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Kiwis set to tackle Sahara Desert



Jack Keelys and Amy Strang are set to become New Zealand's first Sahara marathoners.
Photo: SUPPLIED

By KELLEY TANTAU, Public Interest Journalism funded by NZ On Air

A former Paeroa man and his partner will be running in the Sahara Marathon next month - becoming the only Kiwis who have ever taken part in the challenge.

Jack Keelys and his partner Amy Strang have signed up to compete in the Sahara Marathon solidarity race

for the refugee children of Western Sahara.

Jack will run the full marathon, while Amy will run the half marathon.

The adventure race includes running between four refugee camps, across the hot desert and over sand dunes, and Jack said he was told by an event organiser that he and Amy would be the first New Zealanders to have com-

pleted the mammoth task.

Now residing in Toulouse, France, Jack told *The Profile* that the refugee situation there and around Europe had opened his eyes and inspired him to make an impact.

"There are many refugees caught in really challenging situations, usually through no fault of their own, and often living in tents or on the streets

with their families. I'd started building friendships with some of them and hearing their stories, and it inspired us to both educate ourselves more about the situation," he said.

"We had also already wanted to participate in an adventure race in 2025 where we could challenge ourselves, and found this as the perfect

CONTINUED ON P8

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Man charged with Thames homicide

By KELLEY TANTAU, Public Interest Journalism funded by NZ On Air

Police arrested and charged a 28-year-old man with murder after an altercation in Thames led to the death of 60-year-old Maxwell Connor last week.

Detective Senior Sergeant Kristine Clarke said the incident occurred at an address on Rolleston St around 3:40pm on Monday, January 13.

Police responded to reports of an altercation at the address, across the road from Te Kura o Te Kauaeranga Thames South School, where Mr Connor was located with moderate injuries.

He was transported to Thames Hospital where his condition declined and he passed away overnight.

A homicide investigation was launched, with Police stating at the time that those involved were believed to be known to each other.

On January 15, Police announced they had arrested a 28-year-old man, who was due to appear in the Kaitiaki District Court the following day, facing a charge of murder.

Police do not believe there is any ongoing risk to the wider community, and gave their thoughts to Mr Connor's whānau.

Police continue to appeal to anyone



Police at the site of the homicide on Rolleston St, Thames, on January 13. Photo: SUPPLIED/CFM

with information to come forward. "In particular, we would like to hear from anyone who witnessed an altercation in Rolleston St at around 3.40pm on Monday afternoon," Senior Sergeant Clarke said.

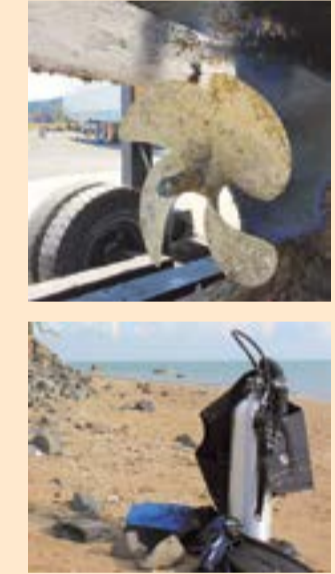
"If you have any information, please contact Police via 105 either online or over the phone referencing file number: 250113/5723."



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Thames Tides

Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue
Jan 22	Jan 23	Jan 24	Jan 25	Jan 26	Jan 27	Jan 28
 Morning: 1:42am 3.0, 7:42am 1.0 Afternoon: 2:02pm 3.1, 8:11pm 1.0 Sun: 6:22am 8:36pm Fish: Best At 7:03am 7:24pm Last Quarter: Rise 12:13am, Set 2:04pm	 Morning: 2:30am 2.9, 8:34am 1.1 Afternoon: 2:47pm 3.0, 9:00pm 1.0 Sun: 6:23am 8:36pm Fish: Best At 7:46am 8:08pm Last Quarter: Rise 12:38am, Set 3:05pm	 Morning: 3:24am 2.8, 9:31am 1.2 Afternoon: 3:35pm 2.9, 9:55pm 1.1 Sun: 6:24am 8:35pm Fish: Best At 8:32am 8:56pm Last Quarter: Rise 1:07am, Set 4:07pm	 Morning: 4:26am 2.8, 10:30am 1.2 Afternoon: 4:27pm 2.9, 10:55pm 1.1 Sun: 6:25am 8:35pm Fish: Best At 9:22am 9:48pm Last Quarter: Rise 1:42am, Set 5:09pm	 Morning: 5:28am 2.9, 11:27am 1.1 Afternoon: 5:24pm 2.9, 11:55pm 1.0 Sun: 6:26am 8:34pm Fish: Best At 10:16am 10:44pm Last Quarter: Rise 2:26am, Set 6:10pm	 Morning: 6:25am 3.0, 12:20pm 1.1 Afternoon: 6:22pm 2.9, 12:49pm 0.9 Sun: 6:27am 8:33pm Fish: Best At 11:13am 11:41pm Last Quarter: Rise 3:18am, Set 7:06pm	 Morning: 7:15am 3.1, 1:11pm 0.9 Afternoon: 7:19pm 3.0, 1:11pm 0.9 Sun: 6:28am 8:33pm Fish: Best At 12:10pm Last Quarter: Rise 4:20am, Set 7:55pm

*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	MIN	Hr	MIN
Coromandel	-0	04	-0	04
Whitianga	-0	01	-0	06
Tairua	+0	10	+0	21
Whangamata	-0	03	-0	05
Waihi Beach	-0	12	-0	12

A 'common sense' approach to service

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

Newly-minted Member of the New Zealand Order of Merit Keith Trembath credits his persistent honesty and "abundance of common sense" with his success.

The Hikutaia farmer and former politician has spent his life in service to various organisations, including the Waikato Agricultural Industry Training Organisation, Federated Farmers, Waikato East Life Education Trust, the St John Paeroa area committee, and a five-year stint on the Hauraki District Council; and the 2025 New Year's Honours list saw his public service, agriculture and education efforts nationally recognised.

"I've always worked alone, so it was good for my mental health to be out learning from other people," he said.

His work has not been achieved in a vacuum, however.

Keith says his years-long dedication to the community is also owed in large part to the legacy of his family.

Among his ancestors he counts numerous community leaders, including former Thames Mayor Frances Trembath, various members of county councils, and Keith's own father George, who contributed to Federated Farmers, Scouts, school committees, and more.

"There's a long whakapapa of serving. And then my dad was



Member of the New Zealand Order of Merit Keith Trembath.

Photo: KELLY O'HARA

on everything you could be on."

There are dozens of others who've helped and supported him along the way, too - Keith rattles off a list of names including former council colleagues Basil Morrison, Popeye Challis, Bruce Gordon, Sel Baker, and Mike Hayden; Life Educa-

tion Trust team members Bruce Smith and Frances Nichol; St John volunteer Jackie Thorne; friends Andreas, Ben, Gene and Sam; and of course his wife Judith and three children Kelly-Anne, Jared and Logan.

Keith says he could always see what needed to be done and

"just do it" - although he's quick to admit this attitude often gets him into trouble.

"I wouldn't use the process if I could get stuff done. And I'd think to somebody, if you're not going to work with me, don't block me, because eventually I will run on top of you.

"But some organisations, I scared them terribly that I could just get it done and I'd find a way to do it."

Although age and health concerns have now slowed him down a little, Keith says he intends to keep serving the community where he can.

"I've enjoyed the journey," Keith said.

"And I want to continue. People say to me, you should retire. You shouldn't be looking after... 300 different assorted animals.

"But do I go and sit in a retirement home somewhere in a Lazy Boy dribbling in my beer? Um, no."

Keith hopes to use his new accolade to further benefit the community, saying it will "open doors" for him to keep advocating for causes close to his heart.

Chief among these are furthering women's education - which he says will benefit the entire economy - supporting and promoting the farming industry, and supporting health and well-being initiatives.

More than anything, Keith says he's proud to have contributed so much to his community and country.

"I've always been proud to be a farmer, helping feed New Zealand and the world. It's been a privilege to serve my community, and I will continue to do so as long as I am able."



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Our Coromandel

News from Thames-Coromandel District Council



22 January 2025

Summer visitor success

It's been a busy summer for Thames Info Centre, which has helped out more than 3,000 visitors in the three months since it opened.

Feedback from local businesses and bus companies has been overwhelmingly positive. Visitors to the town have boosted trade at cafes, retailers and local attractions.

As well as providing information to visitors, the centre books accommodation and attractions, stores luggage, offers cold drinks on a hot day and sells merchandise – from T-shirts to mugs to jewellery, handicraft, postcards and art prints.

Manager Sue Lewis-O'Halloran says the Info Centre "gives us an opportunity to proudly promote the Thames area and all that it has to offer, while engaging with visitors and demonstrating, by the warmth of our welcome, what a great place it is to visit!"



ANNIVERSARY AND WAITANGI WEEKENDS



Kerbside collections

There will be no delays to kerbside schedules

anywhere in the district due to the two upcoming public holidays. Our contractor's staff are working on those days. Thames Coast and Manaia will have their yellow week collections on Wednesday 29 January and red week on Wednesday 5 February. Thames Rural South and Thames & Surrounds will have yellow week on Thursday 30 January and red week on Thursday 6 February. Check your local calendar at tcdc.govt.nz/bindays

Our Refuse and Recycling Transfer Stations are open daily from 8.30am–5.30pm until daylight savings ends 5 April, including Anniversary Day and Waitangi Day public holidays. tcdc.govt.nz/rts



Service centres

Our offices (and AA services) are closed on Anniversary Day Monday 27 January and Waitangi Day

Thursday 6 February. You can still contact us 24/7 at 07 868 0200, customer.services@tcdc.govt.nz

WHAT'S ON

Whitianga Summer Concert

Hurry now to get your local discounted tickets to Greenstone's Whitianga Summer Concert this coming weekend. It's packed full of great entertainment. greenstoneentertainment.co.nz



Kickdown Festival

Get your tickets now for Kickdown motorcycle festival based at Joe's Farm near Whangamatā, on the weekend of 8 February. The festival combines all the elements of ultimate motorcycling with music, an open fire meat cook and lots of night-time entertainment. kickdown.co.nz



Thames Community Board UPDATE

Board Chair, Adrian Catran JP reports:

"Here's to 2025 being a great year for all of Thames – our businesses, residents and visitors. The year's got off to a good start with an influx of visitors. Our Community Board is rightly proud of the work it's done to support the new Info Centre and promoting the Explore Thames theme – raising awareness of the reasons to stop in our town and experience its quirky blend of history, creativity and natural attractions. Our new signage is helping to direct motorists to take a break in town. We're delighted with the way the public have embraced the new, innovative Porritt Park and the upgraded recreational boating ramp at Kōpū. Board members are also playing a leading role in promoting more sculpture and artwork in town and restoring the walking track above Moanataiari.

