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From Waihi to All Blacks Sevens



Oli Mathis, 19, will make his All Blacks Sevens debut at the 2024/25 SVNS Series in Dubai.
Photo: NZ RUGBY

By DAVIDDA HIKATANGATA

Oli Mathis is a name to watch. The inspiration that sparked his involvement in rugby started with him playing for his mates and “just trying to make my family proud”.

But the 19-year-old from Waihi said “my why” was now about trying to show kids from a small town that it’s still possible to “crack it”.

“That’s probably my big motivator now,” he said.

And the young athlete has certainly put his best foot forward to crack it in the rugby world with a recent streak of triumphs.

The rising talent, who has been playing for Waikato development teams, caught the eye of many when his “freakish” moves, which resulted in him scoring a try during the National Provincial Championship (NPC) semifinal last month, went viral online.

But that’s not all.

It was announced last week that Oli would make his debut in the All Black Sevens line-up to start the 2024/25 SVNS Series in Dubai at The Sevens Stadium on November 30.

Oli, who has committed to two years with the All Blacks Sevens, said he was “stoked as” when his

name appeared on the projector.

He told *The Profile* the first person he shared the news of his selection with was his “rugby mad” little brother, followed by the rest of his family.

“As soon as I told my family, my old man, my uncle, and my grandad all booked tickets to go over to Dubai and Cape Town.”

Unfortunately, Oli said his mum wouldn’t be able to make it over as she would be looking after the kids and working on the farm.

His love for the game of sevens rugby was something that started when he was young, so he was “jumping at the opportunity” to play, he said.

“I was always quite keen to give sevens a go but obviously just had to wait for the right time.”

“I guess the time has come.”

But the rugby prodigy on the rise had another run of good news. Oli was announced as a nominee for the New Zealand Rugby Age Grade Player of the Year as part of the ASB Rugby Awards. It was clear it meant a lot to Oli.

“It’s massive. I’m just pretty stoked that I guess I can go out and try to perform at the big level. Growing up, especially as a young fella from a small town,

CONTINUED ON P8

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Hauraki hikoī

Hundreds of Hauraki whānau marched along Pollen St, Thames, on November 19 singing waiata and chanting “kill the bill”. The protest was part of a nationwide hikoī mō Te Tiriti, protesting the government’s proposed Treaty Principles Bill. The peaceful protest ended at Thames Civic Centre, followed by kai and karakia, and a visit to Coromandel MP Scott Simpson’s office.



Hundreds march down Pollen St in protest.

Ihaia Ikinofu leads the haka at the Thames Civic Centre.

Photos: TERESA RAMSEY



Te Moana Wheriko, right, Koinaki, Tuawhiorangi and Ihaia wait for the hikoī.

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Thames Tides

Wed Nov 27		Thu Nov 28		Fri Nov 29		Sat Nov 30		Sun Dec 1		Mon Dec 2		Tue Dec 3	
4 am	6 NOON 6 pm	4 am	6 NOON 6 pm	4 am	6 NOON 6 pm	4 am	6 NOON 6 pm	4 am	6 NOON 6 pm	4 am	6 NOON 6 pm	4 am	6 NOON 6 pm
Morning	5:08am 2.9	Morning	6:03am 2.9	Morning	12:26am 0.9	Morning	1:10am 0.8	Morning	1:52am 0.7	Morning	2:31am 0.7	Morning	3:10am 0.6
Afternoon	5:18pm 3.0	Afternoon	12:01pm 1.0	Afternoon	12:46pm 1.0	Afternoon	1:28pm 0.9	Afternoon	2:08pm 0.8	Afternoon	2:48pm 0.8	Afternoon	3:30pm 0.8
	11:12am 1.1		11:39pm 0.9		6:06pm 3.0		7:36am 3.1		8:16am 3.2		8:55am 3.3		9:33am 3.3
	5:53am 8:19pm		5:53am 8:20pm		5:52am 8:20pm		5:52am 8:21pm		5:52am 8:22pm		5:52am 8:23pm		5:51am 8:24pm
	Best At 9:51am 10:11pm		Best At 10:32am 10:53pm		Best At 11:14am 11:37pm		Best At 12:00pm		Best At 12:24am 12:50pm		Best At 1:16am 1:43pm		Best At 2:11am 2:39pm
	Rise 3:24am Set 4:29pm		Rise 3:46am Set 5:28pm		Rise 4:11am Set 6:29pm		Rise 4:39am Set 7:31pm		Rise 5:13am Set 8:35pm		Rise 5:55am Set 9:35pm		Rise 6:45am Set 10:32pm

*Not for navigational purposes. Graphic supplied by OceanFun Publishing Ltd. www.tidewiz.com www.tidespy.com www.ofu.co.nz

MOON AND FISH KEYS

● New Moon ● First Quarter ● Full Moon ● Last Quarter

Good Fishing Fair Fishing Not So Good

TIME DIFFERENCES FOR OTHER PLACES

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

PLACE	Hr	HIGH Mn	LOW Mn
Coromandel	- 0	05	- 0 04
Whitianga	- 0	01	- 0 05
Tairua	+ 0	10	+ 0 21
Whangamata	- 0	03	- 0 05
Waihi Beach	- 0	12	- 0 12

'Trauma runs deep' - hui for gang recovery

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

In the wake of the government's November 12 national apology over historical abuse in state care, a group of gang members has been quietly working away to overcome their own trauma.

Members of Black Power and the Mongrel Mob have been attending a series of hui in Thames, where around 40 members have been sharing their stories and learning how to heal from their pasts. The sessions have been held monthly since July.

Among those looking for help was Black Power member Arama Turoa. He said childhood abuse was the catalyst for a lifetime of difficult feelings he had no idea how to deal with.

"Been through quite a lot of heavy stuff back in the day. I was sexually molested at about seven or eight, so that sort of stuck with me for years," he said. "I can say that I forgave the one that touched us, but it still kicks in when I get into my little dark spaces... and then the hate comes back. We didn't have no one to really just talk, just [had] to harden up and deal with it."

Seeing how his fellow gang members had responded to the first session of the trauma hui, Arama said he wanted to go along and "get some healing" for himself.

"Seeing my friends be all happy and how tight everyone's gotten, I was like oh yeah I want some of that. And I want to help people unlock too and help peo-



Jared Sione-Lauaki and Arama Turoa are among a group of gang members facing their trauma. Photo: ALICE PARMINTER

ple heal - just be a mentor and be someone to talk to and help people deal with their pain," he said.

"That's what it's about for me: knowing that all my kids are doing better and all my kids aren't going through the same cycle that my grandfather went through, my dad went through and I went through - so it all stops for me."

Black Power member Jared Sione-Lauaki, known as Jah, was also struggling with life. He lost his 19-year-old daughter in a car crash on Christmas Eve, 2022, and just three months ago, his wife was found murdered on a

Northland beach. He joined the hui in a desperate attempt to find some peace of mind. But having his gang around him was what kept him going, he said.

"I was probably worse out of the club, to be honest. I don't really have family... When you're brought up fatherless and stuff you need some guidance, no matter how old you are. It's giving you purpose as well, an identity, all the things I didn't have as a child," Jah said.

"I think from my point of view, there's citizens that are deemed good, that are out there doing

shit. It's way worse than what we would do. We've kind of got morals and you know, we've got to abide by them."

Trauma runs deep in the gangs, Mongrel Mob leader Ariki Paito said, passed down through generations and largely caused by what happened behind the closed doors of state institutions.

"You're disconnected from your whakapapa, your identity, who you are. And because of who we are as a people, we need to connect to our own. So the people that you shared that space with became your whāngai

whānau, and those become the gangs later on," he said.

"Mongrel Mob whānau was about our brothers and sisters who needed to prioritise their families first and foremost, because they were sick and tired of all the poverty coming in and stealing the babies. So it was all about them, working on them so that they're able to be better parents, looking at the support that's needed and wrapping that around them."

Ariki said the hui sessions weren't about improving public perception of gangs - they were solely focused on helping the attendees recover.

"There's nothing you can say that's ever going to change their point of view. We're not in it for that, we're in it to make a difference for our families," he said.

"I don't see it as rehabilitation. Because rehabilitation means that you know the fundamentals of life and you've fallen off the bandwagon. In terms of our people, when they came from parents that came out of state abuse: values, morals, principles, they came out broken."

"So what could they teach their generation, the new generation? Nothing but pain. So it's about habilitation. "And that's been the core essence of the success for us is teaching them and giving them the tools."

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Education

ADVERTISING FEATURE

Jordan tops science, maths and dux honours

By DAVIDDA HIKATANGATA

It wasn't Jordan Wheater's aim at the start of the year to become the Thames High School dux for 2024, but that's exactly what he did.

The year-13 student was very surprised and "slightly apprehensive" about going on stage to receive his award at the school prizegiving evening recently, he told *The Profile*.

"I am not a fan of being the centre of attention," he said.

Even though he preferred to stay out of the spotlight, Jordan said he was very proud and happy this was the result of his hard work.

"This year I was aiming for as many excellences as I could get."

Jordan said he had 31 excellence credits so far, with a lot more to come from external exams.

"I had a lot of great teachers this year and supportive family and friends," he said.

The fact all his subjects were ones he enjoyed also "helped keep me motivated".

But the top achiever also snapped up a few more notable awards.

"Even if I had not won dux however, I still would have been very happy that I came



Thames High School dux for 2024 Jordan Wheater celebrates his win.

Photo: SUPPLIED

first in all of the sciences."

Jordan managed to achieve top spot victories in biology, chemistry and physics and was awarded the Boyce Cup for Top Science Student.

"I really like all these subjects because they involve solving problems and finding a definite

answer," he said.

However, if he had to pick just one favourite, it would be physics because it involved "the least amount of writing", he said.

But it doesn't end there.

Jordan also claimed distinction in mathematics with cal-

culus and was awarded The University of Waikato Ko Te Tangata Schools Leavers Scholarship.

