

The Valley Profile

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Gone to the dogs

Paeroa is going to the dogs - for a good cause. ALICE PARMINTER chases the details

A community fashion show is being put on at the end of September in aid of the Paeroa Community Patrol.

The theme for the event is "Going to the races... or the dogs", and punters are encouraged to don their finest glad-rags for a shot at the prize for best-dressed.

Seven human models will strut the runway in ensembles sourced from Paeroa op-shops and antique stores, with each outfit also available for sale.

They will be joined by several well-trained canine models, also dressed to impress.

"Two of the dogs will be from the Hauraki Animal Rescue... They'll be up for adoption as well," event organiser Sybil Woolmore said.

"They've been to obedience and they're all well-trained and everything, so it's just another way of incorporating another community [group] into the whole thing."

The fashion show will be rounded out with raffles, spot prizes, and afternoon tea.

Sybil said the committee's aim was to bring the community together.

"Last year was very successful - we raised just over \$3000," she said.

"But I think the main thing for me is promoting the shops in Paeroa, [while] having a riotous afternoon."

"We just want to make everyone have a good time. And we're excited about it, so we hope that other people will be excited too."

Funds raised from the event will go to the Paeroa Community Patrol, which is run by volunteers and relies on donations for petrol and vehicle upkeep for their work preventing crime in the community.

DETAILS: *Going to the Races... Or the Dogs. September 27 at the Baptist Church, Wood St, Paeroa. Doors open 1.30pm for a 2pm start. Tickets \$20 from St John Op Shop, Arkwrights Antiques, or available at the door.*

For more information about the Paeroa Community Patrol, email paeroa@cpnz.org.nz.



The Paeroa community fashion show fundraiser is back for another year, with human and canine models getting ready to strut their stuff.
Photo: SUPPLIED

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The Little Things

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Kissing them all goodnight.

LETTERS

Send your letters to the editor: editor@valleyprofile.co.nz. Letters must include your full name and address, be 250 words or less and may be edited, abridged or rejected at the editor's discretion.

AA HELP APPRECIATED

It was on Tuesday night, August 4, as I was driving in from Paeroa to the Thames Hospital to drop off some items to a friend who had a minor stroke, my car was making intermittent grinding noises. Not something I had experienced before. Then, as I was trying to park in a parking bay at the hospital as I was turning the steering wheel in a three-point turn when the grinding noise was horrendous and I thought something had broken in the wheel. I visited with my friend and dropped off her items, then I rang the AA at 6:45pm to say that I needed assistance. It was a very cold night and I was a woman on my own with no husband or partner and worried.

They told me there would be a 15- to 60-minute wait, but I only had to wait 30 minutes before the AA man arrived. After being asked to reverse the car and move it over to the next bay so he could work on it, the car made the most horrendous noise. The AA man, Steve, then pulled out some tools and proceeded to take the front left tire off and fiddled around removing some small stones that had got caught in the brakes.

Steve then fitted the tyre back on asked me to go for a drive but as I reversed it was still making

that horrendous noise and he told me I would probably have to take it to the shop to get it sorted.

However, he said as I appeared to be a damsel in distress he would give it another go, but if it didn't fix the problem then I'd have to get it towed to a workshop and have someone go over the wheel and the problem.

So Steve took the tyre off again poked some more stones out, refitted the tyre and told me to go for a drive around the hospital car park. Which I did and there was no more grinding noise.

I am so grateful to this man who after hours came to my assistance, and went above and beyond to keep me on the road so I could get back to my destination. The next day I went to the AA at the council office thinking the AA workshop was there as I wanted to leave a small gift of appreciation (chocolates and a card of thanks) however they did not know the AA callout personnel, but we managed to identify an AA workshop at Kōpū.

So I got the address and on my way home that afternoon, I dropped off the card and chocolates, being informed that Steve was away for a few few days. So I left the chocolates and card and carried on my merry way.

- Susan



ROCK STARS

There was no hanging around for specialist rope crews in the Karangahake Gorge as they took to the cliffs above State Highway 2 last week. The crews spent five days inspecting the steep rock faces and scaling away anything that could come tumbling down, making the vital route between Waikato, Bay of Plenty, and the Coromandel safer and more resilient. Rock scaling involves trained rope-access technicians inspecting cliff faces and removing loose or unstable material using hand tools and specialist equipment. SH2 through the gorge was closed between 9am and 4pm each day from August 25-28 to allow the work to take place. The rope crews will return from October 12-16 to remove larger unstable rocks and complete further work identified during inspections.

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Thames Tides

Wed Sep 2	Thu Sep 3	Fri Sep 4	Sat Sep 5	Sun Sep 6	Mon Sep 7	Tue Sep 8
 Morning: 4:16am 0.4, 10:28am 3.4 Afternoon: 4:31pm 0.6, 10:53pm 3.4 Sun: 6:38am 5:58pm Fish: Best At 3:36am 4:02pm Moon: Set 8:47am, Rise 11:28pm	 Morning: 5:00am 0.4, 11:14am 3.4 Afternoon: 5:20pm 0.7, 11:41pm 3.3 Sun: 6:37am 5:59pm Fish: Best At 4:29am 4:57pm Moon: Set 9:24am	 Morning: 5:48am 0.5, 12:04pm 3.3 Afternoon: 6:15pm 0.8 Sun: 6:35am 6:00pm Fish: Best At 5:27am 5:57pm Moon: Last Quarter, Rise 12:41am, Set 10:09am	 Morning: 12:33am 3.3, 6:41am 0.6 Afternoon: 1:02pm 3.2, 7:16pm 0.9 Sun: 6:34am 6:00pm Fish: Best At 6:28am 7:00pm Moon: Rise 1:52am, Set 11:04am	 Morning: 1:30am 3.2, 7:40am 0.7 Afternoon: 2:07pm 3.2, 8:24pm 0.9 Sun: 6:32am 6:01pm Fish: Best At 7:31am 8:03pm Moon: Rise 2:56am, Set 12:09pm	 Morning: 2:34am 3.1, 8:49am 0.7 Afternoon: 3:17pm 3.2, 9:35pm 0.9 Sun: 6:31am 6:02pm Fish: Best At 8:33am 9:03pm Moon: Rise 3:51am, Set 1:21pm	 Morning: 3:43am 3.1, 10:01am 0.7 Afternoon: 4:26pm 3.3, 10:41pm 0.8 Sun: 6:29am 6:03pm Fish: Best At 9:32am 10:00pm Moon: Rise 4:36am, Set 2:36pm

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	MIN	Hr	MIN
Coromandel	-0	05	-0	04
Whitianga	-0	01	-0	06
Tairua	+0	10	+0	20
Whangamata	-0	03	-0	06
Waihi Beach	-0	21	-0	16

Coro man sentenced for child sex abuse material

A 49-year-old Coromandel man was sentenced in the Waihi District Court on August 24 to two years and two months' imprisonment for the importation of an indecent or obscene article (child-like sex doll), possession of child sexual abuse material, and intentionally or recklessly making an intimate visual recording. He has also been registered as a child sex offender, New Zealand Customs says.

In January, 2025, Customs intercepted a child-like sex doll falsely declared as a "mannequin model" and imported via sea freight.

Investigators from Customs' Child Exploitation Operations Team identified the importer and executed a search warrant at his home, locating child sexual abuse material on his devices.

Acting Chief Customs Officer - Child Exploitations and Operations Team Shaun Martin said Customs remained committed to investigating child exploitation offending.

"This offender imported a child-like sex doll, which is often linked to other forms of child exploitation offending," he said.

"We also found computer-generated content. Whether AI-generated or created by other means, material of this nature contributes to the exploitation and sexualisation of children.

"He was not only accessing and sharing harmful material but had also begun exploiting another person by secretly filming a sexual encounter. We are pleased we were able to intervene before further harm occurred."

If you have concerns or suspicions about someone who may be trading in or producing child sexual abuse images or videos, contact Customs confidentially on 0800 WE PROTECT (0800 937 768) or Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111. If you are, or know of, someone who is at risk or being abused, contact the Police immediately.

Councils keep tabs on counterfeit tags

By KELLEY TANTAU

Copying might be the sincerest form of flattery, but it could be an expensive habit when it comes to rubbish tags.

Western Bay of Plenty District Council has been seeing some of its residents take the idea of reuse a little too far, with contractors spotting pay-as-you-throw rubbish tags that have been photocopied, recreated, or painstakingly taped or stapled back together after use.

But council says those shortcuts could come with a \$200 infringement fee.

Between October, 2025 and April, 2026, 195,500 PAYT tags were sold, and 216,165 rubbish bins were collected. That's 20,665 more collections than tags sold.

While the difference couldn't be directly attributed to fraudulent tags, council's contractors were identifying more reused and altered tags - and counterfeiters were getting creative.

