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Double Take

Twins take over at Waitakaruru School, story: P2

Waitakaruru School principal Tina Taylor with the school's unique twin club. Photo: ALICE PARMINTER

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Waikato District Council confirms 3.79% rates increase

Waikato District Council has adopted its Annual Plan, confirming an average rates increase of 3.79 per cent for 2026/27, and staying within central government's 2-4 per cent rates cap ahead of its January 2027 start.

Council also confirmed a drop in the general rate increase from 3 per cent in the Long Term Plan 2025-2034 to 2.8 per cent.

This follows a series of cost-saving initiatives, including pausing and stopping certain technology upgrades, managing staff vacancies and numbers, and major savings through procurement initiatives.

Rates increases will vary for ratepayers due to the capital value of properties and the specific services properties receive such as rubbish and recycling collection, water services, and community halls.

Mayor Aksel Bech said council understood any rates increase would be challenging for households and businesses already under pressure from the rising cost of living.

"We know many households and businesses are feeling the strain, and affordability remains front of mind for council.

"That's why we're focused on finding sustainable savings across council to keep rates as low as possible. We'll continue to look for savings in how we operate, while also exploring opportunities to work closely with other Waikato councils.

"Reform will reshape the region, and while we're focused on achieving cost savings to address affordability, we're equally committed to maintaining local decision-making and local voices," he said.

\$4.5m Lotto windfall

A couple who live on the Coromandel Peninsula are Lotto NZ's latest Powerball winners, landing a life-changing \$4.5 million jackpot earlier this month.

The couple, who wish to remain anonymous, are regular players who buy a Triple Dip ticket.

"I was in the shop in Thames when I noticed they had about six first division trophies on the shelf," the man said.

"I asked the woman if they were genuine, and she said they were and that they had sold a few first division tickets over the years.

"So I said, 'Well you'd better give me a ticket then!'"

A few days after the draw, he checked his ticket at a different store.

"I scanned it and 'major prize' came up.

"I didn't know there had been a big win in Thames - so I thought it might be a grand or two."

He handed it to the Lotto operator to check.

"She looked shocked when she scanned it, and said, 'wow, we've never had one that big here before'."

The man drove home to tell his wife about the win, knowing it would make a big difference in their lives.

"I was in total shock. It took me a while to figure out how many zeroes there were," she said.

"It's mind-blowing, and it really is life-changing for us."

The couple struggled to sleep that night. "I'm usually a pretty good sleeper but I must have woken up every 15 minutes that night.

"I kept picking up the paperwork and telling myself I can feel it in my hands, so it has to be real," he said

It's taking the couple a while to come to terms with their win, but they say the future now looks very different.

"There's been a bit of a running joke about when I'll retire, and honestly, I didn't think it would ever happen - but this win means I can.

"It's huge for us," he said.

The winning Powerball ticket was sold at Paper Power Thames for the draw on Saturday, June 6. The prize was made up of \$4 million from Powerball First Division, and \$500,000 from Lotto First Division.



Twins take over at rural school

By KELLEY TANTAU

Anyone walking through Waitakaruru School could be forgiven for doing a double take.

Five sets of twins are enrolled at the small Hauraki Plains school, creating a unique little club that makes up almost 10 per cent of the roll.

The twin tally has grown steadily over recent years, principal Tina Taylor said.

Two sets were already attending the school in 2021, before another two sets arrived from other schools in 2025.

The fifth set joined in Term 2 this year, prompting staff to realise just how unique their student population had become.

Tina, who has a personal connection to the phenomenon, said having so many twins had added something special to the school community.

"Although we have a very inclusive culture at Waitakaruru and treat everyone as individuals, all the twins have a special relationship with each other and that does add something unique," she told *The Profile*.

"Four sets of twins are in the same class as their twin, and because we are a small school, they often share the same friends."

Adding another twist, Tina is a twin too.

As children, she and her brother - who now lives in Wellington - also attended small, rural schools.

"We grew up sharing the same friends and were very extremely competitive with each other," Tina said.

"I look back at that in such a positive light as we were always trying our best - while trying to beat each other."

Waitakaruru School is not the first

to notice an abundance of twins on the school roll.

Ōtūmoetai Primary School in Tauranga earlier this year reported that about five per cent of its students were twins - already well above the global twinning rate of about 1.2 per cent of births.

Waitakaruru's figure is even higher, with twins making up 9.4 per cent of its roll.

Tina said for her teaching staff, one of the highlights has been watching the bonds form between the siblings.

"We also have two sets of identical twins, and we all have unique ways that we've learned how to tell them apart."

And what do Waitakaruru's twins think about being part of such a rare group?

According to Tina, they love it.

"They love that there are other twins like themselves at our kura."

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Thames Tides

Wed Jun 24	Thu Jun 25	Fri Jun 26	Sat Jun 27	Sun Jun 28	Mon Jun 29	Tue Jun 30
 Morning: 2:14am 3.2, 2:51pm 3.0 Afternoon: 8:30am 0.8, 8:58pm 1.0 Best At: 7:32am 7:55pm Set: 2:01am, Rise: 12:59pm	 Morning: 3:06am 3.1, 3:50pm 3.0 Afternoon: 9:24am 0.9, 9:55pm 1.0 Best At: 7:32am 8:40pm Set: 3:02am, Rise: 1:27pm	 Morning: 3:57am 3.0, 4:46pm 3.0 Afternoon: 10:18am 0.9, 10:47pm 1.0 Best At: 7:32am 9:26pm Set: 4:03am, Rise: 1:58pm	 Morning: 4:48am 3.0, 5:38pm 3.1 Afternoon: 11:10am 0.9, 11:34pm 1.0 Best At: 7:32am 10:15pm Set: 5:04am, Rise: 2:35pm	 Morning: 5:39am 3.0, 6:25pm 3.1 Afternoon: 11:58am 0.9 Best At: 7:32am 11:06pm Set: 6:02am, Rise: 3:18pm	 Morning: 12:19am 1.0, 12:43pm 0.8 Afternoon: 6:28am 3.0, 7:08pm 3.2 Best At: 7:32am 11:57pm Set: 6:57am, Rise: 4:08pm	 Morning: 1:03am 0.9, 1:25pm 0.8 Afternoon: 7:15am 3.0, 7:48pm 3.2 Best At: 7:32am 12:23pm Set: 7:46am, Rise: 5:03pm

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	20	
Whangamatā	-0	03	-0	06	
Waihi Beach	-0	21	-0	16	

HDC NEWS





He Pātaka Kōrero | Hauraki Plains Library and Community Centre

A New Name for a New Chapter

A name inspired by the stories, knowledge and connections that bring our community together.

In consultation with local iwi, the name He Pātaka Kōrero has been identified for the new Hauraki Plains library and community centre.

Names carry the footprints of those who came before us, the stories of the land, and the aspirations of those yet to come. In selecting a name for this new community space, Council is not simply naming a building; it is recognising and honouring the identity, history, and future aspirations of the Hauraki Plains.

Earlier place associations linked to Ngātia - from which Ngātea is believed to have evolved - are connected to conflict during the Musket Wars. While this history remains an important part of the story of the Plains, the new facility will carry a name that reflects a positive, inclusive, and forward-looking view of the community.

The area was once commonly known as "The Orchard," a reference to the peach and quince orchards that supported local communities and helped supply produce to Auckland. *Pātaka* traditionally refers to a raised storehouse or food pantry, historically used to protect preserved foods and valuables from pests and the elements, while *Kōrero* means to discuss, share thoughts and ideas. Drawing on this legacy of abundance, knowledge, and connection, *He Pātaka Kōrero* is seen as a fitting name — representing a welcoming storage place where people can come together to learn, connect, and share stories.

Ngātea is getting a new place to come together and soon you'll be able to see it taking shape from the outside for the first time. The site fencing is coming down shortly, giving the community its first look at the building and landscaping. Once the final compliance requirements are complete, **Hauraki District Council will announce the opening date.**



Kerepēhi playground now open!

Kerepēhi's new playground officially opened, bringing community ideas to life in a vibrant new space for tamariki, whānau and the wider community.

Shaped through Placemaking conversations and community feedback, the upgraded playground includes new play equipment, a half-court basketball court, and a space for new memories and adventures. A design led by the ideas of local tamariki.

Scan the QR code or visit our website to read the full story.



Office closures in July

Thursday 9 July, 11 am - 2 pm
Temporary closure of our services centres, libraries and refuse transfer stations to celebrate Matariki.
Online and telephone services will still be available during this time.