It's a big year for the town with crucial work underway to clarify the best ways to protect the town from rising sea levels. We're also set to make important decisions about a new swimming pool facility for the town. Preparatory work for increasing the town's housing stock through development of Totara Valley is scheduled for the latter part of the year.

The Board and I look forward to continue serving the best interest of ratepayers for a bright future for the town." adrian.catran@council.tcdc.govt.nz

The Board's first meeting for 2025 is Wednesday 5 February at 10am in Thames Council Chamber.

Meeting agendas and the 2025 Council meeting schedule are at tcdc.govt.nz/agendas-reports-and-minutes



KEEP YOUR BOATS CLEAN

A clean boat helps to protect our Coromandel coast from invasive marine pest hitchhikers like exotic caulerpa and Mediterranean fanworm. Check and clean your gear and anchor, and get to know the marine pest rules and restrictions before casting off this summer. marinepests.nz/rules



Great to see The Boer War Memorial in Victoria Park restored to its former glory, after the spire was vandalised a few years ago.

Crypt conservator honoured for graveside work

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

For a quarter of a century, King's Service Medal recipient Graeme Pearce has been tending to Thames' historic final resting places.

At least twice a week the volunteer caretaker can be found among the crumbling walls and overgrown headstones of Shortland Cemetery, Tararua Cemetery or the urupā at Pārāwai. And while he tackles the never-ending job of weed clearing, grave cleaning and general tidying up, he collects the stories of the departed.

Graeme's interest in the cemeteries began when he was cleaning a grave belonging to his wife's relatives, and ran into acquaintance Kevin Small. Kevin took him up the hill to the overgrown upper section of Shortland Cemetery.

"He'd found a grave there where a headstone had fallen over, so he straightened it up, and it was a little grave of a 16-year-old girl, so he decided he would tidy it up," Graeme said.

"I said, 'that's a bit of a mess, isn't it?' He said, 'yeah, I'm going to try and do a bit', and I said, 'okay, that's what we'll do'."

For the first several years, he would tote his tools up the slopes and clear what he could, funding the work himself. The sites, closed to new burials, only receive limited council maintenance.



Graeme Pearce tends to the tombs of Thames' earliest residents.

Photo: ALICE PARMINTER

In 2017, Thames-Coromandel District Council took him on as a "council volunteer", which meant he could receive assistance for things like petrol and line for his weed-eater.

"Things changed and all this health and safety came out, so all of a sudden I became a liability and nobody wanted to know about me," Graeme said.

"In the back of my mind was,

don't try and tell me I can't go up there because I am a stubborn old bugger sometimes. Pig-headed, you might say. So anyway, they came to a compromise."

Over the years, Graeme has become known as the go-to person for gravesite information. Many of Thames' historians have sought his help over the years to find and photograph

the sites, and his findings are uploaded on the Find A Grave website.

"I've always liked reading about things in history," he said.

"[And] I've got all the maps of the cemeteries. I've got all the information."

Graeme's also quite used to getting the odd knock on his door from people looking for

their loved ones. It can be quite emotional, he says, when they find what they're looking for.

"I'll take people up there... One was right up the back to the grave that Kevin first found, the 16-year-old girl," he said.

"I took this lady and her brother up there and [she's] taking photos. I said, 'do you realise there's someone else in there?' I read off the name that I had on a bit of paper, and she burst out crying. And she hugged her brother and I thought, what the hell's going on? And [she] was the mother, and she had no idea where the girl was buried."

Just as rewarding, Graeme says, is when people return and start tending to the grave themselves.

"They come back and they love it - it's one of the greatest things since sliced bread."

These days, Graeme has slowed down a little. He's had a year off for health reasons, and is easing back into it. While it's been discouraging to see the regrowth of weeds in his absence, he's determined to keep going as long as possible.

"I've got two artificial hips and an artificial knee, so my balance isn't 100 per cent. I don't do any fancy footwork," he said.

"I'm down to about two and a half, three hours now. That's all the body can take."



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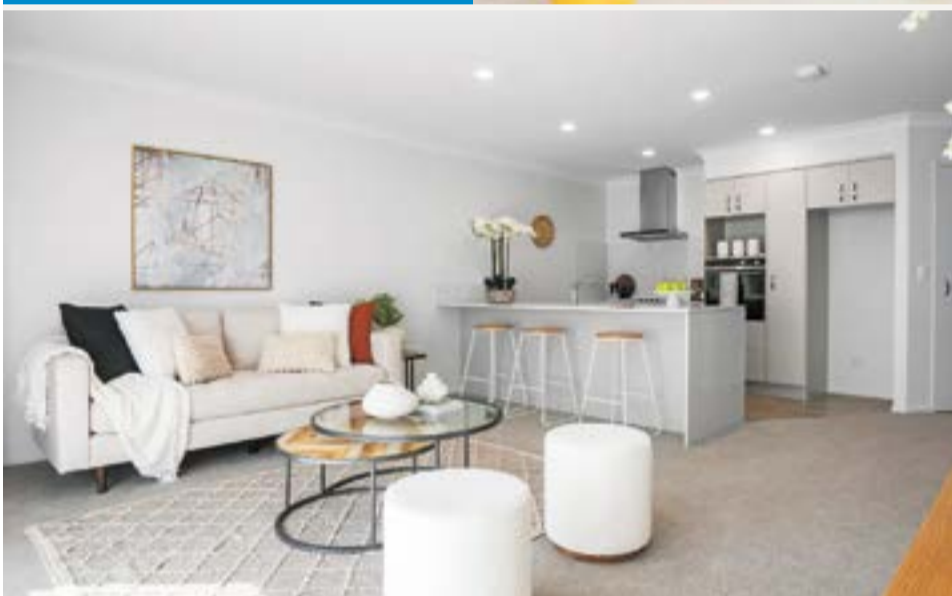
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Statue marks memorial milestone

By KELLEY TANTAU, Public Interest Journalism funded by NZ On Air

A bronze statue depicting Sir Keith Park has been completed, marking a “most important milestone” in the memorial of the Thames-born war hero.

The sculpture, designed by Helensville artist Joanne Sullivan, has been packaged for shipment from China, where it was cast, to Auckland, where it is scheduled to arrive in late January or early February.

Sir Keith Park Memorial Airfield president Geoff Fulkert said the development showed that the memorial to the Royal Air Force veteran at Thames Airfield would “indeed be completed”.

The statue will be unveiled at the Thames Battle of Britain Commemorations, along with the inauguration of the completed memorial, at the airfield this September.

“My plan is to make this a truly memorable occasion and I am working to invite New Zealand VIPs at the highest level to attend and participate,” Geoff said.

A second Sir Keith Park statue already stands outside the Thames Civic Centre, where it was unveiled in April, 2019.

Sculpted by Mark Whyte and cast in bronze by Jonathan Campbell, the Civic Centre dedication was paid for by a \$200,000 bequest from Betty (Yvonne Elizabeth) Hare, of



The life-sized, 2.3m bronze statue designed by Helensville artist Joanne Sullivan portrays Sir Keith in his flying uniform. SUPPLIED

Coroglen, who felt Sir Keith deserved greater recognition in his homeland.

The airfield memorial shares the same aim - to establish a “greater and more appropri-

ate recognition and acknowledgement” of Sir Keith and his achievements and successes in both peace and war times. Its life-sized, 2.3m statue will portray the Air Chief Marshal in his

flying uniform, looking into the distance and awaiting the return of his pilots from a mission.

At his feet, there are impressions of his many medals and awards. It will be mounted on a plinth under the Hurricane fighter aircraft on-site, with landscaping and lighting.

“Back at the clay modelling stage, [Joanne] purchased an era-true RAF uniform and Mae West [an inflatable life jacket] from England, which her husband modelled so that she could capture how the items fitted, and how the folds sat particularly on the arms and legs,” Geoff said.

“I am certainly extremely happy with her work, her concept for the statue, and the level of detail that she has achieved in the final work. Joanne has been very obliging to work with, as when the philanthropic sector collapsed through Covid-19, she was happy to pause the project, then pick it up again when funding enabled.”

Although sufficient funds have been raised to complete the bronze statue of Sir Keith Park - who died 50 years ago on February 6 - Geoff said \$35,000 was still needed to the finish line.

DETAILS: To help, or to get in touch email geoff.fulkert@xtra.co.nz or visit: www.sirkeithparkmemorial.org.nz.



In Brief

SERIOUS WAIHĪ CRASHES

Two serious crashes occurred near Waihi last week, with the first occurring on January 16 when a single vehicle crash blocked State Highway 2/Tauranga Rd. Police said the incident happened about 10km south of the Hauraki town just after 8pm and initial indications were that there were serious injuries.

The following day, January 17, emergency services again responded to a crash - this time involving two vehicles - on State Highway 2 near Tauranga Rd, Waihi. Emergency services received the report about 5:40pm and Initial indications suggested there were serious injuries, with the Serious Crash Unit having been advised. The crash blocked SH2 and diversions were put in place at the intersections of SH2, Trig Rd South and Waihi Beach Rd.

NEW TURUA CLUB MEETING

Newly-formed Turua Sports and Recreation Club is holding its first meeting for 2025 with a discussion planned on how to make the club a success. January 26, 2pm at the Turua Domain, all welcome.

A&P SHOW MARKS 100 YEARS

The annual Katikati A&P Show takes place at Uretara Domain, Katikati on February 4 from 9am-4pm. The Katikati Society is celebrating their 100th show this year with a Victorian/art deco theme. The public are invited to come dressed in era-appropriate clothing, and there will be prizes for best dressed plus a Fashion Parade. The show will also feature the regular home industry, equestrian and photography categories, the pet sheep show, and the Katikati Farmers Market. Entry \$10; children 14 and under are free.



