‘Not again’: historic Kōpū Bridge metal theft disheartens volunteers, P3
ISSUE 297 November 17, 2026

The Valley Profile

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Marching through time



A tiger is transported via time machine to the Steampunk the Thames parade on Pollen St on Saturday.
Photo: RICHARD HORNELL PHOTOGRAPHY

Time was truly marching on through Thames over the weekend as punters gathered for the 11th annual Steampunk the Thames festival. The main parade made its way down Pollen St on November 14, with vehicles and people decked out in their best clockwork gear. Elsewhere in town, numerous events were held over the weekend, including markets, entertainment, competitions, and more. MORE PHOTOS: P7

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Mining campsite granted licence

By ALICE PARMINTER

Despite mayoral confusion over a mining company's intended use of a council-owned paper road, Hauraki District Council has given the go-ahead for OceanaGold to continue its activities there.

At its November 11 meeting, council granted a five-year renewable Licence to Occupy (LTO) to OceanaGold, allowing the company to continue to occupy an already-operational campsite it had set up in the Wharekirauponga Forest north of Waihī.

It follows the repeal of the original LTO, which was granted by council on September 15, 2021, for a period of 40 years, subject to OceanaGold getting approval for its Waihī North mining project under the Resource Management Act.

Mayor Toby Adams said in the council meeting that council granted the original LTO on the understanding that OceanaGold would occupy a footprint of up to 150 square metres on the paper road, for the purpose of building a ventilation shaft for an underground mining access tunnel.

However, instead of a ventilation shaft, the company had built a 144-square-metre timber platform, which holds a campsite housing 10-15 staff. A 20-metre by 20-metre frog-proof fence surrounds the camp.

Fine print in appendix B of the LTO consent conditions included a number of authorised activities besides ventilation shafts, including the "establishment and use of, camp facilities and supporting amenity facilities such as portaloos, showers, and kitchens on sites previously cleared/used for exploration or investigative drilling".

"The [council's] original decision was based on ventilation shafts... I smack myself on the hand for not actually reading through the lawyer's letter, I probably should have had more of an understanding than that, but that's on us," Mayor Adams said.

The original LTO was repealed in the Court of Appeal in April this year after being challenged by environmental group Ours Not Mines Ltd.

However, OceanaGold applied to council for a new LTO so it could continue to use the campsite.

Mayor Adams said even though the campsite was not what council originally thought the site would be used for, it was still important that the councillors were fair and treated the request as they would any other business.

"They're now in a position where they had a Licence to Occupy, they built a structure, which legally they're allowed to do, and then the Court of Appeal has overturned that Licence to Occupy," he said.

"They've now got a structure ... and we can either make a decision to give them a [new] Licence to Occupy or not."

This time, OceanaGold already has approval for the Waihī North mining project through the government's Fast Track approvals process, which means the company now has consent for mining activities - including the construction of ventilation shafts on Department of Conservation land in the Wharekirauponga Forest.

OceanaGold's new application to the council also noted that the paper road site was already in use, with the campsite having been constructed before the original LTO was overturned.

The councillors discussed the issues raised by the Court of Appeal in its judgement against the original LTO, which included concerns that ventilation shafts could impede public access along the paper road. However, they noted that the campsite had a smaller footprint than a ventilation shaft would, and also pointed to the temporary and easily removable nature of such a camp.

Moreover, Mayor Adams noted the site was deep in the forest, accessible only by helicopter, and unlikely to ever have members of the public chancing upon it.

The council agreed the licence would be approved in principle, but would have staff include strong protections for the environment, the community, and the council itself, including fees for the use of council land, in the terms of the licence. The fees are yet to be set, and will be discussed at council's December meeting.

The decision doesn't authorise any mining, drilling or extraction activity. Those matters are subject to entirely separate statutory processes under the Resource Management Act.



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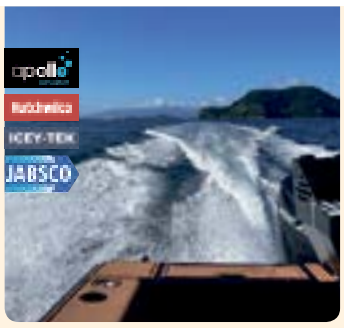


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Thames Tides

	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue
	Nov 18	Nov 19	Nov 20	Nov 21	Nov 22	Nov 23	Nov 24
Morning	1:44am 3.1 7:47am 1.3	2:33am 3.1 8:43am 1.3	3:27am 3.1 9:43am 1.3	4:25am 3.2 10:43am 1.3	5:25am 3.3 11:39am 1.1	12:04am 0.9 6:22am 3.5	12:57am 0.7 7:16am 3.7
Afternoon	2:22pm 3.3 8:31pm 1.3	3:13pm 3.3 9:23pm 1.2	4:04pm 3.3 10:16pm 1.2	4:55pm 3.4 11:10pm 1.0	5:46pm 3.5	12:31pm 1.0 6:38pm 3.6	1:21pm 0.9 7:32pm 3.7
	5:58am 8:09pm	5:57am 8:10pm	5:56am 8:11pm	5:56am 8:12pm	5:55am 8:13pm	5:55am 8:14pm	5:54am 8:15pm
Best At	B 7:33am 7:54pm	B 8:15am 8:37pm	B 8:58am 9:20pm	F 9:43am 10:06pm	G 10:31am 10:56pm	G 11:23am 11:51pm	G 12:21pm
First Quarter	Set 2:03am Rise 1:11pm	Set 2:28am Rise 2:13pm	Set 2:52am Rise 3:16pm	Set 3:16am Rise 4:21pm	Set 3:43am Rise 5:31pm	Set 4:14am Rise 6:45pm	Set 4:52am Rise 8:02pm

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MOON AND FISH KEYS
New Moon · First Quarter · Full Moon · Last Quarter
G Good Fishing · F Fair Fishing · B Not So Good

TIME DIFFERENCES FOR OTHER PLACES
To determine tide times at the following places, add (+) or subtract (-) the given time difference from the Thames times listed in the calendar.

PLACE	HIGH Hr	HIGH Mn	LOW Hr	LOW Mn
Coromandel	- 0	05	-0	04
Whitianga	- 0	09	-0	14
Tairua	+ 0	09	+0	20
Whangamata	- 0	04	-0	06
Waihi Beach	- 0	22	-0	16

‘Not again’: theft, damage disheartens

By ALICE PARMINTER

A brazen metal theft on the historic Kōpū Bridge has left volunteers disheartened by the damage.

Two men, aged 42 and 56, were arrested at the bridge on the evening of November 12 by Police officers on a routine patrol.

Police said the officers had stopped to investigate after noticing the offenders’ car, which belonged to “an individual with a proclivity for scrap paraphernalia”.

“Officers heard loud banging, smashing and crunching from beneath the historic bridge, out over the water,” Eastern Waikato area commander Inspector Mike Henwood said.

Police then called for backup and arrested the offenders after they made their way back to shore.

Their car, which was “loaded with butchered metal”, was also seized.

“It wasn’t scrap metal before they got to it, but they’ve smashed through girders to access the wires [under the bridge] and caused a decent amount of carnage,” the Inspector said.

“This offending is especially frustrating because the damage that’s caused far outweighs the few dollars they would have made if we hadn’t stopped them.”

Kōpū Bridge and Community Trust trustee Kim Buchanan said the extent of the damage was still being assessed, but was expected to be costly and have a huge impact on the group’s restoration efforts.



Friends of the Historic Kōpū Bridge walk the bridge on October 11 to mark 100 years since construction began. File Photo

“The offenders smashed and stripped a fuse box of anything basically that they could sell with no regard to the consequences to the bridge... it’s limited our future options regarding connecting power to the bridge again,” she told *The Profile*.

“They also went and smashed wood and wires underneath the bridge. It’s caused damage to the heritage fabric.

“There doesn’t seem to be visible damage to the pilot house and swing span at this point, but that is still being assessed.”

Currently, the swing span section of the bridge is operated by generator due to the cost of reinstating mains power to the bridge.

But Kim said the cost would be even greater now.

“[The generator] is not as good because it’s kind of stinky and it’s noisy - it’s not like the original heritage experience,” she said.

“But now we really have been cut off from ever putting in power because they’ve taken all the connections and all the stuff that made it work from shore.”

And alongside the cost, there is emotional damage.

“There’s just the mental impact of, ‘oh no, not again’,” Kim said.

“We have working bees out there every Sunday and the same people come week after week - we’ve all poured years and years of work into this.

“And then to have someone come along and just smash things up... They’re not thinking about how it affects them.

“This is one of many, many attacks that have happened. We had our gate stolen ages ago, that was $500 to replace... People have also heavily graffitied [the bridge] many times, we’ve found bottles and evidence of people using it for parties. It’s not good.”

Kim said she was grateful, however, to the outpouring of community support since the incident.

“It’s just been really heartening to read the comments from people saying that this was a terrible thing to do and that the bridge is really important to them. And recognising the work that we’ve put in over such a long time,” she said.

“This has been a very unwelcome distraction for us and [a] cost that we just don’t need. But it won’t stop us.”

The 42-year-old man was due to appear in the Hamilton District Court on November 13, charged with theft and willful damage. The 56-year-old man will appear in the Thames District Court on November 17 on the same charges.

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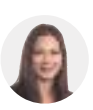
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Set on an impressive 1,118sqm (approx.) section, this charming home combines comfortable everyday living with plenty of future potential. The living area has both a heat pump and wood burner. A practical kitchen. Wet-floor bathroom and separate dedicated laundry make day-to-day life easy. Out back a covered porch adds another inviting space to sit back and relax. Alongside is a detached garage/workshop and sheds.

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HPC Dux: 'Follow your dreams, never give up'

By DAVIDDA HIKATANGATA

Emma Tegg doesn't believe in doing things half-heartedly.

"My motto is if you are going to do it, then do it at your very best, strive for excellence," the 18-year-old Hauraki Plains College student told *The Profile*.

It's the very mindset that propelled the year 13 student to achieve Hauraki Plains College's top award at the school's Academic Prizegiving on November 5.

Emma aid it was "overwhelming, shocking and exciting" when she heard her name announced as the Dux for 2026.

"I was really happy that the students behind me were so happy for me with their support.

"The cheering was amazing," she said.

The top award winner received the Lynne Penrhys-Evans Memorial prize of $1000 and the Dux medal with the Leonard Cup.

Emma, who has also worked part time job at a cafe since she was year 10, said it showed her that "all my hard work and dedication to learning paid off". "I can achieve highly when I put my mind to it."

Emma studied history, English, sociology, mathematics, legal studies and art history, and is set to attend the University of Auckland in 2027 to study a Bachelor of Arts in History and Art History.



Emma Tegg is the Hauraki Plains College Dux for 2026. Photo: SUPPLIED

Something that helped the Dux winner to stay motivated was her ambitious outlook.