Friday 10 July - Matariki Day
Council service centres and libraries will be closed Friday for the Matariki public holiday.
Kerbside collections will run as normal.
No changes to your usual collection days.
Refuse Transfer Stations will be closed Friday 10 July and open Saturday and Sunday, 10 am to 4 pm as usual.



Dog registration and ROL dates

Your dog registration notice should have arrived by now. If you haven't received yours, please give us a call 0800 734 834.

Important Dates:

- 15 July 2026 - Applications close for our Responsible Owner Licence (ROL) scheme.
- 31 July 2026 - Annual dog registrations are due.

Got a great track record as a dog owner?
You could save up to \$60 a year with a Responsible Owner Licence. Scan the QR code to complete the ROL form online, <https://my.hauraki-dc.govt.nz/do-it-online/animals>, or come see us at one of our service centres.





Antenno is getting a fresh new look

From 1 July, the Antenno app is getting a makeover - new colours, a new logo and tidied-up look. Purple is the new orange. Everything else stays the same.

Already have the app? It'll update automatically. Your settings and preferences stay put.

Not on it yet? Download Antenno today from Google Play or the App Store and start getting local updates and alerts that matter to you, plus it's an easy way to report issues straight to us.



This is your Hauraki

Help shape what comes next

Local Government Reform Survey

How Hauraki is governed will shape our place for a generation. Before deciding what to put forward, we want to know what matters most to you.

Our survey takes a few minutes and closes on Friday 3 July.

Scan the QR code or visit <https://letstalk.hauraki-dc.govt.nz/head-start> to complete the survey.





HAURAKI COROMANDEL BUSINESS AWARDS

- Showcase your business | 7 categories
- Nominate your local superstars | 2 categories

KEY DATES

- 1 June - 31 July: Entries/nominations open
- 10 - 23 August: Voting for People's Choice opens
- 28 August: Finalists announced
- 1 September - 1 October: Ticket sales open
- 15 October: Winners announced/Awards Night

Scan the QR code or visit www.tcdc.govt.nz/HCBA





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Old but new at reopened heritage site

By ALICE PARMINTER

The Thames School of Mines is back in its home with a new, but old, look.

Since November 2024, the School of Mines (SOM) has been operating out of the Carnegie Library at nearby Te Whare Pātaka the Treasury Heritage Research Centre and Archive on Queen St.

Plans were made earlier this year to move the SOM back into its Cochrane St address.

Pouhere Taonga Heritage New Zealand, which manages SOM, also took the opportunity to repaint the site's mineral museum, which was last renovated in the 1950s.

Inside, the museum's vintage pastel palette has been colour-matched and refreshed.

The exterior now sports new signage funded by the Thames Community Board, which contributed \$1600 to the renovation.

Several changes have also been made to the site's layout.

The shop and ticketing office have been moved into the museum itself, with the former shop space being repurposed into a dedicated education and holiday programme space.

Property lead Fiona Cameron said she was excited by the changes. "It's a new look based on what the place used to look like... it's true to its heritage," she said.

"Bringing the shop [into the museum] gives it more of a focused feel - this was the initial entrance so in many ways we're bringing it back to its original intent and layout."



Steve Clarke talks during a tour.

The site was officially opened on June 12, with volunteer Steve Clarke hosting a tour for Thames Community Board members, councillors, volunteers, and representatives from Heritage New Zealand.

The site has now resumed its regular opening hours and tours. An open day will also be held at the end of the month for the public to see the renovations.

Fiona said the refresh and move was just the beginning of other innovations at the site.

"I'm going to develop the shop more... it's going to have a vintage school vibe. And we're going to develop our relationships with the schools even stronger."

The SOM is also leasing an office space from Thames Squash club because the historical site is located on an urupā (burial site), which means no food, drink, or bathrooms are allowed onsite. Fiona said the location of the office space will allow her to manage the SOM with ease while still observing tikanga.

Heritage New Zealand acknowl-



The Thames School of Mines has reopened after 18 months. BELOW: From left: Heritage NZ northern region director Bev Parslow, heritage asset manager Boris Bogdanovic, and property lead Fiona Cameron. Photos: ALICE PARMINTER

edged the support of Ngāti Maru in returning to the site.

"We are standing on their footprint and also on their urupā in that sense," heritage asset manager Boris Bogdanovic said.

"It's managing those layers of history, both as the kaitiaki (guardians) of the museum today, but also making sure we are kaitiaki of that Māori history that's beneath our feet."

DETAILS: Open Day, June 27, 10am-4pm at 101 Cochrane St.



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Movies from Thursday 25 June to Wednesday 1 July

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

Amazing Grace (88 mins) G. Music documentary capturing Queen of Soul ARETHA FRANKLIN.

The Doors: The Final Cut (138 mins) R16. Psychedelic and powerful musical portrait of Jim Morrison.

Michael (encore screenings) (130 mins) M. Biopic of Michael Jackson's early life beyond the music.

The Devil Wears Prada 2 (encore screenings) (119 mins) M. Meryl Streep, Anne Hathaway, Emily Blunt and Stanley Tucci return to the fashionable streets of New York City and offices of Runway Magazine.

Moss & Freud (100 mins) R13. Biopic about the life of era-defining supermodel Kate Moss, centred around her relationship with the British artist Lucian Freud. Filmed in NZ, starring Ellie Bamber and Derek Jacobi.

Glenrothan (97 mins) M. Compelling family drama set in the stunning Scottish Highlands. Donal (Alan Cumming) returns to his family-owned whisky distillery for the first time in nearly 40 years.

The Way (15th anniversary) (121 mins) PG. An unlikely quartet of misfits from around the world on a pilgrimage on the Camino de Santiago in France and Spain. In English.

The Christophers (100 mins) M. Comedy starring Ian McKellen. The estranged children of a once-famous artist hire a forger to complete his unfinished works so they can be "discovered" and sold after his death.

Caterpillar (97 mins) M. Follows a daughter, mother and grandmother (who has an obsession with raising monarch caterpillars and one day seeing the butterfly migration in Mexico) living in a leaky Wellington villa.

The Sheep Detectives (109 mins) PG. About a shepherd (Hugh Jackman) who reads detective novels to his sheep, assuming they can't understand. A mysterious incident occurs, and the sheep become detectives.

Starting these school holidays: Toy Story 5: With Buzz Lightyear, Woody, Jessie and the rest of the gang.

Moana (Live Action): Moana answers the Ocean's call and voyages beyond the reef with the demigod Maui.



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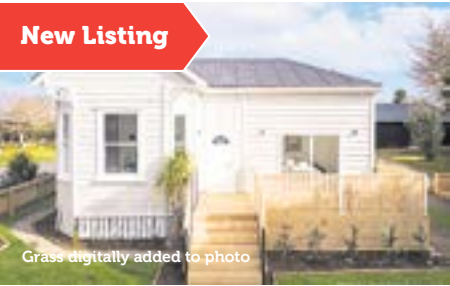
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New Listing



Grass digitally added to photo



Waihi

24 Gilmour Street

3

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1

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1

Space to Play, Home to Stay

This charming renovated Villa sits proudly on a generous 1011 sqm (more or less) section. Inside, you will love the open-plan living, dining, and kitchen. The main bedroom has a walk-in robe. Spacious family bathroom. Plus a scullery/laundry with good storage.

 [eves.co.nz/ewa21857](https://www.eves.co.nz/ewa21857)

For Sale by Deadline Private Treaty

Closes 1pm, Tues 14 July *(unless sold prior)*

View by appointment

Dynasty Holtz 022 124 1186

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New Listing





Waihi

8 Albert Street

3

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1

Classic Charm, Refined

This charming character cottage blends timeless charm with modern comfort. Renovated throughout, it features 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, a stylish new kitchen, separate laundry and storage shed. Set on a low-maintenance 560sqm (approx.) section.

 [eves.co.nz/ewa21830](https://www.eves.co.nz/ewa21830)

Asking Price \$635,000

Phone for viewing times

Brooke Edwards 027 435 5905

brooke.edwards@eves.co.nz

New Listing





Waihi

25 Thorn Road

4

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2

The Complete Family Package

Set on a fully fenced 1,004sqm (approx.) section, this Stonewood home offers 4 bedrooms, an office, 2 living areas, open-plan living, a butler's pantry, separate laundry and great storage. Covered outdoor entertaining area with a spa pool and playground.