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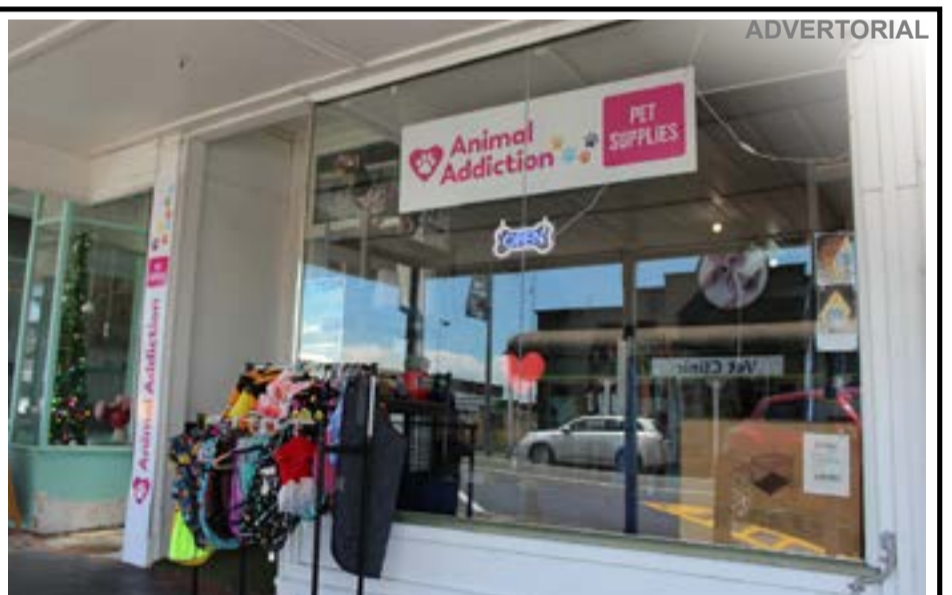




634 Pollen St, Thames

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animaladdiction.co.nz



Paws fur a second at Animal Addiction

A haven for pet enthusiasts is what Jessica Jennings' store Animal Addiction at 634 Pollen St, Thames, is best known for.

Not only is Animal Addiction a one-stop shop for pets such as fish, budgies, cockatiels, finches, rabbits and on occasion - rats and guinea pigs, it is also the place to get pet supplies.

Customers are invited to paws fur a second and take a look around.

As a lover of pets and owner of furry friends, she wanted to create “one place where you can get everything”, so people didn't need to go to more than one location for pets and pet goods.

“You can find everything you need for your beloved animals, from cozy beds to stylish outfits.”

Jessica said fur babies were also welcome for an in-store visit with their owners to try on clothes, collars and harnesses.

For top-tier advice about pets, pet care and to find the right products - Jessica is the person to see.

Jessica opened Animal Addiction in Janu-



ary, 2021, motivated by her desire to start “following my dream”, she said. Back then it was only an online store, but as the business started to grow, in November, 2023, Jessica opened a physical shop in Thames.

A few setbacks resulted in Jessica needing to close the store for six weeks last year.

But it was support from the people of Thames who encouraged her to reopen Animal Addiction at its new location in November, 2024.

“Thank you to the community, if it weren't for them, I wouldn't have reopened.”

ADVERTORIAL

I would like to thank all my amazing and loyal customers for their support over the last 21 years.
I have now sold the business and wish Christine all the best for the future and I am sure you will support her as well.
Once again many thanks to everyone.
My last day of business will be 31 January 2025.

Lynne's 500 Pollen St, Thames - 868 8725



Jack Keeyes and Amy Strang are raising funds for charity by running the Sahara marathon.
 Photo: SUPPLIED

Kiwis set to be first Sahara marathoners

CONTINUED FROM P1
 opportunity to do that, but also make an impact.”

Jack and Amy are raising money for four causes close to their hearts: the Sahara Marathon project supporting camp refugees with special needs; the Sahara Marathon project supporting war orphans in restoring recently flooded Dakhla camp; the New Zealand Refugee Family Reunification Trust; and the Toulouse Refugee support charity in their current home city.

“Two of the charities are projects specifically within the refugee camps where we will be staying, and are the focus projects being supported as part of the marathon event,” Jack said. “However, with many refugee situations, it’s often difficult for people in their home countries to find a connection or understanding. As a result, we wanted to support two causes closer to home, in each of New Zealand - where we’re from - and France - where we’re living - so that we could increase that connection, but also make a small difference in two communities that are also so important to us.”

Jack is no stranger to running for a cause. In 2020, the former Paeroa College Head Boy ran the entire 42km Auckland Marathon in gumboots, raising money for Melanoma NZ and the Rural Support Trust.

But the change in locale - the terrain of the Sahara Marathon is mostly compact earth and rocks, with some areas of soft sand - will be a new challenge for the couple, who decided on a European move to explore the world, learn a new language, and add international experience to their careers.

In its 15th year, the Sahara Marathon involves participants living with a refugee family in their tent for a week, sharing stories, and supporting local projects.

Jack said he was most excited to meet his and Amy’s host family in the refugee camp, but was most nervous about attempting to run 42km in the middle of a desert.

DETAILS: Jack and Amy are raising funds for their causes. To donate, visit Givealittle.co.nz and search ‘Footprints For Hope’.



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New home for library as \$1.3m reno begins

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

Renovations are underway to breathe new life into Turua's community hall, as its committee works on future-proofing the facility for another half-century.

The \$1.3 million project is expected to take around 10 years to complete, and will be performed in stages as funding allows. The first step has already begun with the acquisition of a portacom to house the community library, which is currently located in the mouldy and leaking front annex of the hall.

"[It] will have air conditioning, et cetera, so that the books are actually not deteriorating," Turua Hall committee secretary Cynthia Bates said.

"My vision is to also have a drop in centre over there that's open during the day ... And more types of activities like an after school homework club, internet, story time."

The portacom, originally owned by Barnardos, was moved to the hall on January 6, and will be shifted into its final spot adjacent to the main building once resource consents have been approved.

It will have its own separate access on Matai St, and along with the library it will house toilets, a meeting room and Turua Hall's Civil Defence control room.

Once the library is relocated, work can begin on the main hall. The library annex will be refurbished, reroofed, and outfitted with a toilet and kitchenette to create a self-contained space. In the main hall, the toilets will be



Neil Gray, Cynthia Bates and Dave Greenslade are part of the committee planning big things for Turua's community hall. RIGHT: The hall's new portacom will eventually house the Turua Community Library. Photo: ALICE PARMINTER

redeveloped into unisex toilets with a shower and change area, and ranch sliders and a porch will be installed on the Matai St side of the building. The stage will be replaced with stackable risers and acoustic curtains.

A toilet will also be installed in the supper room and kitchen area, and another ranch slider installed facing the recently-replaced council playground.

At the main entrance, there are plans to replace the front meeting room with a covered area for unloading vehicles. And the building

needs an external facelift, to deal with the peeling paint and broken windows.

The project is ambitious, the committee said, but much needed.

"The community use this hall. Possibly not as much as we would like, but we have a number of regular users. We also have birthday parties, funerals, weddings come through and use the hall. And with those other [community] halls shutting, it will increase the demand for us," Cynthia said.

"There's also a large social connection there between having

a facility within your area, and wanting to be involved with that area because there are facilities for things to happen," committee president Dave Greenslade said.

Hauraki Plains district councillor Neil Gray said the project was inspiring.

"The council is pretty supportive of the communities keeping their halls going... Some communities just can't sustain it, and some communities like Turua are working really hard to embrace them and improve them," he said.

"[It helps] make our communi-



ties vibrant and retain a decent population around, that's critical."

So far, the committee has received an \$81,000 grant from Lotteries New Zealand, \$5000 from Barnardos, and \$6000 from the Grassroots Trust. It also has funds set aside from previous fundraising campaigns, and access to Hauraki District Council's targeted rates for the upkeep of community halls.

The committee was also grateful for the support it has received from local businesses and community members, Cynthia said. The council donated its internal consenting costs, and building relocation company KT Cartage donated a portion of its fee to move the portacom; and local builder Roger Brocklehurst regularly volunteers his time to perform maintenance on the hall.

"We draw on [our community] quite a bit, but because we've got so many projects lined up one after the other, we don't want to exhaust them. It's sort of a very delicate balancing act," she said.

DETAILS: To get involved with Turua Hall contact Cynthia Bates at cbates66@outlook.co.nz



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Rural Life

Immigration changes welcomed

DairyNZ has welcomed changes to migrant visas which will help ease staffing pressures for dairy farmers.

The government recently announced changes to the Accredited Employer Work Visa, which will reduce the minimum experience requirement to two years and increase the visa duration for some workers to three years.

DairyNZ chief executive Campbell Parker said DairyNZ data shows 16 per cent of farms didn't have enough staff to meet their needs.

"While our sector employs significant numbers of New Zealanders, international workers have filled a genuine gap in the workforce," he said.

"Reducing the experience requirement for migrants from three years to two ensures migrants are sufficiently skilled while increasing the number of available workers.

"Increasing the visa duration to three years for some workers will also help add certainty for farmers over the different seasons."

Other changes announced by the government include the removal of median wage requirements.

"The dairy sector is committed to offering competitive wages for skills and experience," Campbell said.

"However, we face the dual challenge of a tight local labour market and New Zealand equivalent farm experience not being readily available overseas.

As a result, the majority of our international workforce start as entry-level farm assistants, making it challenging for businesses to justify paying the median wage.



DairyNZ says international workers "filled a genuine gap".
Photo: SUPPLIED

"The key issue is finding the right set of capabilities, as farm businesses are complex and require a range of skills.

"Farmers can do their bit by offering great jobs in great workplaces, including good rosters, competitive pay and safe work environments, to attract these people."

The value of international workers should not be underestimated, he said.

"They and their families, contribute to the vibrancy and prosperity of rural communities.

"These new changes will align wages with local workers while helping to create a pathway for migrants.

"We will continue working with the government to ensure the immigration system is robust, sustainable, and works for farmers."

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Rural Life

Tech aids in Black Jack firefighting

By KELLEY TANTAU, Public Interest Journalism funded by NZ On Air

Drone technology helped firefighters battle the Black Jack scrub blaze last week, which damaged nine hectares of steep Kūaotunu terrain.