"I am a very self driven person, getting excellences always helped me with my goal," she said.

"I am not a loud person, [I'm] quiet and reserved, being recognised in academics was how I could shine."

Emma's journey to Dux didn't come without its rough patches. "I didn't have a great time during my junior years at HPC, but I have always loved learning.

"My mindset was I just needed to turn 16 years old and I could leave [school]. But then I started getting really good teachers, building strong friendships and learning lots, so started to enjoy school more. I decided I would stay in school and just keep going," she said.

It was at the end of year 12 prizegiving in 2025 when Emma told her mum "my goal for next year is to get Dux".

"I achieved my goal, I said I was going to be Dux and I did it."

Now, the high flyer said she would always be "so grateful" to the teachers who supported her such as Mr Thom, Mr Collette, Mrs Place and Mr Entwisle.

Emma said she valued the support and belief of the teachers around her.

"Look after your teachers, we have some amazing teachers at HPC. Be grateful for them, they are sometimes undervalued."

Her hope was that people at HPC would remember that she was hardworking and "put the effort in".

The legacy she wanted to leave behind was a message for people to pursue their goals.

"Set a goal and have an idea of what you want," she said.

"Follow your dreams and never give up."

Meanwhile, Lucia Suess received the Proxime Accessit to dux award.



A year of progress in Hauraki

HAURAKI DISTRICT COUNCIL

MESSAGE FROM **MAYOR TOBY ADAMS**

It's been a tough year for many of us, and I want to be upfront about how Council has done.

We delivered our biggest year of building work ever, with $43 million invested across the district. That includes He Pātaka Kōrero, our new library and community centre in Ngātea, and good progress on the new Paeroa wastewater plant. We also resealed more roads than planned and opened the Morgan Park link extension.

I also want to be open about the deficit shown in this year's results. A significant part of this was because land sales took longer than budgeted but sales are now picking up.

We also faced the same cost pressures that households and businesses are dealing with, while responding to Cyclone Vaianu and other weather events.

We stayed within our borrowing limits.

Thank you to our staff and contractors, who worked hard all year.

I hope you'll take a look at the full report.

Ngā mihi,

Toby Adams, Mayor





Read more about the Annual Report to see the full picture of what your Council delivered in 2025/26

www.hauraki-dc.govt.nz/annualr26

It's been a big year

Here are just some of the highlights we're most proud of delivering for our community



Protecting our Waterways, quietly and carefully

Some of the most important work we do happens out of sight. This year, Council invested over $2 million in wastewater and stormwater infrastructure across the district - upgrading treatment plants in Whiritoa and Kerepēhi, replacing aging pipes, renewing water meters, and maintaining pump stations that quietly do their job every day.



Paeroa Wastewater Treatment Plant

Construction is almost complete on Council's largest-ever capital project - a new wastewater treatment plant for Paeroa. This major investment in public health and environmental protection will future-proof Hauraki for generations to come.



Smoother, Safer Roads

Council exceeded its road resealing target this year, resurfacing 8.5% of the sealed network with major upgrades on Trig Road North, Waitawheta Road and Ridgeview Place. This work protects the road network our communities rely on every day.



Active Communities

New women's and umpire changing rooms at Paeroa Domain, along with accessible seating and planned training lights at Morgan Park, mean more people can participate in community sport. These improvements reflect Council's commitment to inclusive facilities where everyone can thrive.



He Pātaka Kōrero - Hauraki Plains Library & Community Centre

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Visit us at He Pātaka Kōrero in Ngātea - your one-stop shop for Council services and community connection.



Marching on...

Time was marching on through Thames over the weekend, as punters from around the country and overseas gathered for the 11th annual Steampunk the Thames festival. The main parade made its way down Pollen St on November 11, with vehicles and people decked out in their best clockwork gear. Elsewhere in town, numerous events were held including markets, entertainment, competitions, and more. Steampunk the Thames chair **RICHARD HORNELL** captured the day through his lens.



Giant bubbles add to the colour and excitement of the parade.



Dressing up in their Steampunk finest for the annual parade.



A mechanical hand of the future - and past.



Flying through time down Thames' main street. Photos: RICHARD HORNELL PHOTOGRAPHY





Striking a pose during the parade.

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Some* of our movies this week - Thurs 19 November to Wed 25 November

For times & the full list of movies, see our website, grab a brochure from the cinema, or email or phone us.

The Hunger Games: Sunrise on the Reaping (158 mins) M. The Hunger Games: Sunrise on the Reaping will revisit the world of Panem twenty-four years before the events of The Hunger Games, starting on the morning of the reaping of the Fiftieth Hunger Games, also known as the Second Quarter Quell.

Ebenezer: A Christmas Carol (130 mins) M. Starring Johnny Depp. A thrilling ghost story set in Dickens' London, following one man's supernatural journey as he fights for a second chance at redemption.

Wicker (110 mins) R16. Starring Olivia Colman, Alexander Skarsgård…. In a village lives a fisherwoman; smelly, single and perpetually ridiculed. Fed up with her small-minded neighbours, she commissions a husband to be made from wicker. This unconventional romance sparks outrage, jealousy and chaos.

Wild Horse Nine (118 mins) R13. Starring John Malkovich, Sam Rockwell…. Just before the 1973 Chilean coup, CIA agents Chris (Malkovich) and Lee (Rockwell) are dispatched from Santiago to Easter Island. Chris's newfound bond with a pair of rebellious students sends everyone's trip to this paradise sideways.

Sense and Sensibility (132 mins) G. An irresistible new take on Jane Austen's iconic Sense and Sensibility: a charming, witty, and deeply relatable story of love and sisterhood.

Black Sheeps (97 mins) R16. Comedy. Sequel to the NZ cult horror classic Black Sheep. Follows a young scientist tracking a dangerous new pathogen back to the shadow of the remote sheep station.

Coming: Andre Rieu's 2026 Christmas Concert: Let it Snow A heartwarming festive spectacular.

The Incomer On an Orkney isle, siblings Isla and Sandy hunt birds and talk to mythical beings while fighting off outsiders. Their lives change when Daniel, an awkward official, arrives to relocate them.

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RURAL AND LIFESTYLE

Health deteriorates despite 'miracle cure'



As part of a Valley Profile series, ***MEGHAN HAWKES*** *explores our local history by seeking out stories of life and death in the Thames Valley*

Thomas Rawdon complained of being shaken by the coach when he returned to Thames from a trip to Te Aroha in January 1884.

Thomas had been called 'living evidence of what was almost a miracle' after surviving a mine accident several years previously, but his was health was deteriorating.

He had suffered two slight paralytic strokes within the last year and suffered from bronchitis and asthma brought on during the great flood at Thames in 1881.

In December, 1883, in a weakened state and unable to move his hand or foot, he tried the 'cure' at the Te Aroha hot springs with wonderful results. He was able to walk alone and his breathing problems vanished. He strolled about Thames singing the praises of the springs.



Hot Springs Hotel, Te Aroha 1880. Photo: SUPPLIED

Thomas, a 54-year-old married man with no children, was from Lancashire, England.

He had travelled to Australia where he worked as a miner and a road contractor and ganger. He later moved to the South Island, mining at Gabriel's Gully and other Otago and West Coast goldfields.

By 1867 he was in Auckland and swept up in the excitement surrounding the discovery of gold at Thames. Thomas, along with others, was commissioned to consult with Dr Pollen, Deputy Superintendent of Auckland, the outcome being that Thames was declared open for mining.

Thomas was one of the original peggers-out of the afterwards famous Golden Crown claim. He was an experienced, skilful miner who moved on to become a mine manager, running several mines at Tapu. He developed the resources of Waiotahi Creek, and discovered a rich run of gold in the Shamrock mine. It was while inspecting the Shamrock that the timbers supporting the drive collapsed, nearly entombing Thomas and causing dreadful injuries to his spine. He was confined to a water bed in Thames hospital for about two years. When he recovered, Dr Lethbridge described him as living evidence of almost a miracle.

'Old Tom', as he was affectionately called, was a kind hearted, genial man with a wide circle of friends. He was a member of the mutual aid organisations the Ancient Order of Foresters and the Ancient Order of Shepherds.

He returned to mining but the effects of the accident remained. He was appointed Foreman of Works for the council in 1873 having had experience as road contractor and ganger in Australa.

As the years passed he was never quite free of ill-health and in January 1884 after returning from the Te Aroha springs he was seen unwell in Brown Street and advised to go home. But the next morning he was nowhere to be found.

Alarmed, Mrs Rawdon went to the Borough Council where Thomas' lifeless body was discovered in his office. It seemed that he had gone there to rest before proceeding home the night before. An inquest was considered unnecessary.

Thomas's funeral was attended by a great number of the public as well as the Grahamstown and Shortland Fire Brigades, three Masonic lodges and the Foresters.

Thames' once living miracle is buried at Tararu cemetery.

Chris' Quiz

Weekly quiz compiled by Chris Parminter

1. Which of the following elements is strongly magnetic at room temperature? a) Iron, b) lead, or c) Titanium?
2. Which of the following organs or major body structures is normally free of blood vessels? a) Appendix, b) bladder, or c) cornea?
3. Earlier this year, UK cricketer Brian Devine received a two-year ban after clicking his fingers to: a) distract the umpire's gaze, b) speed up play, or c) imitate the sound of the ball hitting the bat?
4. After Latvia and Lithuania, what country is the third Baltic state/country? a) Belarus, b) Estonia, or c) Finland?
5. True or false: identical twins have identical fingerprints?
6. What name is given to a Kauri tree that has begun to shed its lower branches - usually between 30 and 50 years old? a) Bicker, b) Ricker, or c) Zwicker?
7. If a movie has a Rotten Tomatoes score of over 90 per cent, does that mean the movie received: a) mostly positive reviews, or b) mostly negative reviews?
8. If you were wearing a 'Canadian tuxedo', what would you be wearing? a) A formal suit and ice skates, b) matching denim jeans and a denim jacket, or c) nothing at all?
9. After the Model A in 1903, what was the next car to be introduced by Ford? a) Model B, b) Model C, or c) Model T?
10. Which New Zealand electorate is the largest by geographical area? a) Southland, b) Te Tai Tonga, or c) West Coast-Tasman?

ANSWERS: 1. a) Iron; 2. c) Cornea; 3. c) Imitate the sound of the ball hitting the bat (in an attempt to convince the umpire that the batter had edged the ball and should be given out caught behind); 4. b) Estonia; 5. False. Identical twins have unique fingerprints; 6. b) Ricker; 7. a) Mostly positive reviews; 8. b) Matching denim jeans and a denim jacket; 9. a) Model B (in 1904). The popular Model T wasn't introduced until 1908; 10. b) Te Tai Tonga (A Māori electorate that comprises all of the South Island, Chatham Islands, Stewart Island and parts of the Wellington Region).