 [eves.co.nz/ewa21823](https://www.eves.co.nz/ewa21823)

Price by Negotiation

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brooke.edwards@eves.co.nz

New Listing





Waihi

11 Margaret Street

4

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Brilliance in Brick

Positioned on a sunny 724 sqm (more or less) section, find this solid, well-maintained brick home. Enjoy spacious open plan living, dining, and kitchen, great for entertaining. This space extends to a private garden courtyard. Double garage with internal access.

 [eves.co.nz/ewa21819](https://www.eves.co.nz/ewa21819)

For Sale by Deadline Private Treaty

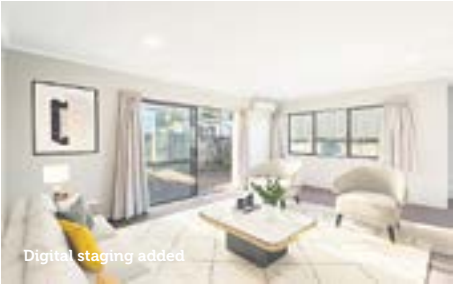
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View by appointment

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Digital staging added

Waihi

82A Gladstone Road

3

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Low-Maintenance, High Appeal

Privately positioned off the street, this well-maintained brick home offers easy-care open plan living and lasting appeal. Ideal for retirees, downsizers, or investors, it combines comfort and practicality. Plus a double garage with internal access.

 [eves.co.nz/ewa21831](https://www.eves.co.nz/ewa21831)

Asking Price \$639,000

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Waihi

122 Parry Palm Avenue

3

1

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2

One You Simply Must View

Set on a flat, fully fenced 1,037sqm (approx.) section, this spacious 150sqm three-bedroom home offers open-plan kitchen/dining, separate lounge with heat pump, wrap-around deck, covered patio, internal-access garage, outdoor fire pit and raised vegetable gardens.

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Asking Price \$720,000

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EVES Realty Ltd, Licensed under the REAA 2008

‘Great champion’ Gilbert James farewelled

OBITUARY

By KELLEY TANTAU

Gilbert James spent a lifetime championing the Coromandel.

Now, following his death at the age of 84, the district is remembering a pioneering mussel farmer whose vision and persistence helped transform aquaculture from a fledgling idea into one of the region’s most important industries.

Gilbert was born and bred in the Coromandel. He was granted a mussel farm license in 1984, after calling the first Coromandel Mussel Farming Association meeting in 1981.

He also served on the Mussel Industry Advisory Council and as a founding director on the Aquaculture New Zealand Board.

In 2022, he received a Community Service Award from Thames-Coromandel District Council for his commitment to both community and industry.

District Mayor Peter Revell said Gilbert’s leadership and vision helped shape an industry that now played “a vital role in our local economy”.

“Gilbert brought people together at a critical time and laid the foundations for a thriving aquaculture industry,” Mayor Revell said. “His determination and collaborative approach set a standard that



Gilbert James.
File Photo

continues to benefit the Coromandel today.”

Through his work, Gilbert played a significant role in growing aquaculture into a key pillar of the district’s economy.

His contributions extended

beyond his own business, Gold Ridge Marine Farms, to regional and national leadership.

“His influence reached well beyond our district,” Mayor Revell said. “He was a respected voice nationally, always ad-

vocating strongly for the marine farming community and its future.”

Coromandel MP Scott Simpson said the Coromandel had lost one of its greatest champions.

“Gilbert lived and breathed the Coromandel every day. He was a passionate and dedicated inventor, entrepreneur, innovator, and always a vocal ambassador for our Peninsula, its people and its prospects.

“We have much to be grateful for when it comes to his innovative work on helping create the aquaculture and mussel industry we know so well today,” Simpson said.

“His development of techniques to grow and harvest green lip mussels on rope back in the very early days of what is now a thriving aquaculture sector is, in large part, due to his hard physical work, gritty - and at times even stubborn - determination, and most importantly, his foresight for what he knew could and would be a valuable primary production sector based on our wonderful marine environment.”

Simpson said although he and Gilbert supported different political parties, his “commitment to our democracy and active participation in it” was admirable. “Collectively, we’ve lost a truly great New Zealander who always had the spirit of Coromandel flowing through his veins.”

Gilbert died peacefully at his Coromandel home on June 11. A service celebrating Gilbert’s life was held at Grahamstown Chapel in Thames on June 18.

‘Landmark’ conservation reform bill sparks controversy

By ALICE PARMINTER

The government is calling for public submissions on its Conservation Amendment Bill.

The bill, which was introduced on May 7, proposes several amendments to the Conservation Act 1987 aimed at increasing economic growth.

The government said these changes would streamline the management of land, better enable appropriate use of conservation land, and support more effective administration of conservation land.

“The Conservation Act is nearly 40 years old, and out-

dated rules and slow processes have created unnecessary cost and delay,” Conservation Minister Tama Potaka said.

“These changes mean less red tape, faster approvals, and more investment into biodiversity, tracks, huts, and visitor infrastructure.”

The Minister’s press release focused on tourism and other activities, saying the reforms will make it easier to get concessions for activities on conservation land and enable the enactment of international visitor access charges at some sites.

However, opponents of the bill said the amendments will

also make it much easier to sell off conservation land, and questioned the inclusion of a section which “recognise[s] the economic opportunities that arise from the use and development of land... to enable this use and development to the greatest extent practicable”.

Conservation organisation Forest and Bird said the bill could potentially make up to 60 per cent of public conservation land in New Zealand eligible for exchange or disposal, including parts of Coromandel Forest Park and Cathedral Cove Recreation Reserve.

“It seems almost unbeliev-

able. Your local reserve, your favourite holiday spot, beaches, forests, and iconic landscapes - they could be at risk of being sold,” group manager for conservation advocacy and policy Richard Capie said.

“Allowing even parts of these places to be sold or exchanged is a major shift... The bill isn’t just about modernisation, it’s also opening the door to privatisation.”

Coromandel Watchdog chair Catherine Delahunty said the amendments could be worse for the region than the Fast Track legislation.

“The sale of parts of a state

asset to facilitate more development like mining in areas set aside for protection is one of the most disgraceful abuses of the country the Coalition has initiated and that’s a high bar,” she said.

“They have misread what many people value, and they should expect robust opposition from far and wide, and especially from Hauraki/Coromandel and its many friends.”

DETAILS: Public submissions close on July 2. Visit www3.parliament.nz/en/pb/sc/make-a-submission to have your say. Public meeting, June 25, 5pm, at Thames Community Centre, 609 Mackay St.

Scott Simpson

MP for Coromandel

Contact me anytime
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On the Land

Dairy farm sales surge as confidence returns

By KELLEY TANTAU

Strong milk solid markets, evolving land-use regulations, and renewed confidence among dairy operators are helping drive positive prospects for New Zealand's dairy farm market heading into the new season.

Bayleys Real Estate has this month released its Rural Insights Report, highlighting a mixed outlook across New Zealand's rural sectors.

In the Waikato, Bayleys general manager Mark Dawe said the volume of dairy farm sales for Bayleys had more than doubled to 58 in the past year compared to the year before.

Alongside this, Bayleys' sales of dairy support and cropping units had a 50 per cent growth in volume of sales.

"Smaller dairy units are tending to sell for between \$3m and \$6m, depending on location, size, and condition," Mr Dawe said.

According to the report, strong milk price forecasts and sustained dairy profitability continued to support confidence in the rural property market,

underpinning land values and keeping quality dairy assets and scale opportunities in demand in key dairying regions nationwide.

It said ongoing discussion around RMA reform, freshwater management, and environmental limits continued to shape buyer due diligence, with increasing emphasis being placed on compliance certainty and operational flexibility. Well-developed dairy farms with modern infrastructure, efficient layouts, and proven production history continued to attract the strongest buyer demand, particularly where scale supported lower operating costs and long-term operational efficiency.

The report also said fertiliser, freight, and energy costs remained "a key watchpoint" as global geopolitical tensions continued to put pressure on supply chains and operating margins.

Bayleys recorded \$850 million in dairy farm sales between April 1, 2025 and March 31, 2026, covering 22,000 hectares of land.

Over the same period, the agency sold 128 dairy farms nationwide.

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WorkSafe warns of farm vehicle risk

Vehicles were involved in four out of five of the 67 agricultural deaths notified to WorkSafe between 2020 and 2025. Quad bikes and side-by-sides account for two-thirds of those vehicle deaths alone.