"The idea behind PAYT is simple - the more waste you produce, the more you pay to dispose of it.

"It gives households a financial incentive to reduce what goes into the red bin and make use of recycling and food scraps services," council's general manager infrastructure Brad Singh said.

"We know the vast majority of people are doing the right thing, but using a fraudulent tag means someone is getting a rubbish collection without paying for it."

The district's kerbside service was introduced in 2021, and has a target of diverting around 1,800 tonnes of material from landfill each year.

Brad said one of the key benefits of PAYT was that the cost of collecting and disposing of rubbish was paid



Counterfeit rubbish tags are turning up in the Western Bay of Plenty. Photo: SUPPLIED

for by the people using the service, rather than through general rates.

"PAYT is a fully user-pays service - it isn't funded through rates - so every red-bin collection needs to have a genuine tag. When people use fake tags, everyone else ends up carrying the cost, which isn't fair on those doing the right thing.

"We're increasing our monitoring, and people should be aware that if a fraudulent tag is found, the address will be issued with an infringement."

Thames-Coromandel District Council said it was aware that counterfeit tags were sometimes identified by its contractor's staff; however, it couldn't determine the extent of it or attribute any difference between tag sales and collection figures to a single cause.

"Our contractor routinely monitors bin and tag presentation and will place a sticker on 'non-compliant' bins, and not empty them. Most times this is because a bin is put out without a tag or it's not properly attached, rather than fraudulent tags," a spokesperson said.

Hauraki District Council also had no figures available to compare tag sales with the number of bins collected, but said its contractors regularly checked bins to confirm that the tags displayed were genuine and valid.

"We are unable to provide information about the number of fraudulent tags identified in our district. However, we have processes in place to monitor compliance and address any issues that are identified."

The cost of a rubbish tag varies across the region, from \$5.20 in Western Bay of Plenty, to \$8 in Hauraki, and \$9.30 in Thames-Coromandel.



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Tairua's visitor tally puzzles councillors

By KELLEY TANTAU

Tairua's information centre has reported almost 100,000 visitors over the past year - more than all five of the district's other information centres combined - but councillors have questioned whether the figure accurately reflects the number of people using the centre.

Figures presented to Thames-Coromandel District Council show 97,290 visitors were recorded at the Tairua Information Centre between July 1, 2025, and June 30, 2026.

By comparison, Whangamatā recorded 28,243 visitors, Whitianga 23,048, Pāuanui 16,561, Thames 11,909 and Coromandel Town 7,874 - a combined total of 87,635.

The unusually-high Tairua figure prompted questions from councillors at the council's August 25 meeting, with staff acknowledging there could be an error in the reported numbers.

Staff said the centre uses a door counter to record visitor numbers and that the figure had been checked with the information centre several times. However, the reported total would require a very high number of visitors throughout the centre's operating hours for the entire year - around 47 visitors per hour.

Councillors Flemming Rasmussen, Robyn Sinclair, and Alison Smith questioned whether the door counter could

be recording people who were not actually visiting the information centre, with the Tairua site also being a pickup point for parcels.

The anomaly was raised because, despite recording by far the highest visitor numbers, Tairua receives the least amount of council funding among the district's information centres.

For 2026-2027, it is set to receive \$42,940 in council funding, while Thames and Whitianga will receive the most at \$59,053.

The council report also highlighted other challenges facing the information centres, including significant building issues at Whangamatā and anti-social behaviour outside the Thames centre - which has been raised with the council's community team and New Zealand Police.

Meanwhile, the council's annual dog control report showed some positive trends across the district, with infringement notices dropping 41 per cent to 130.

There were 12 dogs classified as dangerous in the district, down from 16 the previous year; however, the number of menacing dogs increased from 44 to 50.

Three new disqualified dog owners and four new probationary owners were also recorded during the year, bringing the district totals to nine disqualified and eight probationary owners.

Businessman to stand for New Zealand First

Businessman Vincent Andersen has been selected as New Zealand First's Candidate for the Coromandel electorate.

Vincent said NZ First had a proven track record of backing regional New Zealand and delivering real investment to the Coromandel.

"The Coromandel deserves more than election promises. We need continued investment in infrastructure, roading and local businesses, to create jobs and build resilient communities," he said.

During their time in government, NZ First established the Provincial Growth Fund that has pumped tens of millions of dollars into projects across the Coromandel.

It includes, the expansion of Sugarloaf Wharf, the Kōpū Marine Precinct and support for marine infrastructure projects. "Those investments created jobs, backed local business and strengthened our regional economy, we need to keep that momentum growing," Vincent said.

NZ First was also part of the government that invested millions of dollars in roading infrastructure.

Vincent is the owner of a family-run recycling and waste management company that services more than 5000 customers across the Waikato-Coromandel-Bay of Plenty region.

He understands the challenges facing employers and families and knows small to medium sized businesses are the backbone of New Zealand's economy.

Vincent and his wife spent nine years living in the United Kingdom, where he worked for a multi-national company gaining experience in IT and procurement.

"Living overseas instilled a deep appreciation of what a special and unique country New Zealand is. It reinforced



Vincent Anderson. Photo: SUPPLIED

the importance of putting New Zealand and New Zealanders first."

Vincent said NZ First's principals reflected his own values.

"I'm patriotic and proud of my country and I want other Kiwis to feel that way too."

Currently active in local government, Vincent wants to see practical reforms that cut unnecessary bureaucracy and regulations, making it easier to get things done. "I want to support the industries that keep our region thriving, including tourism, agriculture, aquaculture, farming, small business and mining."

Under NZ First, 50 per cent of all mining royalties will be returned to the region it came from.

Vincent said he's also committed to protecting New Zealand Superannuation by keeping the eligibility age at 65.

"We live in one of the most beautiful parts of the country. I want to work with NZ First to ensure we create more opportunities for the generations that follow while protecting the lifestyle and communities we value today," he said.

Morning tea raises \$6.5k

By ALICE PARMINTER

A morning tea in Ngatea has raised \$6500 for cancer support groups. Nearly 200 people attended the Ngatea Lions Club Cancer Support morning tea at the Ngatea War Memorial Hall on August 26, in what club president Pat Ridings said was their biggest-ever turnout. "It's a lovely social day out... people come back every year. They love it." Along with morning tea, the event had quick-fire raffles and a talk by guest speaker Angela Williams from the Thames

Cancer Support Group. The funds raised at the event will be split between the Thames Cancer Support Group and the Lions Cancer Lodge in Hamilton. Lions Club secretary Brian McMillan said the event was a chance to help spread the word about the importance of supporting those in the community who are affected by cancer. "It was a wonderful community effort, and we are extremely grateful to everyone who contributed, attended, donated, sponsored, or helped behind the scenes."



Nearly 200 people attended the Ngatea Lions Club Cancer Support morning tea. Photos: ALICE PARMINTER



Parkrun Pop-up pops on to Kōpū Bridge

By ALICE PARMINTER

Thames runners, joggers, and fresh-air enthusiasts are invited to a free Pop-up Parkrun event, taking place on the Historic Kōpū Bridge on September 5. The event is the result of nearly two years of work by local Chris Kemp and his partner Kendall Todd to begin a Parkrun community in Thames, and they're hopeful the one-off event will generate the interest needed to develop a regular programme. "The plan is to show the

community what Parkrun is all about," Kendall told *The Profile*. "And the bridge is going to be opened up as well." Parkrun is a social, volunteer-led event where people meet every weekend to run or walk five kilometres in an open space in their community. There are Parkrun groups around the world, and participants can log their races online via a barcode system. Parkrun can also be "prescribed" by GPs, and Kendall said having a local group was

a great way for doctors to help their patients develop a healthy lifestyle. Chris first floated the idea of a Thames Parkrun group in December, 2024, hoping to create a legacy to the sport he loves in the wake of his terminal diagnosis with motor neuron disease (MND). But despite the enthusiasm of several locals, there have not been enough volunteers to facilitate a group. "[Chris] had nearly given up, but it feels like we're finally making progress," Kendall

said. "We're using [the pop-up event] as an opportunity to try and build our volunteer base, because at the moment that's basically what's holding up the Parkrun - we just need some more names on board. "We've got about six people... we might need a rotating roster of around 12 people, so they don't have to do every weekend." While Chris will not be running the course himself - his MND has progressed to the point where he now must use a

power wheelchair - he hopes to be well enough to attend on the day and see the run take place. "I am anxious about my health - it's going to be so different for me now," he said. The course for the run will include a couple of laps of the Historic Kōpū Bridge and sections of the Thames side of the Hauraki Rail Trail. **DETAILS: Historic Kōpū Bridge Pop-up Parkrun, 12pm on September 5. The meeting point is the Kōpū cycle trail shelter on Pakura Close, parking available at On All Floors Flooring Xtra.**

Scott Simpson

MP for Coromandel

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SS Taniwha provides fruitful entertainment



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.