The vegetation fire broke out on January 11, and between then and January 18 - when firefighters handed the land back to the Department of Conservation to monitor - around 100 Fire and Emergency personnel worked to extinguish the blaze.

This included using drones to undertake thermal imaging flights to identify hot spots; flying at night when the weather was cooler, incident controller Shane Bromley said. "Drone crews come in about 11 o'clock at night and they'll fly 'til 4 o'clock in the morning or until they're finished. Then they transfer their information onto a mapping system that we use and the firefighters have that on their phones," he said.

"So, they can actually pick up the correct GPS location where [the hotspots] are and they go there with handheld thermal imaging cameras, pick up the hotspot, and either dig it up or put water on it."

Shane said technology was helping in firefighting efforts more and more, including during natural disasters such as Cyclone Gabrielle.

"We can put these machines in places where we can't put firefighters."

However, helicopters and drones don't mix, he said, and helicopters - often more than one - were used daily when extinguishing Black Jack.

"We just have to be very, very careful with the public, and what I'd really like to state is it was really good at the Black Jack fire, where none of the public got in our way using their own drones or anything like that."

Shane said in one instance, while they



Between 80-100 fire fighters, including drone and helicopter pilots, worked to extinguish the Black Jack fire in Kūaotunu. INSET: A drone was used to find hotspots. Photos: SUPPLIED

were fighting the Whangamarino wetlands fire near Mercer in October last year, helicopter pilots using water to extinguish the blaze had to go to ground due to a member of the public flying a personal drone over the site.

"We stopped operations for 20, 30 minutes, and the fire just grew in intensity... we lost another 10 hectares," he said.

Shane also wanted to thank the Kūaotunu public for keeping their distance, offering food, and being understanding when Black Jack Rd had to be closed.

"We're looking at doing a community update on January 29," he said. "We just want to engage with the community, have a talk, a question-and-answer sort of thing."

"I've been very proud of our firefighters on the ground, our incident management team, and also working with the Department of Conservation. It just shows how working together can have a positive outcome."

Fire and Emergency said an investigation will take place to determine the cause of the fire.

DETAILS: There is a ban on outdoor fires throughout the district and Waikato region unless holding a permit. To find out more or apply for a permit, visit www.checkitsalright.nz or phone 0800 658 628.



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'English Tornado' in boxing match at Neavesville



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.

1914

A boxing match at Neavesville provided the most exciting fisticuff encounter that had been staged for some time between an Irish ex-champion and a fighter known as the English Tornado.

The Irishman was a tempest of executions and the Englishman wary and kitten-like in his movements. Suddenly the Irishman unwound with a left and right to either side of the face.

The Englishman came out for the second round with the glint of war in his eyes. In the third round nothing sensational happened; it was mostly confined to sparring and foot work. The fifth round saw the Irishman miss with the right and left and the Englishman taking advantage whipping in with right and left blows to the body. The Irishman sagged at the knees and lay against the hempen ropes, no doubt longing for a restorative brew at the Neavesville pub.

Over at Paeroa, a tuatara lizard in transit from Waikino to



An outback pub at Neavesville.

Photo: SUPPLIED

Auckland was intercepted by Constable Miles.

Possession of the rare reptile by a private person was illegal. Tuataras, once plentiful in the Dominion, had become very scarce, and were only found on islands adjacent to the mainland. There was a heavy penalty

for owning or exporting them to try and prevent their total extinction. They were the last survivors of an order of reptiles that thrived in the age of the dinosaurs. Children at Paeroa School were shown the lizard; probably the first opportunity they had of seeing such an ani-

mal. Under instructions from the Minister for Internal Affairs, the tuatara was forwarded to the Auckland Museum.

At Turua meat, tools and a rifle were stolen from Bagnall's slaughterhouse. The captain and three crew of the scow Kapua were charged with the theft at the Thames Police Court. The evidence showed that two of the crew had entered the premises and appropriated the goods. The meat was taken to the ship, and eaten by all, including the captain.

The captain, knowing the meat to have been stolen, did not inform an inquiring constable, who boarded the scow at Turua.

The court found that the captain had been indiscreet, but that he had no deliberate intention, and after severely reprimanding him, dismissed the case against him. The crew was sentenced to three months imprisonment.

Meanwhile at Waihi Mr J Walker, a leading mine manager recently returned from London, outlined an important mining scheme for prospecting the Waihi field. He proposed, if certain concessions were granted by the Mines Department, to drive a tunnel from the sea coast to Waihi, five or six miles, with numerous crosscuts.

He planned to lay the scheme before the Borough Council, the Miners' Union and the public with a view to co-operation. Mr Walker said he was assured of an abundance of British capital if the required mining concessions were granted.

Chris' Quiz

Weekly quiz compiled by Chris Parmenter

1. What colour is the most visible part of a giraffe's tongue? a) blue/purple b) pink or c) yellow/orange?
2. The province in Canada known as Nova Scotia, translates from Latin to English as 'New ___' what?
3. The florin, a coin issued in New Zealand between 1933 and 1965, was worth how many pence?
4. A punji is defined as a) a wastepaper basket, b) a musical instrument for charming snakes, or c) a tropical sandfly?
5. Was the earliest written record of goods being returned due to poor quality from a) 377, b) 3,775 or c) 37,775 years ago?
6. Which of Colleen Hoover's best-selling romance novels was written first? *It Ends with Us* or *It Starts with Us*?
7. The first commercial transaction made using Bitcoin was in 2010, for what item? a) furniture, b) pizza, or c) a Tesla car?
8. The flags of Malta, Northern Marianas and Vatican City are the only national flags to contain which monochrome colour?
9. Black Doris, Damson, Greengage and Luisa are all types of which fruit?
10. Match each band - a) Supergroove, b) The Supremes, and c) Supertramp - with the country where it formed: i. New Zealand, ii. United Kingdom, and iii. United States.



ANSWERS: 1. a) blue/purple; 2. Scotland; 3. 24; 4. b) a musical instrument for charming snakes; 5. b) 3,775 years ago, for poor quality copper ingots; 6. *It Ends with Us*; 7. b) pizza - the two pizzas together cost 10,000 Bitcoin; 8. Grey; 9. Plims; 10. Supergroove - New Zealand; The Supremes - US; Supertramp - UK.

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Discover life lessons in everyday moments

OPINION

By MICHAEL WILKES



Living in a small town is something I cherish.

I love the sense of community, the feeling of belonging, and the friendly faces everywhere.

Of course, the downside is that a quick trip to Pak'nSave often turns into a longer outing thanks to a few impromptu chats.

But honestly, I wouldn't

trade it for anything.

I want to say a big thank you to those who've stopped me to chat about these little reflective articles I write.

One question I often get is, "How do you come up with something to write about every week?"

It's a question that has sparked some meaningful conversations - and it's one worth sharing here.

The question itself has been a gift.

It's reminded me of the power of intentional reflection.

Writing these articles has become an important rhythm in my life because it forces me to pay attention - to look for teachable moments in the everyday.

What's happening around me and in me that holds a lesson?

How is life, in all its ups and downs, becoming my greatest teacher?

This practice has reinforced for me the importance of how we approach life.

Are we open to letting both the good and the hard experiences refine us?

Or do we let them pass by, unexamined?

Do we allow life's small stories to shape us, or do we run from them?

Practically, cultivating this mindset doesn't have to be complicated.

At the end of each day, you could ask yourself, "What did I learn today?" or "What did my experiences or observations teach me?"

These simple questions can

turn ordinary moments into opportunities for growth.

Life is constantly teaching us - if we're willing to listen.

What lesson might be unfolding around you today?

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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 – Irish Proverb

“All you need is love. But a little chocolate now and then doesn't hurt.” – Charles Schulz

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Kopuarahi School kids explore and learn together.
Photo: SUPPLIED

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Whether exploring the outdoors, working together on projects, or engaging in hands-on learning, every day is an opportunity for discovery. Our approach to education places strong emphasis on developing essential literacy and numeracy skills, while also nurturing creativity, curiosity, and collaboration. We view learning as an ongoing journey, where our role is to guide, inspire, and support each child as they grow and explore their potential. Every student is encouraged to ask questions, take risks, and discover new paths forward. What truly sets Kopuarahi School apart is our dedication to

small class sizes, which allow us to create close, personal connections with our students and their families.

We believe that education is most powerful when it is tailored to each child's needs, interests, and abilities. Our dedicated and professional team works tirelessly to ensure every child feels valued and supported, helping them unlock their unique talents and untapped potential. With a vision that looks to the future, our curriculum is designed to equip students with the skills and resilience needed to navigate a rapidly changing world.

We foster adaptability, a strong sense of social responsibility, and the confidence to become active, thoughtful contributors to society. At Kopuarahi School, every student is seen as an integral part of our community. Here, we celebrate the joy of learning, the beauty of curiosity, and the importance of caring for one another and the world around us.

It is a place where each child's potential is nurtured, and where the values of kindness, respect, and discovery are at the heart of all we do. If you'd like to learn more about our school and how we can support your child's journey, we'd love to hear from you.

- Supplied by Kopuarahi School



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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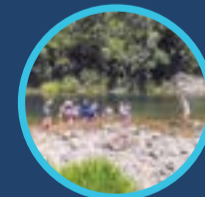


New Enrolments Welcome

Term 1 starts: 30th Jan 2025

Family Fun Night: 7th Feb 2025

Beginners' Evening: 6th Mar 2025



office@moana.school.nz

www.moana.school.nz

<https://www.facebook.com/Moanataiari>

[instagram:@moanataiarischool](https://www.instagram.com/moanataiarischool)

101 Kuranui Street

Thames, 3500

868 6504

021 026 34461



ADVERTISING FEATURE

Why 'good people, working hard'?

Kaihere School was established more than 100 years ago, through the good will and hard work of the local community.

Good people, working hard is firmly in our DNA and continues to be the expectations for staff and students alike.

So what do we mean by 'good'?

When we say of a person that they are a good human being, we mean that they are respectful, responsible, considerate of others, gracious and honest. They use their time and talents to contribute to the lives of others, and in this, find meaning and purpose in life.

Why 'working hard'?