The fresh insights show harm from farm vehicles remains a stubborn problem – which is why WorkSafe was focussed on it at Fieldays recently.

Inspectors were on-site at the event for informal, open conversations with farmers, workers, and agribusiness operators on practical ways to stay safe.

WorkSafe's chief executive, Sharon Thompson, said the numbers were stark, but the patterns are not new.

"We keep seeing the same situations. Experienced operators on familiar ground, working alone, without check-in systems or protective equipment. Then something goes wrong, and no one finds them for hours.

"That's why we're at Fieldays – to have

some honest discussions about what good looks like and what people can do right now to reduce risk."

While overall farm safety has improved, harm involving quad bikes and side-by-sides has refused to follow the same trend this decade – and their share of vehicle-related deaths is growing.

With sector input, WorkSafe is currently developing an Approved code of practice for safe farm vehicle operation – a practical way for farmers to understand and meet their responsibilities.

In the meantime, Sharon said the immediate steps were clear.

"Helmets are a must-have. We strongly recommend fitting a crush protection device to your quad bike, and using the seatbelt in your side-by-side.

"Don't work alone without a way for someone to find you. Assess the ground before you ride it – even if you've ridden it a hundred times before. Familiarity is not the same as safety."

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On the Land

Supreme Award for Pathways to the Sea

Waikato Regional Council's Pathways to the Sea strategy won the Supreme Award at the 2026 LGFA Taituarā Local Government Excellence Awards on June 18 after winning the category for Excellence in Environmental Leadership.

The LGFA Taituarā Local Government Excellence Awards recognise excellence in local government management across a range of programmes and projects.

There were seven categories and 69 entries in total, a record-breaking number of entries celebrating the innovation, leadership and collaboration happening across local government in Aotearoa.

Chief executive Chris McLay, senior freshwater ecologist Alicia Williams and reliability engineer Steve Hall collected the awards on behalf of the council at the ceremony at Tākina Wellington Convention and Exhibition Centre.

Alicia said Pathways to the Sea was a real passion project for everyone involved.

“Developing this strategy to provide safe downstream passage for tuna (eels) and other native fish through our flood protection infrastructure was something we deeply believed



Chief executive Chris McLay, senior freshwater ecologist Alicia Williams and reliability engineer Steve Hall at the awards ceremony last week.

Photo: SUPPLIED/WRC

in, and we're incredibly proud of the positive environmental outcomes it will deliver.

“Winning this award wouldn't have been possible without the support of our 14 funding partners, and our iwi

and hapū partners across the Waikato.”

Council said it had more pump stations than any other council in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Many of these pump stations

were constructed decades ago, and with little consideration for ecological impacts.

They prevent safe downstream migration of fish species and can cause a high level of injury and mortality for

long-lived native tuna (eels). The strategy embeds ecological outcomes into infrastructure planning and is grounded in a six-year, evidence-based research programme undertaken by council staff.

Co-funded by 14 partners, the research included testing fish-friendly solutions, including new pump technologies, gravity bypasses, electrical deterrents and trap-and-transfer operations.

Altogether, more than 20 technical reports were produced, and the research generated significant national and international interest.

Field-tested pumps – including a New Zealand-designed retrofit prototype – achieved safe passage rates of between 74 and 100 per cent.

Council chief executive Chris McLay said “The Pathways to the Sea Strategy has now been embedded into our business-as-usual operations and has been designed so it can be adopted by councils across the motu”.

“The passion and dedication of our staff throughout this project ensures it will deliver long-term benefits for our freshwater ecosystems, while upholding Te Mana o te Wai,” he said.

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ADVERTISING FEATURE

Gateway students dig into new courses

By DAVIDDA HIKATANGATA

Lexis Pointon and Evan Leeson were inspired to take on the new digger and scaffolding courses at Hauraki Plains College for different reasons.

For year-11 student Lexis, she hoped to one day become a qualified plumber, “so the digger experience will be helpful with drain-laying”, she said.

Meanwhile, year-13’s Evan hoped to become a qualified builder and to one day build his own house.

HPC Gateway coordinator Lauren Scott said it was the first year Hauraki Plains College offered both courses as part of the Gateway Programme.

So far the school had seen two scaffolding courses this year with 10 students in each, while the digger courses were held in Bombay and ran as three courses of four students.

“These courses opened up options for future careers [and] employment for students. We chose students where these courses aligned with their vocational pathways, i.e. building, construction and infrastructure, plumbing and mechanical engineering,” she said.

Both Lexis and Evan said the courses “boosted our confidence”



Lexis Pointon, 15, and Evan Leeson, 17, took on the digger and scaffolding courses.

Photos: SUPPLIED

and that “we can achieve anything if we’re willing”.

Ever since Lexis was young, she said she wanted to become a plumber because “there are not many female plumbers in comparison to other trades”.

She learned how to operate the digger and said she “got the hang of it straight away”.

The young learner said she learned how to scrap and how to dig trenches and could now “be more confident” when she applied for her tracks licence.

During Evan’s scaffolding course, he said he learned how to put up scaffolding and work in a team environment.

“I learnt how an onsite scaffold-

ing team would work, the instructor explained it really well.”

He was always interested in building or following a trade because “it would set me up for life”, he said.

One key aspect was that people needed to lift equipment properly to take care of their backs, he said, but the most significant point he



Lexis operates the digger.

learned was that “good communication is key”.

Both students said the instructors were great and Evan added that the scaffolding instructor “saw potential in us” and “kept pushing” for his group to achieve higher.

It was easy to see how rewarding the Gateway programme was for the students.

“We are lucky to have the opportunity to experience different things, to give us an idea of what our pathways could be. It’s really helpful to give you a step ahead towards a goal you have,” they said.

They encouraged other students to try the courses.

“If you get the opportunity, just give it a go, any experience is [a] good experience.”

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"Mint way to work towards my NCEA" - Jake

"Great opportunity to learn something new" - Ryan

"Cool course to learn at school" - Te Puaukiohau

"It's inspired me to take up any opportunities that are offered at school" - Cooper

"Never thought I would drive a digger at school, the instructor was easy to learn from" - Luca

Digger Training

Thank you Mrs Lawlor and Mrs Scott for organising awesome opportunities for our students!

Martha Open Pit extension scrapped

Plans to extend Waihi’s currently non-operational Martha Open Pit are going back to the drawing board.

In 2023, OceanaGold applied to Hauraki District Council to expand the Martha Mineral Zone in its district plan, to include additional properties owned by the company adjacent to the existing Martha Open Pit.

The Martha Mineral Zone identifies the area where surface mining may occur, subject to obtaining all other necessary approvals and resource consents.

Following a public hearing in 2025, a panel of commissioners granted approval to change the zoning, however, with a reduced area that would not support an economic pit expansion.

That decision was then appealed by Ngāti Porou ki Hauraki. The Environment Court has not yet set a date to consider the appeal.

Alison Paul, OceanaGold’s senior vice president of legal and public affairs, said in light of the partial approval which does not include all of the land necessary to support a future expansion of the existing Martha Open Pit, OceanaGold has decided to withdraw its application.

“At some point in the future we may choose to revisit the expansion of the Martha Open Pit. However... significant future work and engagement would be needed ahead of any new application. Progressing to this point has already taken considerable effort over a number of years,” she said.

“We know the future of the Martha Open Pit is important to the community and we’ll continue to be open about our plans and provide updates as they develop.”

While plans for the pit expansion are paused, the company said it remains committed to the ongoing stewardship and maintenance of the site.

Environment and social performance manager, Kyle Welten, said this included planning for the final closure and enhancement of the wider Pukewa/Martha Hill area, which has been developed in collaboration with iwi and the wider community.

“We intend to get this work underway now, where we can, and to make improvements around the pit, focusing on areas we can progress regardless of any future pit expansion,” he said.

Maintaining the long-term stability and safety of the open pit also remained a priority, particularly in the north wall area where a large slip halted surface operations in 2015.

“We have the necessary approvals to layback this area, however, monitoring has shown no significant movement since 2017, indicating the area remains stable.

“As a result, this work is not time-critical and can be carefully aligned with broader operational planning. We continue to assess the most appropriate approach and will provide updates as plans are confirmed,” Kyle said.

Meanwhile, progress is continuing on the Waihi North Project, with operations expected to continue out to at least 2042.

