wire post and batten with 2-wire electric, with SH25 frontage largely 7-wire, ideal for finishing sheep or calves. The 42ha title includes a 1910s four-bedroom villa and shedding, while the 39ha title offers a three-bedroom 1960s home, gardens, and shedding.

bayleys.co.nz/2630182

81.61 ha

Tender (unless sold prior)

Closing 3pm, Wed 25 Feb 2026

View by appointment

Karl Davis 0508 83 83 83 karl.davis@bayleys.co.nz

Sam Aislable 027 429 5410

sam.aislable@bayleys.co.nz

SUCCESS REALTY LIMITED, BAYLEYS, LICENSED UNDER THE REA ACT 2008



Ngatea 168a Bush Road

A standout location with four bedrooms plus shedding

Discover space, comfort, and versatility in this substantial four-bedroom home, well suited to busy family life or those needing room for work, hobbies, or storage. Set on 6,551sqm (more or less), the 282sqm (more or less) home offers generous proportions designed for everyday ease. Heating throughout and double glazing provide year-round warmth. Four well-sized bedrooms are supported by a family bathroom, with the master enjoying its own ensuite. Open-plan dining flows to a covered deck, creating a sheltered setting for relaxed entertaining in all seasons. Internal access garaging for two vehicles is complemented by a three-bay shed, ideal for tools, equipment, or a dedicated workspace.

bayleys.co.nz/2630205

6,551 sqm 4 2

Auction (unless sold prior) 11am, Thu 12 Mar 2026

96 Ulster Street, Hamilton

View 4-4.30pm Sun 22 Feb & 10-10.45am Sun 1 Mar

Karl Davis 0508 83 83 83

karl.davis@bayleys.co.nz

Connor Davis 027 496 4622

SUCCESS REALTY LIMITED, BAYLEYS, LICENSED UNDER THE REA ACT 2008

BAYLEYS



Pipiroa 133 Hopai East Road

A farm with scale, function and a location that works

Set across three titles, this well-presented dairy holding combines scale, functional infrastructure and a location that supports both farming and everyday living. Ancillary improvements and good access to townships and coastal destinations position the property for its next chapter. The all-flat 123 hectares (more or less) create a highly workable dairy platform, supported by a 30-aside herringbone shed with ML2100 midi-line and automatic cup removers, plus a 300-cow feed pad. Two older cowsheds add useful support, while a metered council water supply brings confidence through drier months. A three-bedroom and a four-bedroom home provide practical on-farm accommodation.

bayleys.co.nz/2630203

123.37 ha

Tender (unless sold prior)

Closing 3pm, Wed 18 Mar 2026

96 Ulster Street, Hamilton

View 11am-12pm Thu 19 Feb

Karl Davis 0508 83 83 83

karl.davis@bayleys.co.nz

Sam Aislaby 027 429 5410

SUCCESS REALTY LIMITED, BAYLEYS, LICENSED UNDER THE REA ACT 2008

bayleys.co.nz

BAYLEYS



Maramarua 36 and 70c Maxwell Road

A well-established Maramarua dairy holding

Positioned in the heart of Maramarua, this established dairy unit spans 121.3 hectares (more or less) and delivers a practical balance of scale, infrastructure and liveability, suited to reliable production and progressive management. Gently rolling contour supports an efficient dairy platform, centred around a 25-aside herringbone shed with generous yarding for smooth herd flow. Supporting infrastructure includes multiple implement sheds and a substantial half round barn for machinery and feed storage. A well-maintained three bedroom home provides comfortable accommodation. Well-formed raceways and dependable water reticulation support effective pasture use.

bayleys.co.nz/2630200

121.3614 ha

Auction (unless sold prior) 11am, Thu 5 Mar 2026

96 Ulster Street, Hamilton

View by appointment

Karl Davis 0508 83 83 83

karl.davis@bayleys.co.nz

Sam Aislaby 027 429 5410

sam.aislabie@bayleys.co.nz

SUCCESS REALTY LIMITED, BAYLEYS, LICENSED UNDER THE REA ACT 2008



Mangatarata 428a State Highway 27

New year in the country starts here

Ready to swap city life for a country New Year this summer? This family home on 7,802sqm (more or less) offers generous open-plan living, with a spacious kitchen and dining area for easy entertaining. Featuring a large master, two double bedrooms, and a family bathroom with bath and separate shower. A large laundry adds practicality, with extra buildings on site. Enjoy sweeping farmland views from the patio - ideal for summer BBQs and laid-back outdoor living. In the golden triangle, close to Hamilton, Auckland Airport and Ngatea, plus schools and amenities nearby. Waihi Beach is an easy day trip. Motivated vendor - act now!

bayleys.co.nz/2630195

7,802 sqm 3 1 2

Auction (unless sold prior) 11am, Thu 5 Mar 2026

96 Ulster Street, Hamilton

Karl Davis 027 496 4633

karl.davis@bayleys.co.nz

Connor Davis 027 496 4622

SUCCESS REALTY LIMITED, BAYLEYS, LICENSED UNDER THE REA ACT 2008

BAYLEYS



Turua 111 Piako Road

Location, lifestyle, and room to grow

Step inside a home shaped for comfort and considered living, set within the green stretches of the Hauraki Plains. On 4.0469 hectares (more or less), it offers generous spaces that link smoothly to the outdoors, creating an easy setting for shared moments or quiet evenings. Three bedrooms and thoughtful storage support a growing household, while the 2020 renovation brings a fresh, ready-to-enjoy finish. A spacious single paddock adds real usefulness, whether you're running a few cattle or tending a garden, with a three bay shed close by for vehicles and gear. Turua township is just over 1km away for schooling, plus Thames and Ngatea are both under 15km offering wider services.