1929

‘Jerry Joy’ from Turua enjoyed a day out to Kōpū so much she wrote about it for the ‘Dot’s Little Folk’ section in the Otago Witness.

Their party had motored to Kōpū to pick blackberries, travelling over a very bumpy clay road. Leaving the car parked amongst some ti tree, they set to work and in a short time had a benzine tin full of berries.

They then had a swim in the Kirikiri Stream and after this boiled the billy for lunch. On a stroll they found several peach trees laden with fruit and grapes growing up into puriri trees.

At 3.30pm they started for home. As they approached the Kōpū Bridge they could see the SS *Taniwha* steaming up the river on her way from Auckland to Paeroa.

The bridge gates were closed, the span moved out and the *Taniwha* glided through. They waved to the people on board and threw peaches down to them, amused by their scramble for the fruit.

The span went back, the gates opened, and the happy party pro-



The SS *Taniwha*.

ceeded home.

At Waitakaruru, a movement was afoot to secure a rural mail delivery service and a petition to the Postal Department was circulated amongst the settlers.

Rural delivery mail required a minimum of four boxes per mile if the route was less than 10 miles, but if it was over 10 miles at least three boxes per mile was sufficient. The cost of a daily delivery was one pound a year, and settlers were required to provide a proper box.

At present the bulk of the mail arrived in Ngātea by the Paeroa service car at about 3.30pm and mail from Auckland about 6pm. The main mail stayed in Ngātea or Thames overnight and reached

Waitakaruru late in the morning where it could be collected from the post office. A rural mail delivery would see mail being delivered in the mornings and an added advantage was that rural posties collected letters for posting as well. Settlers also found that there were other services which the posties could ‘sometimes be induced to perform’.

The Hauraki Plains were visited by 75 business men who were traveling the province on an annual train tour organised by the Auckland Chamber of Commerce. The visitors were to be motored over the route of the proposed Paeroa - Pokeno railway.

The Pokeno Chamber of Commerce offered the use of at least six

cars and the Hauraki Plains County Council also supplied some. Twelve Paeroa residents volunteered the use of their cars.

Meanwhile, while motoring along the Thames coast between Tapu and Waikawau, Mr Leggett and several passengers had the narrowest possible escape from extinction.

Mr Leggett heard a strange booming noise and stopped the car. A moment later a mass of earth, hundreds of tons in weight, tumbled down the steep hill onto the road. In places it was 20ft high, and blocked the road completely.

Several other motoring parties were held up until a gang of Thames county workmen cleared the road.

Photo: SUPPLIED

Chris’ Quiz

Weekly quiz compiled by Chris Parminter

1. The musician referred to as ‘The Thin White Duke’, was better known by what name?
2. Which English business magnate founded Virgin Galactic in 2004, a company which promised to make regular tourist space flights?
3. In 1979, The Shire of Esperance in Australia fined the United States AUD\$400 for littering, due to what? a) A particularly messy tourist, b) pieces of a crashed plane, or c) pieces of a crashed space shuttle?
4. The character of Groundskeeper Willie, from the animated show *The Simpsons*, speaks with which accent? a) French, b) Irish, or c) Scottish?
5. The famous quote “There’s no place like home” is most closely associated with which film? a) *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*, b) *Mary Poppins*, or c) *The Wizard of Oz*?
6. What is the only mammal that has a shell (made of bone)? a) Armadillo, b) pangolin, or c) turtle?
7. What is a squirrel? a) An animal, b) a board game, or c) a shape?
8. An area backstage at a theatre, which actors use as a waiting room, is referred to as what colour room? a) Blue, b) green, or c) red?
9. Tea leaves are harvested from which type of plant? a) Camellia, b) dahlia, or c) rose?
10. Which type of particulate plastics are smaller: microplastics or nanoplastics?

ANSWERS: 1. David Bowie; 2. Richard Branson; 3. c) Pieces of a crashed space shuttle. The fine was never paid by NASA, but was eventually paid by a US radio station as a promotion in 2009; 4. c) *The Wizard of Oz*; 5. c) *The Wizard of Oz*; 6. a) Armadillos (pangolins have scales, and turtles are not mammals); 7. c) a shape (a square with rounded edges is intermediate between a square and a circle); 8. b) Green; 9. a) Camellia; 10. Nanoplastics.

New citizens welcomed

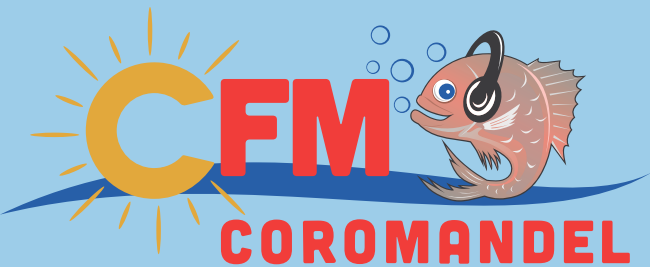
Hauraki District officially welcomed 16 new citizens to New Zealand on August 12, at a citizenship ceremony held at the council building. The newly-minted Kiwis hailed from Ngātea, Waihi, Paeroa, Te Aroha, Hamilton and Great Barrier Island. There were a range of home countries represented in the new citizens - England, United Kingdom, South Africa, Chile, Philippines, Brazil, Tonga, Zambia and Canada.

Back row: Miguel Cartes Alfaro, Johnathan Meyer, Matt Hunt, Daniel Rodovalho and Paea He Lotu Fifita. Middle row: Mayor Toby Adams, Chloe Belanger-Martel, Locel Cati-an Davis, Guinevere Meyer, Samantha Horne, Mark Leeson and Louise Beer. Front row: Luke Meyer, Ethan Meyer, Diane Edwards, Bronwyn Leeson, and Cristiane Ramos de Oliveira.

Photo: SUPPLIED



TUNE IN TO CFM ON 92.2 IN WAIHI



More than a licence: 200 gain mobility, opportunity

The JumpStart Driver Training programme has reached a major milestone, helping its 200th person gain their restricted licence since launching in 2022.

The free programme supports Waihi residents and Waihi College students working towards their restricted licence by providing supervised on-road driving sessions, with support from community volunteers, local Police, and OceanaGold.

The idea for JumpStart grew from conversations between OceanaGold and Waihi College in late 2021 about how best to support local young people.

“We’re very proud of what the JumpStart programme has grown into today,” OceanaGold Waihi asset president Michael van Anen said.

“I take my hat off to the volunteers. I’ve had two teenage boys myself, so I know it’s a special skill and patience to be able to teach others how to drive.”

At the heart of the programme are volunteer driver navigators, who give their time to help others gain the skills, experience and confidence needed to become safe, licensed drivers.

After completing training and Police vetting, navigators work alongside learner drivers, providing practical coaching and encouragement throughout their licensing journey.

For JumpStart navigator Andrew Bellamy, volunteering is an opportunity to share his passion for driving while helping others unlock new opportunities.

“One of the things I enjoy



JumpStart celebrates 200 people gaining their restricted licence qualification.

Photo: SUPPLIED

most about being a navigator is the coaching aspect,” Andrew said.

“The people who come into the programme are usually really motivated and it’s rewarding to support them as they work towards their goals.”

An experienced driver with licences across multiple vehicle classes, Andrew draws on years of driving experience to help learners build confidence behind the wheel. He said while there were certainly moments when you’re sitting in the passenger

seat and your foot is instinctively reaching for the brake, the greatest reward comes from seeing learners achieve a milestone that can transform their future.

“I really enjoy being a navigator because you’re helping someone achieve their goals and broaden their horizons,” he said.

“Getting a licence can open the door to employment, education, and greater independence. Being able to play a small part in that journey is a pretty special thing.”

For Waihi College student Ruby Wilhelmi, gaining her driv-

er licence through the JumpStart programme has opened the door to new opportunities and greater independence.

“JumpStart has given me lots of opportunities I otherwise wouldn’t have had,” Ruby said.

“To all the navigators, I imagine it can be nerve-wracking sometimes, but the patience, time and effort you’ve invested in all of us is inspirational. We really appreciate everything you’ve done to help shape our futures.”

The JumpStart programme is also available free of charge

to members of the wider Waihi community, helping more people take the next step towards gaining their restricted licence. Among them is community graduate Nikita Anderson.

“Having my licence has allowed me to go back to work after maternity leave, be independent, do things around town, go out of town - just daily life,” Nikita said.

“If you’re thinking about JumpStart, just do it. Getting your restricted licence is freedom. It makes life so much easier.”

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On the Land

Health students hit the rural road

Hauora Taiwhenua’s Rural Health Careers Promotion Programme is back on the road, with tertiary health students travelling to the Coromandel this month to encourage rural rangatahi to consider a future in health.