Construction is well underway on the project, which includes the development of an underground mine beneath the forest park at Wharekirauponga about 10 kilometres north of Waihi.

OceanaGold said the project represents an approximately \$1 billion capital investment with over 80 per cent of expenditure expected to be spent in New Zealand, including more than \$300 million within the Hauraki district.

“The project will support an average of 859 jobs per year (direct, indirect, and induced) with the average wage exceeding \$140,000 per annum, and each direct job supporting nearly three additional jobs across New Zealand,” Alison said.

“Once producing, the underground mine at Wharekirauponga is expected to generate over \$8 billion of export revenue for this country.”



It’s back to the drawing board for the Martha Open Pit extension plans. Photo: SUPPLIED



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Accident ward busy after Omahu picnic



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.

1902

The accident ward at Thames Hospital became a popular destination during an annual Sunday school picnic at Omahu. Close to 1300 people journeyed out to the rendezvous - Mr Elliot's farm, Bushy Park - by two special trains. Settlers from all around rolled up in all sorts of conveyances, as well as arriving on horseback and by foot. The large orchard proved an attraction for a great many. Refreshments were provided in abundance, free of charge. The Puriri, Paeroa, and Hauraki bands were in attendance adding to the enjoyment. Games and races were provided for young and old and were participated in with a zest that was a delight to behold. The very pleasant day was marred only when a man named Thorne accidentally cut off one of his fingers while preparing bread and butter, and a youth named Horn, while engaged in the hop, step and jump competition sprained his left leg. Both were removed to Thames Hospital for treatment. Meanwhile, an interruption of



The Thames Hospital accident ward. Photo: SUPPLIED

telegraphic communication between Waihi and Paeroa was found to be caused by the Auckland wire being broken in four places and lying in a swamp. Linesman Findlay and Mr Henderson, of the Post Office, repaired the damage. It was the linesman's opinion that the damage was due to boys throwing stones and breaking the insulators and severing the copper wires. At Waiomu and Te Puru mysterious fires resulted in a coronial inquiry being held. The coach house of Mr Hogarth, Waiomu, was destroyed by fire as well as a buggy and harness. It appeared the building had been willfully set on fire as the door lock was broken and pieces of ti tree were found amongst the debris. Mr Scanlon's

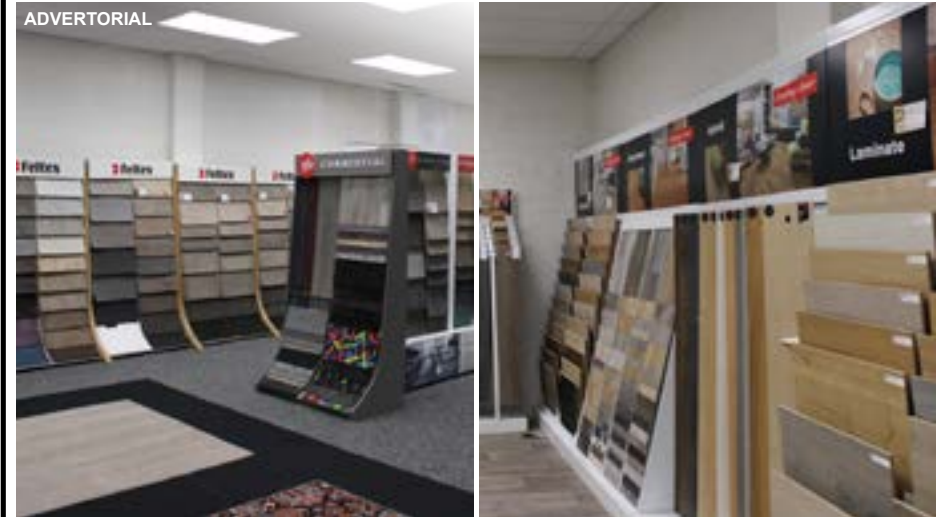
five roomed house at Te Puru was also destroyed by fire. In the Waiomu case the jury returned a verdict that the buggy shed was deliberately set fire to by some person or persons unknown. In the Te Puru case the jury could not establish the cause of the mystery. There was little doubt, though, that the house was over insured, but this seemed to be the fault of the company's representative who had negotiated the insurance without inspecting the property. The coroner remarked that if insurance companies did that sort of thing and accepted the premiums, they, and not the persons insuring, were to blame. Over at Paeroa, in an attempt to rob the safe at the railway station, burglars cut a panel in the door

and removed the key from the inside. But the door was bolted at the top and they had to resort to breaking a window. They then dynamited the safe but failed to open it. The railway station police were quick to apprehend two men at Te Aroha who had been detected under suspicious circumstances carrying swags, one containing a quantity of caps, pieces of fuse and a chisel. At Thames, when the wheel came off a cart in Pollen St, the driver received a bump on the head. "You had a narrow escape, if you had been trotting you might have hurt, your head," remarked a bystander. "If I'd struck the cart with my head," was the reply, "I pity the cart!"

Chris' Quiz

- Weekly quiz compiled by Chris Parminter
1. How many times have the One New Zealand Warriors reached the NRL grand final? a) Never, b) once, or c) twice?
 2. What proportion of New Zealanders were directly involved with the *Lord of the Rings* filming as recorded by the amount of unique payments made by the production company? a) 1 in 16, b) 1 in 160, or c) 1 in 1600?
 3. Which single US State has the distinction of containing the most northerly, eastern and western points in the USA?
 4. The catchphrase "It's a no from me dawg" is usually attributed to which former American Idol judge? a) Jennifer Lopez, b) Paula Abdul, or c) Randy Jackson?
 5. On which product would find an 'NPK rating', used to list the ratio of components?
 6. The Criterion Bridge in Paeroa was named after which nearby building? a) The Criterion Blacksmith, b) The Criterion General Store, or c) The Criterion Hotel?
 7. Where on the body would you find the intergluteal cleft? a) Buttocks, b) face, or c) feet?
 8. Which country's flag has a dragon on it? a) Bhutan, b) China, or c) Thailand?
 9. The term 'pram', used to mean a baby transport craft, is short for which longer term?
 10. Schapelle Corby was convicted of what crime in Bali in 2005?

ANSWERS: 1. c) Twice (in 2002 and 2011); 2. b) 1 in 160 (around 25,000 people); 3. Alaska (the Aleutian Islands which are part of Alaska, cross into the Eastern Hemisphere); 4. c) Randy Jackson; 5. Fertiliser; 6. c) The Criterion Hotel; 7. a) Buttocks; 8. a) Bhutan; 9. Perambulator; 10. The importation of 4.2kg of cannabis.



ADVERTORIAL

Flooring dreams come to life

The team at Flooring Design Paeroa are the professionals when it comes to helping customers bring their flooring dreams to life. Owner operator Bill DeRenzy has been at the helm for seven years, and is supported by Helen Lee, who runs the showroom at 33 Belmont Rd, Paeroa. The team of two were backed by a wealth of knowledge and offered all facets of flooring, Bill said. "We can help with any carpet and flooring queries, both retail and commercial, and offer a free measure and quote. "We do vinyl plank, laminate flooring, timber flooring, carpet roll, carpet tiles, garage carpet, nylon or wall carpet," he said. But that's not all. The flooring connoisseurs also offer blinds. Roller blinds, venetian blinds, vertical blinds, shutters, awnings, zip track blinds and curtains are some of the products Bill and Helen can assist customers with, he said. Those who stop in and visit the showroom will also have the opportunity to buy a coffee and snack from the on-site coffee cart. It should come as no surprise the Paeroa business services a wide area from the bottom of the Bombay Hills, across the Hauraki

Plains, Tahuna and Thames-Coromandel, through to Waihi Beach, Athenree and Katikati. Their goal is simple - to provide every customer with friendly knowledge and advice so they can find the right flooring for their homes or businesses. "We take pride in our great product range, fantastic pricing, quality service and excellence you can trust." Bill and Helen know their clients are busy people so "we make sure to follow up promptly" and turn quotes around quickly. Afterall, the best thing about running the business is "the people", Bill said. "You generate a friendship over your dealings with the people, you help them solve their problems, maybe the colour, the texture, whatever the issue might be." DETAILS: 33 Belmont Rd, Paeroa. Monday to Friday from 9am to 4pm, and Saturdays by arrangement. Ph: 07 214 7208 or email paeroa@flooringdesign.co.nz. By Davidda Hikatangata

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Labour selects Glen Bennett for Coromandel

Labour has selected New Plymouth LMP Glen Bennett as its candidate for the Coromandel electorate ahead of the next general election on November 7.