Nothing great is easily won and effort is needed to achieve anything worthwhile in life. A 'high expectations, no blame, no excuses' attitude to learning and life is called for, along with support by family and school. Putting in the hard work requires diligence, perseverance, determination and resilience. We need our students to work hard in their learning.

If they leave primary school without a sound foundation in reading, writing and mathematics, then future pathways and life outcomes are likely to narrow down.

A back to basics approach is urgently needed if we are to ensure that our young people have what they need to be learning ready, life ready, work ready and world



Ngaire Harris

ready. If we don't get the basics right, the alternative for too many is poorer health, uncertain employment, financial insecurity, and ultimately less fulfilling and satisfying lives. It is not just about working hard in learning.

We also need to be working hard at being and becoming a good person, a trustworthy friend, a reliable employee - in short, a decent human being who shows respect, cares for others and uses one's talents for self growth and in the service of others. As a society, it is as important as ever to raise a generation who are good people, working hard.

- Ngaire Harris
Principal Kaihere School

Farewell to Carolyn Purcell: a legacy of excellence

After 31 years of dedicated service, Carolyn Purcell is retiring from Hauraki Plains College. Since joining the school in 1993 as secretary/receptionist, Carolyn has held a variety of key roles, including executive officer, finance/payroll, board secretary, support staff manager, principal's personal assistant, and a valued member of several board committees.

Throughout her career, Carolyn has role modelled our guiding principle, "excellence is our tradition". Carolyn's journey has been marked by her efficiency, professionalism, and dedication. Known for her ability to navigate the complexities of school operations with grace, her astuteness and valued support have been crucial to ensuring the school runs smoothly.

With a heart of gold and strong loyalty,

Carolyn not only excelled in her roles but also kept a broader perspective on how the school was functioning, always working in its best interests.

Support staff are the backbone of any school, and Carolyn has been an incredible support to all staff, tirelessly working to make their jobs easier. She has been much more than a colleague to many - becoming an ally and friend. Everyone needs a Carolyn in their lives. Carolyn's positive impact has touched hundreds, if not thousands, of staff, students, and community members during her time at Hauraki Plains College. As she embarks on a well-deserved retirement, we extend our heartfelt gratitude and best wishes to Carolyn and her husband Rick.

- Supplied by Hauraki Plains College



Carolyn Purcell is retiring from Hauraki Plains College after 31 years as an incredible support to all staff, tirelessly working to make their jobs easier. "Carolyn's positive impact has touched hundreds, if not thousands, of staff, students and community members."

Photo: SUPPLIED



KAIHERE SCHOOL
Good People, Working Hard

Start of Year Information:

Open for education:
9am Monday 3 February 2025 for all students.

Enrolment Information: Contact Ngaire Harris
Email: principal@kaihere.school.nz
Mob 021 756 411

- Our motto, *Tama Tu Tama Ora* (literally he who stands lives) carries the message that to get anywhere in life, you have to get up and get going.
- We hold to a high expectations, no blame, no excuses approach in everything we do.
- Our guiding principles are: *You Have Value; Others Matter and We Succeed Together*. These underpin our expectations that our students are becoming good people who work hard.
- We teach through a back to basics approach in reading, writing and mathematics along with a sound foundation in Social Sciences and Science, with engaging programmes in PE, the Arts and Technology.
- We want our students to be well prepared for secondary schooling and for life beyond school: developing work ready attributes; understanding how money works; becoming self-disciplined young people who pursue a healthy life style; and contributing one's time and talents to community.



Kaihere School
1115B State Highway 27
(07) 867 7081
Principal: Ngaire Harris
principal@kaihere.school.nz

HAURAKI PLAINS COLLEGE

2025 Back to School Information

Senior Course Confirmations: Senior students will be able to login and view their draft timetables on 17 Jan. Students who need to make subject changes or selections must call into school before we are back next year to confirm their timetable - in the Hub.

20, 21 & 22 Jan: 12pm-5pm
24 Jan: 9am-12pm
28 Jan: 2pm-5pm

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 & 31 Jan: All year levels attend
07 Feb: School closed

Stationery: www.myschoolnz
Uniform: www.argyleonline.co.nz
P.E Uniform & Footwear:
www.nzuniforms.com



New dates for Course Confirmation

Student Life

ADVERTISING FEATURE



Students enjoy the 'Bush School Programme', left, and the new bike and scooter track plan.

Big year planned at Pārāwai

Pārāwai School is looking forward to an amazing, learning-filled year in 2025, with loads of new innovations and experiences being rolled out for learners.

Over the summer holidays, the new bike and scooter track, that has been fundraised for by the school community, and with grants from the We Care Community Trust and Pub Charity, will be built for the students and community.

The school is looking forward to seeing the students active and involved with their 'wheels' at break times, and also on the way to and from school.

This year, learners at Pārāwai School were lucky enough to be the pilot students for the new Ngāhere Discovery Space in the Kauaeranga Valley. This space is the home for the 'Bush School Programme', where learners can connect with and learn about our natural environment in the amazing space on their back door step.

All classes and students get the opportunity to visit this space in terms 1, 2 and 4 in 2025, to build on knowledge and experience over time.

The valuable collaboration and connections

that form in this Education Outside the Classroom are proving to be so enriching for the students and parents, who volunteer their time to support this programme.

Next year, Pārāwai School will also be launching their new Year 7-8 Technology Programme based at the school. They have recently purchased a new laser cutter for the students to use to create new products, in one of the six streams of technology over the year.

Other streams include cooking/hospitality, engineering, soft materials and movie making. Collaboration with the local Menz Shed will also give students the amazing opportunity to design and create projects with hard materials, but also create community connections.

In small groups of 10-12, these students are getting an amazing learning opportunity, and developing real-life problem-solving and creative thinking skills along the way.

If you want to see more, and keep up-to-date with all these innovations, check out the Pārāwai School Facebook page (Proudly Pārāwai), or look at the website; www.parawai.school.nz.

-Supplied by Pārāwai School

Matatoki a fantastic place to learn

Just a 10-minute drive from the centre of Thames, at Matatoki School, teaching excellence is at the heart of everything we do.

Our dedicated educators, stunning rural surroundings, and focus on achievement and wellbeing create the perfect environment for your child to thrive.

Matatoki School offers a warm and welcoming space for students in Years 1 to 8, where they can learn and flourish within an inclusive and safe community.

The school features excellent facilities, including four classrooms, upgraded car park, new sports courts, a refreshed field, a large hall, a swimming pool, and spacious playgrounds.

Set in a peaceful rural location, Matatoki offers students plenty of opportunities for sports, cultural activities, and outdoor adventures all year round.

Our close-knit school community is supported by enthusiastic parents who play an active role in creating a friendly and collaborative atmosphere. This strong partnership makes Matatoki School a fantastic place for students to learn, grow, and enjoy their time at school.

Spaces for the 2025 school year are limited.

This is your chance to provide your child with an exceptional education in an environment that fosters growth, curiosity, and a sense of belonging.

Join our warm and welcoming community, where every child is encouraged to have fun, thrive and reach their full potential in a positive and supportive environment.

- Supplied by Matatoki School



The AIMs Games team.

Photos: SUPPLIED



The school production of *The Lost Chick*.



Matatoki School Kapa Haka performance.



ENROLMENT | 2025








"Students learn in caring and inclusive environments."
(Education Review Office)

We provide a well rounded, rich curriculum with plenty of opportunities and resources for all of our learners.

www.parawai.school.nz Facebook: Proudly Pārāwai

Enrolment days: 30th January 2025 9am-12pm
31st January 2025 9am-12pm

Our Vision:
Kia Māia, Ki Hiranga, Kia Ngākau nui
Be courageous, Strive for excellence, Be of big heart.



MATATOKI SCHOOL

Achieving Excellence Together

Rere totika, rere pai, rere rungarawa re e

Matatoki School - Where Teaching Excellence Inspires Bright Futures
Vibrant Learning, Rural Charm, Limitless Potential

Matatoki School Motto:
"Achieving Excellence Together"
Rere totika, Rere pai, Rere rungarawa re e"
We achieve excellence through nurturing high expectations of ourselves and each other

Matatoki School Values: Courage • Attitude • Respect • Excellence

Why Matatoki School?

- **Outstanding Teaching:** Expert, passionate teachers who inspire a love for learning.
- **Amazing students:** Our students support each other and demonstrate our School CARE values academically and socially. They love to participate positively in a wide range of activities and sports. Our students are our greatest assets.
- **Achievement-Focused:** High expectations and tailored support for every child.
- **Wellbeing Matters:** We foster confidence, resilience, and lifelong success.
- **Beautiful Grounds:** Lush gardens, open spaces, and an onsite pool for a balanced, enriching experience.
- **Community Spirit:** A school where families and staff work together to support student growth.





Limited Spaces Available for 2025!
Don't miss the opportunity to give your child the gift of an exceptional education in a warm, welcoming community.

Contact Us Today: 07 868 1079

(If you wish to meet with the Principal before school starts, please text 0211062010 or email principal@matatoki.school.nz)

Principal: Hine Viskovich
Web: <https://www.matatoki.school.nz>
Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/MatatokiSchool/>
View our ERO Report 2024: <https://ero.govt.nz/institution/1819/matatoki-school>



Student Life

ADVERTISING FEATURE

Culture and environment priorities at Central Kids

Central Kids Paeroa Kindergarten has been providing early childhood education in our community for over 50 years, and is proud to have built strong relationships with many generations of whānau.

The fully qualified teaching team is passionate about supporting tamariki to learn through play – by doing, asking questions, interacting with others, problem solving, and the purposeful use of quality resources within a safe, fun and stimulating environment.

Older tamariki enjoy regular visits to the ngahere (bush), which allows them to explore the wonders of nature, make new discoveries, develop their physical skills, exercise their imagination and connect with Papatūānuku (Mother Earth).

Kindergarten kaiwhakaako (head teacher) Rachel says ngahere visits are a special part of the curriculum at Paeroa Kindergarten. “Being outside in nature, with space and opportunity to explore, makes our tamariki so happy. It gives them so many opportunities to learn about the world around us, and builds the foundation for them to become future kaitiaki of our environment.”

The kindergarten’s inclusive learning environment welcomes whānau to be part of their child’s learning journey, with plenty of opportunities to get involved.