Next year Jordan will head to The University of Waikato to study computer science, and he said the scholarship would be a great help toward his accom-

modation costs.

"The logic and the problem solving [for computer science] appeal to me and I might end up in a field like cyber security."

But Jordan really valued time with his mates.

"Even though I did a lot of study this year, I made sure I had time to hang out with my friends."

Earlier in the year, he said they had a great time hiking The Pinnacles track in the Kaueranga Valley together.

Jordan said after exams he planned to put time into improving his fitness.

He earned a black belt in Ki-aïdo Ryu martial arts when he was 12, but since then "keeping fit hasn't been a priority", he said.

If Jordan could leave a piece of advice with next year's senior students, it was to "study hard, but don't let it take over your entire school year".

"Doing well is much easier if you don't leave it until the last minute," he said.

"Make sure you leave some time for social activities with friends."

Meanwhile, Maia Harrison was named Proxime Accessit to dux.

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Fin Owen

McConnell Cup



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Maureen Coakley Cup



Elle Johnston

AMP Cup



Calleigh Poipoi

AMP Cup



Taylor Menzies

Two arrested after Coromandel Police chase

Two people have been arrested in connection with an incident in Coromandel on November 18, which ended in a fleeing driver event.

Police received a report around 2.25pm that a caravan had been stolen from a Matarangi property.

Senior Sergeant Leo Belay said the caravan was seen by Police being towed by a vehicle shortly after in Te Rerenga and the driver was signalled to stop but failed to do so. "The driver has then begun driving in a reckless manner and overtaking vehicles," he said.

"We... continued to receive various reports and sightings of this vehicle in the Coromandel area, where it has continued to be driven with disregard to the road rules.

"At one stage on Castle Rock Rd, one of the occupants has thrown a hammer from the fleeing vehicle at Police, which has damaged the patrol car."

Senior Sergeant Belay said while travelling on The 309 Rd, an occupant of the vehicle had thrown a wrench out, hitting two members of the public in the head. Both were treated for minor injuries.

"Shortly after, while in the Waiau area, the caravan came off the vehicle that was towing it.

"The driver has continued to overtake dangerously while heading towards Coromandel township, where Police lost sight of it.

"Further information from members of the public helped Police relocate the vehicle again as it headed towards Colville."

Senior Sergeant Belay said the Police Eagle helicopter was then able to assist ground units to track the vehicle.

He said road spikes were deployed by officers, which successfully brought the vehicle to a stop.

"Three occupants fled on foot near Flays Rd, Coromandel, running into a nearby address and have allegedly stolen another vehicle from a member of the public and continued to flee down the Thames Coast at high speed.

"The vehicle was followed by Eagle up Tapu Coroglen Rd, where it was eventually abandoned near the Te Puru Track carpark and set on fire. The three offenders then decamped into the bush where two people were taken into custody with the assistance of Delta, the Police dog team."

Police said forensic examinations of the scene, two vehicles, and caravan had been completed and they were following strong lines of enquiry to identify and locate the remaining offender/s.

Police are calling for witnesses and information and urge anyone with CCTV or dashcam footage of the incident to contact Police: 105, police.govt.nz, call 105, or 0800 555 111. Reference: 241119/3669.

Survivors witness state apology

Survivors of abuse in state and faith-based care gathered at Te Whāriki Manawāhine o Hauraki Hauraki Women's Refuge on November 12 to witness the broadcast of the government's national apology.

For some of those who gathered, it was also an acknowledgement of their right to exist in their own identities.

The apology, presented by Prime Minister Christopher Luxon, came in response to a 16-volume report tabled in Parliament in July.

The report outlined the results of the Royal Commission of Inquiry's six-year investigation into the abuse of children, young people, and adults in state and faith-based care between 1950 and 1999.

Hauraki Women's Refuge leaders were significant contributors to the commission's investigation, the organisation said, and it was particularly focused on ensuring the voices of survivors with diverse gender and sexual identities were not forgotten.

During the inquiry, the Hauraki refuge developed a 66-page independent research report titled *As a Kid, I Always Knew Who I Was: Voices of Takatāpui, Rainbow and MVPFAFF+ survivors*.

Takatāpui is the Māori term for a member of the LGBT+ community, while MVPFAFF+ is an acronym encompassing the diverse gender and sexuality expressions and roles across Pacific cultures.

In the report, Takatāpui, Rainbow and MVPFAFF+ survivors described the experiences of indigenous people in state care



Survivors of abuse in state care gather in Thames to watch the national apology on November 12.

Photo: SUPPLIED

whose identified gender or sexuality was outside the "Pākehā and Western, cis and binary shapes, forms and ideas that dominate our society".

The report outlined the harm that was done to those communities, from opposition to their identities within care settings to psychological and sexual abuse, conversion practices, medicalisation and neglect.

It shared their hope for a positive future where survivors were adequately supported and the care system improved to provide a safer place for those who needed it.

Hauraki Women's Refuge researcher Paora Moyle said the elevation of the distinct voices of courageous Takatāpui, Rainbow, and MVPFAFF+ survivors who

shared their powerful testimonies in the Abuse in Care Inquiry was vital to Aotearoa New Zealand's journey toward truth and reconciliation.

"We work to uphold the voices of the most marginalised whānau in our communities and were approached by the Royal Commission to undertake this research," Paora said. "Takatāpui, Rainbow and MVPFAFF+ identities are neither well understood nor well accepted in mainstream siloes of our society."

Included in the report was a list of proposed solutions for the state, including stripping churches of charitable status, monitoring mechanisms, a code of ethics for clergy, redress and reparation, and the need for significant and meaningful enduring change.

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News from Thames-Coromandel District Council



27 November 2024

Meri Kirihimete

~ NGĀ MIHI O TE TAU HOU ~

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from all the elected members and staff at Thames-Coromandel District Council.

2024 was a challenging year for the entire Thames-Coromandel community as we worked to achieve a new normal after the challenges of the last few years. We'd like to acknowledge the hard work that so many in the Coromandel put in this year to our ongoing storm recovery and making our district thrive. We know it hasn't been easy.

Take care over the holidays, and here's to continued progress and partnership in the year ahead.

From all of us at TCDC



Thames Community Board UPDATE

Board Chair, Adrian Catran JP

reports: "Thames Community Board would like to take this opportunity to wish you a happy and healthy holiday season with a great start to a prosperous new year. The Board has supported the work to rebrand and promote Thames under the banner of Explore Thames by engaging Brand Matters to fit out the new Info Centre in the theme. The Board provided funding and adding to the effect with new Explore Thames streetpole flags. We look forward to progressing this even further in 2025 and making sure Thames remains a vibrant, thriving community." adrian.catran@council.tcdc.govt.nz



The Board's next meeting is on Wednesday 5 February at 10am, in Thames Council Chamber. [tcdc.govt.nz/meetings](https://www.tcdc.govt.nz/meetings)



Thames Visitor Information Centre

With the opening of the new Visitor Information Centre in Thames Civic Centre, the town is well set up for a sparkling summer, with businesses benefiting from well informed visitors.

Using the 'Explore Interesting' brand, the Information Centre is fitted out with visitor guides, historical storytelling and postcards, while flags are flying in Pollen Street. The Thames map showing amenities, tracks and trails and attractions has been supplied to local businesses. A visitor website showcasing all the interesting things to do and see in Thames is up and running: [explorethames.nz](https://www.explorethames.nz) A social media campaign has promoted Thames over the past year, netting 2,000 followers.

Further plans include: a Māori History of Te Kauaeranga, branded map signage at Porritt Park and Grahamstown, and a summer goldrush promotional campaign to further drive visitors into Thames.



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CHRISTMAS / NEW YEAR

Some rules, regulations and schedules may change.



Kerbside collections

New kerbside collection calendars for 2025 will

be available at [tcdc.govt.nz/bindays](https://www.tcdc.govt.nz/bindays) and printed copies from Council offices and information centres from early December.

Thames Coast and Manaia – collection day continues to be Wednesday. In the holiday period there is no Christmas Day collection – red week collections will take place on Thursday 26 December. The following week, yellow week collections will move to Thursday 2 January.

Thames Rural South, Thames & Surrounds – collection day continues to be Thursday. In the holiday period, red week collection moves to Friday 27 December and yellow week collection moves to Friday 3 January.

Our Refuse and Recycling Transfer Stations are closed on Christmas and New Year's days, and open daily from 8.30am–5.30pm until 5 April. [tcdc.govt.nz/rts](https://www.tcdc.govt.nz/rts)

Service centres

Our offices will be closed from 12 noon on Tuesday 24 December 2024, resuming normal hours on Friday 3 January 2025.

You can contact us 24/7 at 07 868 0200, customer.services@tcdc.govt.nz



ANNUAL REPORT FINAL

Our 2023/24 Annual Report has been independently audited and signed off, wrapping up the last financial year. [tcdc.govt.nz/annualreport2023](https://www.tcdc.govt.nz/annualreport2023)



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Tangata Ora - 'We're not ready to give up'

By DAVIDDA HIKATANGATA

When the Thames Valley Tangata Ora Trust hosted its closing down sale in June this year, they did not expect the doors would still be open five months down the line.

The trust, which offers help to people navigating systems in the health and disability, work and income and social service areas, has provided its services in the community for seven years.

But the trust's future once again hangs in the balance as funds are stretched thin.

Centre manager Robyn Pengelly said after *The Valley Profile* shared a front page story on May 15 about the trust needing to shut its doors, many people came in to buy products.

"Our bank balance went up and then we got some funding in, so the board decided that we'll hang on a bit longer."

The trust, located at 607 Mackay St in Thames, received funding to cover operational costs such as rent from The Lion Foundation and Pub Charity Ltd, which would see them through until mid-January, Robyn said.

But recent funding applications were declined from funders who had supported them in the past, Robyn said.

One of the funders saw the trust as an organisation that was "doing okay" compared to others, Robyn said.