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On the Land



Rock drilling competition organiser Kevin Peka competes. Photos: TERESA MAXWELL

On show

Rural life was celebrated in style at the Waihī A&P Show on Saturday, November 14. There was a rock drilling competition, horses, livestock, food trucks, entertainment, market stalls and family rides at the show, which is in its 86th year.



Maia Goodwin, 12, wins the Waihī class.



Farrah Kirk with her yearling jersey Vogue.



Waihī's Olivia McIntyre wins Rider over hurdles.



Reet Sandhu, 7, of Waihī enjoys a pony ride.



Kevin Cave and nephew Hunter enjoy a ride.



Vivian Clayton-Greene in Arabian costume.

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2026 dairy benchmarking: solid season and rising costs

ADVERTORIAL

The 2025/26 season was another solid one for Waikato dairy farmers, with increased production, a sound milk price and stronger livestock values all contributing positively.

Our 2026 benchmarking pool covers 134 Waikato dairy businesses producing 21.9 million kgMS across more than 18,000 effective hectares, giving us a strong picture of what is happening across the region.

For Farm Owner/Operators, average production reached a six-year high of 1,219 kgMS per hectare and 440 kgMS per cow, up 8% and 7% respectively on last year. Stocking rates remained relatively consistent, suggesting farmers are continuing to get more production from the land and animals already in the system.

The average cash dairy payout for Owner/Operators was a very workable $9.57 kgMS, down from $10.25 kgMS last year.

Livestock values also strengthened considerably during the year, with higher sale prices flowing through to Herd Scheme values. Net Livestock Cash Income lifted by $0.28 kgMS, while the value of a Mixed Age dairy cow increased by $713 per head.

The Fonterra capital return also provided a one-off boost to cash available during the year, giving farmers additional capacity for tax, debt repayment and reinvestment.

The sting in the tail is rising costs

The trend we are watching closely is farm operating expenditure.

Farm operating costs for Owner/Operators increased from $5.45 kgMS to $5.99 kgMS, a 10% increase in one year. Animal health spend increased 20% per cow, feed increased 10% per kgMS and fertiliser expenditure increased 40% per hectare.

That matters because higher costs are absorbing more of each dollar earned. Gross Operating Income for Owner/Operators fell from $5.39 kgMS to $4.32 kgMS, a greater decline than the fall in milk price.

In absolute cash terms, the impact is even clearer. In 2025, Gross Operating Cash Income was $1.553m and, after operating expenses of $781k, $772k remained for non-operating expenditure. In 2026, Gross Operating Cash Income increased to $1.768m, but operating expenses rose to $1.027m, leaving $741k. So despite an additional $215k of cash income coming into the business, there was actually $31k less left after operating costs.

It is perhaps the clearest message from this year's results: a good payout doesn't automatically translate into a good margin. Over the past few seasons, farmers have generally been able to absorb rising expenditure through stronger dairy returns and increased production. The question looking ahead is how sustainable that will be if milk prices eased off while the higher cost base remains.

What about 50/50 sharemilkers?

It was also a good season for our 50/50 sharemilkers, although they were not immune from increasing costs.

Farm operating costs increased 15% to $3.42 kgMS, with a 10% increase in feed spend, a 15% increase in animal health costs and a 10% increase in herd improvement expenditure.

Livestock continued to be a positive story, with Livestock Cash Income increasing by 28%. This helped offset the lower average payout for the group, which was down $0.07 kgMS. Despite some pressure on margins, overall profitability remained among the stronger results in our six-year comparison.

Where the margin opportunity lies

Perhaps one of the more interesting takeaways from this year's benchmarking came from looking more closely at the top 25% of profitable Owner/Operators.

The top performers generally had lower costs across a range of areas, particularly feed and labour, highlighting the value of continuing to fine-tune already well-run farming systems.

Average feed expenditure across all Owner/Operators was approximately $1.93 kgMS, compared with around $1.46 kgMS for the top quartile. Wages were approximately $0.84 kgMS across the benchmark group, compared with $0.70 kgMS for the top quartile.

With production already at strong levels, managing the cost base becomes increasingly important. This is not simply about just spending less, but looking across the farming system at where a combination of money, time and resources at hand are being used and the value they are delivering.

A good time to look ahead

2026 represented another good year for the dairy sector, with strong production and livestock returns supporting results. However, rising farm working expenses are steadily lifting the underlying cost base.

The challenge ahead will be maintaining the strong production farmers are achieving while continuing to keep a close eye on costs and overall farm profitability.

If you would like to see how your results compare with the Cooper-Aitken 2026 Waikato Dairy Farming Benchmarking data, contact us about preparing an individual comparison report.





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Volunteers wrap gifts during last year's appeal. File Photos: DAVIDDA HIKATANGATA

Toy Appeal to share joy

By DAVIDDA HIKATANGATA

It's an important time of year in the town of Paeroa.

Not only is it nearing the end of year, it's also time for people to spread Christmas cheer through the Paeroa Baptist Church's annual Community Christmas Toy Appeal.

From now until December 5, people are invited to share some Christmas cheer for families and children, who might otherwise miss out, by donating and placing a gift under the Christmas tree at one of two drop-off points in town: the Paeroa Library or the Hauraki Bike Hire/Paeroa Information Hub.

Paeroa Baptist Church Pastor Bryce Millar said they were "really blessed" to act as the go-between between the givers and the kids who needed it.

The focus was on families and children who they could "bless as a community".

"It's this cool reflection of our community that people give so generously and have done for a long time now," he told *The Profile*.

Last year's community efforts rallied together more than 300 presents, each with multiple gifts in them, Bryce said.

"We've never not had enough, we've never missed any kids out, you know, which is really special."

December 5 is the final day for all donated gifts to be placed at the drop-off points as a team of volunteers will collect and sort them for the wrapping day at the Paeroa Baptist Church on December 9 from 9am.

Donations of gift wrap as well were always welcome, he said.

"We'll happily take it. The good thing about gift wrap is that we can hold it for the next year.

"We're really grateful for all the people who donate, and we're really grateful for all the schools and the community groups who help nominate and deliver as well," he said.

"We don't want any kids to miss out."

DETAILS: Donated gifts need to be new or in excellent condition for children aged newborn-12 years old, and donations of wrapping paper are also appreciated. Gift drop-off is at the Paeroa Library at 5 Mackay St; the Hauraki Bike Hire/Paeroa Information Hub at 6 Wharf St. Place unwrapped gifts under the Christmas tree at the drop-off points by December 5. For more info, contact Jill Robertson, Ph 027 414 4853 or email paeroabapchurch@gmail.com. To help wrap gifts on December 9, visit the Paeroa Baptist Church, 2 Wood St, from 9am.



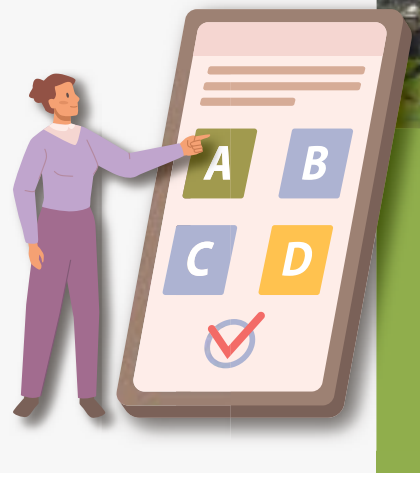
Have your say on OceanaGold's operations in Waihī

OceanaGold is inviting people living in Waihī and the surrounding area to take part in its annual Community Perceptions Survey.

The survey asks about your views and experiences of OceanaGold's operations, including the economy, health and wellbeing, and the environment.

All perspectives are welcome, even if you have had little or no direct experience with OceanaGold.

The survey takes approximately 5–10 minutes to complete. Responses are anonymous.





To complete the survey by 21 December...

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SPORTS

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Constable drives home Police golf title

GOLF

By KELLEY TANTAU

Three birdies in his final five holes helped Thames constable Keegan Walsh overcome a third-round setback and win the 2026 New Zealand and South Island Police Sport Golf Championships earlier this month.

The tournament, held at the St Clair Golf Club in Dunedin from November 1-3, saw Keegan finish on a high, with the victory all the more rewarding after several years of coming up short in his own local championships.

"It feels amazing to finally get a win," he told *The Profile*. "Over the last few years, I've tried and fallen short at my club's Club Championships, which at times has left me quite disheartened with golf. So to finally achieve this feels like a weight off my shoulders."

Keegan said the tournament went well overall, and he managed to play consistently across the rounds. However, in round three, he made a triple bogey on a "relatively easy par-three" 13th hole.

"I managed to bounce back, making three birdies over the final five holes to finish my round at even-par 71," he said.



Thames' Keegan Walsh wins this year's NZ and South Island Police Sport Golf Championships. SUPPLIED

"It was awesome coming down the last hole with a crowd gathered around the 18th green and receiving the applause as I holed my final putt."

It was Keegan's second time competing in the NZ Police Golf Championships.

His first appearance was fairly uneventful, with a disappointing result, he said, so it was great to come back and achieve "a much better outcome" this time around.

Keegan has been playing golf for around 14 years.

Last year, his team won the Division 2 Pennants final and earned promotion to Division 1, which was a first for Hauraki Golf Club, he said.

Away from the golf course, Keegan is also a familiar face at Kaihere Cricket Club, where he has played for most of his cricketing career, starting out with the junior Kaihere Cubs before progressing to the senior Kaihere Cougars.

"It's a club that's very special to me and my mates," he said. "It's very much built around family and friendships, with many of us having known each other since day one."

He said cricket shared some similarities with golf, particularly when it came to hand-eye co-ordination.

"For me, it's great being able to play both. Golf is very much an individual sport where you're competing within yourself, whereas cricket offers that team camaraderie, which I think is really important."

Keegan, a frontline constable stationed in Thames, said his win at this year's New Zealand and South Island Police Sport Golf Championships had gone down well with his colleagues.

"It's been awesome having so many fellow Police members congratulate me on the achievement. There's been some great support from within the organisation, which I've really appreciated."