Interacting with whānau, friends, community groups and services gives tamariki a strong sense of identity within our local community, and prepares them well for the transition to kura (school). Te ao Māori is woven throughout the curriculum of all Central Kids kindergartens, with te reo Māori me ona tikanga (Māori language and protocols) embraced and thriving.



Rachel says the kindergarten values the language, culture and identity of all tamariki, and actively promotes the use of te reo Māori. “One of our goals is for our tamariki to be confident in te reo Māori to ensure the language thrives. We learn local waiata and use te reo Māori in everything we do.”

Paeroa Kindergarten is a special place that supports tamariki to grow to their full potential. Central Kids believes quality education should be something that all tamariki can experience, and provides flexible financial and accessibility options to ensure no tamariki miss out.

The door is always open, you are welcome to pop in for a visit any time.

- Supplied by Central Kids Paeroa

Open day and new hours at Thames Coast Community Kindergarten

Exciting changes are coming to Thames Coast Community Kindergarten.

From February 3, we’re introducing extended hours to better support our community. Our new schedule runs from 8am to 3:30pm, offering six-hour sessions for children aged 2-5 years.

These extended hours are a response to parent feedback, ensuring greater flexibility for busy families while maintaining the nurturing environment we’re known for.

Join us at our Open Day on January 28, 10am to 1pm at 4 West Crescent, Te Puru, for a sausage sizzle and a play at kindy.

It’s a great chance to see our space, meet our teachers and find out how our kindy works.

As a small, non-profit kindy, we aim to provide a vibrant, supportive space for children to grow and thrive.

Less than 15 minutes from Thames, our

green space, large outdoor play area, passionate team and family-centered ethos make us a unique choice for local families.

We enjoy a strong connection with Te Puru School and offer a transition programme for kindy children moving on to school.

We have an early bird offer for new enrolments received before January 31. Enrol for 30 hours per week (6 hour sessions, 5 days a week) to receive NO FEES and a \$20 Pak n Save voucher (limited to first 8 new enrolments).

Open Day on Jan 28, 10am to 1pm @ Thames Coast Community Kindergarten, 4 West Cres, Te Puru.

Enroll now to start from February 3, 2025. Daily sessions for 2-5 years, any six hours between 8am to 3.30pm. Email tckkindy@gmail.com or visit tckkindy.co.nz

- Supplied by Kate McGee, TCCK chair

THAMES COAST COMMUNITY KINDERGARTEN

New hours - enrol now!

Open 8.00am - 3.30pm, Monday - Friday

Daily sessions for ages 2 - 5 years
(any six hours between 8am-3.30pm)

Earlybird offers for new enrolments by 31 Jan!
Visit tckkindy.co.nz or contact us for details

OPEN DAY - All welcome!

Tue 28 Jan, 10am - 1pm

Drop in to our open day for a play, sausage sizzle and learn more about Thames Coast Community Kindy.

4 West Cres, Te Puru, Thames Coast
Contact us at tckkindy@gmail.com



Central Kids
We all grow together

Paeroa Kindergarten

SPACE TO PLAY

We have a large outdoor area that invites ngā tamariki to explore.
Nau mai, haere mai. Call in and see us today!

HOURS AND FEES

8.45am - 2.45pm, Monday - Friday
8.30am - 3.30pm from January 2025

Term breaks: OPEN

Low fees + extra support available

Nappies and breakfast provided



ENROL NOW!

We have spaces available for your tamariki to start right away.

CONTACT US

07 862 8871

13 Arney Street, Paeroa 3600

paeroa@centralkids.org.nz

www.centralkids.org.nz





DIRECT CREMATION within 15kms of Thames: \$3100.00
DIRECT CREMATION requiring transfer from Whangamata, Tairua, Whitianga, Waihi, Paeroa, Ngatea and Coromandel: \$3345.00
DIRECT CREMATION requiring transfer from North of Coromandel or Waikato Hospital: \$3445.00
 Outside all of these areas: \$3445.00 plus mileage



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

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



Please advise your Vet of your wish to use Forever Pets Crematorium



Visit the website: foreverpets.co.nz for further information.

CONTACT: Forever Pets 07 868 6003.

We guarantee the ashes you get back belong to your pet and only your pet.



SUDOKU

184

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

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

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7		9		4	8	6		
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MEDIUM

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		3			5		7	
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6		9				8		
				4			1	
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HARD

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HARD

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

MEDIUM

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

EASY

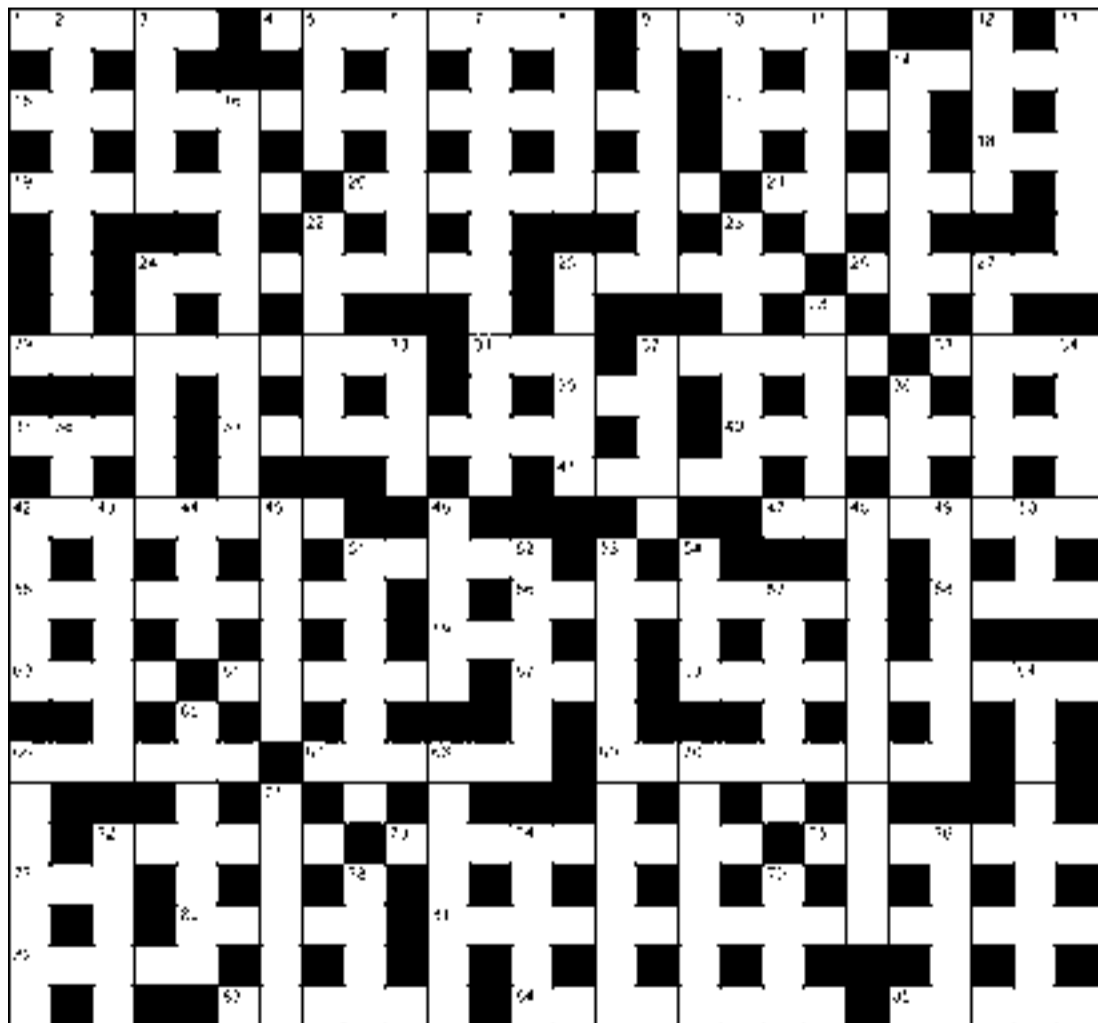
5	7	3	6	4	8	2	9	1
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6	8	9	1	5	2	3	4	7
9	3	8	2	7	6	1	5	4
4	1	6	3	9	5	7	2	8
7	2	5	4	8	1	9	3	6
3	6	1	8	2	4	5	7	9
8	9	7	5	1	3	4	6	2
2	5	4	7	6	9	8	1	3

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

JUMBO CROSSWORD

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- ACROSS**
- 1 Flooded (5)
 - 4 Horrified (8)
 - 9 Idle scrawl (6)
 - 14 Decorate (5)
 - 15 Very fast and efficiently (4,1,4,2,5)
 - 17 Wheel covers (5)
 - 18 Hardened (3)
 - 19 Greek mountain (7)
 - 20 Spear-shaped food (9)
 - 21 Play text (6)
 - 24 Dangled (9)
 - 25 Clippers (6)
 - 26 Move about restlessly (6)
 - 29 Toys (10)
 - 31 Be in debt (3)
 - 32 Reign (6)
 - 33 At a great altitude (4)
 - 35 Total (3)
 - 37 Siamese (4)
 - 39 Deserted (9)
 - 40 Viewer (9)
 - 41 Surly youth (5)
 - 42 Went over (8)
 - 47 In a doltish manner (8)
 - 51 Farewell (5)
 - 55 Sets free (9)
 - 56 Projecting strip of land (9)
 - 58 Autograph (4)
 - 59 Wind up (3)
 - 60 Nobleman (4)
 - 61 Bow user (6)
 - 62 Fire residue (3)
 - 63 Branch of medical science concerning the elderly (10)
 - 66 Bovine creatures (6)
 - 67 Deadly epidemic (6)
 - 69 Barriers (9)
 - 72 Defective (6)
 - 73 Dancer's spin (9)
 - 75 Conspicuous (7)
 - 77 Mineral spring (3)
 - 80 Bring upon oneself (5)
 - 81 Always be seemingly protected by magic (4,1,7,4)
 - 82 Upright (5)
 - 83 Fled (6)
 - 84 Ambled (8)
 - 85 Thwarts (5)
- DOWN**
- 2 Eddy (9)
 - 3 Water vapour (5)
 - 5 Gone by (4)
 - 6 Stimulated sexually (7)
 - 7 Newspaper column (4,3,5)
 - 8 Broad triangular river mouth (5)
 - 9 Argue about (7)
 - 10 Expletive (4)
 - 11 Song words (6)
 - 12 Lift (5)
 - 13 Immediate (7)
 - 14 Painkilling drug (7)
 - 16 Germans' name for Germany (11)
 - 22 Strain injury (6)
 - 23 Condition in a contract (7)
 - 24 Horizon (7)
 - 25 Unfluctuating (6)
 - 27 Shone, sparkled (7)
 - 28 Pressing (6)
 - 30 Foam (4)
 - 32 Orb (5)
 - 34 Rugged (5)
 - 36 Halt (4)
 - 38 Evil spell (3)
 - 42 Girl's name (5)
 - 43 Floor show (7)
 - 44 Gain by work (4)
 - 45 Obtain through intimidation (6)
 - 46 Passenger ship (5)
 - 48 Not obtainable (11)
 - 49 Covers for loss (7)
 - 50 Journey segment (3)
 - 51 Roading material (7)
 - 52 Modernise (6)
 - 53 Alfresco (2,3,4,3)
 - 54 Unexpected drawback (4)
 - 57 Imaginary (6)
 - 64 Psychedelic, vivid (9)
 - 65 Enthusiastic approval (7)
 - 66 Bunch (7)
 - 68 Questioned intensively (7)
 - 70 School bag (7)
 - 71 Plaster wall coating (6)
 - 72 Doomed (5)
 - 74 Multicoloured gemstones (5)
 - 76 Snow house (5)
 - 78 Worry (4)
 - 79 Large plant (4)