Other feedback said the trust's request did not align as closely with the committee's priorities as other requests in the round, she



The future of the Thames Valley Tangata Ora Trust is again uncertain.

File Photo

said.

Robyn said they could only apply once a year for funding, and the next round was in May, 2025.

"And they take about three to four months to decide to make the decisions anyway."

But Robyn said the trust was intent on surviving.

"We're determined that we want to survive as long as we can because I believe that this is a really important organisation."

Nobody else sold or hired out mobility equipment in the Coromandel Peninsula, she said.

If they were forced to close, people would have to go to Hamilton, Tauranga or Auckland for mobility equipment, unless they bought online, Robyn said.

"And that's not always a good thing, buying online, because you don't know what you're getting."

The trust shares its premises with a massage therapist, mindfulness counsellor and an acupuncturist, who hired the rooms at the back of the building.

Robyn said the three health services also offered philanthropic work for the Tangata Ora clients

for either a koha (donation) or for free.

One thing Robyn said was "in the pipeline" for around the end of February next year, if the trust was still operating, was a well-being expo day fundraiser.

It would be a "reasonably easy" fundraiser for the trust, and an opportunity to collaborate with other people, she said.

They planned to hold the event at the Civic Centre in Thames, with stalls set up for people in the health field doing things like mini massage, reiki healing, and card

readings, she said.

"It's an opportunity for them to promote their business, and for people to have a taster of different alternative health methods."

Robyn said the auditorium would be set up with stalls for makers who sell their products online, and entry would be a koha donation.

Even though the future was uncertain, it was clear Tangata Ora would continue to persevere.

"We're just not ready to give up yet because we know, we believe that this organisation is really important," Robyn said.

Tangata Ora's show room was their social enterprise, where they sold and hired out mobility products and daily living aids, she said.

"But we don't just sell them for the sake of making money. We give expert advice. We support people through things. We're an organisation with a heart and with integrity."

The hire equipment consisted of two wheelchairs, three walkers, three shower stools and a shower chair, she said.

Robyn said the health system was overloaded and under-resourced as it was.

People were waiting for equipment through the system, she said, so they needed to have another alternative to be able to buy or hire products.

"I don't think people realise how important this is," she said.

"We're not ready to give up."

DETAILS: Stay up to date with the trust at www.tangataora.org.nz or visit them at 607 Mackay St, Thames.

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Toy appeal 'a way to come together'

By DAVIDDA HIKATANGATA

One way Paeroa people embrace manaakitanga or care for others is through the Paeroa Baptist Church's annual Community Christmas Toy Appeal.

People of Paeroa are invited to "make Christmas special" for families and children, who might otherwise miss out, by donating and placing a gift under the tree at one of three drop-off spots in town: The Hauraki Bike Hire/Paeroa Information Hub, the Paeroa Library or Paeroa Pigeon Post.

All gifts need to be placed underneath the trees by December 9, before Santa's helpers collect them and begin sorting and wrapping at the Paeroa Baptist Church on December 12.

People were also welcome to donate wrapping paper as well, organiser Carol Millar told *The Profile*, because "we do go through a lot of it to wrap all the presents".

Carol said the appeal was "a way to come together" and support people, and let them know they're cared for. "We're glad they're part of our community."

Around 260 presents were gifted to children in the past few appeals, Carol said.

"Each year we seem to need just a few extra gifts, so I would be expecting somewhere around the 270 mark."

Carol said local organisations nominate people who might benefit from receiving a gift.

Once the presents were wrapped, they would go into piles to be distributed to the organisations who will then deliver the



Paeroa Baptist Church is calling for donations for its Paeroa Community Christmas Toy Appeal.

File Photo

gifts to families.

"If there is a social agency organisation that we haven't contacted, they're most welcome to contact us to be a part of it," she said.

For those interested in helping wrap presents on December 12, 9am was the start time, Carol said.

While everything would be provided, Carol said it helped to take a pair of scissors. "Scissors seems to

be the one thing that we often try to share between people."

Some people may only be able to make it for an hour, and then head off, she said, while others might be able to stay until the job is done.

"Both are wonderful," and a huge help, she said.

DETAILS: Donated gifts need to be new or in excellent condition. Gift drop-off is at the Hauraki Bike Hire/

Paeroa Information Hub at 6 Wharf St, the Paeroa Library at 5 Mackay St, or Paeroa Pigeon Post at 52 Belmont Rd. Place unwrapped gifts under the Christmas tree by December 9. To make any enquiries, contact Carol Millar, Ph 0274 606 692 or email paeroabapchurch@gmail.com. To help wrap gifts on December 12, visit the Paeroa Baptist Church, 2 Wood St, from 9am.

Mathis makes All Blacks Sevens debut

CONTINUED FROM P1

you always see these big guys on TV and think it's not possible. "But I guess if you train hard and work hard, your dreams are going to turn into a reality," he said.

For the next two years, Oli said his mind would be purely focussed on sevens rugby.

"[I'll] give that a good crack as well as the NPC, and then I guess we'll kind of go from there to see what the future holds."

His development included growing his professional habits, "being around the boys", training full-time and "not having to worry about anything else", he said. "I can kind of work with the old boys, pick their brains... and hopefully become the best athlete I can be."

Oli said he looked up to All Blacks player Ardie Savea, and wanted to "try to play the game like he does".

But the former Hamilton Boys' High School student said his biggest influences in the sport from day one were his dad and grandad.

Oli said he was "always trying to make them proud".

For rugby players who wanted to follow in similar footsteps, Oli's advice was to "just enjoy your rugby".

Enjoy time with mates, he said, and don't take things too seriously - "but still train hard at the same time".

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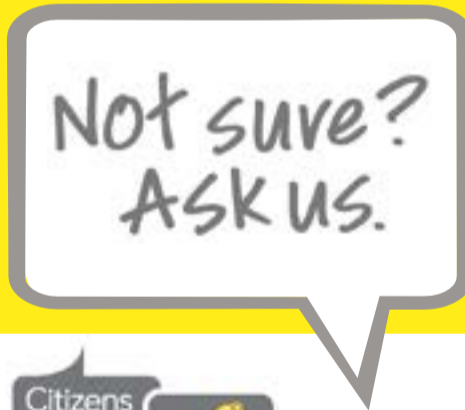
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Injuries sustained during Waihi cycle race



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.

1899

Mr Tanner, of Waitekauri, met with an accident while engaged in a cycling road race organised by the Waihi Cycling and Touring Club. During the race, between Waihi and Waikino, he was leading on the return home and when travelling down one of the hills he lost his pedals. He was thrown a considerable distance, and sustained a concussion and other injuries. He progressed favourably, however, under the care of Dr Wright.

Over at Thames, the state of the Thames to Coromandel road caused conniptions at a Thames Borough Council meeting. One councillor said it was simply disgraceful that two such important centres should have been in existence for so long but had not years ago been connected by a good road. The council passed a resolution that it was of the greatest importance to Thames that better road communication should exist between there and Coromandel.

They heartily supported the efforts being made by local councils to induce the government to assist



The Waihi Cycling and Touring Club's opening run, 1899.

Photo: SUPPLIED

in the construction of a road suitable for coach and vehicular traffic.

A communication was sent to Mr Cadman, Minister of Mines, urging upon him the necessity to give assistance to enable the work to be speedily undertaken.

At Pūriri, there was disappointment when the Public Works Department failed to metal the roads leading from the main road to the Pūriri railway station. Hikutāia and Kōpū had metalled roads to their stations, while Pārāwai had a beautiful gravel footpath. At Pūriri they were left paddling through the mud as best they could.

Meanwhile at Paeroa, a Free Reading Room was opened to the public. A number of people visited

the room, and all agreed that the building filled a gap. A liberal supply of magazines and papers were placed on the tables, and all government papers, pamphlets, and books of reference were neatly arranged on the shelves.

Parliamentary papers for several years back were available for reference on application to the custodian. The walls were somewhat bare, but there was a landscape in oils and a panel of roses from the brush of Mrs Brennan, also a view in the Otira Gorge, donated by Mrs Gooch. The committee hoped to receive further donations from Paeroa residents.

At Grahamstown, some excitement was caused when a horse

attached to a spring cart owned by Mr Causley stampeded. The horse was standing near Mr Renshaw's shop in Owen St, when its blinkers became disarranged and caused the horse to bolt.

When turning round the Bank corner the horse fell and broke the pulleys, with the result that the cart was turned, with the shafts up in the air. The horse kept up its hurtle until the cart was brought to a standstill by coming in contact and carrying away Mr Reid's verandah posts at his shop in Pollen St, and also breaking a plate of glass at Mr Booth's shop. The horse then broke loose from the vehicle, but was soon caught without any more damage resulting.

Chris' Quiz

Weekly quiz compiled by Chris Parminter

1. How many kilometres is a half-marathon?
2. The first ever solo flight from New Zealand to England was made by New Zealander Jean Batten in which year? a) 1916, b) 1926 or c) 1936?
3. True or false: Australia is wider than the moon?
4. The historic gold mine known as Martha Mine is in which Hauraki town?
5. What term describes a plant that completes its life cycle in one year? a) annual, b) biennial or c) perennial?
6. How many keys does a standard piano have? a) 88, b) 108 or c) 128?
7. The musical *The King and I* is set in which former country, now known as Thailand?
8. What does "HTTP" stand for in web addresses?
9. Which artist sang the hit song *Rolling in the Deep*?
10. The term 'za refers to which food?



Jean Batten

ANSWERS: 1. 21 km; 2. c) 1936; 3. True; 4. Waihi; 5. a) annual; 6. a) 88 (52 white and 36 black); 7. Siam; 8. HyperText Transfer Protocol; 9. Adele; 10. Pizza.

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Rural Life

Dairy farmer's new book an act of devotion

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

A Mangatarata author is bringing faith and life lessons together in a book of devotionals with a uniquely Kiwi twist.