The latest school visits are the next phase of Hauora Taiwhenua’s 2026 programme, following tours of Northland and Southland earlier this year. The programme connects secondary school students with tertiary students studying a range of health professions, giving them the opportunity to hear first-hand about study, training and careers in health.

Over five days, the group of seven student volunteers will visit 10 rural schools, sharing their experiences of studying medicine, nursing, midwifery, pharmacy and allied health, while answering questions about tertiary education and career pathways.

Across the Coromandel, the students will be at Whangamata Area School and Mercury Bay Area School on September 3, and Coromandel Area School

“We know students from rural backgrounds are more likely to return to work in rural communities”

- Grant Davidson

and Te Wharekura o Manaia on September 4.

Hauora Taiwhenua chief executive Dr Grant Davidson said connecting rural students with people already studying health could help make those pathways more tangible.

“We know students from rural backgrounds are more likely to return to work in rural communities, making early exposure to health careers and tertiary pathways an important part of building a sustainable rural health workforce for the future.

“For a student thinking about a career in health, hearing from someone who has recently made that same transition can make a big difference. These visits are about showing rural rangatahi the breadth of op-

portunities available to them and helping them see a future in health that can include their rural community.”

The programme also gives tertiary health students the opportunity to share their experiences, develop their communication and leadership skills, and strengthen their own connection to rural health and the communities they may one day serve.

Siyeon Lee, a medicine student at the University of Auckland, said they remembered having rural health volunteers visit their school in Year 12.

“That experience helped inspire me to study medicine. Five years later, I had the opportunity to return as a volunteer and hopefully inspire another student to consider a career in health.

“For me, that was what made the experience so meaningful. It was about giving students an opportunity to learn about health careers, ask questions and have fun trying some of the practical activities - just as I did when volunteers visited my school.”

Māori farming awards open

Entries are now open for the 2027 Ahuwhenua Trophy - Excellence in Māori Farming, and Ahuwhenua Young Māori Farmer Award dairy competitions. “The competition is an opportunity to recognise and celebrate our farmers who can be counted among the country’s top in agribusiness, and the Ahuwhenua Young Māori Farmer Award is the pipeline to help grow our up-and-coming leaders,” Ahuwhenua Trophy chair Nukuhia Hadfield said. “We encourage industry groups and rural professionals to support Māori farmers, trusts, and incorporations to enter.”

DairyNZ Chair and Ahuwhenua Management Committee member Tracy Brown said Māori dairy farmers made a significant contribution to the sector.

“We’re proud to back the great things Māori agribusinesses are doing, and to be a strong supporter of the Ahuwhenua Trophy competition.”

The Ahuwhenua Trophy is the most prestigious award for Māori farming established nearly a century ago by Tā Apirana Ngata and Governor-General Lord Bledisloe. Its purpose is to celebrate and grow Māori farming and horticulture excellence with an emphasis on sustainability.



The Ahuwhenua Trophy.

The Ahuwhenua Young Māori Farmer Award (AYMF), started in 2012, recognises rising talent. The competitions run on a three-year cycle, rotating between dairy, sheep and beef, and horticulture.

“It celebrates the pursuit of innovation and new approaches by Māori farmers committed to realising the full potential of their whenua,” Hadfield said. Pouarua Farms, near Ngātea, jointly owned by Ngāti Maru, Ngāti Paoa, Ngāti Tamaterā, Ngāti Tara Tokanui and Te Patukirikiri, was named a finalist in the Ahuwhenua Trophy competition for dairy in 2021.

DETAILS: Ahuwhenua Trophy entries close December 2, and AYMF entries close January 29, 2027. Ahuwhenua Trophy finalists will be announced at Parliament in February, before each hosting a field day through March and April. The winners will be named at the awards dinner on May 28 at the Energy Events Centre, Rotorua.



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On the Land

AI data centres to be considered

Waikato Regional Council is preparing a position statement on Artificial Intelligence (AI) data centre development in the region.

The regional growth and resilience committee met on August 20, and endorsed the preparation of a position statement that will outline key principles for maximising economic and social benefits while minimising environmental, infrastructure and land-use impacts.

Committee chair Keith Holmes said the Waikato region, with its strategic industrial areas and strong energy infrastructure, was well positioned to benefit from the growing global demand for AI and digital infrastructure.

“This is an opportunity to show that Waikato Regional Council is ready and willing to take the lead on economic opportunities, responding quickly and working collaboratively to ensure positive outcomes for the whole region,” he said. “We need to be balancing economic opportunities with responsible management of energy, water, land-use and environmental impacts, to ensure the long-term benefits for our Waikato communities.”

Regional economic lead Tariq Ashraf told the committee that North Waikato and Taupō were among six “advantaged zones for data centre deployment” identified in a campaign seeking international investment, and the government agency had called staff to provide input.

Tariq said developing a clear, regional position on the development of AI data centres would put the council on solid footing and provide clarity moving forward.

“One of the council’s roles is to help attract investment into the region, but there are other roles we undertake as well, including when it comes to issuing consents for such an enterprise.”

The committee heard the benefits of AI data centres in the region included investment into the region, employment, digital infrastructure growth, data sovereignty and enhanced digital resilience.

However, the impacts included electricity demand, significant water consumption, land-use implications, visual and noise impacts on communities.

Sustainability and climate change senior advisor Joy Moir said not all data centres were equal and that new, advanced technologies were becoming increasingly prevalent, including renewable energy-powered AI data centres and closed loop, water-efficient cooling systems.

“Genuine community engagement is also what good development looks like,” she said.

Lockdowns likely for hens

RNZ Digital reporters, RNZ Checkpoint

While the threat of bird flu hangs over the egg industry, the Egg producers Federation says it’s likely free-range chickens will be going in and out of lockdown in coming months.

Hundreds of thousands of hens have been in lockdown as the third case of bird flu was confirmed in a wild bird in Aotearoa.

But chairperson of the Egg Producers Federation and Mainland Poultry chief executive, John McKay told *Checkpoint* they would let half a million of their hens back outside on Wednesday last week. There was now good data out there for farmers to decide the risk level for their birds and whether to let their hens out of temporary lockdown, he said.

Many egg suppliers that have the ability to do so have put their hens into lockdown, restricting their roaming as a precaution to protect them from bird flu, meaning free-ranging was not always possible.

The most recent data McKay had seen showed there was a low risk for chickens, he said, even with the third detection.

“It’s in a petrel and it’s likely we will continue to find those ocean going birds occasionally washed up on our shores.”

He said Mainland Poultry had decided to prepare its farms on Tuesday for the hens to be let outside on Wednesday morning.

“This is an evolving situation so



we will continue to look at it and judge the risk - the welfare of our birds is paramount and the risk is likely to change in the future. As the risk level changes it might be time to bring those birds back in again.”

McKay warned it might be something Aotearoa had to get used to with free-range farming going forward.

“We are free-range farmers because we want our birds roaming outside and we value that highly, and people who buy free-range eggs care deeply about welfare.”

For consumers who were worried about whether their eggs were still free-range, McKay said stickers would be put on Mainland Poultry cartons, next time the birds went into lockdown, alerting potential buyers to the fact the birds were temporarily kept inside.

He said the stickers would very clearly state the eggs had been laid by birds temporarily housed for their own welfare.

“It will be very clear communication... we’re also explaining to consumers around New Zealand how we as farmers are looking to manage this risk going forward.”

- This story was first published on rnz.co.nz

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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

‘All sorts of intrigue’ in *Crazy Ladies* play

By DAVIDDA HIKATANGATA

It’s almost time for the people across Hauraki and beyond to head along to the Paeroa Little Theatre’s upcoming show.

From September 9 to 13, the community will have the opportunity to witness the chaos, laughter, stories and “a little payback” in *Crazy Ladies* by Devon Williamson and directed by Paeroa Little Theatre director Sara Single.

“One of the reasons we chose this play was because it is by a New Zealand playwright,” Sara said.

She got in touch with Devon, who is based in Tauranga, to seek permission to change a few things in the play, and she said he was very adaptable and easy to work with.

It’s the story of a group of five ladies who get together for a school reunion.

“They share what’s happened through their lives, and there’s all sorts of intrigue... the question would be - where does the janitor fit in?”

With four evening shows and one matinee, she said theatre-goers were in for some “great entertainment”.

It was different from watching a television or a movie on a big cinema screen, she said.



Theatre-goers will have the opportunity to witness the chaos, laughter, stories and “a little payback” in *Crazy Ladies*. Photo: DAVIDDA HIKATANGATA

“It is quite different sitting in a theatre in front of people who are not very far from you but actually performing a play,” Sara told *The Profile*.

Those attending the show might recognise some of the cast, she said.

“But they become quite different people when they’re on a stage and taking a part.

“And they take on the character of the person that they are playing.”

There were also members who hadn’t been on stage for a long time and had “come back to theatre”.