PREVIOUS SOLUTION

ACROSS: 1 Stiff, 4 Leave in the lurch, 14 Salve, 15 Droll, 16 Vibrations, 17 Elect, 19 Fir, 20 Reserve, 21 Witnessed, 22 Urgent, 25 Calculate, 27 Mettle, 28 Flashy, 33 Takes apart, 35 Mar, 36 Accord, 37 Prop, 39 Cub, 41 Disdain, 42 Gateau, 43 By degrees, 44 Radio, 45 Tendency, 50 By, 51 Vendetta, 55 Deuce, 58 Masticate, 59 Talent, 60 Swollen, 61 Raw, 63 Dais, 64 Celery, 65 Ebb, 66 Bankruptcy, 68 Mayhem, 69 Poison, 71 Broadened, 76 Porous, 77 Surcharge, 79 Learner, 81 Nor, 84 Corgi, 85 Regulation, 86 Lucky, 87 Envoy, 88 My lips are sealed, 89 Shine.

DOWN: 2 Turret, 3 False, 5 Exit, 6 Verdict, 7 Intent, 8 Tools, 9 Easiest, 10 Used, 11 Cherry, 12 Aloft, 13 Hearsay, 14 Steeple, 18 Evacuation, 23 Clear, 24 Placebo, 26 Amended, 27 Mercury, 29 Serpent, 30 Malice, 31 Impel, 32 Cradle, 34 Tear, 36 Abode, 38 Pasta, 40 Aged, 45 Timid, 46 Nastily, 47 Eric, 48 Chalet, 49 Curry, 50 Between, 52 Now or never, 53 Ellipse, 54 Trench, 55 Develop, 56 Clubs, 57 Snub, 62 In-law, 67 Secrecy, 68 Meander, 70 Squirms, 72 Regatta, 73 Quarry, 74 Vaults, 75 Weaken, 76 Prove, 78 Cigar, 80 Rough, 82 Fiji, 83 Cope.

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Matheson clan chief to open Highland Games

By KELLEY TANTAU, Public Interest Journalism funded by NZ On Air

A clan chief will be a special AVIP at this year's Paeroa Highland Games and Tattoo, held on February 8.

Chief of Clan Matheson, Sir Alexander Matheson, will be making a private visit to New Zealand alongside his wife Lady Katharine Matheson for Paeroa's popular Scottish celebration.

There, they will join 14 other clans in the Clan Village at the Paeroa Domain - complete with a Highland Bar and Variety Stage.

According to the event committee, the clan concept dated back to the 12th century when the Scottish clans were originally extended networks of families who had loyalties to a particular chief; the history of a family clan was complex and interwoven.

Historically, the main function of a chief was to lead the clan in battle on land and sea.

Now, the role of a clan chief is largely ceremonial; representing the clan and its heritage to the wider world.

Sir Alexander Matheson, eighth Baronet of Lochalsh, is the 28th chief of the Matheson clan.

He succeeded to the baronetcy and to the chiefship on the death of his father Sir Fergus Matheson in 2017.

Following three years at



Sir Alexander Matheson, and his wife Katharine will attend Paeroa's popular Scottish celebration. Photo: SUPPLIED

Durham University Sir Alexander joined the Coldstream Guards as his father, grandfa-

ther, three uncles, three first cousins and both godfathers had done

before him. He served as a regular officer from 1973 to 2001 in the United Kingdom

and on overseas postings.

Paeroa Highland Games and Tattoo president Richard Hornell said the committee was "honoured" to have Sir Alexander Matheson attending and taking part in the event this year.

"The clan march is part of our 10.30am official opening ceremony.

"This year, the march will be led by Clan Matheson, and Sir Alexander Matheson will also be taking in our spectacular evening Tattoo," he said.

Meanwhile, the Clan Village and Scottish shops were another important aspect of the Games; they were a great opportunity for visitors to find out more about Scottish culture and history, he said.

DETAILS: The 32nd Paeroa Highland Games and Tattoo will be held on Saturday, February 8 at the Paeroa Domain. At 10.30am, Sir Alexander Matheson will lead the Mathesons and all other clans into the main arena for the opening ceremony. Also on show will be the pipe band competition, highland dancing, caber tossing, and hammer throwing. The evening tattoo will take place from 6pm-9pm. Tickets \$25 at the gate. Children under 15 are free with an accompanying adult. For the full programme and more info visit paeroahighlandgames.co.nz.



The most anticipated movies to hit the big screen in 2025

POP CULTURE

By ALI KOIA-HAMLING, Paeroa College student



This year promises to be a big year of movies, from big Marvel blockbusters to live-action remakes and new family flicks. Here, we'll take a look at five upcoming movies to get excited about in 2025.

A Minecraft Movie

Arriving in cinemas in April is the highly anticipated *A Minecraft Movie*. This movie was actually filmed here in New Zealand this year. The film stars Jason Mamoia, Aquaman, Jack Black, *School Of Rock*, Jennifer Coolidge, *The White Lotus*, Kate Mckinnon, *Barbie*, Jemaine Clement, *Flight Of The*

Conchords, *Moana*, Emma Myers *Wednesday*, Dannille Brooks, *The Colour Purple* and more. The film will be an adaptation of one of the biggest video games of all time. From the trailers released, it looks like they have the look of the blocky world nailed!

Superman

Superman is returning! Superman is undoubtedly the most recognizable superhero of all time, and after more than 10 years, the hero is being brought back to the big screen in his own solo film.

David Cornsweat has been cast in the lead role, and from the set photos so far, he looks amazing. James Gunn, the director of Marvel's funny and hugely successful *Guardians Of The Galaxy* films, will helm this film, which he also wrote the screenplay for. This film will also mark the beginning of the new

DC universe. The film releases in cinemas in July, 2025.

Mission Impossible: Final Reckoning

Slated to be the final *Mission Impossible* film, Tom Cruise returns as Ethan Hunt in the eighth film in the franchise, set to be released in May. Tom Cruise is yet again trying to pull off another incredible stunt in this film, after riding a motorbike off a cliff in the last one, this time he is going underwater. As always, this upcoming final *Mission Impossible* film promises to be high stakes, and full of great action.

Wicked: Part 2

After the huge success of this year's *Wicked* film, which is already the highest grossing musical Broadway adaptation film of all time, it is nearly time to see some more *Wicked* when the second and final part of

the film arrives in cinemas next year in November, exactly one year after the release of *Wicked: Part 1*. Cynthia Erivo and Ariana Grande will return in their lead roles, and this film reportedly will star Dorothy and will retell the *Wizard Of Oz* plot during the film.

Avatar: Fire And Ash

Avatar is the highest grossing film of all time. *Avatar: The Way Of Water*, the sequel to *Avatar*, is the third highest grossing film of all time. In December, 2025, the third film in the *Avatar* franchise will arrive, and is sure to be a hit blockbuster. The upcoming film promises to have incredible visuals like the previous films and emotional stakes. The plot of this upcoming film is set to centre around fire people, after the exploration of water people in the previous *Avatar* film.

<h1>GBD</h1>	<p>Summer Hours: Closed Monday Tues-Fri: 12pm to 8pm Sat: 9am - 8pm Sun: 12pm to 8pm</p>	<p>LEFT BANK THEATRE</p> <p>Ph: 07 868 3142 www.leftbanktheatre.co.nz 659 Pollen St, Thames</p> <p>Movies from Thursday 23 January to Wednesday 29 January</p>	
<p>Sunday Lunch</p> <p>ROASTS</p> <p>(bookings essential)</p> <p>plus full a la carte available</p>	<p>Thursday Cocktails</p> <p>\$10</p> <p>5-8pm</p> <p>The only venue on this side of the peninsula with Guinness on tap</p>	<p><i>For times, see our website, pick up a brochure by the cinema doors, or email or phone us</i></p> <p>Mufasa: The Lion King (118 mins) PG. "Mufasa: The Lion King" enlists Rafiki to relay the legend of the unlikely rise of the beloved king of the Pride Lands, introducing an orphaned cub called Mufasa.</p> <p>Paddington in Peru (106 mins) PG. Follow Paddington and the Brown family as they visit Aunt Lucy in Peru, but a mystery sends them to the Amazon rainforest and up Peruvian mountains.</p> <p>Spontaneous Combustion: Songs for Barry Brickell + Pluck (72mins + 22mins) E. A celebration of Barry Brickell's legacy and Driving Creek Railway. Preceded by 'Pluck' - Facing a battle with cancer, Jean Neshausen is on a mission to weave her last Korowai, a final gift to her daughter.</p> <p>We Live In Time (108 mins) M. An up-and-coming chef and a recent divorcee find their lives forever changed when a chance encounter brings them together, in a decade-spanning, deeply moving romance.</p> <p>Moana 2 (100 mins) PG. After receiving an unexpected call from her wayfinding ancestors, Moana must journey to the far seas of Oceania and into dangerous, long-lost waters for an adventure.</p> <p>Wicked (160 mins) PG. The story of how a green-skinned woman framed by the Wizard of Oz becomes the Wicked Witch of the West; feature film based on the Broadway musical.</p> <p>Anora (139 mins) R16. Anora, a sex worker from Brooklyn, gets her chance at a Cinderella story when she meets and marries the son of an oligarch. Once the news reaches Russia, her fairytale is threatened.</p> <p>Conclave (120 mins) M. Follows Cardinal Lomeli as he oversees the group of Cardinals responsible for selecting a new Church leader while trying to uncover a secret from the late Pontiff.</p> <p>Lee (117 mins) M. The story of photographer Elizabeth 'Lee' Miller, a fashion model who became an acclaimed war correspondent for Vogue magazine during World War II.</p>	
<p>700 Pollen St, Thames - Phone 868 6008 - f GBDThamesLtd</p>			