Mum-of-six Chris Bovill is releasing her second book, *Wonder*, on November 30. It features 60 short essays about her life on a dairy farm, raising children, living in South America as a child, and her thoughts on daily life.

Woven through each story is a passage from Christian scripture, tying her values to her experiences.

"There are a lot of mistakes that I've made in life... dumb life choices. I've written about those mistakes from a very vulnerable place, trying to be as open and authentic as possible," Chris said.

"I think when you're honest and open, that gives other people permission to do that as well. There have been times in my own life where I've felt particularly lonely. How can I be a mum to six kids when I've got my own questions, you know?"

"It's encouraging others and giving them hope that even though we muck up and fail, we can pick ourselves up again and carry on."

Wonder is the second in Chris' series of devotional essays - her first book, *Flourish*, was released in 2022. The volumes developed from Chris' practice of daily journaling and as a way to make



Author Chris Bovill's second book expands on her life experiences and her faith. Photo: ALICE PARMINTER

sense of her own struggles, she said.

"I was born with deformed hips and with spina bifida in my lower back, and doctors were saying things like I'd be in a wheelchair and I would not be able to have children," Chris said.

"In my adult years, [a doctor] spoke some words over me that were quite life changing to me. She said, 'you're an egg that your

mother's body should have rejected'. So that was a hard pill to swallow. I had to go on a quest really to find out, is our life of value? Are we just mistakes... or is there a purpose and are we valued? I guess you could say I've just been on a quest for truth."

Chris said one of the things she loved most about her books was their Kiwi perspective.

"They're stories that we can all

relate to - there's place names in there that any Kiwi would recognise. Driving through Taupō... breaking down in our car on the Desert Rd, everyone instantly pictures it," she said.

"When I was a young mum, I started reading devotionals because you don't have time for anything else. [But] the devotionals that I used to read were always American based. So I thought,

well, I'd like to take it from our perspective. I think we're all on a journey of sorts, whether we believe strongly or whether we don't. And you don't have to take on board the faith behind it, but they're a good yarn."

Producing the books has been a challenge - Chris began restoring furniture to pay for the publishing process - but she has been encouraged by the support of her family and the community.

"The vulnerability side of it surprised me, how real I got in some of the stories. But then once I put it down on paper and I read it to a couple of my nearest and dearest, they were like, yeah, that needs to go in the book as well because that's going to help someone," she said.

"[It got] such a lovely reception, honestly. It's been quite life-changing, quite pivotal in the way I look at the world. Just looking around at other people and listening to their stories gives you a real empathy."

"We're all on this life journey together just trying to figure it out. And if faith guides your steps, which it does for me, I like to write it down."

DETAILS: *Wonder* is available from November 30 at Willow in Ngatea, Carson's Bookstore and Lamp Books in Thames, and at www.chrisbovill.com.



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Rural Life

Modelling reveals reductions in erosion due to soil conservation

Region-wide sediment loads to water are reestimated to have decreased by 4 per cent regionwide between 2002 to 2017 in response to soil conservation efforts, Waikato Regional Council's Integrated Catchment Management Committee heard last week.

Tim Norris, one of the council's soil and land scientists, gave the committee a presentation about the work done with Manaaki Whenua Landcare Research to assess the effectiveness of catchment management and river restoration through monitoring and sediment modelling.

SedNetNZ modelling was used to estimate baseline erosion and evaluate the effectiveness of historic riparian restoration efforts (specifically fencing and stock exclusion) and hill-country erosion control measures, such as space planting, for reducing erosion. It was found that between 2002 and 2017, modelled erosion decreased across most of the council's eight management zones, with reductions ranging from 3.5 per cent (Lake Taupō zone) to 8.5 per cent (Waipā zone).

Only the upper Waikato zone showed a modelled increase of 9.4 per cent, which Norris attributed to land use changes from forestry to farming.

"The modelling implemented a series of backward-looking scenarios at four points of time: 2002, 2007, 2012 and 2017," Norris said. "Given the council's large investment in soil conservation programmes, and the significant investment by landowners, we want to know what impact these programmes are having."

The council's Integrated Catchment Management (ICM) directorate incentivises landowners to undertake soil conservation mitigations in priority catchments

and reaches, providing co-funding support particularly from Waikato River Authority and the Ministry of Primary Industries (Hill Country Erosion Fund).

It assists landowners with funding to enable them to take an integrated approach to keeping soil on land to reduce the impacts of sediment in waterways, and to maintain channel capacity.

Priority catchments for funding are identified through science, such as the results from the council's catchment environmental monitoring programme and the recent erosion and sediment modelling undertaken using the SedNetNZ model.

Norris said the council undertook a regional survey every five years to assess the overall state of riparian margins across the region, looking at fencing, vegetation and buffer width.

"Over time, we have seen a consistent increase in the proportion of bank length effectively fenced across the region. For dairy farms, the 2017 survey found that 87 per cent of streambanks were effectively fenced."

More than 1 million hectares in the Waikato region is affected by erosion to varying degrees.

The West Coast zone has the highest average erosion (190 tonnes per square kilometre per year) due to steep hill-country, soft rock geology and high rainfall in some areas, followed by Waipā and Upper Waikato (105 tonnes per square kilometre per year and 70 tonnes per square kilometre per year respectively), while Central Waikato (the smallest zone by area) has the lowest (39 tonnes per square kilometre per year). Across the region, approximately 1700 kilotonnes per year of sediment is delivered to the coast.

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Gardening

Water a lifeline for summer gardens

Gardens go up a gear in December so to keep ahead of the pests take a daily garden stroll. Catching problems early makes for simple solutions and happy plants. Squash aphids, dead head flowers and pinch laterals off tomatoes. A little each day goes a long way.

Water is the lifeline of the veggie garden in summer. Plants are best watered in the morning or early evening, not in the searing heat of the day. Water deeply every few days rather than a little every day. This encourages plants to develop deeper roots and don't forget to water your pots.

This month is about succession of crops especially the ones that you are most likely to eat plenty of. Sow direct, summer salad greens, spring onions, cucumber, beans, carrots, beetroot, capsicums, and eggplants.

Continue to mound up potatoes to prevent them going green. They should be nearly ready for Christmas Day harvest. It is also time for harvesting garlic and onions.

Harvest and dry herbs before they flower. They can be dried in a dehydrator or hung in bunches in a cool airy place. Some herbs are nice to use for flavoured vinegars or oils. Use fresh clean herbs but make sure they are dry before putting in the containers to prevent mould forming. These make nice Xmas gifts.

Be vigilant about feeding, weeding and watering and I strongly advise mulching your gardens. This applies to vegetable beds, around fruit trees and flower gardens. Mulch is your soil's shelter. It keeps the moisture in, provides a roof over the worms' heads, and drip feeds the soil life. Mulch comes in many forms, so check out your local garden centres for advice.



Encourage the kids to plant sunflowers.

File Photo: PIXABAY

Pea straw is one of my favourites around strawberries.

Liquid feed with seaweed will make your garden look very happy and promote good strong growth. Feed your tomatoes weekly with a liquid feed and water regularly. Happy plants mean successful cropping.

Plant cosmos, phacelia, calendula, cornflower and more sunflowers.

Encourage the kids to plant sunflowers and see who can grow the tallest. These are all great for attracting nectar loving bees to help the pollination cycle. Whatever you are planting, be it seeds or seedlings, water well and prepare the soil with blood and bone and sheep pellets.

Protect new seedlings with an appropriate slug bait.

Lift spring flowering bulbs once the leaves have died down and store a cool dry place. Remove dead flowers off the roses to promote repeat flowering. Or just constantly pick blooms for the vase. Fill pots with flowering annuals to give some colour for Christmas and water regularly.

Continue to aerate your compost and move worm farms out of the afternoon sun if possible.

Avoid cutting the lawn too short as it will dry out too quickly. Water the lawn in the evening to allow moisture to soak into the roots overnight.

Happy gardening and have a wonderful, safe Christmas and New Year.

Enjoy your garden,
- Ngatea Garden Circle

Stepping forward into growth

OPINION

By MICHAEL WILKES



Still remember the first time I gave a public presentation. I was in my late teens, facing a daunting 20-minute slot, and I was petrified.

The audience was full of people who likely knew more than I did, and I felt an immense pressure. My palms were sweaty, my mouth

dry, and all I wanted to do was run. Yet, despite the fear, I stepped up and stumbled my way through. With each passing opportunity, it got easier. Each conversation afterwards provided encouragement and valuable lessons on what I could do differently.

Today, I smile when I think back to that moment. Had I never stepped forward into the fear and the growth, I'm pretty confident my life would look radically different today.

"In any given moment, we have two options: to step forward into growth or step back into safety."

This quote by Abraham Maslow resonates deeply with me - it's a reminder that growth often comes from stepping outside our comfort zones.

We all face moments in life when fear tries to hold us back, whether it's public speaking, taking on a new role, or pursuing a passion. Those moments can feel paralyzing, but they also offer incredible opportunities for development. When we choose to step forward, even when our knees are shaking, we often find a path to personal growth we never knew existed. So, the next time you find yourself at a crossroads, feeling the pull of safety, ask yourself: what might I gain by stepping into the unknown? Embrace the fear, take that leap, and who knows? You might just find yourself on a journey that transforms your life for the better.

Michael Wilkes is a Living Well Trust Youth Worker. He and his team provide mentoring and resilience programmes across Thames and Paeroa to more than 300 students a year. They are passionate about supporting our young people to thrive. Much of this work is funded outside of schools and it becoming increasingly challenging in the current climate. Email michael@livingwell.org.nz to sign up to their quarterly newsletter or to become a supporter.