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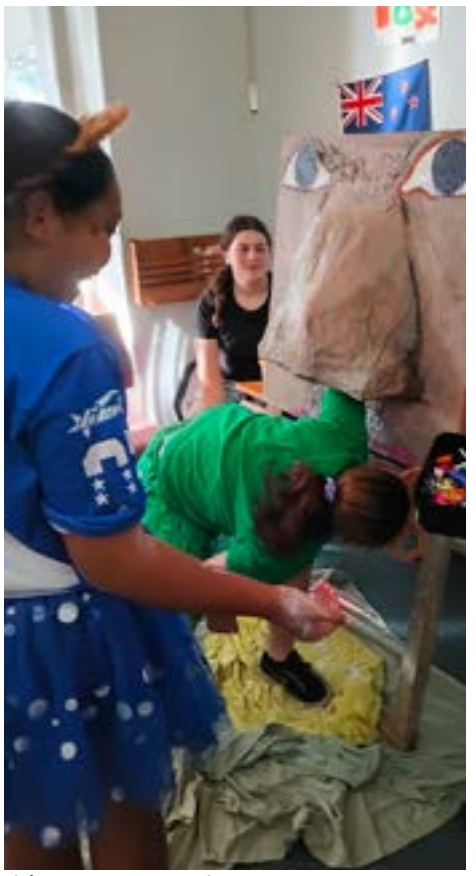
It was a night of adventure across Hauraki on October 31. That's when tamariki, whānau and people from the community explored the Halloween Alternative event in Paeroa and the Light Party in Waihī. Halloween Alternative organiser Bob Turlington said many parents and kids enjoyed the event which was in its 16th year. It was held at Paeroa Baptist Church. Children and families were treated to a night of fun, food, prizes and games such as Pick Your Nose, Smack the Rat and more. Meanwhile, there were bouncy castles, face painting, laser tag, music, fire engine rides and more in full force at the Waihī Baptist Church Light Party. Reporter **DAVIDDA HIKATANGATA** took in the sights and sounds.



Smack the Rat game. Photos: SUPPLIED



Organiser Bob Turlington hands out prizes.



Pick Your Nose game in Paeroa.



The Rainbows **adventure around the Light Party in Waihī.** Photos: DAVIDDA HIKATANGATA



Jeeva, Jake and Jianna enjoy the Light Party.



The swing ride is a hit.

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Water is a standout feature, with an abundant and reliable supply from both town water and a natural spring-fed stream. Established trees and a natural pond enhance the property's appeal and create an attractive rural setting. Conveniently located just 11km from Thames, and 5.7km from the nearest boat ramp at Kopu, the property is also close to a country primary school, local café, and rail trail, offering the perfect balance of rural living and everyday convenience.

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Helping grow the country



Tailings Storage Facility 3 — Preparation work starting soon

You may start to see more activity around our tailings storage facilities over the coming weeks as we begin preparing the site for the development of our new Tailings Storage Facility (TSF3).

TSF3 will be located next to TSF1A (our existing Tailings Storage Facility) and was approved as part of the Waihi North Project in December 2025. The first stage of work will include:

- Widening parts of the existing TSF perimeter roads
- Moving some farm fencing
- Removing topsoil and rock material that is unsuitable for construction from the area where the new embankment will be built.

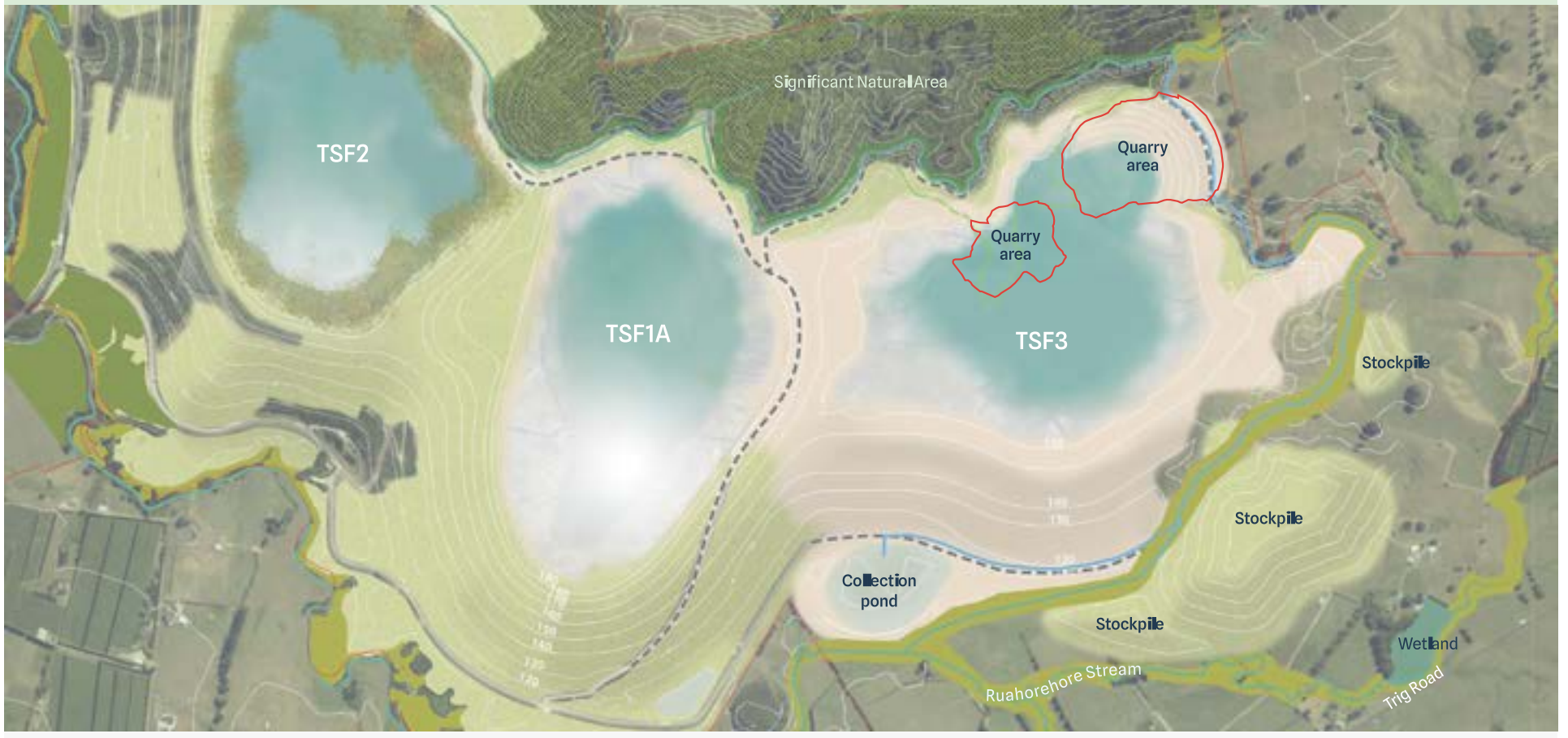
During these works, there will also be a temporary increase in trucks using the haul road at the bottom of the existing TSF embankments, as aggregate is brought to site for the road upgrade works.

Managing effects

As always, we will work to manage the effects of our activities on our neighbours and the wider community, including traffic, noise and dust associated with the works.

Hours of operation

Initially, most activities will be undertaken between 7.00 am and 7.00 pm on weekdays, and between 7.00 am and midday on Saturdays.
As the project progresses, some work may also take place between midday and 7.00 pm on Saturdays and between 7.00 am and 7.00 pm on Sundays, subject to compliance with the stricter noise limits that apply during those periods.



Questions or concerns

We appreciate your patience and understanding as this next stage of work gets underway. If you have any questions, concerns or would like further information, please contact us on our 24/7 **Community Engagement Line: 0800 924 444.**

More information about our activities is also available on the Waihi Gold website or by visiting our **Project Information Office at 86 Seddon Street.**

Please note

We are not currently blasting in the Martha Open Pit.

Any changes to this will be notified.



Possum chase lands Jess in deep trouble

A keen nose for possums landed six-year-old fox terrier Jess in a predicament that would take several rescue teams and the better part of a day to resolve.

Jess was out on her weekly bush walk in the Maratoto Valley with owner Sarah, a friend, and the friend's dog, when the group came across a historic mine opening.

The Maratoto area has a long history of gold and silver mining, dating back to the late 1800s. Stamper batteries, processing plants, ore transport systems, and multiple underground horizontal adits and vertical shafts were once scattered through the hills and valleys.

Normally, Jess doesn't stray far and takes commands well. ***"She's quite a homebody. She doesn't wander at all. But she does like the old possums. A lot,"*** said Sarah.

Jess picked up a scent, went into the mine entrance and disappeared from sight. ***"I heard a bit of a yelp. I was like, 'Oh, surely not.' Oh yes, she's down a mine shaft,"*** Sarah said.

Using head torches, the group could see Jess at the bottom of the near-vertical shaft, an estimated 10 to 15 metres below them. There was no safe way for them to climb down, and with no cellphone reception at the site, getting help meant heading back through the bush.

Sarah made the roughly 45-minute trip back to the road, walking and running along the way, while the friend stayed near Jess with their dog. A neighbour was contacted and raised the alarm.

After some back and forward with different emergency services, it was decided that the rescue was best suited to the skills and equipment of the Waihi Mines Rescue team, which is made up of OceanaGold staff.



Meanwhile, the hours were adding up... ***"She fell down the mine shaft at about 11:30 in the morning. When the Mines Rescue team turned up, it was about 6pm,"*** Sarah said.

With the light quickly fading, the team assessed the historic mining site: a 30-metre horizontal tunnel, and then the near-vertical shaft Jess was now trapped in.

After confirming the area was safe, the team found the tunnel walls weren't suitable for anchor points. Instead, they anchored their ropes to nearby trees, then ran them through the tunnel and down the shaft.

"I could hear her whining as I was abseiling down, but she calmed down once I reached her. I secured Jess in the bag and the team lifted her out," said team member Kristin Gillard.

After close to eight hours underground, Jess emerged apparently no worse for wear, but certainly hungry. She tucked straight into the dog roll the family had brought and even helped herself to a high-protein muesli bar.

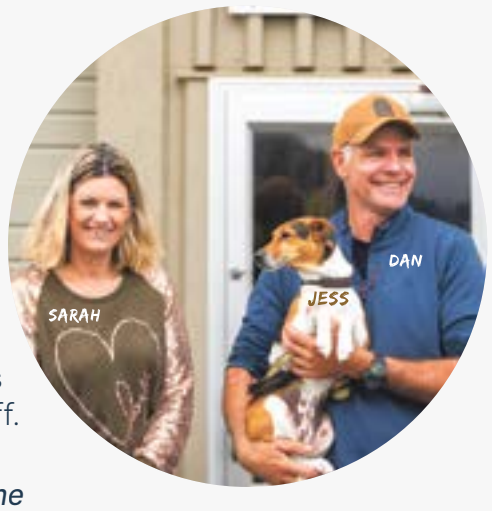
Her terrier instincts were clearly intact. ***"She walked out, and then she was still keen on chasing possums,"*** Dan said.

For Sarah and Dan, getting Jess back safely was an enormous relief. ***"We're just grateful to everyone involved in rescuing her, because she's like a member of the family,"*** Sarah said.

Dan was particularly impressed by the way the Mines Rescue team approached the job.

"The Mines Rescue team had a pretty good attitude. They were confident and really professional in what they did. They didn't take any risks," said Dan.