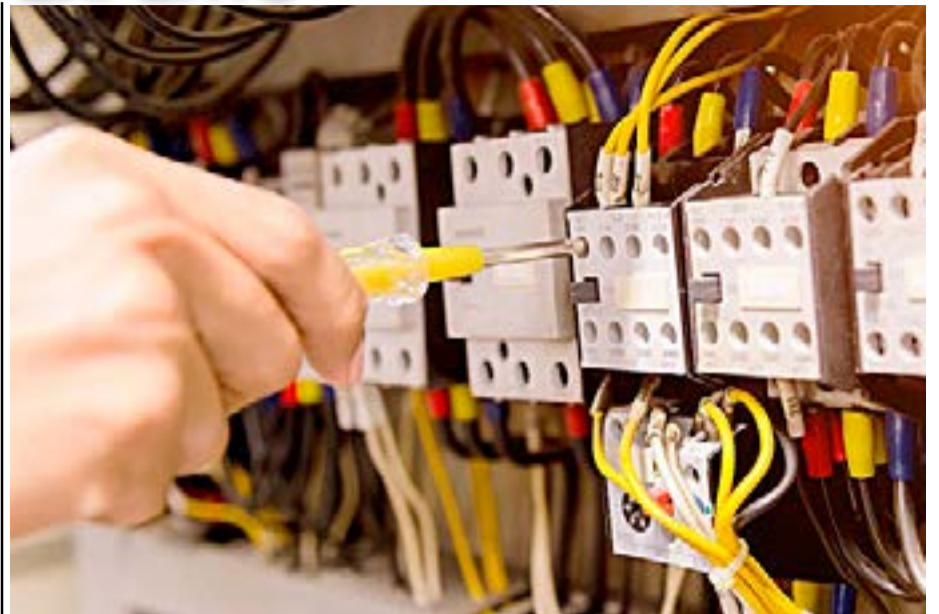
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Death Notice

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Public Notice

ADLAM, Richard Harry (Dick):
Passed away peacefully at Thames Hospital on 16th January, 2025; aged 86. Loved husband of Coral. Loved father of Bruce, Suzanne and Karen. Loved grandad to all his grandchildren and great-grandchildren. A private funeral has been held, as he wished. Many thanks to Thames Hospital staff and St John Ambulance. Communications to 5 Merrimana Drive, Thames 3500.

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HARDIE, Jill (nee Hounsell):
Passed away peacefully in Tairua on 16 January 2025; aged 95 years. Loved wife of the late Alex. Loved mother of Liz and Wesley Garratt, Bill and Julie Hardie, Ian and Joanna Hardie. Cherished grandmother, and great-grandmother. Loving sister of Janet Crisford and the late Don Hounsell. She is 'present with the Lord' whom she loved. A service to celebrate Jill's life will be held at St Francis Anglican Church, 248 Main Road, Tairua on Friday 24 January at 11:00am. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to St John Ambulance Tairua bank a/c no 030458-0210325-00, or via St John donation box at the funeral. Messages to C/- 7 Tui Terrace, Tairua 3508.

TWENTYMANS

WHITE, Jacqueline June (Crabb / Clark):
Passed away in Whanganui Hospital at 5.30am on 15-01-2025. Special younger sister of Barbara (Ngaruawahia) and Patricia (Waiomu). Our loving memory of Jackie will always be with us. Many thanks to the staff of Whanganui Hospital and also to her husband Paul who was her carer for many years.


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Hauraki District Council Meetings - January 2025




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 January 2025 in the Council Chamber, Hauraki House, 1 William Street, Paeroa unless otherwise stated.

Council
Wednesday, 29 January 2025, 9:00am

District Licensing Committee
Thursday, 30 January 2025, 10:00am
Hearing of Application for Special Licence - D. McLean/M Hornicy, Valley Poker Run

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Chief Executive
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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
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BOWLS

Kerepehi Bowls & Sports saw a good turn out of bowlers and a glorious sunny day for the 20 teams playing three-bowl triples sponsored by Twenymans Funeral Services/Norm Allen on January 12. Prize winners: 1st 4 wins 55 points 26 ends (Hauraki) G Sharp. Andy McCowatt, Mike Hitchcock; 2nd 4 wins 32 points 22 ends (Thames Coast) Kaye Bunn, Amanda Woods, Ross Marshall; 3rd 3 wins 19 points 20 ends (Waihi Beach) Gary Hewitt, Ross Cowan, David Brennan; Hard Luck Prize (Kerepehi) Jason, Robin, Pyke. Coming up on January 23 is the Local Bodies Invitation Optional 4s (Kerepehi Transport/Laser Electrical Ngatea); February 23 (Richardsons Ngatea) Opt 3s. Club championship 4s February 1-2 and on February 15, the club hosts the Thames Valley Taylor Shield. Good bowling to all,
- Terry King.



Winners from top: Hauraki, 1; Thames Coast, 2; and Waihi Beach, 3. SUPPLIED

Malayalees celebrate

The Thames Malayali Association was thrilled to be named Best Cultural Float at the 2024 Thames Santa Parade on December 7. The association, which began as a small group of Thames-based Malayalees, has grown significantly in the last few years, now boasting over 140 members. The group was officially inaugurated on December 28 at a festive Christmas and New Year celebration which included Thames-Coromandel Mayor Len Salt and St Francis School principal Oliver Fahey.



Thames-Coromandel Mayor Len Salt cuts the cake.



Performers, above and left, light up the stage.

Photos: SUPPLIED

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CLASSIFIEDS Deadline 5.00pm Friday

Public Notice

Thames-Coromandel District Council Meetings for January and February 2025

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 January and February 2025.

Council Meetings

Council Meeting - Submission on the Resource Management (Consenting and Other System Changes) Amendment Bill report
Tuesday 28 January 2025 09:00 am, Thames Council Chambers, 515 Mackay Street, Thames

Council Meeting

Tuesday 18 February 2025 09:00 am, Thames Council Chambers, 515 Mackay Street, Thames

Committee Meetings

Risk and Assurance Committee Meeting

Thursday 13 February 2025 09.00am, Thames Council Chambers, 515 Mackay Street, Thames

Community Board Meetings

Tairua-Pāuanui Community Board

Monday 3 February 2025 10.00am, Pāuanui Community Hub, 23 Centreway, Pāuanui

Whangamatā Community Board

Tuesday 4 February 2025 10.00am, Whangamatā Service Centre, 620 Port Road, Whangamatā

Thames Community Board

Wednesday 5 February 2025, 10.00am, Thames Council Chambers, 515 Mackay Street, Thames

Coromandel-Colville Community Board

Tuesday 11 February 2025 09.00am, Coromandel Service Centre, 355 Kapanga Road, Coromandel

Mercury Bay Community Board

Wednesday 12 February 2025 09.00am, Mercury Bay Service Centre, 10 Monk Street, Whitianga

Please visit <https://www.tcdc.govt.nz/Our-Council/Meetings/Agendas-Reports-and-Minutes> for copies of agendas and order papers.

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Students build beach buggy for Beach Hop

By DAVIDDA HIKATANGATA

A group of senior automotive students at Hauraki Plains College has dedicated themselves to building a special project in the hope it will be ready by the time the Whangamatā Beach Hop rocks around on March 26.

Eighteen-year-old automotive student Abigail Cammell told *The Profile* she first took on the automotive subject in 2023, as a year 12 student because she wanted to take a practical class.

She enjoyed the subject so decided to stay with it for another year in 2024 as a year 13 student, she said.

Abigail and classmates Floyd Morbey, Caden Banks, William Higgins and Marcus Mills, who were supported by their teacher, Mr Kyle Backhouse, were tasked with building a beach buggy known as The Bug, which arrived to their class in parts.

Although Abigail didn't get to paint The Bug, she said she was able to learn the technique of how to paint a car with a spray gun applying primer.

Another important lesson was the amount of preparation work that needed to be done so the car looked good when the final colour was applied.

"I gained good practical skills in general car maintenance."



Automotive teacher Mr Backhouse with students in The Bug. INSET: Abigail prepares to learn car painting technique. Photos: SUPPLIED

The automotive students still have enough time in the tank to get the wheels turning and tune up The Bug so they can fulfil their dream of making it to the Whangamatā Beach Hop.

When Abigail graduated from Hauraki Plains College at the end of last year, the body of The Bug was painted and the motor

was working, she said.

But there was still a bit of work left to do such as attaching the body to the chassis, installing the brakes, clutch, accelerator, lights, and also attaching the roll cage, she said.

But Abigail wasn't just an automotive enthusiast.

She was also the recipient of

the Good Citizenship Award at her senior prizegiving on October 31.

"I have got to be honest I wasn't expecting the good citizenship award but it was nice to be recognised for it," she said.

Abigail was currently taking a gap year in 2025, and planned to do seasonal work around

New Zealand with the hope to "find out what I want to do", she said.

Abigail's advice for students who are interested in automotive studies is to see for themselves.

"Just have a go at everything that is on offer in that class," she said.

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Our open plan, single level apartments feature covered balconies with fantastic views of the sea, Kauaeranga River and mountains.

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All residents enjoy scenic views from each level's shared lounges, use of the Village Community Lodge and participation in all activities and amenities at your leisure.

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A lifestyle village in Thames on the Coromandel

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