There was also one cast member who had been re-

placed due to ill health.

Other cast members “pulled together” to make sure everything would work, and they also had a “very good crew” in charge of set design, she said.

“I’m very happy with the way the group has worked. They all support each other. And we’ve had an awful lot of laughs and giggles along the way, which is what it’s all about,” she said.

“It’s what we call our happy place. That’s our theatre.”

DETAILS: From 7pm on September 9 to 12, and 2pm on September 13 at Paeroa Little Theatre, 1 Francis St, Paeroa. Tickets \$20 at Arkwrights Antiques or cash sales at the door.

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Polly is looking for a loving forever home where she can be part of the family and, ideally, have another friendly feline companion to keep her company.

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Lomu (107 mins) E. A Tongan/Kiwi warrior who could run 100 metres in under 11 seconds. The youngest All Black to put on the jersey and who still holds the record for the most tries scored in World Cup history.

THE ODYSSEY (172 mins) M. Thought you’d missed it? Christopher Nolan’s, *The Odyssey*, is a mythic action epic shot across the world. Brings Homer’s foundational saga to film screens. Starring Matt Damon, Tom Holland, Anne Hathaway and others. 94% on Rotten Tomatoes; 97% on the Popcornmeter!

Project Hail Mary ENCORE (156 mins) M. Science teacher Ryland Grace (Ryan Gosling) wakes up on a spaceship light years from home with no recollection of who he is or how he got there. As his memory returns, he begins to uncover his mission: to save everything on Earth from extinction.

NZ Mountain Film Festival (126 mins) Six different NZ short films covering adventures from paragliding to mountaineering, packrafting and running in Canada. Mon & Tues 7&8 Sept. only. Te Puru School fundraiser.

Tony (106 mins) R16. A 19-year-old Anthony Bourdain travels to Provincetown and stumbles into the chaotic world of a restaurant kitchen, setting off a summer that will shape the course of his life.

De Gaulle: Tilting Iron (158 mins) M. June 1940. France collapses and signs the Armistice. In the midst of the chaos, one man, Charles de Gaulle, refuses to give up. (Mostly in French with English subtitles).

H is for Hawk (119 mins) M. After losing her father, Helen finds herself saved by an unlikely friendship with a stubborn hawk named Mabel. Through the bond, Helen rediscovers the beauty of being alive.

Next week: Oasis: Don’t Look Back in Anger Charts Liam and Noel Gallagher’s triumphant reunion tour, Oasis Live ‘25, one of the most anticipated rock ‘n’ roll comebacks of our time. **Practical Magic 2** Starring Sandra Bullock and Nicole Kidman. Moonlit mischief and powerful ancestral magic with the Owens sisters.

‘A worthwhile cause’

By DAVIDDA HIKATANGATA

Around 40 people gathered in Kaiaua for the Pink Ribbon Day Walk recently, raising \$494 for the Breast Cancer Foundation. But it wasn't just people in attendance.

Six mini horses and two dogs were part of the parade, but the main attraction were the 11 donkeys - all there to support the cause.

Organiser Lee Copland told *The Profile* that every year on Pink Ribbon Day, she'd put on a pink t-shirt and pink wig for the street appeal in Thames, followed by a Pink Ribbon Donkey Walk with the Donkey and Mule Society of NZ.

"Thank you to the lovely people who donated to such a worthwhile cause." In total, Lee raised \$735 this year for the cause.



A sea of pink shows support.



Eleven donkeys put on a show for the Pink Ribbon Day Walk.

Photos: SUPPLIED



People, pets and smiles all around for the Pink Ribbon Day Walk in Kaiaua, where humans and animals sport pink clothes and accessories for the cause.

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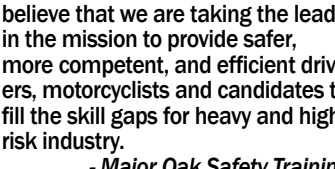
We are always looking to find ways to benefit the local and wider community and industry including building and maintaining relationships with overseas organisations and introducing new services, we



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Build a family culture worth passing on

OPINION



By MICHAEL WILKES

What are the things that matter to your kids? And maybe the bigger question – what culture are you building into them? I’ve been thinking about that lately. On the last public holiday we headed off as a family for a mountain bike ride. These days my kids love it. But it wasn’t always that way. One of them hated it early on. The balance was hard. The climbs

felt brutal. Mud was annoying. There were tears, complaints, and more than a few moments where quitting seemed the easier option. But for me, mountain biking was never just about doing something I loved. If that was the goal, I’d have left the kids at home and hit the trails myself. It was about building something deeper. A family culture. A culture where we do life together. Adventure together. Struggle together. Grow together. Because often it’s in the pushing that people discover they love what once felt hard. And that’s exactly what happened.

On our last ride, it was all smiles, laughter, and kids bombing down tracks with confidence I couldn’t have imagined a few years ago. And watching that... it hit me. Our kids don’t just need us to tell them what matters. They need us to invite them into what matters to us. That’s partly why I’m out running these days, training for a triathlon. Truth be told – I don’t even like running much. But I’m thinking about my kids when I do it. As they grow, I want to call them toward their potential. Toward grit. Toward doing hard things.

And I figure I’d better be living that myself. Maybe for you it’s not running. Maybe your child’s learning another language – could you learn a few words too? Maybe they’re into chess, surfing, coding, music – maybe you enter their world enough to share the journey. Because shared interests create shared memories. And shared memories shape family culture. We often think culture is something that “just happens” in a home. It doesn’t. It’s built – in repeated choices. In what we prioritise. In what we celebrate.

In what we invite our kids into. And if we’re intentional about those little humans we’re helping shape – chances are they’ll thrive. So what’s one thing you could pick up... so your kids can follow your lead? Because the culture you build today might become the strength they carry tomorrow.

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.

Health & Wellbeing

ADVERTISING FEATURE



Prioritise your health and wellbeing

To live well in a region as lively and eclectic as the Hauraki-Coromandel, we must prioritise our health and wellbeing. That’s why The Valley Profile’s monthly Health and Wellbeing feature is a dedicated space designed to connect our community with local resources that support living healthier, more balanced lives. In today’s fast-paced world, taking care of our mental, physical and emotional wellbeing has never been more important, and this feature is here to make it easier for you to find the support and inspiration you need. Each month, this feature will spotlight a variety of local businesses, services and organisations making a difference in our communities.

Whether you’re wanting to find local health and wellness services, a chiropractor, contact care practitioners, a hair salon and more - the Health and Wellbeing feature will point you in the right direction. While there’s no one-size fits-all approach to wellbeing, everyone deserves access to resources that support their unique journey. So whether you’re taking the first step or continuing down your wellness path, we hope this feature becomes your monthly go to guide for living well, right here in the Hauraki-Coromandel. **DETAILS: To find out more and to join the Health and Wellbeing feature, call David-da on 022 174 3988 or email: Davidda@valleyprofile.co.nz.**

Shingles vaccine free for 65+

Shingles is something that can be prevented. Shingles is a painful blistering rash caused by the same virus that causes chickenpox. If you’ve had chickenpox, the virus ‘hides out’ in nerve cells where it stays in an inactive state. Shingles develops if the virus becomes active again, usually many years later. The fluid in shingles blisters is infectious and can cause chickenpox if you haven’t had chickenpox or been vaccinated against it. One in three people will get shingles during their lifetime. Shingles can be very painful and your risk of getting it increases as you get older. The most serious complications are nerve pain that can last for months or years, and eye problems that can result in loss of vision. In New Zealand, the shingles vaccine is free for people 65 years of age.

As long as you receive your first dose when you’re 65, your second dose will also be free. Ideally, your second dose is two to six months after your first dose but if it’s longer than six months, it will still be free. There is further eligibility criteria available for immunocompromised patients. What is Shingrix? It is a vaccine that can prevent you from getting shingles and if you do get shingles, this vaccine can prevent you from complications of shingles including long term pain. Shingrix vaccine is recommended for anyone from 50 years of age onwards, but is only funded when you are 65. - Supplied by Health Ngatea.





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New field eases squeeze on growing club

RUGBY

By KELLEY TANTAU

More kids, more teams, and more games have created a good problem for Hauraki North Rugby and Football Club to have: not enough space to fit them all in.

But a new playing field - made possible by NZ Rugby funding - is helping change that.

The Waitakaruru club received about \$48,000 from New Zealand Rugby's Legacy Fund to create a new field, and alongside funding from Grassroots Trust and investment from the club itself, treasurer Andrew Connaughton said the new pitch was needed to keep up with the growing demand for playing space.

"We already have Hauraki Plains College's First XV - plus, there are under 15s and other younger grade teams from HPC. We have also been hosting the Hauraki Plains Youth Rugby teams, which are kids from five- to 15-years-old. We also have the Ngatea Youth Rugby League that also uses the fields."