Mr Bennett was elected the Member of the Parliament for New Plymouth at the 2020 New Zealand general election.

Currently serving his second term in Parliament, he is a Labour List MP, Senior Whip and spokesperson for Tourism and Hospitality, a portfolio with direct relevance to jobs, small business and the Coromandel economy.

Mr Bennett said he was standing to deliver strong, grounded representation and advocacy for the Coromandel, now and for future generations.

"Across the electorate, people are feeling the pressure of rising costs, health services and housing stress, and the growing impacts of climate change on our coastlines, roads, jobs and local businesses," he said.

"The Coromandel is a special place that deserves representation that understands both its beauty and its vulnerability."

Mr Bennett brings more than two decades of experience working alongside diverse communities across New Zealand.

He says his upbringing in a Salvation Army family shaped his commitment to service and deepened his understanding of how important strong communities are, especially during tough times.

"I've spent my working life focused

Labour MP Glen Bennett.

on the things that make a real difference in people's lives," he said.

His approach to politics was grounded in fairness, inclusion and ensuring everyone had the opportunity to thrive, he said.

"I believe everyone deserves to belong, to be heard and to have a fair go."

Labour was campaigning to build a stronger, more resilient future for the Coromandel, and Mr Bennett said he was asking Coromandel voters to cast their electorate vote for Glen Bennett and their party vote for Labour at the upcoming general election.

DETAILS: The 2026 General Election will be held on Saturday, November 7. Voters need to be enrolled by midnight on Sunday, October 25, and won't be able to enrol once voting starts on October 26. More information online at: www.vote.nz.

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Te Kura o Te Kauaeranga Thames South School students will perform on June 26. Photo: SUPPLIED

Tamariki to showcase waiata, haka at free concert

For the third year in a row, students from Te Kura o Te Kauaeranga Thames South School will perform for the June 2026 Free Friday Lunchtime Concert.

Hosted by the Thames Music Group, the tamariki will showcase waiata and haka for the community on June 26 at St George's Church in Thames.

"Our rōpū Kapahaka has been active for over 30 years. Our current students are mostly mokopuna and tamariki of the original group," the kura said.

"Waiata and haka have been used continuously throughout our kura to celebrate the identity of our tamariki, their whānau and mana whenua."

"Our tamariki range from 6- to 12-years-

old. Some will be taking the stage for the first time while others have been enthusiastic and committed performers of our rōpū for many seasons," they said.

"Our tutors are drawn from our staff and kura whānau."

"Our performance includes both local and original waiata, with a mixture of poi, haka and solo items."

People are invited to support the tamariki and enjoy the free performance.

DETAILS: Thames Music Group's Free Friday Concert series presents Te Kura o Te Kauaeranga Thames South School students on June 26 at 12.15pm, St George's Church, Thames. Free entry, koha/donation gratefully accepted. Contact: thamesmusic-group@yahoo.co.nz.

Reasons or taking ownership?

OPINION



By MICHAEL WILKES

I was chatting recently with a young guy doing a little task for me. Tiny job really - five minutes a day, if that. He confessed he hadn't done it, then quickly launched into all the reasons why.

Study was hectic. Work was busy. Life was full. Fair enough.

But as he talked, I found myself smiling, because don't we all do that? We wear busyness like a badge. Almost like being overloaded somehow proves we matter.

So I asked him a cheeky question: "How much time have you spent scrolling this week?" Silence. "What about Netflix?" More silence. Then we both laughed, because suddenly the issue wasn't lack of time - it was priority.

That got me thinking how often we do this in life. We justify where we're at instead of taking ownership of what's shaping us.

And this matters, because habits quietly build lives. I hear people wrestle with irritability, lack of focus, low motivation, mental clutter - and often jump straight to deeper explanations. Now let me be clear, diagnoses and neurodiversity are real and deserve respect. But it's also worth asking a harder question first: what are my habits doing to me? Because poor sleep, constant device use, overstimulation and fractured attention can mimic all sorts of symptoms. Sometimes before assuming something is fixed about us, we may need to examine our habits.

I learnt this in my own life too. For years I told myself I didn't have time for prayer, reading, quiet. Kids were busy. Work was demanding. Life was full. All legitimate reasons. But one day it struck me - maybe it wasn't that I couldn't make time. Maybe it just wasn't a priority. That thought annoyed me. But it changed me.

Earlier alarm. Earlier bedtime. A different rhythm. And suddenly I had time. Not because life got

easier — because I took ownership. Maybe that's the invitation for all of us. Where are we calling something impossible when really it's just unprioritised? Because there's a big difference between a reason and an excuse. One explains. The other traps. And often growth begins the moment we stop defending our habits... and owning them. Because that's when we can start changing them.

Michael Wilkes is a youth worker with Thrive Trust, supporting mentoring and resilience programmes across Thames and Paeroa. 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 Unschooled Life* at michael-wilkes.kiwi.

In Brief

ROADWORKS FINISH

Storm recovery works at SH25 Pumpkin Hill and SH2 Karangahake Gorge were wrapped up last week. Eight sites at Pumpkin Hill just north of Tairua were repaired following damage from storms in January, with traffic now back to two lanes. In the Karangahake Gorge, nine flood recovery sites were completed, along with a further five sites needing stabilisation. Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency said additional retaining wall protection work in the Karangahake Gorge has been delayed until suitable weather and river flows, and may not be completed until next summer. This work will involve a daytime road closure.

LINCRAFT CLOSES

Thames' craft superstore will close sometime in the coming months. The Lincraft company announced the closure of all of its physical stores across Australia and New Zealand, including the Thames store at Goldfields Shopping Centre. "The decision has not been made lightly. We understand that Lincraft holds a special place in the hearts of many customers," the company said in an email to its members. An exact closing date has not yet been announced. Lincraft said it would continue to operate its online store.

FINAL STRETCH FOR LIBRARY

The site fencing around the new Hauraki Plains Library and Community Centre in Ngatea will be removed at the end of the week. Hauraki District Council says an opening date will be confirmed once landscaping and compliance requirements are complete.



Pet Profile

Pat and Lucy look for new homes

Seven-month-old Pat and Lucy have been patiently waiting far too long for a family to call their own.

This sweet pair deserve their chance to shine!

Pat, a handsome black and white boy, and Lucy, a beautiful tabby girl, are gentle, slightly shy kittens looking for a calm, loving home where they can settle in at their own pace.

Once they feel safe, their personalities begin to blossom - and there's one guaranteed way to win them over... Temptations treats! These two absolutely adore them and will happily do just about anything for their favourite snack.

Both kittens are desexed, micro-

chipped, vaccinated, flea and worm treated, and fully toilet trained, so they're ready to head straight into their forever home.

If you have a quiet home and a little patience, you'll be rewarded with the companionship of two lovely young cats who simply need someone to believe in them.

Pat and Lucy are available for adoption from Thames SPCA. Come in and meet them—you might just find your perfect new best friend.

DETAILS: Visit www.sPCA.nz/centre/thames-centre to find out more.

Pat, a handsome black and white boy, and Lucy, a beautiful tabby, are looking for new homes. Photo: SUPPLIED



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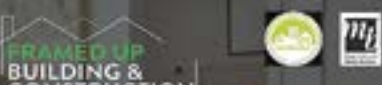
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They also have in-store stock special ranges of carpets and vinyls at competitive prices suitable for all households, with additional sample ranges available of the top-quality brands in engineered timber and laminate planking ranges.

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Owner Bill Owens and his team have more

than 30 years of experience in all aspects of floor coverings. They are a proud member of The Flooring Foundation - which offers exclusive flooring ranges and prices to a selected group of independent flooring retailers - as well as The NZ Flooring Association, which sets the industry training and guidelines to improve and maintain the standards in the field of flooring in New Zealand.

Call in and see their friendly sales team to book a free measure and quotation.

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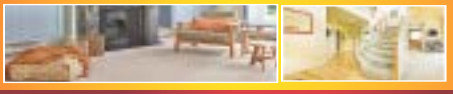
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The Valley Profile



This year's Polar Plunge will take place on July 11 from 12.30pm. File Photo: SUPPLIED

Take the Polar Plunge

The countdown is on for one of Waihi Beach's favourite mid-winter traditions, with the Polar Plunge set to make its chilly return on July 11 from 12.30pm.