bayleys.co.nz/2630177

4.04 ha 3 1 6

Asking Price \$799,000

View by appointment

Karl Davis 0508 83 83 83

karl.davis@bayleys.co.nz

Seth Roe 027 320 6937

seth.roe@bayleys.co.nz

SUCCESS REALTY LIMITED, BAYLEYS, LICENSED UNDER THE REA ACT 2008

NEW LISTING



Thames 6 Teretiu Drive

Totara Palms gem - Auction or prior

Set in one of Thames' most sought-after locations, this beautifully presented low-maintenance brick-and-tile 192sqm (more or less) four-bedroom home sits on an easy-care 823sqm (more or less) section, offering space, comfort, and security in a tightly held neighbourhood. The layout includes two separate lounges and four generous bedrooms—including a master with walk-in robe and ensuite—while the main bathroom with separate toilet ensures ease of living. Renovated kitchen and bathrooms feature modern finishes and excellent storage throughout, complemented by two air-conditioning units for year-round comfort.

bayleys.co.nz/2180913

4 2 2 2

Auction (unless sold prior) 11am, Thu 5 Mar 2026

96 Ulster Street, Hamilton

View Sun 3-3.30pm

Pippa Jackson 027 747 7000

pippa.jackson@bayleys.co.nz

M H REALTY LIMITED, BAYLEYS, LICENSED UNDER THE REA ACT 2008

bayleys.co.nz

BAYLEYS



Whitianga 67 Joan Gaskell Drive

Shape the outcome

- 2,201sqm (more or less) landholding
- Lease in place
- Existing improvements onsite included

Presenting an add-value commercial opportunity on 2,201sqm (more or less) with an existing building, sealed access and site improvements. The property is currently leased, with the tenant indicating a desire to exit, offering scope for repositioning or alternative use (subject to approval). Suited to investors or developers looking to shape the next outcome.

bayleys.co.nz/2202164

2,201sqm 74sqm

Auction (unless sold prior) 2pm, Thu 19 Mar 2026

1030 Victoria Street, Hamilton

View by appointment

Josh Smith 027 229 8865

josh.smith@bayleys.co.nz

MH REALTY LIMITED, BAYLEYS, LICENSED UNDER THE REA ACT 2008



Thames 515 Pollen Street

Backed by a bank

- Secure income with proven tenant
- Internal configuration to suit tenant
- Strategic regional location

515 Pollen Street is a two-level commercial building leased to Westpac Bank, delivering secure, established income with defined medium-term certainty. The property returns \$76,755 pa + GST & outgoings, with the tenant having renewed its lease in December 2025 for a further three years, extending occupation through to 2028. Completed strengthening works further support the building's ongoing commercial use.

bayleys.co.nz/2180813

819sqm 529sqm

Auction (unless sold prior) 2pm, Thu 19 Mar 2026

1030 Victoria Street, Hamilton

View by appointment

Josh Smith 027 229 8865

josh.smith@bayleys.co.nz

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SPORTS

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From pool 'impostor' to swimming master

SWIMMING

By KELLEY TANTAU

Returning home with one silver and three bronze medals from the 2026 Dunedin Masters Games, Anne Barker has shown that commitment - and access to a local pool - is key to supporting swimmers of all ages.

As a "self-taught, uncoached swimmer", Anne admitted she had long grappled with imposter syndrome in the pool.

Despite this, she said the annual Masters Games - held alternately in Dunedin and Whanganui - were consistently encouraging.

"I come home inspired," she told *The Profile*, "by the beautiful swimming, by the advanced age of some of the swimmers, and by their courage. People in their 80s were competing and competing strongly."

"New Zealand age group records were smashed. It was an amazing three days."

Now in its 37th year, the New Zealand Masters Games is Aotearoa's largest and longest-running multisport festival, featuring more than 60 sports and over 300 individual events. Minimum ages vary by sport, from 18 for Gymsports to 35 for netball, with most around 30. There is no upper age limit.

Anne has attended four Masters Games, and said it all began when a colleague at work



Anne Barker with her medals outside the Thames Centennial Pool.

Photo: SUPPLIED

mentioned he was playing rugby at the event and described what a great experience it was.

"He challenged me to give it a go and enter the swimming. That challenge meant that I kept on swimming," she said.

Competing at the games had

also pushed her to step beyond the 'useless at sport' image she once had.

"I have always been an enthusiastic participant, but attaining the F team in netball at age 11 didn't really inspire me with huge confidence in my sporting

ability," she said.

"After each competition, I check out the qualifying times for the World Aquatics. This year, my times were inside the qualifying times. I still can't really believe that. One day, I will investigate further and maybe

dip my toe in that water."

Anne said swimming did wonderful things for your body, your aerobic fitness, and for many, their mental health.

She encouraged anyone curious about their own abilities to give the Masters Games a go.

She also stressed the importance of maintaining a local swimming facility for the wider community, with the Thames Centennial Pool slated for demolition in 2027 - and no firm plans for its replacement.

Anne said the uncertainty raised concerns not just for her own swimming, but for aquarobics classes, rehabilitation programmes for those recovering from injury or illness, learn-to-swim and water confidence classes, school swimming sports, Supported Lifestyle swimmers, and many others who relied on the pool.

According to Thames-Coromandel District Council, the Thames Community Board voted in March, 2025, on a business case recommending an all-indoor facility at a projected cost of \$26.2 million.

Decision-making was then delayed by the October local body elections, and the newly elected council is expected to discuss the issue early in 2026.

"Time is running short," Anne said.

"And there are many patrons who would love to ensure ongoing access to a pool for a further 50 years."

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