Hauraki North is the only club in the Thames Valley Rugby Football Union to field four teams, Andrew said, while the club has also recently become home to the newly-formed Waitak Warriors Rugby League team.

"So we needed more playing fields to accommodate all these teams."

With demand for playing space increasing, the new field has been made possible through funding, club investment, and significant volunteer effort.

Among those who had provided what Andrew described

as invaluable "sweat equity" were Mike Hayward of Hayward Builders and James Barker of James Barker Earthworks.

Andrew said both had provided their time, expertise and equipment to help bring the project together.

Hauraki North was one of 18 community rugby clubs around the country to receive funding in the latest distribution from the New Zealand Rugby Legacy Fund.

A total of \$1.29m was distributed to the successful clubs, with 70 applications seeking a combined \$5m in project funding.

The grants support projects aimed at improving or developing clubrooms, women and girls' changing facilities, and playing fields.

The latest funding follows the first round of Legacy Fund grants in December, 2025, when \$687,438 was distributed across 12 projects.

"The funding from NZ Rugby's Legacy Fund has been invaluable, and along with Grassroots is the only reason that we have been able to achieve this new pitch," Andrew told *The Profile*.

"Without the likes of NZ Rugby and Grassroots, projects like this would never happen."

"We have now created a long lasting legacy that will massively benefit our community, our youth, and our school kids. HNRFC are extremely grateful for the funding from NZ Rugby and Grassroots."

The next application window for the Legacy Fund runs until Friday, September 18, with successful recipients announced in December.

DETAILS: More info at www.nz-rugby.co.nz/legacyfund.



Waihi College cooking students receive their medals at a school assembly. RIGHT: Students are ready to cook at the competition. BELOW: A sample of the award-winning fare. Photos: SUPPLIED



Students dish up culinary gold

A culinary cluster of Waihi College students competed at the Waikato Culinary Fare on July 2-3 for the Fare's 21st year. Not only did the young Waihi cooking students cook up a storm, they dominated the medal count.

The two-day competition saw more than 400 aspiring chefs from 20 schools and tertiary providers compete and showcase their talent, creativity and passion. The 2026 results for Waihi College were "humbling" for head of department of food technology and hospitality Siobahn Fitzgerald, with rangatahi (youth) sweeping up a total of 10 gold medals, 11 silver medals and eight bronze medals. It was "a huge testament

to the dedication of the young people, she said.

"They particularly shone in their creativity and their organisation and presentation of their dishes. Accepting and taking feedback on-board can be a test to students' resilience and these girls all worked tirelessly to perfect each element of their dishes," Siobhan said.

One of the "huge moments" for Siobhan was the number of Top in Class wins that students collected.

"Out of 13 classes that we were eligible to enter they took out top in seven of those."

Ana Whatarau, Ella Troughton and Charisse Mercader were all also awarded top in class for their dishes, winning

a total seven of the 13 events that Waihi competed in. The "dynamic duo" and twin sisters Clarisse and Charisse created dishes heavily influenced by their heritage and took the judges on a mini holiday to the Philippines with their flavours. They were awarded Top in Class with their Team Cook.

Charisse also was awarded top for her Healthy lunch dish and Clarisse top for her Cupcakes, Burger and Live Dessert, with Bronze medals for their Mystery box challenge.

"The judges raved about their work in the kitchen, their organisation, teamwork and authentic dishes with a high level of balance and immaculate presentation."

WAIKATO CULINARY FARE RESULTS:
Cupcakes: Clarisse Mercader - Gold with Distinction (a perfect score & Class Winner), Jazmine Jones - Gold; Cold Dessert: Ana Whatarau - Silver, Kendra Wills - Bronze; Cafe Cake: Auriol Stronach - Silver, Meliza Jacob - Silver; Live Restaurant Classes: Chicken: Cleopatra Huang - Gold, Shaniah Manawat

- Bronze; Healthy Lunch: Charisse Mercader - Gold & Class Winner, Cleopatra Huang - Silver; Pizza: Ana Whatarau - Silver, Saffire Walters - Bronze; Mystery Box: Charisse/Clarisse Mercader - Bronze, Ana Whatarau/Cleopatra Huang Merit; Burger: Charisse Mercader - Gold & Class Winner, Clarisse Mercader - Gold, Ana Whatarau - Silver, Meliza Jacobs

- Bronze Shaniah Manawat - Bronze; Dessert: Clarisse Mercader - Silver & Class Winner, Ella Troughton - Silver, Kendra Wills - Silver; Dumplings: Ella Troughton - Gold & Class Winner; 2 Course team menu: Charisse/Clarisse Mercader: Gold & Class Winner; Barista: Jazmine Jones - Silver; Volare Toastie: Ana Whatarau - Gold & Class Winner, Kendra Wills - Bronze.



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Court wins for Valley schools

By ALICE PARMINTER

The Jack McLean Community Recreation Centre in Thames was filled with supporters for the finals of the Thames Valley Secondary Schools Basketball Competition on August 21.

First to compete were the junior boys, with Paeroa College taking the win 106-48 against Mercury Bay Area School.

The Overall Junior MVP for the tournament was

awarded to Paeroa College's Kaitiaki Gurnick.

Next up were the senior girls, and Thames High School fought hard to score a 60-35 victory against Coromandel Area School.

The final match of the evening was the senior boys' finals, pitting Hauraki Plains College against Mercury Bay Area School.

It was a close fight, with Hauraki Plains College winning by one point, for an 84-83 victory.



Kiani Angrove Van der Putten scores for Mercury Bay Area School.



Hauraki Plains College's Denzel Apps, left, and Kayde Veal get some air.



Photos: ALICE PARMINTER



The Paeroa College Junior Boys team.



Dimple Martin scores for Thames High School.



Aiyana Penton-Fair races down the court.



Samuel Isiderio from Hauraki Plains College.

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Contact Lou, Dion and John of Old Mates Property Services. Photo: DAVIDDA HIKATANGATA

Look no further than Old Mates

People might recognise Dion, Lou and John from their former business, Old Mates Pizza and Pasta in Paeroa. For six years, the food connoisseurs fed the masses from their Belmont Rd shop, as well as several markets across the Hauraki-Coromandel. Now, the family has shifted their pace and attention to their new business: Old Mates Property Services.

"We specialise in all your home service needs such as rubbish removal, green waste removal, property tidy ups, deceased estate clearing, shed and fence demolition," Dion said. There's also hedge trimming, lawn mowing, gutter and window cleaning, furniture moving, general labour and water blasting, with the addition of a new commercial water blaster to take care of heavy duty jobs.

The property service experts, who enjoy working outside, say no job is too big or small to tackle, "just get in touch". For people across Thames, Thames Coast, Te Aroha, Ngatea, Waihi, Paeroa and "all directions really", give Old Mates a call to help make your property something to be proud of.

DETAILS: Call or text Dion and Lou on 027 212 2402, or email oldmatesrps@outlook.co.nz. Follow Old Mates Property Services on Facebook.

- By Davidda Hikatangata

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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT



The Auckland Youth Choir. Photo: SUPPLIED

Youth Choir to perform

The Thames Music Group welcomes back the Auckland Youth Choir, directed by David Squire and accompanied by pianist Claire Caldwell. The choir was last in Thames in 2024, and had recently won a gold medal at the World Choir Games, this time, they have not long returned from their first international tour in seven years, having taken a group of 47 singers to Australia to attend the Festival of Voices. Auckland Youth Choir is a 130-strong mixed voice group of singers aged 16–27 from across the city. The choir was set up in 1984 to bridge the gap between school and adult choirs and has had significant success since with innovative performances, large membership growth and collaborations with some of New Zealand’s preeminent musicians and arts organisations. The choir celebrated its 40th Anniversary in 2024. In 2019, the choir won the choral section of the Australian International Music Festival and performed in the Sydney Opera House. In February 2026, AYC was proud to perform at the opening of the New Zealand International Convention Centre alongside internationally acclaimed band, Six60. Auckland Youth Choir concerts have been a highlight of the Thames Music Group Sunday concert series, and this concert is bound to be a treat for your ears. **DETAILS: Sunday 13 September at 2pm, St George’s Church, Mackay St, Thames. Tickets: \$20 Adult, \$15 TMG Member, Free entry for under 18 yrs old.**

Vessel turns over New Leaf

Thames gallery Vessel is celebrating the opening of its new shop on September 4 with an exhibition by its members called *New Leaf*. “This exhibition is a celebration of fresh beginnings, new possibilities and, of course, our exciting new chapter at Vessel,” a spokesperson said. Members each created work inspired by the idea of turning over a new leaf. “So expect plenty of colour, creativity and lots to discover. Come along, have a look around the new shop, meet some of our local artists and enjoy an evening celebrating this next chapter for Vessel. “We’d love to see you there and share our new space with you. Come and turn over a *New Leaf* with us” **DETAILS: Vessel Gallery, 754 Pollen St, September 4, from 5.30pm.**



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Danika leads the way.
Photo: SUPPLIED

Danika rides on world stage

The world of BMX is where Danika Bergersen lives. The young rider, of Hauraki Plains College recently represented New Zealand at the 2026 UCI BMX Racing World Championships in Brisbane, Australia, and competed in the 17-24 female category. “This was my second consecutive World Championship, after also competing at the 2025 World Championships in Copenhagen, Denmark,” the biking whizz said. “It was a huge achievement to qualify for Worlds again and race alongside some of the best BMX riders from around the world.” At the competition, Danika said she achieved the 16th fastest qualifying time in the 17-24 year female category, where she progressed through to the ¼ finals. “The racing was intense, but I really enjoyed the whole experience of being part of such a massive international event.” One of her favourite parts, she said, was when she met riders from different countries and swapped jerseys with riders from France, Australia and Chile. “It was such a cool way to make memories and connections with people who share the same passion for BMX,” she said. “I’m really grateful for everyone who helped me get there, especially my family, sponsors and supporters.”