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*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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SUDOKU

178

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

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

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MEDIUM

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HARD

HARD

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

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

EASY

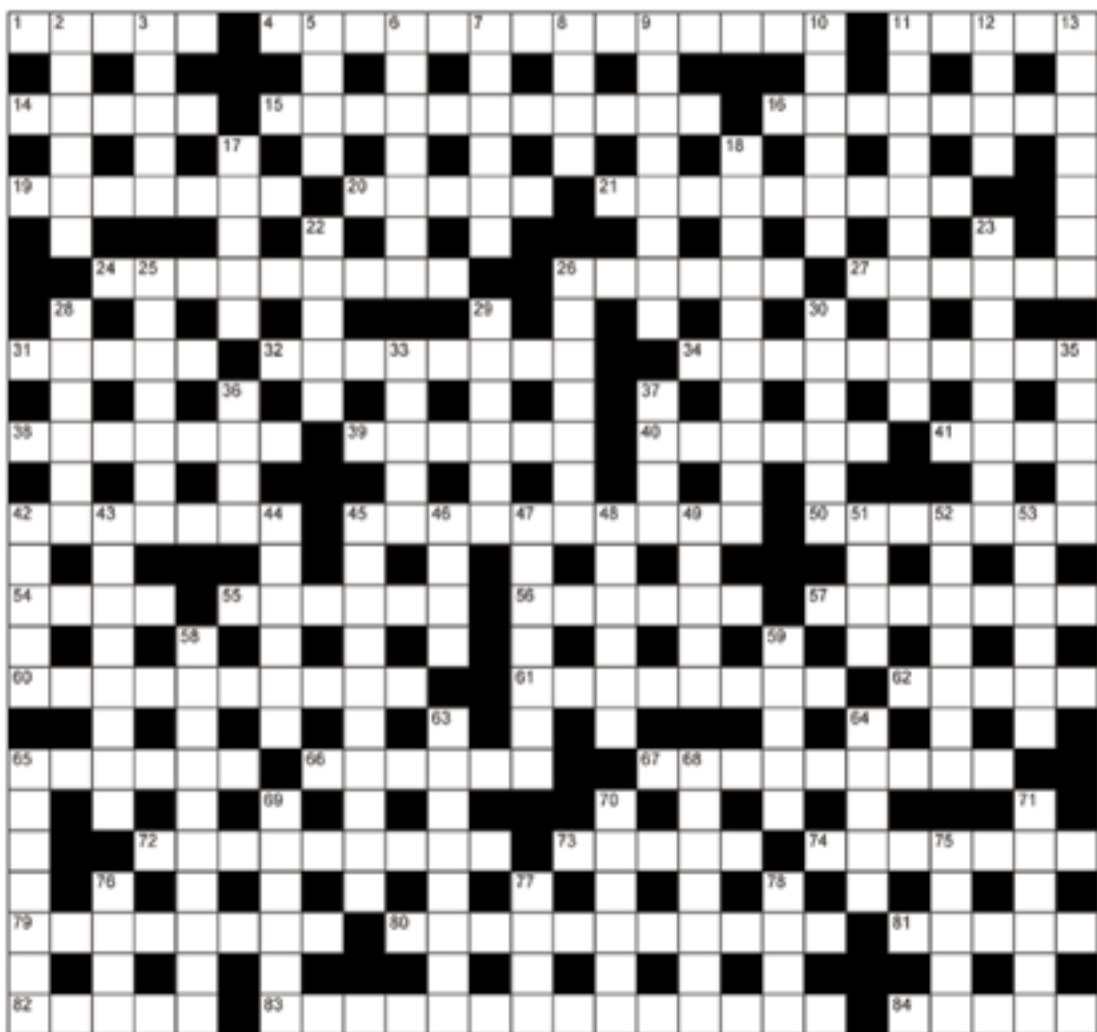
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6	3	8	5	4	1	7	9	2
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7	4	1	9	6	2	3	8	5

Puzzles © The Puzzle Company
www.thepuzzlecompany.co.nz

JUMBO CROSSWORD

198

- ACROSS**
- 1 Cake topping (5)
 - 4 Refrain from criticising (4,4,6)
 - 11 Camera adjustment (5)
 - 14 Kingdom (5)
 - 15 Fellow-conspirators (11)
 - 16 Productive (8)
 - 19 View (7)
 - 20 Shun (5)
 - 21 Last century (9)
 - 24 Playwright (9)
 - 26 Thoroughfare (6)
 - 27 Rebound (6)
 - 31 Intone (5)
 - 32 Scholastic world (8)
 - 34 Silenced by astonishment, terror (6,4)
 - 38 Fervent, enthusiastic (7)
 - 39 Light smart jacket (6)
 - 40 Tempestuous (6)
 - 41 Carnival (4)
 - 42 Law (7)
 - 45 Final utterance (5,5)
 - 50 Most indolent (7)
 - 54 Thick cord (4)
 - 55 Debacle (6)
 - 56 Unnerve (6)
 - 57 Grazing land (7)
 - 60 Keyboard player's seat (5,5)
 - 61 Vex, annoy (8)
 - 62 Cove (5)
 - 65 Tolerate (6)
 - 66 Exile (6)
 - 67 Retires (4,2,3)
 - 72 Trembling motion (9)
 - 73 Craze (5)
 - 74 Glossy clear paint (7)
 - 79 Confiscates (8)
 - 80 Of magnetic appeal and charm (11)
 - 81 Suspicion (5)
 - 82 Heron (5)
 - 83 Flee (4,2,3,5)
 - 84 Criticise (5)
 - DOWN**
 - 2 Eerie (6)
 - 3 Synthetic fibre (5)
 - 5 Hankering (4)
 - 6 Develops over time (7)
 - 7 Serviette (6)
 - 8 Matching set of clothes (4)
 - 9 Heatproof cooking dishes (8)
 - 10 Insect (6)
 - 11 Old muzzle-loading guns (10)
 - 12 Simple restaurant (4)
 - 13 Recovery operation at sea (7)
 - 17 Spacious (5)
 - 18 Contagious (10)
 - 22 Jammed (5)
 - 23 Lag against heat loss (8)
 - 25 Curly lock (7)
 - 26 Garden bird (7)
 - 28 Menace (6)
 - 29 S American river (6)
 - 30 Punch repeatedly (6)
 - 33 Time lag (5)
 - 35 Charred (5)
 - 36 Poled boat (4)
 - 37 Consumer (4)
 - 42 Remnant (5)
 - 43 Claps (8)
 - 44 Throws out (6)
 - 45 Unfaithfulness (10)
 - 46 Golf club (4)
 - 47 Embellish (7)
 - 48 Loud protest (6)
 - 49 Dutch earthenware (5)
 - 51 Slightly open (4)
 - 52 Acute (7)
 - 53 Filter (6)
 - 58 Blood-stemming bandage or cord (10)
 - 59 Secret store (5)
 - 63 Bullet bounce (8)
 - 64 Reef material (5)
 - 65 Ask (7)
 - 68 Paper-folding art (7)
 - 69 Ledger entry (6)
 - 70 Annoying inconvenience (6)
 - 71 Weather map line (6)
 - 75 Rope loop (5)
 - 76 Box (4)
 - 77 Obnoxious child (4)
 - 78 Small glass bottle (4)



PREVIOUS SOLUTION

ACROSS: 1 Sparred, 4 Loss of face, 9 Crucial, 13 Eels, 14 Nausea, 15 Unique, 16 Absence, 19 Marionette, 20 Enhanced, 21 China, 24 Bricks, 25 Script, 27 Objective, 32 Infamous, 33 Supply, 34 Decline, 38 Annually, 39 Libido, 40 Evil, 41 Stout, 42 Organ, 45 Put the kibosh on, 52 Exits, 55 Spare, 56 Toga, 57 Tragic, 58 Stopping, 61 Villain, 62 Seance, 63 Uncovers, 66 Shake a leg, 68 Larder, 69 Deceit, 73 Amuse, 74 Kindling, 76 In the clear, 81 Bayonet, 82 Cinema, 83 Hawser, 84 Long, 85 Gruyere, 86 Prospector, 87 Delayed.

DOWN: 1 Steam, 2 Allergic, 3 Dealer, 4 Liszt, 5 Scab, 6 Opulent, 7 Flight, 8 Churn, 10 Ruby, 11 Chekhov, 12 Ascend, 17 Look in vain, 18 Beret, 22 Tinsmith, 23 Otter, 24 Bravado, 26 Coop, 28 Bullets, 29 Gallop, 30 Aplomb, 31 Insult, 33 Smirk, 35 Latex, 36 Snag, 37 Silo, 43 Repair, 44 April, 46 Upon, 47 Trapeze, 48 Extent, 49 Inane, 50 Obituary, 51 Native, 52 Experience, 53 Iris, 54 Segment, 59 Risky, 60 Acre, 64 Basil, 65 Ceremony, 67 History, 68 Luggage, 70 Impair, 71 Biceps, 72 Shield, 75 Drier, 77 Newer, 78 Raged, 79 Gear, 80 Shut.

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Mass of the Children

St George's Community choir is preparing a musical treat for Thames audiences with its upcoming performances of *Mass of the Children* and other music selections by Sir John Rutter.

Composed in 2003, with its themes of hope, peace and unity, *Mass of the Children* has been performed only a few times in New Zealand.

In this work, Rutter combines traditional melodies with contemporary harmony with the goal of bringing together both adults and children. The *Mass of the Children* is especially unique because it combines the voices of an adult choir with a children's chorus, as well as soprano and bass soloists and orchestration.

"St George's Community Choir prides itself in being an 'all-comers' choir and for these performances we combine the sounds of forty talented, adult singers with a small but enthusiastic group of children," a spokesperson said.

"The work blends traditional Latin texts with English poetry. Much of the poetry in this work is sung by the children, while the adult choir serves more to maintain the traditional Latin text."

Soprano Emma Jones and baritone Arana Ashby, who are both promising and accomplished students from the Waikato School of Music, will bring their voices to the solo parts. The choir will be accompanied by an ensemble, featuring Walter Nicholls playing the piano, Elsa Klein playing the harp and Ilyse Jennings playing the flute. Walter will also perform two organ solos, showcasing the beautiful sounds of St George's Church organ.