Now is the time to sort a costume, rally your team, or convince yourself that cold water is character building.

Dress up, head to the beach, briefly question your life choices, then charge into the water with a crowd of equally committed locals. Plunging is encouraged, but cheering from the sidelines is also an important community service.

Organised and hosted by Waihi Beach Lifeguard Services Inc, the Polar Plunge has become a classic Waihi Beach winter event, bringing together whānau, friends,

workplaces, sports teams, and community groups for a chilly but cheerful afternoon, all for a gold coin donation.

This year, prizes will be awarded for best dressed across Individual, Under 12, Group, and Corporate categories, thanks to local support from The Sauna Project, Bachcare and The Surf Shack. The more colourful, creative, or ridiculous the outfit the better.

Volunteer surf lifeguards from Waihi Beach Lifeguard Services Inc will support the event, so plungers can take part knowing safety is front of mind.

Whether you are brave enough to plunge or wise enough to stay dry, bring your best costume energy and be part of a classic winter's day at Waihi Beach.

Dog exercise area 'pup and running'

Dogs and their owners living in and around the Western Bay of Plenty are invited to celebrate the completion of a new Dog Exercise Area in Katikati, with a community event showcasing the park's new agility equipment.

The free event, held this Saturday, June 27, from 10am to 1pm, will give four-legged friends the chance to test out the new obstacles, meet other dogs, and enjoy a fun day out with their humans.

The day will feature 'trick training' with Bex Tasker, of Positively Together, who is a certified trainer through the Karen Pryor Academy and has been training animals for more than 20 years.

There will also be a 'Sniff and Seek' zone, 'doggie-cam' to capture the fun, and spot prizes throughout the day.

"This project has been a wonderful example of what can be achieved when council and community come together," Western Bay of Plenty District Council Reserves and Facilities Manager Peter Watson said.

"The agility equipment and landscaping of the space have been made possible through the generosity, encouragement, and hands-on support of many people and organisations who believed in the vision and helped bring it to life. "This event is an opportunity to thank everyone involved and celebrate the space with the community."

The fenced enclosure, at Donegal Re-

serve, was completed by council almost two years ago, but there was no funding available at the time to furnish it with any equipment.

Under the guidance of Katch Katikati, the community rallied together to raise funds and support for the equipment.

Raw Pawz, Franklin Vets, and Katikati Vets offered sponsorship, a Givealittle page was set up to take donations, and Katch Katikati held a dog tricks workshop facilitated by Bex Tasker as a fundraising event.

Once there were enough funds for materials, Katikati MenzShed donated time and expertise to build the dog agility equipment, which includes balance beams, sit/stay platforms, a dog seesaw and bench seats.

Local businesses and individuals also donated plants and rocks for landscaping, and spot prizes for both the fundraising workshop and the upcoming celebratory event.

"Whether through sponsorship, fundraising, donated materials, practical help, or simply getting behind the project, every contribution has played an important part in reaching this milestone," Peter said.

"We are incredibly grateful for all the support given and are looking forward to celebrating this special achievement with the Katikati community."

DETAILS: Katikati Dog Exercise Area open day, June 27, 10am to 1pm, at Donegal Reserve. Free event.



Equipment fit for pups has been installed in the Katikati Dog Exercise Area in Donegal Park, with an open day set for June 27. Photos: SUPPLIED

Kuaotunu pursues dark sky status

By KELLEY TANTAU

A September astronomy course in Kuaotunu is set to shine a light on the peninsula’s ambitions to become an internationally recognised dark sky destination.

The three-day course, run by the non-profit Aotearoa Astro-tourism Academy (AAA), will bring astronomy experts, amateur stargazers, and tourism operators to the Coromandel community from September 18-20.

But beyond the workshops and night-sky observing sessions, the event will also highlight local aspirations for Kuaotunu to gain DarkSky International accreditation

The Aotearoa Astrotourism Academy was founded in 2021 by Professor John Hearnshaw, Emeritus Professor of Astronomy at the University of Canterbury, and Nalayani Davies, former president of the Royal Astronomical Society of New Zealand and current president of Arizona-based DarkSky International.

Professor Hearnshaw told *The Profile* that Kuaotunu was chosen for the course partly because of local astronomer Alastair Brickell and his wife Harriette’s successful observatory and astrotourism business, but also because of the area’s potential as a future dark sky location.

The International Dark Sky Places programme certifies



The Valley of the Stars, astrophotography by Mark Gee.

Photo: SUPPLIED

communities, parks, and protected areas around the world that preserve and protect dark sites through responsible lighting policies and public education.

New Zealand already has 10 accredited dark sky places, including Aotea Great Barrier Island, Naseby, and Stewart Island.

Professor Hearnshaw said the September course, which will be run from the Kuaotunu Community Hall in Jack Black Rd, will offer “an intensive programme of talks and practical workshops, including night-time observing”, and will feature seven instructors, including some of New Zealand’s leading astronomy and astrotourism experts.

Practical advice on astrophotography and on Māori astronomy and Matariki will also be on offer, he said.

“The course is for anyone wanting to learn how to appreciate the beauty of the night sky and learn more about the stars. No previous astronomy knowledge is required.”

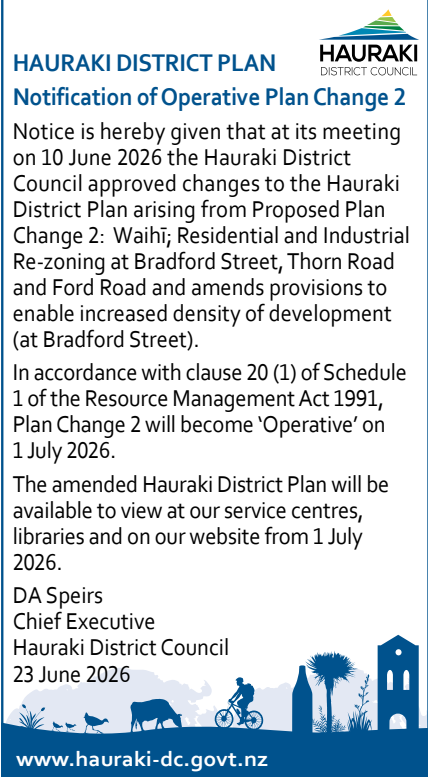
DETAILS: The course will be held on September 18-20. For more information, visit: www.aaanz.org.

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Notification of Operative Plan Change 2
Notice is hereby given that at its meeting on 10 June 2026 the Hauraki District Council approved changes to the Hauraki District Plan arising from Proposed Plan Change 2: Waihi; Residential and Industrial Re-zoning at Bradford Street, Thorn Road and Ford Road and amends provisions to enable increased density of development (at Bradford Street).
In accordance with clause 20 (1) of Schedule 1 of the Resource Management Act 1991, Plan Change 2 will become 'Operative' on 1 July 2026.
The amended Hauraki District Plan will be available to view at our service centres, libraries and on our website from 1 July 2026.
DA Speirs
Chief Executive
Hauraki District Council
23 June 2026
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276