FOOTBALL

Thames Men Firsts missed the chance to strengthen their position in the race for second place, going down 3-2 away to Waikato Unicol Gold.

Thames have made a habit of starting quickly this season, and Saturday was no exception.

A long kick forward from goalkeeper Mathew Burchell was neatly gathered by Jake Hudson, who weaved past two defenders before firing into the corner to make it 1-0. A dream start for the visitors. Thames doubled their lead on the half-hour mark.

Darius King drew the defender into a foul with some quick footwork, and Yusuke Koizumi took the resulting free-kick. The ball zipped up off the greasy surface and sneaked under Shantanu Ghosh in the Unicol goal and into the net.

Just before half-time, Unicol pulled one back as Fateen Syed found space in the box and fired a low shot into the corner. The second half was one to forget for Thames. Unicol took control, scoring twice in quick succession to turn the game around and seal a 3-2 win. Thames Firsts now drop to fourth, two points behind second place with two games remaining.

Meanwhile, Thames Reserves were involved in an entertaining fixture on the other side of Hamilton, drawing 5-5 with Northern United Booming Kickers at Korikori Park.

It was the sides’ third meeting of the season, with both having won their home fixtures 3-0, and



Criswin Jose scores in the 5-5 draw.

Mark Brown/One of a Kind Photography

another closely fought encounter followed between two well-matched sides.

Northern United started quickly, racing into a 4-1 lead. Thames regrouped at half-time and mounted a brilliant comeback, going ahead 5-4 with goals from Criswin Jose, Raegen Winslow, Alex Langton, Neil Hope and Daniel Burchell.

With time running out, Northern rallied to secure a late equaliser and share the spoils in a ten-goal thriller. Next Saturday is the final double-header of the season,

with both men’s teams playing at Rhodes Park.

The Reserves start the day with a 12:30 kick-off against West Hamilton Development before the Firsts host old foe Waih AFCi at 14:30.

Thames Women are also back in action next Sunday at 11am, following a prolonged break due to postponements. They travel to Gower Park to face Melville Epics in a vital game for their title campaign.

- Jonathan Coles

CLASSIFIEDS Deadline Monday Noon

Death Notice		For Lease		Situation Vacant		Public Notices	
FOX, Annette Mary: Passed away peacefully in Thames with family by her side, on Sunday 30th August, 2026; in her 91st year. Dearly loved wife of the late Noel. Loved mother and mother-in-law of Rosemary and Cliff Olsen, Lorene and Peter Rutherford, Angela Fox and Tony Jurlina. Loved Nana of Gemma, Courtney and Josh, James and Ana, Cameron and Brita, and Sophie. Adored Big Nana of Nova, Luca and Phoebe. 'No longer in our lives to share, but in our hearts forever. We will miss you and cherish the many happy memories'. A Celebration of Annette's life will be held in The Grahamstown Chapel, 102 Kirkwood Street, Thames on Saturday 19th August at 11am. Communications to gorocco@xtra.co.nz or 0279299952.		Yards for lease, Thames and Kopu. Suitable for trucks, vehicles or trade business base. Ph 027 440 7101		FARM WORKER/HANDYMAN We require someone to assist farm owners on their beef farm in the North Waikato (Mangatangi) with stockwork, fencing, tractor work. MUST have NZ experience, have a full drivers licence, be fit and healthy. Please call 0272709866 evenings.		BATTLE OF BRITAIN 86TH BIRTHDAY COMMEMORATIONS 11am Sunday 13 September 2026 at the Thames Airfield 395 Ngāiri Maru Highway, Thames	
For Rent Tiny house, Kaiaua. 1 dbl, 1 sgl furnished brm. 50 metres to sea. Not suitable for children or pets, suit working or retired couple. \$415 p.w. Ph 027 289 8629		Handyman An experienced handyman covering all trades with over 20 years exp building trade. Please contact Laurie King 021 251 0246 ktpropertyservice.com					
Gardening STUMP GRINDING. All sizes, all areas. Thames based. Ph 021 060 7659		Handyman Services THAMES HANDYMAN & BUILDING SERVICES Building, home maintenance & general gardening services Phone: Fleur or Crighton • 0273 913 283					
Land Wanted Land wanted to lease, up to 40 hectares, Hauraki Plains or surrounds, long term. Ph 027 278 5384		Storage 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					
Church Notice Thames Spiritualist Church. Sunday September 6th, 2pm Grahamstown Hall. Speaker: Candida		STORAGE KOPU, PAEROA "New Units" Ph 027 440 7101 07 868 3033 Safe n Sound Storage www.safestorage.co.nz					
Estate Sale Every Sat. in Sept. \$2 entry. BYO milk for a cuppa. Main Rd Hikutaia. Cones by letter box.		Silage Quality silage for sale. Ph Tom Mason, Totara, 07 868 7156 and leave a message.		TOTAL STORAGE LTD KEREPEHI / PAEROA 10FT CON. \$125 per mnth 20FT CON. \$240 per mnth T&C's apply 021 67 67 99 info@totalstorage.co.nz		Builder Friendly licensed builder. 40 years exp. All aspects .No job too small. Ian 021 540 376	
Trades FENCING CONTRACTOR Residential & Rural Retaining walls & more High quality workmanship Competitive prices Call Matt 021 1727 148		Public Notice 2027 Season A.G.M Monday 21st September 6pm Rhodes Park Clubrooms All current members welcome Annual Reports Election of Officers & Committee General Business New members needed Enquiries to Secretary thamesrugby@gmail.com					
CLASSIFIEDS Call Nikki: Ph 022 130 3885		Last month's winner of the lotto ticket was Carolyn Humphries who found Pete in the August 11th edition in the Paton Kitchens advert. Go to page 2 for details about how to enter. 					



DIRECT CREMATION within 15kms of Thames: **\$3395.00* + Doctors Fee**

DIRECT CREMATION requiring transfer from Whangamata, Tairua, Whitianga, Waihi, Paeroa, Ngatea and Coromandel: **\$3595.00***

DIRECT CREMATION requiring transfer from North of Coromandel or Waikato Hospital: **\$3710.00***

Outside all of these areas: \$3395.00 plus mileage

For additional information please refer to Twentymans website: twentymans.co.nz **CONTACT: 07 868 6003**

* Additional mileage may apply, according to roading conditions. + Plus Doctors Fee. The Doctors Fee for medical paperwork required for Direct Cremations is an additional charge. This fee ranges from \$45.00 to \$200.00, determined by the patient's Doctor.





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CONTACT: Forever Pets 07 868 6003.