Musical director Sandie Davis-Roberts, who has sung in concerts featuring many of John Rutter's works, will conduct the performances.

The concerts will take place in the historic St George's Church, renowned for its stunning acoustics. The choir is grateful to be able to use the grand piano in the church, which is owned by the Thames Music Group. "There are two performances, please join us to enjoy music that celebrates a sense of community and the beauty of shared song."

DETAILS: Performances: November 30 at 7pm and December 1 at 2pm, at St George's Church, Mackay St, Thames. Adults \$20 (cash only), School-age children free.



St George's Community choir rehearse *Mass of the Children*.

Photo: SUPPLIED

'Awe-inspiring' art to feature

The first of the featured artists for December is Pat Lumber, who will be exhibiting his art at the southern end of the Thames Art Gallery. Originally from Wellington, Pat attended the Elam School of Fine Arts in Auckland from 1968-1970, studying for a B.A. Although it was a great experience, he admitted that he didn't think he was cut out for that life.

However, whilst at Elam, Pat amassed as much experience and inspiration as possible from his tutors, particularly the brilliant Garth Taper, Don Binney and Colin McCahon. He said Colin used to give his rejected work to his students to recycle - where are they today!

Pat says that he is greatly inspired by the impressionists Manet, Monet and Cezanne; the colour, depth and, in some way, simplicity of subject and statement appeals to him.

He finds using cloud formations, opposing landmass and colour conveys this depth, while portraying landscape that is uncluttered but still highlighting a scene that is recognisable, without unnecessary detail. This technique is very apparent in Pat's work.

It was during his time at Elam that the call of the sea beckoned and Pat spent the entire 38 years of his working life as a seafarer, working for many shipping lines and sailing to all corners of the world. Along the way he made sketches of the ships he encountered and he has turned many of them into fine portraits, reflecting the highest respect and fondest memories he has of the experiences and shipmates he served with.

When not at sea, Pat lived on Waiheke Island for 51 years, which he says had an impact on his art and way of life, but after two years in Thames, he likes to think that he now has an appreciation of the beauty and pulse of his new environment.

Meanwhile, two extremely talented potters will be sharing the northern end of the gallery, showcasing their astounding creations and techniques.

Deborah A McNair ('DAM') has been doing pottery for several years but it took her

some time and a few different projects (like making a ceramic clock) to find out what she really liked to do. Deborah hand builds with Ross Benson's clay (Turama Ahi pottery).

She loves bold, bright colours and clear lines, and gains inspiration from science fiction and classic comic books.

Ria Erasmus began her artistic journey in the stunning landscapes of South Africa, where she honed her skills and passion for art. Her style is as varied as the natural world that inspires her, constantly evolving and exploring different mediums and techniques. From the breathtaking vistas to the intricate details of the natural world, she finds endless wonder in the awesomeness of creation. This profound sense of awe fuels Ria's creative process, shaping her approach to art and teaching. For many years she has dedicated herself to both creating art and sharing her passion through teaching across diverse genres.

Ria's aim, in every brushstroke and every lesson, is simple: to bring joy and happiness to herself and to those who encounter her work. She believes art has the power to uplift, inspire, and connect us all, and it is her privilege to contribute to that experience.

DETAILS: Thames Art Gallery, 604 Tararu Rd, Thames, open daily 10am to 4pm.



Painter Pat Lumber.

Photos: SUPPLIED



Pottery by Deborah A McNair, left, and Ria Erasmus will feature at Thames Art Gallery in December.

Thames Art Gallery
604 Tararu Road, Thames Coast
www.thamesartgallery.co.nz

December Featured Artists

<p style="text-align: center;">PAT LUMBER</p> <p>Exhibition Opening Sunday 1st December 4.30-6.30pm All Welcome</p> <p>Pat enjoys portraying uncluttered landscapes that depict realism, while leaving out unnecessary detail. His work also shows his love of ships</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">DEBORAH MCNAIR & RIA ERASMUS</p> <p>Two extremely talented artists are featuring together to showcase their vibrancy, creativity and passion in ceramics and artistic offerings</p>
<p>OPEN 7 DAYS 10am - 4pm</p>	

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Movies from Thursday 28 November to Wednesday 4 December

The Way, My Way (100 mins) PG. **Thu 1.30pm; Fri 10.30am; Sun 4pm:** The true story of a stubborn, Australian man who decides to walk the 800-km-long Camino de Santiago pilgrimage route through Spain.

A Different Man (112 mins) M. **Thu 7.15pm; Wed(4/12) 1.30pm:** An aspiring actor undergoes a radical medical procedure to transform his appearance. But his dream new face soon turns into a nightmare.

Here (104 mins) M. **Fri 1.30pm; Sat 7.15pm; Wed(4/12) 10.30am:** A generational story about families and the special place they inhabit, sharing in love, loss, laughter, and life. Starring Tom Hanks, Robin Wright.

Encanto Reo Maori (102 mins) PG. **Sat & Sun 1pm** (In Te Reo Maori): Encanto tells the tale of an extraordinary family, the Madrigals, who live hidden in a magical house in the mountains of Colombia.

The Critic (101 mins) M. **Sat 4pm:** Ian McKellen (Lord of the Rings) stars as a powerful London theatre critic who lures a struggling actress into a blackmail scheme with deadly consequences.

Bookworm (103 mins) PG. **Sun 10.30am:** 11-year-old Mildred's world is turned upside down when her estranged father takes her camping to find a mythological beast known as the Canterbury Panther.

My Favourite Cake (97 mins) M. **Sun 7.15pm:** 70yo solitary Mahin chooses to revive her love life. A chance encounter becomes an unforgettable evening. Iranian - in Persian with English subtitles. "Deeply endearing, [with] general joie de vivre... a crowdpleaser through and through" Hollywood Reporter.

Pacific Mother (88 mins) TBA. **Wed(4/12) 7pm with director Q&A:** Freediver Sachiko Fukumoto connects with ocean women from Hawai'i, Tahiti, the Cook Islands, and Aotearoa and explores the importance of reclaiming traditional birthing knowledge, community and caring for the planet and people.

Lee (117 mins) M. **Thu 4pm:** Story of photographer & model Lee Miller who became a war correspondent. Includes a photo of Miller herself posing defiantly in Hitler's private bathtub.



New programme offered at HPC

Hauraki Plains College is thrilled to join 29 other NZ schools to offer the Services Academy Programme. This is a leadership and life skills course delivered in a military setting here at HPC, with spaces for 20 Year 12 students.

Students will be in Academy classes for 50 per cent of their timetable and will be able to select three other classes during the year.

We are excited to welcome Paul Dodds as the new director of our Services Academy at HPC.

With an extensive 26-year career in the New Zealand Army as both a soldier and commissioned officer, Paul brings unrivalled expertise, leadership, and a deep commitment to student development in this role.

Paul's military background includes more than a decade of experience instructing and mentoring soldiers at all levels - from basic recruit training to advanced courses for junior and senior non-commissioned officers, Officer Cadet School (OCS), and other specialist units.

His passion lies in helping individuals grow in confidence, adopt a winning mindset, and achieve their full potential. He holds a range of qualifications that perfectly align with the Academy's focus on developing skills and character in students: training designer (curriculum and programme development), advanced instructor (teaching methodologies), outdoor education (NZQA), working at heights supervisor (rope work), first aid instructor, physical training instructor, close-quarter battle (CQB) instructor, and anti-harassment advisor.

Paul's leadership experience extends beyond instruction, having managed teams of instructors, overseen training doctrine and future operations, and co-ordinated international engagements. His ability to connect with people and build trusting relationships fosters a positive learning environment where students can thrive. Outside his military service, Paul is deeply rooted in community service.

He has been a volunteer firefighter for 10 years, a Search and Rescue (SAR) co-ordinator,



HPC Services Academy director Paul Dodds.

a rugby coach, and has served as Junior Rugby Club President and a motocross club committee member. Paul's combination of military discipline, community involvement, and enthusiasm for mentoring makes him an ideal leader for our Services Academy.

Under his guidance, we look forward to seeing our students grow into confident, capable young leaders equipped with the skills and mindset to succeed. Paul lives locally with his wife, Jacqui-May Allison-Dodds, who teaches at HPC and holds leadership roles as arts curriculum leader and SENCO. Their two children are also students at the college.

We are thrilled to have someone of Paul's calibre leading our Services Academy and are excited about the year ahead under his guidance.

Welcome to the team, Paul.

We encourage interested students and parents to attend one of our two information evenings on November 27, and December 2 from 7pm to 8pm in the Hub. We will outline programme information, introduce you to our director and answer any questions.

Applications close: December 4 at 3pm, and can be dropped to the main office or email: pauld@haurakiplains.school.nz.

- Supplied by Hauraki Plains College



The Karangahake Gorge is a great place to spend time over summer. Photo: DAVIDDA HIKATANGATA

Summer relaxation tips for students

As the summer holiday approaches, students have a golden opportunity to recharge and prepare for the challenges of the 2025 school year.

This time off is essential for mental and physical refreshment, and students can make the most of it by focussing on rest, relaxation and personal growth.

There are plenty of ways to recharge the mental battery and get a good dose of the outdoors such as going for walks around the neighbourhood - heading to places like the Karangahake Gorge to stroll along one of the walkways, or riding a bike on the Hauraki Rail Trail.

Places like Waihi Beach or the Thames Coast offer good spots for a summer dip, fishing, or a picnic and fun in the sun, while towns like Paeroa and Ngatea offer public pools for students and families to cool

down.

Summer holidays are also perfect for exploring new hobbies or skills to build creativity and confidence, whether it's cooking, photography, sports, a science project or learning an instrument - it's a good time to look at branching out and trying something different.

Another way students can take care over the holiday period and to help build strong support networks is by spending time with friends and family.

Something else to think about before the summer holiday ends can be to set personal goals for the upcoming year, which can provide focus and motivation.