A vet check the next morning found no injuries, and any hope the ordeal had made Jess more cautious was short-lived. By the following day, she was already on the trail of another scent.



As Dan put it:

"I don't know if dogs get nine lives, but one's gone."

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Whangamata Menz Shed	Roller door installation	$1,438
Waihi Beach Events and Promotions	Costs for free community event	$2,988
Hetherington House	Commercial dryer replacement	$9,486
	TOTAL	**$14,530**



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O Thames/Thames Coast

O Paeroa

O Waihī

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O Whitianga

O Whangamatā

O Tairua/Pauanui

O Other _____

3. Ethnicity
Please tick one

O NZ European

O Maori

O Asian

O Pasifika

O Prefer not to say

O Other _____

4. Gender
Please tick one

O Male

O Female

O Other _____

The Valley Profile

YOUR NEWSPAPER

5. How long have you lived in the Hauraki or Thames-Coromandel region?
Please tick one

O Less than 2 years

O 2–10 years

O More than 10 years

O All my life

O I live out of the region

6. How often do you read *The Valley Profile?*
Please tick one

O Every issue

O Most issues

O Occasionally

O Rarely

7. Do you share your newspaper with anyone else?
You can tick more than one!

O Yes, family

O Yes, friends or neighbours

O Yes, colleagues

O No, I keep it to myself

8. How much of the newspaper do you usually read?
Please tick one

O Most or all of it

O Several articles

O Mainly browse headlines and advertisements

9. What do you enjoy about *The Valley Profile?*
You can tick more than one!

O Local journalism and community issues

O Community events and activities

O People and human interest stories, profiles

O Sports coverage and stories

O Schools and youth

O Business news and advertising

O Photos

O Other _____

10. What would you like to see MORE of in *The Valley Profile?*

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

11. Do you find our local business advertisements useful?
Please tick one

O Very useful

O Quite useful

O Occasionally useful

O Rarely useful

12. Have you ever contacted, visited or purchased from a business after seeing its advertisement in *The Valley Profile?*
Please tick one

O Yes, several times

O Yes, occasionally

O Not yet

13. What are your favourite sections or features of *The Valley Profile?*

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

14. What could we do to make *The Valley Profile* even better?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

15. Where do you usually get your copy of *The Valley Profile?*
You can tick more than one!

O Delivered to my home

O At work

O Local shop or business

O Community venue

O Digital Edition at www.valleyprofile.co.nz

O Other _____

16. Which types of local businesses are you most likely to use?
You can tick more than one!

O Cafés and restaurants

O Retail shops

O Trades and home services

O Health and beauty

O Professional services

O Farming and rural services

17. Would you recommend *The Valley Profile* to others?
Please tick one

O Definitely

O Probably

O Not sure

O Probably not

THANK YOU!

Your feedback helps us continue telling the stories of our community.

We really appreciate you taking the time to complete The Valley Profile readership survey!

Please either email a copy of your completed survey to editor@valleyprofile.co.nz, or you can post it to:
The Valley Profile,
14 Victoria Street,
RD2 Waihi 3682.

This survey is anonymous. All queries can be emailed to Editor/Owner Teresa Maxwell, editor@valleyprofile.co.nz.

PLACE AN AD WITH THE VALLEY PROFILE
Contact Nikki Sanders, Ph 022 130 3885 or nikki@valleyprofile.co.nz

Waihī College Celebrates Academic Achievement

KEI KŌNEI TĀTOU E TŪ ANA
HERE WE STAND

Waihī College recently celebrated its 2026 Senior Academic Prizegiving, recognising the outstanding academic achievements, dedication and hard work of its students. The evening was a wonderful opportunity to acknowledge student success and celebrate the important role that whānau, teachers and the wider school community play in supporting their achievements.



Special congratulations go to **Zoe-Beth Naisby**, who was awarded the prestigious title of **Dux of Waihī College 2026**, and **Zara Clare**, who received **Proxime Accessit (Runner-Up to Dux).**

Both students are thoroughly deserving of these honours, which reflect their exceptional commitment, perseverance and academic success throughout the year. Waihī College is incredibly proud of their achievements and congratulates all students recognised at this year's prizegiving.

As many of our senior students prepare to take their next steps into tertiary study and beyond, we are proud to celebrate the incredible scholarship opportunities awarded this year, totalling $127,000. These scholarships provide invaluable support for our students as they pursue their future goals, and we extend our sincere thanks to the generous sponsors and organisations who continue to invest in our young people.

2027 STUDENT LEADERS

Leader of Arts & Cultural



Ruby-Rose Sandford

Leader of Environment



Auriol Stronach

Leader of Service



Ben Paulsen

Leader's of Well Being



Tessa Menary



Libby Sammons

Leader of Te Ao Māori



Nikora MacCalman

Leader of Learning



Eli Townsend

Leader of Sports



Lachlan Osborne-Sole

Leader of Community



Kate Goodwin

Board of Trustees Representative



Anakah Lewis

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- J Baker (Sel Baker Family) • Jack Silcock Trust
- Maia Short Memorial (B Habberfield) • Martha Women's Club
- Meares Electrical • OceanaGold • Photolife
- Pioneer Fire & Security • Silcock Trust (Paterson/Silcock Family)
- Waihī 100% Electrical • Waihī Agricultural Education Trust
- Waihī Beach RSA • Waihī Family Dentist • Waihī Lions Club
- Waihī Memorial RSA • Waihī Paper Plus/Toyworld • Waihī Tyres
- Waikato Graduate Women Education Trust • White Cliff Timber Ltd

Particular congratulations go to the winners of the 2026 Special Prizes which recognize academic success as well as leadership and community involvement. The night's key winners were:

The Kurt Hahn Award

Kurt Hahn established the Outward Bound movement, and this award is for a person who best fits the Outward Bound movement motto "to seek, to strive and not to yield".



Isla Menary

The John van der Zwan International Student Award

This trophy is awarded to the international student who has embraced opportunities and contributed to school life.



Cleopatra Huang

The Bronwyn Wightman Memorial Trophy

This award is for a student who has enthusiastically participated in school activities, has a bubbly personality and has a great sense of community.



Alexis Hughes

Maia Short Memorial Scholarship

This is for a year 13 Girl with a top academic performance, who is a good citizen, friendly and helps others. Maia Short was destined for leadership and her Taha Māori was incredibly important to her.



Rylee Morgan

Ara Poutama Award

This award is presented by Whaea Tuihana Jack-Ainsley for someone who shows leadership qualities and is a positive role model for our Maori Students.



Mahana Magee

The Jack Silcock Memorial Cup



Aliya Smith

This cup is named in memory of Jack Silcock and recognises students who have shown tremendous strength and resilience throughout their schooling at Waihi College. It recognises a person who has put others before themselves.

The Chandel Cup

This is for the student who has made the most consistent effort during the year.



Aysheia Domasing

The Ryan Aluminium Trophy

This trophy is for Service to school and community.



Luke Stevens

The O'Leary Cup for Leadership

For being an exceptional role model and showing leadership within the school.



Zoe-Beth Naisby

Penny Bowden Trophy for Performing Arts

This award is in memory of Penny Bowden and is given to the student who has been a mainstay in the performing arts, worked hard to achieve their artistic talents while helping others do the same.



Cade Tucker

The Principal's Award

For someone who has worked hard all year and made a significant contribution to the life of the school.



Ruby Wilhelmi



Ella Troughton



Ana Whatarau

The Sel Baker Cup for Humanities

For the student who has dedicated time and passion to helping others through community spirit and tackling current issues.



Zara Clare

The Ethel Madgwick Cup – Rural Women NZ

This is awarded to a student who wishes to further their studies outside of Waihi College.



Alexis Hughes

The John Combes Memorial Cup for Science and Mathematics

This cup was presented to the College by the Combes family in memory of John Combes who was an outstanding student of Maths and Science.



Rian Morgan

The Board Chairman's Award and the Waihi Beach Lions Trophy



Stella Shave

For a student who is responsible, active, and a contributing member of their community showing integrity, respect, responsibility, tolerance and cooperation.

Best All-Round Girl, Board Chairman's Award & Martha Women's Club Award

For academic, cultural, sporting and service.



Isla Menary

Best All-Round Boy and, Board Chairman's Award

For academic, cultural, sporting and service.