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SUDOKU

266

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

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

EASY

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

MEDIUM

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

HARD

266

HARD

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

MEDIUM

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

EASY

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

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JUMBO CROSSWORD

286

- ACROSS**

1 Stage performer (5)

4 Against my utmost opposition (4,2,4,4)

11 Correct (5)

14 Sea arm (5)

15 Award for third (6,5)

16 Scholarly world (8)

19 Changed (7)

20 Prepare (5)

21 Study of speech sounds (9)

24 Free to go wherever one pleases (9)

26 Wandered (6)

27 Of mountains (6)

31 Loses colour (5)

32 Enumerated (8)

34 Swimming rescuers (10)

38 Assorted (7)

39 Yacht harbour (6)

40 Board (6)

41 Penalty (4)

42 Fill with distaste (7)

45 Surpassingly excellent (10)

50 Reel (7)

54 Leave out (4)

55 First filming prints (6)

56 XX (6)

57 Cast a spell over (7)

60 Stereotype (10)

61 Make less extreme, intense (8)

62 Tempest (5)

65 Spanish Mrs (6)
- 66 Public thoroughfare (6)

67 Rusting (9)

72 Thwart (9)

73 Intestine part (5)

74 Warm ray (7)

79 Reminded (8)

80 Planetary arrangement (5,6)

81 Turning machine (5)

82 Liabilities (5)

83 Is glaringly obvious (6,3,1,4)

84 Tongue-lash (5)
- 35 Scoff (5)

36 Foam (4)

37 Roadway edging (4)

42 Wilt (5)

43 Oscillating (8)

44 Quick to take offence (6)

45 Furniture covering (10)

46 Foundation (4)

47 Endeavour (7)

48 Meeting schedule (6)

49 Afterwards (5)

51 Layer (4)

52 Shine wetly (7)

53 Accompany (6)

58 Disparagement of something because it is unobtainable (4,6)

59 Agitates (5)

63 Student's tome (8)

64 Find the sum of (3,2)

65 Inundated (7)

68 Tree-dwelling marsupial (7)

69 Evaluate (6)

70 Pamper (6)

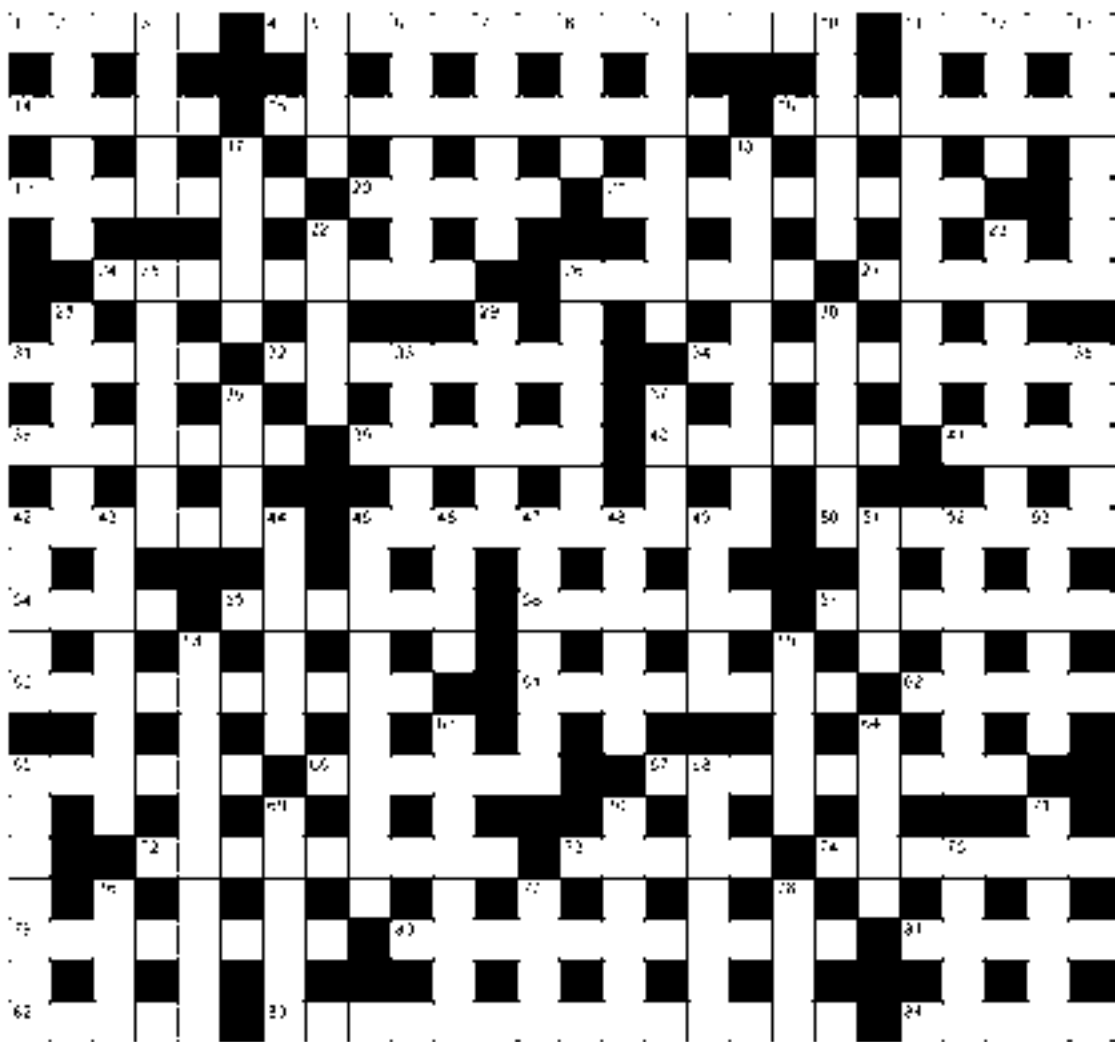
71 Swam (6)

75 Seashore (5)

76 Explosive device (4)

77 Mexican snack (4)

78 Face cover (4)



PREVIOUS SOLUTION

ACROSS: 1 Charges, 4 Thumb a ride, 9 Enchant, 13 Pork, 14 Gambol, 15 Owning, 16 Harrier, 19 Dissimilar, 20 Stopover, 21 Often, 24 Obeyed, 25 Across, 27 Miserable, 32 Stockade, 33 Booked, 34 Shunned, 38 Employer, 39 Kimono, 40 Type, 41 Erase, 42 Lists, 45 A flight of fancy, 52 Veldt, 55 Meant, 56 Best, 57 Shield, 58 Cauldron, 61 Foresaw, 62 Impede, 63 Beholden, 66 Limitless, 68 Ticket, 69 Famous, 73 Tubby, 74 Disclose, 76 Schoolbook, 81 Cobbler, 82 Prunes, 83 Knocks, 84 Data, 85 Trident, 86 Abstinence, 87 Diploma.

DOWN: 1 Coped, 2 Arrested, 3 Static, 4 Tibia, 5 Ugly, 6 Blouses, 7 Ransom, 8 Dingo, 10 Neat, 11 Harmful, 12 Needed, 17 Directions, 18 Never, 22 Hovering, 23 Cache, 24 Oatmeal, 26 Coax, 28 Inertia, 29 Eczema, 30 Nod off, 31 Teased, 33 Bloat, 35 Nurse, 36 Apes, 37 Epic, 43 Icebox, 44 Tense, 46 Free, 47 Isthmus, 48 Hostel, 49 Olive, 50 Fullback, 51 Yearly, 52 Vulnerable, 53 Lard, 54 Tunnels, 59 Panic, 60 Shoe, 64 Claim, 65 Colorado, 67 Imbided, 68 Treason, 70 Rumour, 71 Bonnet, 72 Docked, 75 Carob, 77 Clone, 78 Koala, 79 Neon, 80 Akin.

Shooting for his dreams

FOOTBALL

By ALICE PARMINTER

A pair of shiny new football goals have recently graced the field at Nether-ton School, thanks to the hard work of one of its students.

Head student Harry Powell spent the beginning of the year planning and fun-draising to achieve his dream of having “proper” football goals at the school.

The first step was presenting his idea to the school board and principal Brook Bowman. Once he had the green light, the 12-year-old applied for a grant with the support of his local club, the Hau-raki Plains Football Club.

The new goals were installed on May 9, just in time for the beginning of the Thames Valley football season.

“We have lots of really good ideas at this school - the kids come up with great ideas, but the challenge is seeing the plan through,” Brook said.

“And that is something that Harry has done a phenomenal job of doing.”

Harry’s mother, Fleur Weaver, said she was proud of her son’s determina-tion and initiative.

“Football is one of the most popular activities at the school, with groups of enthusiastic students gathering most lunchtimes to play,” she said.

“It’s been a long, patient wait for Harry, but so worth it. He just lives and breathes football.”

But Harry didn’t stop with the goals. An avid Auckland Football Club sup-porter, he also campaigned for a train-ing session with members of the club’s prestigious football school.

Footballers Josh Arnold and Raihan Azim were happy to support Harry, ar-riving on August 17 to lead Nether-ton

School’s senior students in a morning of drills and skills.

“Harry attends a lot of their camps up in Auckland,” Fleur said.

“Every holidays we go up and he stays for a week... The opportunities aren’t down here, unfortunately. So it’s great to have [the players] come out and share that with the greater population.”

Afterwards, the goals were officially opened, with Harry and Hauraki Plains FC president Matt Vendt cutting the rib-bon.

The students also had the opportunity to see the Auckland team’s A-League and OFC Pro League trophies up close.

Harry told *The Profile* he was thrilled to see his hard work come to fruition.

“I feel like my heart’s going 100 miles an hour... it felt really great,” he said.

“It’s just a super cool opportunity in such a small town.”



Harry Powell, centre, with Auckland Football Club players Raihan Azim and Josh Arnold.



Senior students at Nether-ton School celebrate their new football goals with a skill training session.

Photos: ALICE PARMINTER

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