By balancing rest with personal development, students can return to school in 2025 feeling refreshed, energized, and ready to excel.

HAURAKI PLAINS COLLEGE

2025 Back to School Information

20, 21, & 28 Jan: Course Confirmation 2-5pm in the Hub (*Senior students will be emailed timetables over the holidays and must come in to confirm their courses*)

21 Jan: Year 13 leadership planning day

22 Jan: Office open

28 Jan: Year 9 & 13 only (Pōwhiri 9am)

29 Jan: Year 10, 11, 12 only

30 Jan: All year levels attend

07 Feb: School closed

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Uniform: www.argyleonline.co.nz

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More Than A School
Hauraki Plains College

Welcome to 2025

School Office open from 29th January

- Tuesday 28th January - Head Student Leadership Day
- Wednesday 29th January - Course Confirmation and Enrolments
- Thursday 30th January - Course Confirmation and Enrolments
- Monday 3-5 February - Year 13 Camp
- Tuesday 4-5 February - Year 11 NCEA Course and Year 12 1st Aid Course 9.00am - 3.00pm
- Friday 7 February - Year 9 and all new students Pōwhiri starting at 9.45am - all new students please assemble in the gym by 9.00am. Returning Year 10 – Year 13 students, school starts at 8.55am

Late enrolment paperwork due by Friday 24th January

Uniform Shop and Chromebook Distribution:

Wednesday 29th January Year 9 Students only
8.30am - 3.30pm

Thursday 30th January Year 10, Year 13 Students and Sibling Day 8.30am - 3.30pm
(if you have students across various year levels)

Monday 3rd February - Year 11 and Year 12 Students only
8.30am - 3.30pm

School is closed Thursday 6th February for Waitangi Day

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councils. "They all keep getting us back, so we must be doing a good job," he said. "We cover South Auckland, down to the Waikato, to the Coromandel Peninsula and the Hauraki Plains." Tim said the future plans for the company, which currently has four staff, was to expand if an opportunity arose. **CONTACT:** Get in touch by phoning 027 278 5384.

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CLASSIFIEDS - Deadline 12noon Monday

<p>Death Notice</p> <p>MAXWELL, David Arthur (Moose): Unexpectedly, at his home in Tairua. Wonderful son of Lynne, and the late Don; brother of Kerry and Robert, and adored uncle of Damon and Sara. "Sleep on David. We love you". Mum A gathering to remember Moose will be held at The Kopu Station Hotel on Sunday 1st December at 1pm.</p> <p>TWENTYMANS</p>	<p>For Lease</p> <p>Yards for lease, Thames and Kopu. Suitable for trucks, vehicles or trade business base. Ph 027 440 7101</p> <p>Garage Sale</p> <p>Paeroa, Railway St, lower numbers. 8.30 till 11.00. Tall boys, dishwasher, washing machine, dryer, hot water tank, LP with wet back. Portacot, linen, standing piano Stuttgart. With more, much more.</p>	<p>Handyman</p> <p>An experienced handyman covering all trades with over 20 years exp building trade. Please contact Laurie King 0212510246. ktpropertyservice.com</p> <p>Pets</p> <p>KENNELS WAITAKARURU Boarding Kennels and Cattery. "A great place for your pet to stay." Shane & Sherrin Hansen. Ph: 07-867-3344, SH25 Waitakaruru, RD6 Thames</p>	<p>Property For Sale</p> <p>Cottage Waihi Beach. Tidy 2brm \$445000 ono. Vacant possession. Refer Trademe ID IYD629 for photos or phone 0272717391. Motivated seller.</p> <p>Handyman Services</p> <p>THAMES HANDYMAN & BUILDING SERVICES Building, home maintenance & general gardening services Phone: Fleur or Crighton • 0273 913 283</p>	<p>Trades & Services</p> <p>WE PAINT NZ ROOF Painting, 35 years experience Make your Roof last Years more, all the latest solutions for all types of roofing. Contact Peter for free quote info@hotsy.nz 021 618 384</p>	<p>Storage</p> <p>TOTAL STORAGE LTD KEREPEHI / PAEROA We will beat any legit quote for storage in 10ft or 20ft containers T&C's apply 021 67 67 99 info@totalstorage.co.nz</p>
<p>Church Notice</p> <p>Assembly of God 10am Sundays. Scout Hall. Baker St, Waihi</p> <p>Thames Spiritualist Church, Xmas meeting Sunday Dec 1st, 2pm Grahamstown Hall. Speaker: Kay Moore. Please bring a small plate.</p> <p>CLASSIFIEDS Call Nikki: Ph 022 130 3885</p>	<p>Gardening</p> <p>STUMP GRINDING. All sizes, all areas. Thames based. Ph 021 060 7659</p> <p>Monument Services</p> <p>HEADSTONE DETAILING SERVICES Cleaning and re-inscription. Thames, Paeroa, Waihi, Morrinsville and Te Aroha. Areas not listed please enquire. Ph 027 315 8559</p>	<p>Wanted To Buy</p> <p>Livestock wanted to buy. 1-3 yr old fr/x steers. Any weight, any cond. Payment on collection. Ph 027 238 8009.</p> <p>Painter</p> <p>Professional roof painter. Mario Kerkhof 027 961 4055</p> <p>Tiler</p> <p>Professional tiling services. Ph Rob 022 408 4136</p>	<p>Trades & Services</p> <p>HOTSY WATER BLASTING "Old school service" We turn up on time - Do a great Job Clean up = HAPPY customer Housewashing, Roofwash + Treatments. Gutter cleaning. Decks, Paving + Driveway scrubbing. Fences + Balustrades. Solar Panel cleaning Residential - Commercial - Industrial Contact Peter for free quote info@hotsy.nz 021 618 384</p> <p>Storage</p> <p>STORE 4 U Waihi. Clean, dry, alarmed. Call Lyn 0275 759 173.</p> <p>Thames Valley Storage - secure, dry units available, two sizes. Call Trev 027 4076966</p>	<p>Storage</p> <p>STORAGE KOPU, PAEROA TE AWAMUTU</p> <p>"New Units" Ph 027 440 7101 07 868 3033 Safe n Sound Storage www.safestorage.co.nz</p> <p>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</p>	<p>SPLINTA'S FIREWOOD SERVICES</p> <p>SPRING SPECIAL Pine \$90 per cube Gum \$135 per cube FREE DELIVERY 3 CUBE OR MORE Ends December 20 Ph: 0800 7754 6827 022 427 1618</p> <p>splintasfirewood</p>

CLASSIFIEDS - Deadline 12noon Monday

Public Notices

Public Notices



New patients who book an appointment over the next two weeks are invited to donate a box of new toys in lieu of payment. These will be given to support the Christmas Family Fun Day on December 7 from 10am to 2pm at the Centennial Pools, Mackay Street, Thames, run by Caring Families Aotearoa.

Please contact Evergreen Chiropractic on 07 868 6665 for more information.



The Annual General Meeting

of the Paeroa Tennis & Squash Club will be held on Thursday 5th December at 7.00pm at the Paeroa Tennis & Squash Club upstairs clubroom, Te Aroha Road, Paeroa.
All Welcome

Hauraki Golf Club AGM

To be held on Thursday 5th December 2024 At Hauraki Golf Club, Mangatarata @ 7.30pm
All welcome.

Hauraki District Council Meetings - December 2024



Pursuant to Section 46 of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987, public notice is hereby given that the following meetings will be held during the month of December 2024 in the Council Chamber, Hauraki House, 1 William Street, Paeroa unless otherwise stated.

Western Plains Drainage District Committee

Thursday, 5 December 2024, 10.30am (Ngātea Service Centre)

Eastern Plains Drainage District Committee

Thursday, 5 December 2024, 1.00pm (Ngātea Service Centre)

Hearing Committee to Hear and Deliberate on Proposed Plan Change 6: Extension of Martha Mineral Zone

Tuesday, 10 December 2024, 9.30am
Wednesday, 11 December 2024, 9.30am
Thursday, 12 December 2024, 9.30am
St James Presbyterian Hall, 76 Moresby Ave, Waihi

Regulatory Hearings Committee (confirmed)

Monday, 16 December 2024, 9.00am

Finance Committee

Monday, 16 December 2024, 10.00am

Audit and Risk Committee

Tuesday, 17 December 2024, 9.00am

Council

Wednesday, 18 December 2024, 9.00am

D A Speirs
Chief Executive
Hauraki District Council



www.hauraki-dc.govt.nz

Temporary Road Closure



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, the following roads will be closed to ordinary vehicular traffic for the period indicated below. During the 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 6 December 2024, 5:30pm to 7:30pm

Roads to be closed in Paeroa:

- Wharf St, Queen St and Princes St.
- Normanby Road/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 period of closure

D A Speirs
Chief Executive
Hauraki District Council



www.hauraki-dc.govt.nz

Temporary Road Closure



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 Santa Parade** event, the following road will be closed to ordinary vehicular traffic for the period indicated below. During the 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 12 Dec 2024, 5:30pm to 7:30pm

Road to be closed in Ngātea:

- SH2 (Orchard East Rd) from Kaihere Rd to Darlington St.

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 period of closure

D A Speirs
Chief Executive
Hauraki District Council



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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 does 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

WAIHI - Maybelle Superette, New World, Toyworld/Takenote, Information Centre, Daffodil Dairy, Waihi Supervalve

THAMES - Totara Veggie Shop, Mobil Kopu, Gull Service Station, Martina 4 Square, 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

TURUA: Turua Dairy

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Year six students pose with staff beside the new Pataka Kai.

Photo: ALICE PARMINTER

Pataka Kai encourages sharing

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

The kids of Moanataiari School are hoping to help their local community with the opening of their Pataka Kai.

A Pataka Kai is traditionally the name given to a storehouse or pantry in Māori.