Rian Morgan

The Coombes Cup for PROXIME ACCESSIT

Runner up to Dux



Zara Clare

The Waihi Lions Scholarship & The Harry Shepherd Cup for DUX

Top academic achievement for Waihi College

Zoe-Beth Naisby



Year 12

First	Second	Third
		
Jessica Yeh	*Carlee Huang*	*Auriol Stronach*

Year 11

First	Second	Third
		
Daria Galey	*Eli Townsend*	*Tessa Menary*

The Rogers Calculus Cup

First in Calculus in Year 13/NCEA Level 3

Tiana Reynolds



The Golden Apple

For Year 12 Art

Honoka Kobori



Grover Plate

For Year 13 Art

Tiana Reynolds

Te Whanganui-a-Tara/Wellington

Ruby Wilhelmi

Zoe-Beth Naisby

Canterbury University

Stuart Hartley

Waihi Agricultural Education Trust

Alexis Hughes

Rian Morgan

Ruby Wilhelmi

The Kathleen Adams Memorial Award Scholarship

Cade Tucker

Zoe-Beth Naisby

University of Waikato Scholarships

Isla Menary

The Sharpe Tudhope Law Scholarship

James Flanagan

Waihi Lions Trades Scholarship

Callan Dodd

The University of Otago Scholarship

Asha Davies-Young

Reece Neame

Malea Hutchins

The David Johnstone Scholarship

Isla Menary

James Flanagan



SUDOKU

277

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

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

EASY

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

MEDIUM

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

HARD

277

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HARD

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

MEDIUM

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

EASY

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

JUMBO CROSSWORD

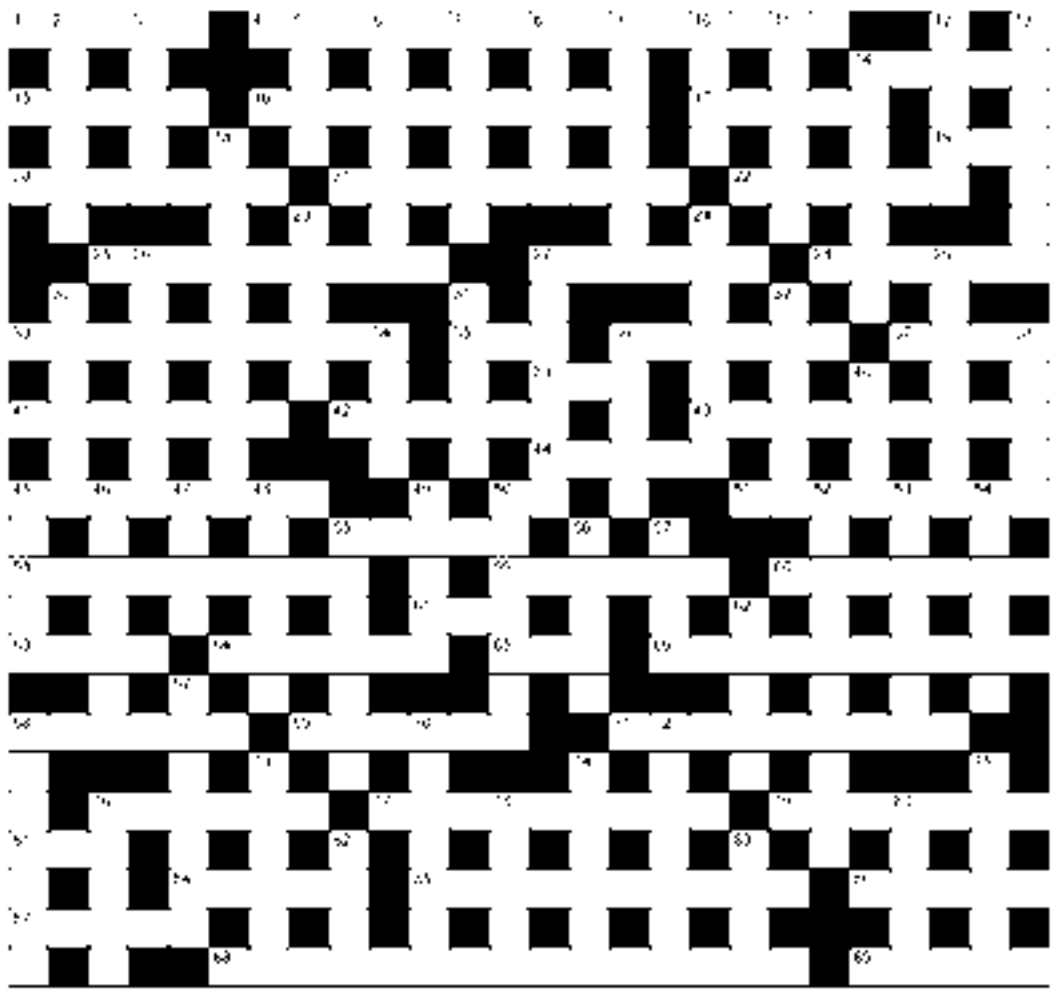
297

ACROSS

1 Male duck (5)
4 Cause embarrassment with a tactless remark (3,4,4,2,2)
14 Spear (5)
15 Messenger (5)
16 Promiscuous (10)
17 Unit of weight (5)
19 Small child (3)
20 Ahead (7)
21 Domain (9)
22 Basic commodity (6)
25 Swing (9)
27 Brownish pigment (6)
28 Little by little (6)
33 Alliance, coalition (10)
35 Application (3)
36 Social standing (6)
37 Clothing (4)
39 Meshed snare (3)
41 Egotism (7)
42 Harmony (6)
43 Fatherhood (9)
44 Poem of lament (5)
45 At an angle (8)
50 Alternatively (2)
51 Hired (8)
55 Farewell (5)
58 Sparkled (9)
59 Cheap and showy (6)
60 Skilled worker (7)
61 Cereal head (3)
63 Blown instrument (4)
64 Of higher rank (6)
65 Tune (3)
66 Warranted (10)
68 Hair cutter (6)
69 Breed of sheepdog (6)
71 Gradual increase in loudness (mus)(9)
76 Supplies (6)
77 Dispersed (9)
79 Scrape with nails (7)
81 Female rabbit (3)
84 Freight (5)
85 Non-resident hospital user (10)
86 Camera adjustment (5)
87 Social blunder (5)
88 Troupers' motto (3,4,4,2,2)
89 Burnt remains (5)

DOWN

2 French painter (6)
3 Recognised (5)
5 Single undivided whole (4)
6 Dine to excess (7)
7 Whole (6)
8 Contemptuously disregard (5)
9 Witness (7)
10 Golf club (4)
11 Set fire to (6)
12 Join together (5)
13 Fate (7)
14 Practical joke (3-4)
18 Sign (10)
23 Undecorated (5)
24 Feeling blue (7)
26 Clients (anag) (7)
27 Gracefully thin (7)
29 With languor (7)
30 Fame (6)
31 Private teacher (5)
32 Habitual practice (6)
34 Small cut (4)
36 Iron alloy (5)
38 Howled (5)
40 Spoken (4)
45 Cast metal bar (5)
46 Mountaineer (7)
47 Jot (4)
48 Gained by work (6)
49 Long-term prisoner (5)
50 Feeling of righteous anger (7)
52 Everlastingness (10)
53 Left out (7)
54 Thrilled (6)
55 Fan (7)
56 Trophy (5)
57 Medication (4)
62 Untrue (5)
67 Jubilate (7)
68 Slavery (7)
70 Small flute (7)
72 Staggering (7)
73 Scarcity (6)
74 Soldier's decorations (6)
75 Blame (6)
76 Villeins (5)
78 Effigy (5)
80 Ages (5)
82 Throw (4)
83 Annul (4)



PREVIOUS SOLUTION

ACROSS: 1 Spare, 4 Pinball machine, 11 Coped, 14 Aside, 15 Loudspeaker, 16 Wigmaker, 19 Hearing, 20 Coven, 21 Willpower, 24 Notre Dame, 26 Please, 27 Escape, 31 Canal, 32 Blushing, 34 Devastated, 38 Upright, 39 Hernia, 40 Acidic, 41 Soap, 42 Remnant, 45 Installing, 50 Opposed, 54 Nude, 55 Prince, 56 Enters, 57 Ordered, 60 Sacrosanct, 61 Tasteful, 62 Trail, 65 Canned, 66 Uneasy, 67 Threatens, 72 Hourglass, 73 Bonus, 74 Leather, 79 Boastful, 80 Streamlined, 81 Lungs, 82 Roomy, 83 Approximations, 84 Thief.

DOWN: 2 Passed, 3 Radar, 5 Iron, 6 Bedroom, 7 Lopped, 8 Moat, 9 Credited, 10 Editor, 11 Compensate, 12 Poke, 13 Durable, 17 Snarl, 18 Glistening, 22 Adult, 23 Cautious, 25 Ovation, 26 Pigtail, 28 Sample, 29 Signet, 30 Calico, 33 Stein, 35 Duped, 36 Thin, 37 Sari, 42 Rings, 43 Medicine, 44 Turban, 45 Innocently, 46 Seep, 47 Adeptly, 48 Latest, 49 Nurse, 51 Part, 52 Overrun, 53 Eyelid, 58 Noteworthy, 59 Quiet, 63 Falsetto, 64 Steer, 65 Crowbar, 68 Houdini, 69 Trauma, 70 Noumea, 71 Reggae, 75 Truth, 76 Taco, 77 Yeti, 78 Sewn.



12 new Kiwis welcomed

The morning of November 11 saw 12 new citizens formally welcomed to New Zealand, at a ceremony held in the Hauraki District Council rooms. The new citizens came from Germany, the United Kingdom, the Phillippines, Brazil, Tonga, Fiji, the Netherlands, and Wales. Each affirmed their allegiance to New Zealand before district Mayor Toby Adams, and was presented with their certificate of citizenship. Welcomed to the country were: Leonardo Oberle, Malia Tupou, Elisabeth de Man, Rosemarie Bjerring, Serena Harris, Neil Owen, and Doug Black. Front row, from left: José Oberle, Caroline Oberle, Marites Gasmen, Fariza Buksh, and Emma Black.

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

White Ribbon Month brings stories to stage

Te Whāriki Manawāhine o Hauraki is marking White Ribbon Month with a public presentation featuring two plays, *Not In Our Neighbourhood* and Tū Tāne.

Written by critically acclaimed playwright Jamie McCaskill (Ngāti Tamaterā), the companion productions are drawn directly from the lived experiences of Hauraki wāhine and tāne.

They illuminate the emotional and wairua wounds associated with trauma, mahi tūkino, and abuse in state and faith-based care - celebrating the determination of whānau and communities to reclaim their dignity.

Not In Our Neighbourhood centers on wāhine pūrākau of resilience and hope, honouring women who have endured intergenerational trauma and violence.

The production stars award-winning Wellington-based actor Kali Kopae (Ngāti Whakaue, Ngāti Awa, Ngāti Pūkeko, Ngāi Te Rangi, Te Whānau A Apanui).

A veteran of Aotearoa and Māori theatre for over two decades, Kopae was nominated for Actor of the Year in 2024 for her performance in And the Lochburns at Circa Theatre, Wellington.

Her extensive screen credits include *Whina, The Lord of the Rings: The Rings of Power, The Brokenwood Mysteries, The Deadlands, My Life is Murder*, and *Warrens Vortex*.

Tū Tāne serves as the companion piece, delivering a powerful exploration of tāne accountability, restoration, and transformation.

McCaskill - co-founder of Māori theatre production company Tīkapa Productions and creator of the popular subversive show band *The Māori Sidesteps* - has earned numerous awards across performance, writing, and directing, while director Conrad Newport, a mainstay of Aotearoa theatre, is known for championing new writing and original Kiwi stories.

"These are not stories of victims," Te Whāriki Manawāhine O Hauraki Manukura chief executive Denise Messiter said.

"They are stories of survival, courage, healing, and people's ability to reclaim their dignity, identity, and sense of belonging."

After the performances, the audience is invited to stay for a facilitated community discussion.

This will be a space to enable people to reflect on and work through the messages from the plays in a safe and supportive way.

DETAILS: Not In Our Neighbourhood and Tū Tāne, performing on Saturday, November 21 at 5pm and 7pm at Te Kura o Te Kauaeranga Hall, 307 Rolleston Street, Thames. Bookings: www.eventfinda.co.nz. Limited door sales available.

Kirihimete at Kerepēhi

The Kerepēhi community is invited to come together for a new Christmas celebration next week.

Kirihimete at Kerepēhi set to bring an evening of music, kai, family fun and festive cheer to the township on Wednesday, November 25, from 5pm until 7.30pm at the Kerepēhi School Field on McGowan Ave.

Proudly organised by Kerepēhi Brass in collaboration with Kerepēhi School and the wider community, organisers say the free event promises to be a wonderful opportunity for local whānau to connect and celebrate the festive season.

"The event will have a relaxed, picnic-style atmosphere," organisers said.

"Families are encouraged to bring along their picnic blankets, pack some kai and settle in for an evening of entertainment under the summer skies."

The programme will showcase homegrown talent within the community, beginning with performances from Kerepēhi School's music groups. "It will be a chance to celebrate the talents of our tamariki and give them an opportunity to shine in front of their whānau and community."