- ACROSS**

1 Range (5)

4 Away very promptly (5,3,3,4)

14 Reject with contempt (5)

15 Haggard (5)

16 Auditing (10)

17 Parcel out (5)

19 Sheep (3)

20 Annul (7)

21 Fed (9)

22 Taken off mother's milk (6)

25 Nearest to the top (9)

27 Household employee (6)

28 Looked as if (6)

33 Very sacred (10)

35 Make a mistake (3)

36 Column base (6)

37 Petty quarrel (4)

39 Hair cream (3)

41 Arctic deer (7)

42 Schedule (6)

43 Final peremptory demand (9)

44 Furious (5)

45 Almanac (8)

50 Fashionable (2)

51 Sailing vessel (8)

55 Lament (5)

58 Dry (9)

59 Stumble (6)

60 Make unclear, vague (7)

61 Age (3)

63 Hard work (4)

64 Of higher rank (6)
- 65 Religious sister (3)

66 Thwarted (10)

68 Month (6)

69 Trifling (6)

71 Relative importance (9)

76 Learning establishment (6)

77 Weak, unable (9)

79 In operation (7)

81 Tear (3)

84 Towering (5)

85 Brought about by incitement or urging (10)

86 Trapdoor (5)

87 Hard coating (5)

88 Unmistakably deceased (4,2,1,8)

89 Bogus (5)
- DOWN**

2 Scratched (6)

3 Fear attack (5)

5 Vases (4)

6 Abundant (7)

7 Happens (6)

8 Breaks down (5)

9 Maximum (7)

10 Defensive ditch (4)

11 Alleviation (6)

12 Welded together (5)

13 Inaudible (7)

14 Dwarfed (7)

18 Taken as read (10)

23 Alter (5)

24 Dregs (7)

26 Of pigs (7)

27 Haggle (7)

29 Wet (7)
- 30 Curved fruit (6)

31 Creature (5)

32 Not moving (6)

34 Gown-like garment (4)

36 Beg (5)

38 Leg bone (5)

40 Bullets (4)

45 Trainee (5)

46 Enduring (7)

47 Pleasant (4)

48 Rouse (6)

49 Measuring stick (5)

50 Formative years (7)

52 Dwelling place (10)

53 Fruit farm (7)

54 Worked for (6)

55 Claimed (anag)(7)

56 By oneself (5)

57 Cow meat (4)

62 Humorous (5)

67 Roothing material (7)

68 Lure (7)

70 Hot region (7)

72 Choose to refrain (7)

73 Chewy sweet (6)

74 Pigment-lacking animal (6)

75 Light meals (6)

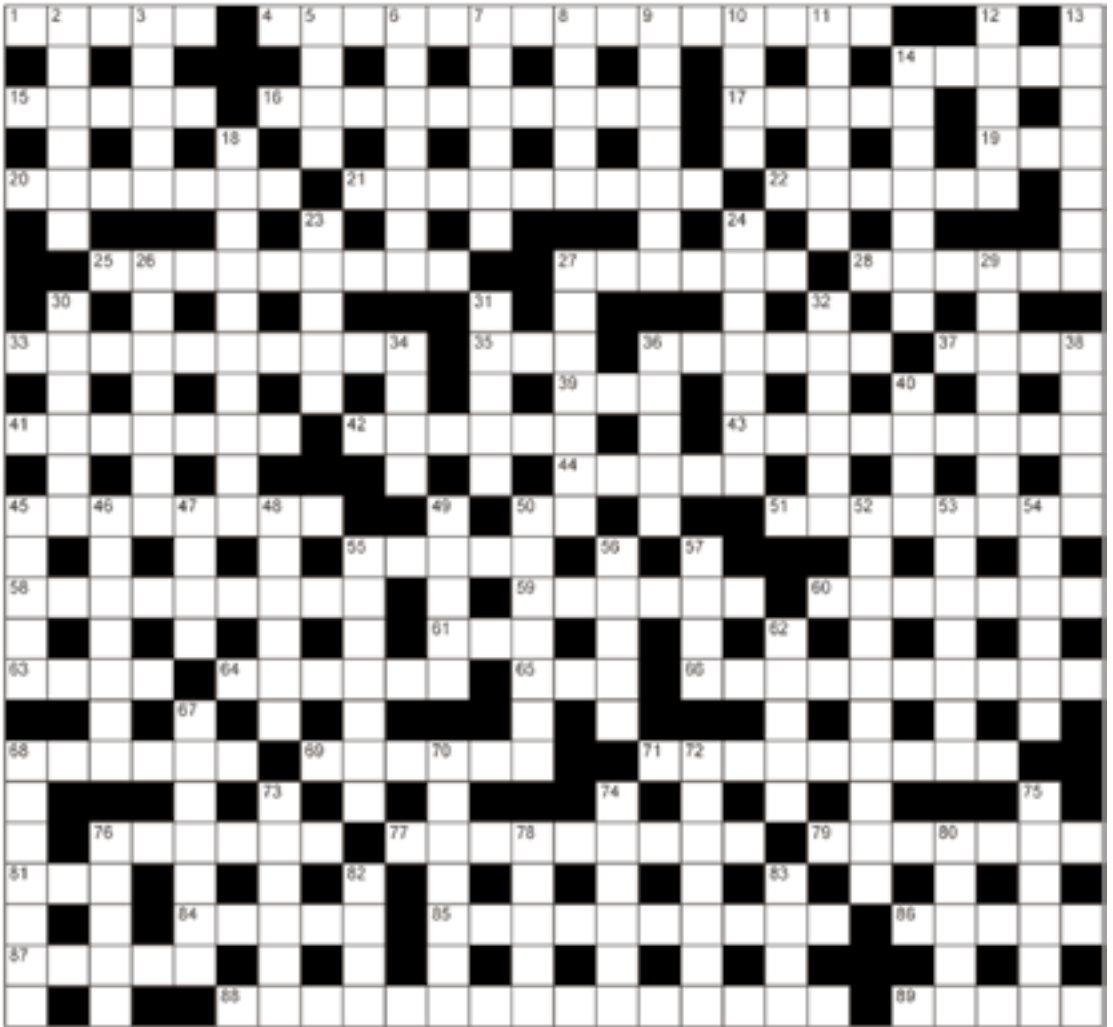
76 Nozzle (5)

78 Alleviated (5)

80 Australian marsupial (5)

82 Coloured (4)

83 Himalayan enigma (4)



PREVIOUS SOLUTION

ACROSS: 1 Adobe, 4 Cigarette paper, 11 Clubs, 14 Sneak, 15 Encompassed, 16 Attorney, 19 Saddles, 20 Hairy, 21 Albatross, 24 Flotation, 26 Madrid, 27 Donate, 31 Limbs, 32 Operetta, 34 Cathedrals, 38 Spirits, 39 Adored, 40 Abused, 41 Core, 42 Cyclone, 45 Borderline, 50 Special, 54 Unit, 55 Recess, 56 Cotton, 57 Engrave, 60 Highlights, 61 Suspense, 62 Roost, 65 Munich, 66 Cloned, 67 Economist, 72 Aspersions, 73 Diary, 74 Flaming, 79 Credited, 80 Endorsement, 81 Steak, 82 Depth, 83 As the crow flies, 84 Grate.

DOWN: 2 Denial, 3 Board, 5 Inns, 6 Avocado, 7 Expire, 8 Tusk, 9 Preclude, 10 Return, 11 Crossroads, 12 Ulna, 13 Skyline, 17 Petty, 18 Caricature, 22 Stops, 23 Macaroni, 25 Liberal, 26 Meander, 28 Biopsy, 29 Stared, 30 Sheets, 33 Radio, 35 Shell, 36 Stun, 37 Taxi, 42 Couch, 43 Clinging, 44 Emerge, 45 Breathless, 46 Rest, 47 Excused, 48 Latest, 49 Noose, 51 Pond, 52 Curious, 53 Advise, 58 Blacksmith, 59 Using, 63 Announce, 64 Ample, 65 Menaced, 68 Caramel, 69 Geneva, 70 Jigsaw, 71 Intact, 75 Meter, 76 Jeep, 77 Boar, 78 Knee.

Finalists named for lifeguard awards

SURF LIFESAVING

Waihi Beach Lifeguard Services has plenty to celebrate, with nine individual nominees named as finalists for this year's Surf Lifesaving New Zealand Coromandel and Bay of Plenty Awards to be held on July 25.

The nominations recognise an outstanding season of mahi across the club, from patrol and rescue support through to powercraft, coaching, officiating, examining, volunteering and athlete development.

This year's Waihi Beach nominees are Sharlene Manukau for Patrol Support of the Year, Luke Butler for Under-19 Lifeguard of the Year, Nicholas Wagstaff for Powercraft Contribution of the Year, Maddie Scown for Examiner of the Year, Andrew Cochrane for Volunteer of the Year, Fiona Swain for Official of the Year, Connor Miller for the Coaches' Commitment Award, Max Morley for Emerging Coach of the Year, and Max Page as an Athlete of the Year age group finalist.

Waihi Beach Lifeguard Services is also a finalist for Overall Club of the Year, recognising the collective effort behind the club's season.



Nicholas Wagstaff is among the Waihi Beach nominees for this year's Surf Lifesaving awards.

Photo: SUPPLIED

Also being recognised for regional service at the awards evening are lifeguards Rian Butler, Aron May, and lifeguard and director of sport Madeline Schnackenberg, with

longstanding board member Natalie Lloyd receiving the Regional Distinguished Service Award.

Senior lifeguard and independent board member Chris-

tiaan Maarhuis is also being honoured for his service to surf lifesaving with regional life membership.

"We are incredibly proud to see these members recognised

for their outstanding service, commitment, and contribution to surf lifesaving," the club said.

"We wish all the finalists the best of luck."

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