There are various Pataka Kai set up in neighbourhoods across the Thames, Coromandel and Hauraki districts - some run by individuals, and others located outside schools, businesses or community gardens. They are places for people to leave what they have spare - usually food or excess garden produce - and for those in need to take for free and without judgement.

The students of Moanataiari School have been working on their Pataka Kai, a jaunty red shed by the school gate on Moanataiari St, since the beginning of the year.

"The year six children have worked on it all year on Mondays when the other kids in their class go to tech," Claire Nankivell, the school's garden and kitchen teacher, said.

"These guys have done heaps of work, not just preparing the Pataka Kai, but making brochures to drop around the neighbourhood and designing the signs and what the rules of the Pataka Kai should be."

The school received funding from the 2023 round of Seagull Centre community grants to develop the Pataka Kai.



The sharing space now sports new signage outlining its purpose, right. Inside the shed are shelves and baskets where items can be stored.

Photos: SUPPLIED

And the building which houses it is special too.

"We got super lucky and got the little first aid shed that they used when they were doing the road works on the Kōpū-Hikuaui [Rd], and so now that's the building that we have repurposed as the Pataka Kai," Claire said.

"It was painted red because it was the little first aid emergency station. [School principal] David said we should keep it that colour, to keep its origins.

"It's like a beacon."



Thames Community Patrol will hold another Safer Plates fundraiser on Saturday.

Safer Plates fundraiser returns

The Thames Community Patrol is holding another Safer Plates fundraiser on Saturday, November 30 from 10am until 1pm at the Goldfields Shopping Centre car park in Thames. For \$10, members of the group will replace licence plate screws on any vehicle with specialty screws which cannot be removed with ordinary screwdrivers. Funds raised go towards the running costs for the patrol. The event follows a successful Safer Plates fundraiser for the group in October. Patrol member Dianne Leather said the aim of the fundraiser was to keep people's vehicle number plates safe from theft over the holiday period.



Puriri 107 Neavesville Road

Serene rural haven: family home with panoramic views

Escape to rural tranquility with this three-bedroom lifestyle property on 3.2 hectares (more or less) of rolling hills and lush greenery. The home features a master bedroom with ensuite, two additional bedrooms, and an open-plan kitchen, living, and dining area with modern appliances and an island bench. Large sliding doors lead to a spacious deck with stunning rural views. With 6.8kW solar panels, a double garage, fully fenced paddocks, extra shedding, and a private river beach, it's perfect for hobby farming or equestrian pursuits. Just a short drive to Thames, this property blends serenity and convenience. Call today!

bayleys.co.nz/2316097

3.2_{ha} 3 2 2

Asking Price \$1,199,000
View 10.45-11.15am Sun 1 Dec
Karl Davis 0508 83 83 83
 karl.davis@bayleys.co.nz
Glenn Tanner 027 486 2399
 glenn.tanner@bayleys.co.nz

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Miranda 1152A Miranda Road

Scenic coastal lifestyle in Kaiaua

Welcome to this exceptional property in the serene coastal town of Kaiaua, renowned for its scenic surroundings. This property represents an extraordinary opportunity to embrace a lifestyle that combines rural peacefulness with the convenience of key amenities and a flourishing community nearby. This property is built with functionality and charm, crafted to fit its scenic surroundings. Offering spacious living areas and well-designed bedrooms, it's ideal for those seeking a family home or a peaceful lifestyle change. Thoughtful design touches ensure comfort, with modern conveniences seamlessly integrated to support everyday living. Call today!

bayleys.co.nz/2316117

2,679_{sqm} 3 1

Auction (unless sold prior) 11am, Thu 12 Dec 2024
 96 Ulster Street, Hamilton
View 3.30-4.15pm Sun 1 Dec
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Seth Roe 027 320 6937 seth.roe@bayleys.co.nz

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Boundary lines are indicative only



Mangatarata 459 (approx). Mahuta Road North

Scenic foothills living with endless potential

Nestled in the scenic Hauraki Plains foothills, this lifestyle section spans 9,653 sqm (more or less, pending survey) with stunning rural views. Only six minutes from Ngatea, the elevated section offers a range of vistas—be it the Hauraki Plains, glimpses of the Coromandel Ranges, or serene rural scenes. You'll rise above morning mists with no flood risk. The northeast-facing land captures all-day sun with several building platform options, allowing you to design your ideal layout with space for a shed, horse paddock, or pool. Close-to-town, elevated spots like this are highly desirable and rarely available.

bayleys.co.nz/2316312

9,635_{sqm}

Auction (unless sold prior) 11am, Thu 19 Dec 2024
 96 Ulster Street, Hamilton
View 5-5.30pm Sun 1 Dec
Seth Roe 027 320 6937
 seth.roe@bayleys.co.nz
Karl Davis 0508 83 83 83
 karl.davis@bayleys.co.nz

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Ngatea 386 Reservoir Canal Road

Refined rural retreat with orchard charm

Introducing a rare gem—a property where stately elegance meets rural tranquillity. This impressive home offers the perfect blend of classic charm and contemporary comfort. With its striking presence and beautifully appointed design, this residence is more than just a house; it's a statement. Step inside to discover a thoughtfully designed layout that caters to both relaxation and entertaining. The home features spacious open-plan living areas that flow seamlessly from the modern kitchen into family and dining spaces, making it ideal for gatherings both large and small. Each room is bathed in natural light, with generous windows that frame the stunning rural vistas beyond. Get in touch today!

bayleys.co.nz/2316256

5,000_{sqm} 3 2

Auction (unless sold prior) 11am, Thu 19 Dec 2024
 96 Ulster Street, Hamilton
View 2-2.45pm Sun 1 Dec
Karl Davis 027 496 4633 karl.davis@bayleys.co.nz
Connor Davis 027 496 4622
 connor.davis@bayleysngatea.co.nz

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Ngatea 55 Puhunga Island Road South

Prime dairy in the Plains

Presenting a rare chance to acquire a profitable 85.9-hectare (more or less) dairy farm, available for the first time since 1919. Located in Hauraki Plains, this property is ideal for first-time buyers or investors, offering easy management and high productivity. The farm includes 65 paddocks, a 20 ASHB shed, feed pad, and ample storage, with reliable water via a council connection. The flat, fertile land has desirable Alluvial clay loam. Accommodations feature a three-bedroom home, a two-bedroom dwelling, and a sleepout. Just minutes from Ngatea and close to Auckland and Hamilton. Sellers are motivated—seize this rare opportunity!

bayleys.co.nz/2316195

85.96_{ha}

Auction (unless sold prior) 11am, Thu 12 Dec 2024
 96 Ulster Street, Hamilton
View 11am-12pm Wed 27 Nov
Karl Davis 0508 83 83 83
 karl.davis@bayleys.co.nz
Sam Aislabie 027 429 5410
 sam.aislabie@bayleys.co.nz

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Paeroa Morrison Road

Last lots available in exclusive subdivision

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bayleys.co.nz/2313374

1.1_{ha}

Asking Price \$475,000
Phone for viewing times
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Connor Davis 027 496 4622
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Boundary lines are indicative only



Waihi 10 Farrelly Road

Something for him and something for her

Nestled just off the beaten track, the property features a massive shed, with multiple power points and three phase power which would suit a car collector or provide a premium location for a home business. Whether you're storing a collection of prized vehicles or running a large-scale operation, this space is equipped to meet your needs with ease. The four-bedroom, north-facing home has been modernized for comfort and style. The flexibility of the property is further enhanced by the additional sleepout, which could serve a range of purposes depending on your needs. Call today to find out more!

bayleys.co.nz/2316109

1.89_{ha} 5 3 20

Asking Price \$1,250,000
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*REINZ Stats November 2020 - June 2024



SPORTS

‘The Punisher’ returns to the ring after injury

BOXING

By ANDREW CONNAUGHTON

November 30 will see the much-anticipated return to the squared ring of New Zealand’s Super Middleweight Champion and WBC Australasia Silver Title holder, Francis ‘The Punisher’ Waitai.

Waitai is due to fight Robert Berridge in Hamilton on Saturday night.

The Paeroa boxer has been out of the ring for the past year, almost to the day, his last contest being on November 25, 2023.

Unfortunately, Waitai broke his left hand during that bout while competing for the WBO Oceania title against Wuzhati ‘OZAT’ Nuerlang, China’s number 1 Light Heavyweight Champion in Chongqing, China.

At stake then was the WBO Light Heavyweight Oceania Title and a top 15 world ranking. The fight went the full distance of 10 closely contested rounds.

The judges’ cards came back at 96-94, 95-95, 93-97, and thus this scintillating bout was judged to be a draw.

Waitai has since been working with his medical team to get his hand fixed, allowing him to enter the ring again.

During his absence from the ring, Francis Waitai also had to deal with the unexpected death of his father, Jack, earlier this year. Jack Waitai had been his son’s cornerman throughout his



Francis ‘The Punisher’ Waitai will return to the ring this weekend.
File Photo: SUPPLIED

career and he was very proud of Francis’ achievements.

His absence will be felt during Waitai’s return to the ring this coming Saturday night.

As Waitai looks to reignite his boxing career and his progression up the professional world rankings, he has picked himself a formidable opponent to test himself.

Robert ‘The Butcher’ Berridge has quite the pedigree, with more than 30 professional fights, winning five boxing titles.

Berridge peaked at ninth on the WBO and 12th on the WBA World Rankings.

His most notable fight was his World Title shot for the WBA World Light Heavyweight Title against the current world cham-

pion Dmitry Bivol. Berridge lost that fight on a TKO.

Waitai’s manager, Shaun George, of Team George Promotions, said: “We are excited for Francis’ return to the ring and we are very happy with his progress since his injury”.

“Francis has returned more focused and stronger than ever. He will be boxing a very tough oppo-

nent in Rob Berridge with a solid resume, which should make for a great fight.

“This fight will be dedicated to Francis’ father, a valuable member of the team who we lost earlier this year.”

Team Waitai would like to thank all their supporters and sponsor Te Rapa Wholesale Cars.

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