Kerepēhi Brass, which proudly celebrates 80 years of music-making this year, will then take to the stage with a selection of Christmas favourites before bringing the evening to a close with a community carol sing-along.

There will also be a coffee cart onsite, providing an opportunity to enjoy some refreshments.

"The vision behind Kirihimete at Kerepēhi is to create something special for the community – an inclusive, alcohol-free event where all generations can come together, enjoy local entertainment and share in the spirit of Christmas.

"Whether you're a long-time local, a new face in the community or visiting family for the evening, everyone is welcome.

"So, dust off your picnic blankets, gather your whānau and come along to celebrate the festive season with us."

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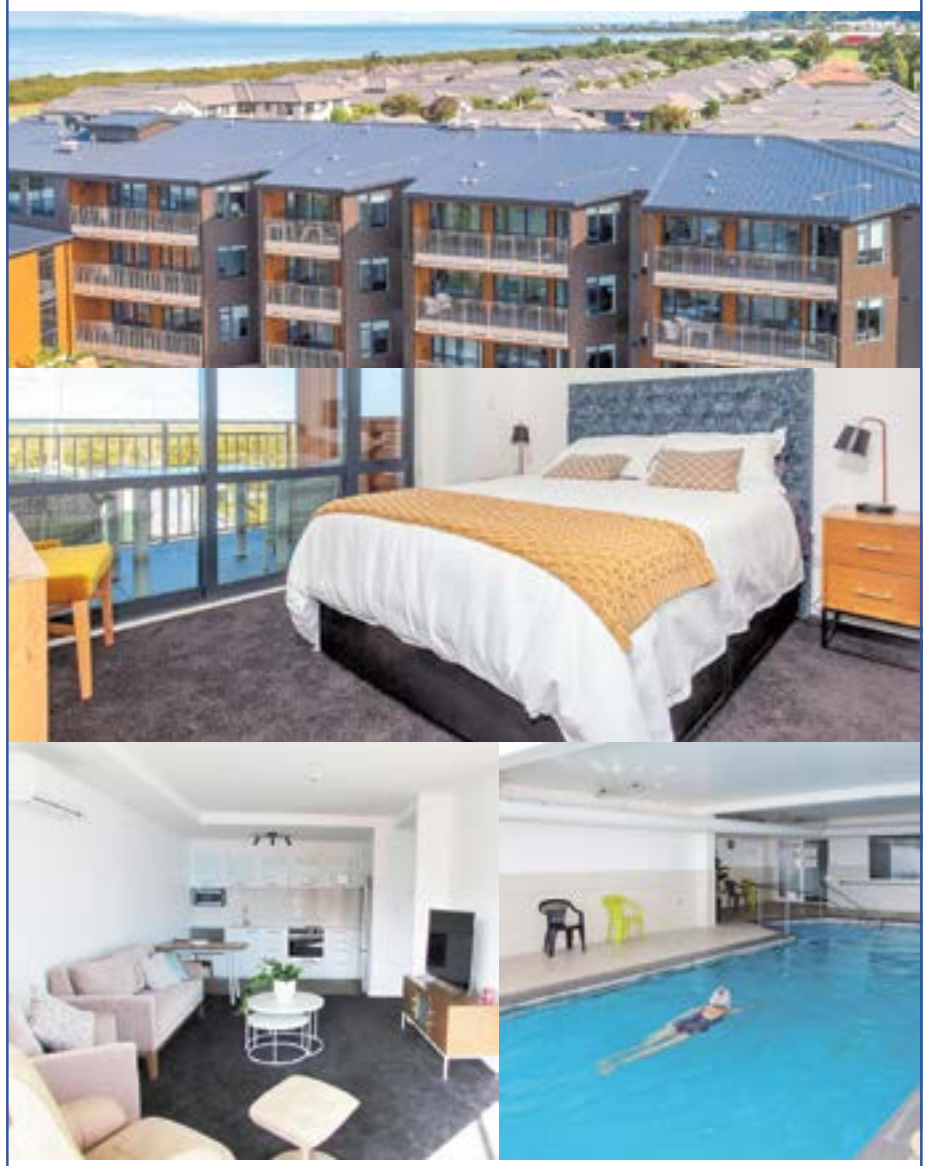
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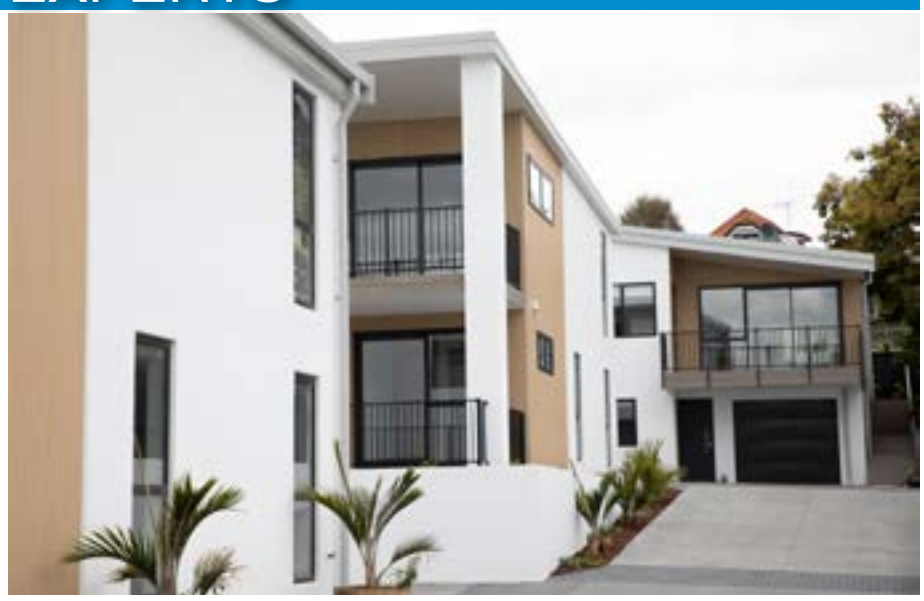
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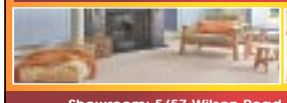
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One brave choice

OPINION



By MICHAEL WILKES

Do you ever find yourself stuck, feeling like there's just no way out?

In my work I meet people who genuinely feel trapped in situations they can't escape.

Homelessness. Domestic violence. Addiction. A circle of friends that keeps pulling them back into the same mess.

I sat with someone recently who basically said those exact words: "I want out... but I just can't say no."

And sometimes there are very real things that make getting out incredibly difficult. Money. Fear. Relationships. Kids. Addiction. Not knowing where you would even go.

But I've also noticed something. Sometimes what keeps us stuck isn't that there is literally no way forward. It's that we're terrified of what might happen if we take it.

Better the devil you know than the one you don't, right? Because at least this mess is familiar. The unknown isn't. Yet over the years I've watched people make some massive changes. Move towns. Find a completely new group of friends. Leave abusive relationships. Walk into rehab. Ask for help. Or finally tell someone, "I can't keep living like this."

And I've watched life begin to change.

Not instantly. Not magically. And usually not easily.But one choice gets followed by another choice. Then another.

Slowly those choices begin moving someone towards the life they actually want, rather than pulling them back towards the place they're trying to escape.

Now I know what some of you are thinking: "Mate, it ain't that simple."

You're right.

Sometimes life is incredibly complicated.

There may be a million questions you don't have answers to yet.

But maybe you don't need to solve all one million today.

Maybe you just need to ask: What's the next choice I can make?

It might be asking for help. Making the phone call. Walking through a door. Saying no. Telling someone what's really going on.

Or simply admitting to yourself that something needs to change. You might not be able to change everything today.

But you can start moving.

And sometimes one brave choice, followed by another, is where an entirely different life begins.

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 michaelwilkes.kiwi.

Pet Profile



Meet Fred - this gorgeous medium-to-long-haired tabby and white boy is a big 5kg bundle of personality. Fred came into our care after his previous owner, who was over 90, found it difficult to keep up with his youthful energy and playful nature.

Fred is a character. One minute he's all about excessive affection, smooches and cuddles, wanting to be as close to you as possible, and the next it's PLAY TIME! Before you know it, he's back for more cuddles. He's looking for a home where he can enjoy plenty of love, attention and playtime. Fred isn't a massive fan of other cats, so he'd likely prefer being the king of his own castle!

You'll notice Fred has only half a tail, which doesn't bother him one bit. It just adds to his unique charm!

Fred is desexed, vaccinated and microchipped and ready to find his forever home. He is available for adoption at Thames SPCA, adoption fee: $149 + $2.50 processing fee.

DETAILS: www.spca.nz/centre/thames-centre.

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Death Notices

DORRINGTON, Evan:
Aged 96 years.
Died in Rotorua November 14, 2026.
Loved eldest brother of Jenny Dorrington-Colley (Thames). Husband of Wyn. Father of Debra and Steve. Grandfather of Ethan and Quinn.
Always in my heart big bro.
Funeral to be held at Collingwood Funeral Services Rotorua, Friday 2pm.

HUDSON, Raewyn Shirley:
Passed peacefully on 12th November 2026, with family at her side. Dearly loved wife of Peter for 60 years. Much loved Mum of Jody, Kim and Karl, and cherished Gran of Troy, Mikayla and Lily. Honouring Raewyn's wishes, a private family service will be held.
TWENTYMANS

Acknowlegement

DUFFIN, Colleen Ann:
Stuart, Raymond and Heather, Michael, Lynlee and Gordon and families would like to thank everyone who has helped us through this difficult time with flowers, food, cards, messages and support. Also a special thanks to the staff at Thames Hospital for the care of Colleen.
Thank you all

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PAPER DELIVERIES

Although we endeavour to deliver our paper to everyone, sometimes we just cannot achieve this. If you are one of the few who did not receive your weekly paper, please note they are available here:

NGATEA - Ngatea 4 Square, HDC Council Offices, Ngatea Post Shop, Z Petrol Station, Ngatea Purple Dairy

PAEROA - Moores Caltex, Countdown, HDC Council offices, Takenote, Paeroa 4 Square, Paeroa Information Hub

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THAMES - Totara Veggie Shop, Mobil Kopu, Gull Service Station, Bin Inn, Tararu Dairy, Queen St Mobil, Goldfields Mall, Pak'N'Save, Paper Power, Thames 4 Square, Carson's Bookshop, Thames Council Offices, Kauaeranga Store

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Public Notices

Proposed Temporary Road Closures

HAURAKI DISTRICT COUNCIL

Pursuant to the Section 11(e) of the Tenth Schedule of the Local Government Act 1974, notice is hereby given that for the purpose of the **Paeroa Christmas Parade** event organised by Paeroa Business Association it is intended to close the following roads to ordinary vehicular traffic for the period indicated hereunder. During the proposed period of closure provision will be made for ordinary vehicular traffic, which would otherwise use the road, to use alternative routes.

Period of closure: Friday 4 December 2026, 5:30pm to 7:30pm

Roads to be closed in Paeroa:

- Wharf St, Queen St and Princes St.
- Normanby Rd/Belmont Rd (SH2), from Arney St intersection to Marshall St
- Corbett St, from Belmont Rd intersection to King St intersection.
- King St, from Corbett Rd intersection to Arney St intersection.

Alternative provision for ordinary vehicular traffic will be made with signs, cones and barriers to redirect traffic on detour.

It will be an offence under the above regulations for any person otherwise than under authority of an authorised permit to use the road for ordinary vehicular traffic during the proposed period of closure.

Any objections should be directed to Transport Manager on 07 862 8609 or info@hauraki-dc.govt.nz by 25 November 2026.

D A Speirs
Chief Executive
Hauraki District Council

www.hauraki-dc.govt.nz

Proposed Temporary Road Closure

HAURAKI DISTRICT COUNCIL

Pursuant to the Section 11(e) of the Tenth Schedule of the Local Government Act 1974, notice is hereby given that for the purpose of the **Ngātea Christmas Parade** event organised by Connecting the Plains it is intended to close the following road to ordinary vehicular traffic for the period indicated hereunder. During the proposed period of closure provision will be made for ordinary vehicular traffic, which would otherwise use the road, to use alternative routes.

Period of closure: Thursday 10 December 2026, 5:30pm to 8:00pm

Roads to be closed in Ngātea:

- SH2 Orchard East Rd, from Kaihere Rd to Darlington St.
- River Rd, at Factory Lane to SH2.
- Dent St, between Hammond Lane to SH2.
- Paul Dr, at SH2.
- Hammond Lane, at River Rd.

Alternative provision for ordinary vehicular traffic will be made with signs, cones and barriers to redirect traffic on detour.

It will be an offence under the above regulations for any person otherwise than under authority of an authorised permit to use the road for ordinary vehicular traffic during the proposed period of closure.

Any objections should be directed to Transport Manager on 07 862 8609 or info@hauraki-dc.govt.nz by 25 November 2026

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Chief Executive
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NGĀ POU TAUNAHA O AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND GEOGRAPHIC BOARD

The New Zealand Geographic Board Ngā Pou Taunaha o Aotearoa advises of one discontinued Crown protected area name resulting from the Ngāti Tara Tokanui Claims Settlement Act 2026, which came into effect on 13 August 2026.

The feature is in Waikato Region. More information is in the New Zealand Gazetteer: **https://gazetteer.linz.govt.nz/**

Discontinued Official Crown Protected Area Name	*Generic Term (Purpose of Reservation) and Description*	*Former New Zealand Gazette Notice*
Mackaytown Recreation Reserve	A recreation reserve at Mackaytown, approximately 4km southeast of Paeroa. Centred at NZTopo50-BC35 394560.	*New Zealand Gazette*, 18 August 2026, Notice No. 2026-ln4602.

NGĀ POU TAUNAHA O AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND GEOGRAPHIC BOARD

The New Zealand Geographic Board Ngā Pou Taunaha o Aotearoa advises of one discontinued Crown protected area name resulting from the Ngāti Rahiri Tumutumu Claims Settlement Act 2026, which came into effect on 13 August 2026.

The feature is in Waikato Region. More information is in the New Zealand Gazetteer: **https://gazetteer.linz.govt.nz/**

Discontinued Official Crown Protected Area Name	*Generic Term (Purpose of Reservation) and Description*	*Former New Zealand Gazette Notice*
Te Aroha Mountain Scenic Reserve	A scenic reserve east of Te Aroha (town), on the lower slopes of Te Aroha (mountain). Centred at NZTopo50-BC35 409412.	*New Zealand Gazette*, 4 March 1965, No. 11, page 284

BAYLEYS



Hikutaia **Lot 1 213 Old Maratoto Road**

Bring your builder - Title due for issue

With title due for issue, this 1.05 hectare (subject to survey) section in Hikutaia offers scope to design and build a home of your own. Elevated and north-facing, the gently contoured land captures all-day sunshine and expansive rural views, with the surrounding mountain ranges providing a striking backdrop. Set along a quiet country road, the property offers room to spread out and enjoy the outdoors. Paeroa is approximately 12 kilometres away, with Thames, Hamilton, Tauranga and Auckland also within reach. Whether planning your first build or seeking more space, this site provides an appealing starting point to create a home that suits your lifestyle.

bayleys.co.nz/**2630317**

1.0557 ha

Auction (unless sold prior) 11am, Thu 3 Dec 2026
96 Ulster Street, Hamilton
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Paeroa **17b Bradshaw Road**

41ha, forestry, income and building potential

Set against the Coromandel Ranges, this 41.37-hectare (more or less) property near Komata offers established bush, elevated mountain views and several avenues for future potential. The medium to steep contour includes a cleared building platform, subject to consents, and an existing onsite quarry. A 2026 ETS assessment identifies potential forestry income of $80,000 per annum from planting. Access is via a ford, with a nearby river, walking tracks and swimming holes adding to the property's appeal. The land is fenced with seven-wire post-and-batten fencing, with no existing water supply or power connection. Paeroa is approximately 6km away, providing access to shops, services and schooling.

bayleys.co.nz/**2630321**

41.37 ha

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BAYLEYS







Te Kauwhata 8 Josephine Place

Elevated lifestyle, effortless connection

Set on 7,757sqm (more or less) at the edge of Te Kauwhata, this substantial 196sqm (more or less) brick home combines family comfort with space and rural outlooks. Built in 2000, it offers three bedrooms, two bathrooms, a master suite with walk-in wardrobe and ensuite, plus open-plan living, a separate lounge and a well-appointed kitchen with stone benchtops. Outdoor entertaining areas, established gardens, two heat pumps, HRV, double internal-access garaging and an approximately 80sqm garden shed add everyday practicality. Enjoy morning sun and elevated views across the village, with Te Kauwhata township just five minutes away and convenient access to the Waikato Expressway.

bayleys.co.nz/**2630288**

3 2 2

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Coromandel 1 Albert Street

Coromandels next neighbourhood

- Walking distance to Coromandel CBD
- Substantial 6.8689 ha (more or less) site
- Potential sea, town or bush views from future lots

Zoned residential and consented for a 53-lot subdivision, this significant development opportunity offers scope to meet growing housing demand in Coromandel. The return of the Auckland–Coromandel ferry service is expected to further support local businesses and future growth.

bayleys.co.nz/**2202455**

6.8689 ha

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BAYLEYS







Te Mata 5 Te Mata Creek Road

Where the creek meets the coast

941 sqm | 4 | 2 | 2

The vendors are ready to move on to their next chapter, with family life evolving and the property no longer being used as much as they would like. Situated in picturesque Te Mata, this renovated waterfront home enjoys stunning Firth of Thames views. Set on a 941sqm (more or less) freehold section, it offers four bedrooms, two bathrooms and two living areas. Open-plan living flows onto a covered deck, perfect for entertaining and enjoying the coastal outlook. Established greenery, native bush and birdlife create a peaceful setting, while Te Mata Creek offers tidal boating access for fishing and exploring the coastline. Ideal as a permanent home, family holiday retreat or weekend escape here.

bayleys.co.nz/**2181073**

Auction (unless sold prior) 11am, Thu 10 Dec 2026
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Thames 203a Hape Road

Panoramic Firth Views

401 sqm | 3 | 2 | 2

Style, space and modern living come together in this easy-care Thames residence. Built in 2008, this contemporary home offers a generous 208sqm (more or less) floor area, quality construction and elevated views. A standout feature is the internal lift installed by Quinn Engineering. The open-plan kitchen, dining and living area flows seamlessly onto a deck overlooking the Firth of Thames, perfect for entertaining. Upstairs, the master suite features a walk-in wardrobe and ensuite, complemented by two additional bedrooms and a family bathroom. Set on an easy-care landscaped section close to Thames township amenities, this is comfortable, convenient living with a view.

bayleys.co.nz/**2181027**

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SPORTS

Email your sports news, reports and photos to editor@valleyprofile.co.nz

New 3x3 basketball league a slam dunk

BASKETBALL

By KELLEY TANTAU

Thames has scored a new addition to its local sporting calendar, with a 3x3 basketball league proving to be a slam dunk for young players and attracting 24 teams in its very first season.

League co-ordinator Mallory Hodgson said the idea to start a Thames and Coromandel Primary School 3x3 Basketball League came from wanting to recreate the enjoyment of the sport she grew up playing.

"My childhood featured a 5x5 basketball league that I absolutely loved, and I wanted to recreate that experience, not only for my own children, but for our wider community as well," she said.

"[The] 3x3 [format] sparked my interest when I watched it on the Commonwealth Games; I thought it would be a fresh, exciting format for our youth to try."





Undefeated Year 5-6 girls winners Basket Belles: Kenzie Harvey, left, Sailor Williams, Nyla Bithell, and Heidie Louden. RIGHT: Kāhu Penton-Fair makes a winning basket. Photos: SUPPLIED

Played on half a court with one hoop and three players per team, 3x3 basketball is a faster-paced version of the traditional game, and Mallory said it was "super fast, continuous, and keeps the kids completely engaged".

"In traditional full-court basketball, quiet or beginner players can sometimes get a bit lost in the shuffle. But with only three players per team on court, every single child gets to touch the ball constantly," she said. "They learn to pass, defend, and shoot so much faster because they're always right in the middle of the action. Plus, half-court play means they aren't totally gassed from running end-to-end, so they can just focus on having fun and enjoying the game."

Mallory told *The Profile* that she was "completely blown away" by the response to the league. It attracted 24 teams across five age divisions in its first season, bringing together young players from Thames and surrounds, including Manaia, Whenuakite, Ngātea, and Turua.

"The biggest highlight for me has been hearing the direct feedback from parents. They've been sharing how much their kids are loving just picking up a basketball, shooting hoops, getting friends together, and having a scrimmage. That was my whole goal from the start: to create a space where both kids and parents could learn the sport, enjoy the journey together, and fall in love with basketball."

The season culminated in a finals night at the Thames High School Gym on September 24, where families, grandparents, classmates, and teachers filled the sidelines to support the players.

The five inaugural division winners were: Hoop Stars, Year 1-2; Whenuakite Warriors, Year 3-4; Basket Belles, Year 5-6 girls; Wolf Pack, Year 5-6 boys; and The Goon Squad, Year 7-8 combined.

Mallory also thanked the families and supporters who presented her with gifts on finals night, saying she was overwhelmed by their generosity and felt fortunate to be part of such a supportive community.

DETAILS: Interested tamariki can enter either as a full team with friends or register individually to be placed into a team for next season. To stay updated on upcoming module dates, registration details, or to get in touch, follow the Thames 3x3 Basketball Facebook page.



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