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# Fire guts 125 year-old hall

The community of Pihama has been left reeling after its hall was levelled by fire on Monday night. This comes in the same week as a fire devastated the Manutahi Hall.

The 125-year-old Pihama Hall is regularly used and was due to host a potluck tea following the annual Anzac Day service at the Lizzie Bell Cemetery.

FENZ shift manager Shannon Lucas said they received a call at 10.20pm. The fire was well involved when they arrived, so it was escalated to a third alarm. Seven appliances, two tankers and three specialist appliances attended, from the Opunake, Manaia, Kaponga, Hawera, Stratford, Kohi, Rahotu and New Plymouth brigades. They were there until 1.30am that morning.

Strong winds and rain had lashed the coast on Monday night. There had earlier been a power surge and power was off at the time.

The following morning the hall had been completely levelled and locals were surveying the damage.

"The hall's fully insured and it can be rebuilt but it won't bring the history back," said Pihama farmer and South Taranaki District councillor Janet Fleming. "It had all the school records, all the school trophies were



**What was left of the Pihama Hall on Tuesday morning.**

here, all the war memorials, those reminders of who served from our community, and the family names of those who served."

She praised the efforts of the firefighters who attended the fire.

"It would have been a hell of a job in the wind last night. We can be thankful that it didn't get to any of the surrounding houses."

Pihama farmer Mark Stevenson also noted the loss of the historical records. "The big loss of all the photos and the honours board

really hurts a lot," he said. "This is total devastation for the community. We had the inspectors here this morning. Hopefully it was in the meter board or something."

Trish Stevenson who is secretary/treasurer of the hall committee said since the school closed, the hall had become the central meeting place for the community. It had been a popular venue for wedding receptions and birthdays. A community dinner was held every July to welcome new farmers to the area. Last month there had been a successful community dinner attended by over a hundred people.

In the latter part of last year there had been extensive building maintenance and exterior painting.

"The next goal after that were the toilets and the kitchens, and to future-proof it for the next 50 years," said Trish.

She says they had received notice there was no reason to suspect any foul play.

South Taranaki District mayor Phil Nixon noted that the Pihama Hall fire came within two days of the one at the Manutahi Hall.

"This to me is more than coincidence. I hope I'm wrong. It just seems that you have two nights and two

fires and two halls," he said. The effects of both fires would be felt in their local communities, he said.

"These halls are an integral part of their communities. The hall committees that run them treat them like their own personal space, and it's really dear to them. It's devastating and my thoughts go out to these communities.

"It will hit Pihama very hard this week as after the Lizzie Bell service they always go back to the hall, and now there's no hall to go back to."

Mayor Nixon said there had been a function at the Manutahi Hall on Sunday evening and FENZ were called to a fire there in the early hours of Monday morning. He says he had

spoken to the police, and the CIB would be investigating both fires.

"FENZ were at Manutahi yesterday and they will certainly be poring over both these buildings with a fine-toothed comb."

Trish Stevenson says they will be going ahead with the Anzac Day service at the Lizzie Bell Cemetery as normal.

"We won't be having the get together. We're leaving it for this year. Maybe we can put something in place for next year."

As for the future, there will be a community meeting instead of the usual Hall Society AGM to decide on what to do next.

"It will be a community decision," says Trish.



**The Pihama Hall in happier times when it was the focal point for local events like the Cancer Walk.**

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## Letters to the Editor

### Labour candidate

Maybe David MacLeod may have defeated Glen Bennett in the last general election, but he must begin to realise that Glen has risen very rapidly within the Labour Party. Now Labour has as its candidate Amanda Clinton-Gohdes who has

been a district councillor, then her profile really began to shine when she tabled a motion opposing this seabed mining proposal which Trans-Tasman Resources (TTR) pulled out of very quickly.

Amanda has been very well served by her university qualifications in law and science and has a

*While we welcome free speech, the views expressed in the Letters to the Editor do not necessarily reflect those of the Opunake & Coastal News. Please limit letters to 350 words as we sometimes struggle for space to fit them all in.*

background in education, plus having an extremely deep understanding of the housing shortage, jobs, health, people facing economical and societal change. So what has David MacLeod got? Maybe he was the chair of the Taranaki Regional Council, yet no one has really seen him, only when there was an election.

So everyone, when Amanda visits you all, listen carefully as what she's saying about how this Micky Mouse Three Stooges government has completely ruined our country by promising us the world but never delivered at all, as every National Party government this country has had has cost our country headaches, which they are still doing in many ways.

I do believe that Amanda will defeat David MacLeod,

and like Glen Bennett have a fairly rapid rise within the Labour Party's ranks, so maybe we could have her and Glen running our country, and as for National they have already cooked their goose, meaning burnt it, and they become the opposition political party for some time to come.

Tom Stephens  
New Plymouth

Ian McAlpine  
New Plymouth.

above 1,500 metres. This is making Taranaki Maunga a 'shit mountain', up there, and back in 2002 Management Plan 2002-2012, blamed the human poos on the summit campers as the culprits for the human deposits up there.

Also park-users are asking in April 2026, where is the Lake Dive Hut up to?

omitted surname who wrote the St Barnabas church piece for Easter. My name is Paul Bowers-Mason and I have recently taken up minister duties here. If great acoustic music is your thing, and you like Wayne Mason's stuff, I am the less famous half of Mason Brothers, coming to the Playhouse in Opunake on 8 May. I am also doing some maths work each week at Opunake High School. I live in Eltham but come over here once or twice every week. Always up for a chat or a coffee or both – contact 0273649274.

Paul Bowers-Mason  
Eltham.

### Taranaki Maunga

It's now April 2026 and near the end of the climbing season on Taranaki Maunga. This year was one of the busiest seasons with more than 20,000 people attempting to climb Taranaki Maunga, yet there are toilets

### The mysterious Paul

I would like to confess to being the mysterious "Paul" with the accidentally

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### ADELPHOS

"Hi Matilda, great we can get together for coffee. it's been two months since George's loving wife, Judy, died. Have you heard anything about him? I've heard that his "charming" neighbour Marilyn is visiting him almost every day for the last three weeks..."

This individual is passing on rumours and asking questions about George's personal life. It's none of her business. It looks like gossip: "If it looks like a duck, swims like a duck, and quacks like a duck, it's probably a duck."

This short article will look at gossip through the lens of some world religions and what psychology and neuroscience inform us. Note: Positive and neighbourly information

sharing is not gossip. Sociological and psychological research often distinguishes between good and bad gossip. Harmful gossip is unkind idle talk behind someone's back that is often damaging to their long-term reputation. Unfortunately, such gossip is often perceived as a harmless pastime compared to stealing and physical violence.

Major world religions condemn gossip as harmful and immoral behaviour that damages reputations, hinders spiritual growth and divides communities. In Hinduism and Buddhism gossip produces negative karma or actions that increase misfortune in this life and cause a lower quality of life in a future reincarnation.

### Gossip

Judaism describes gossip as an evil tongue—lashon hara—in Psalm 34:13-14. This includes spreading evil and false information or even listening to or spreading true, but damaging information about another person (Leviticus 19:16 and in Jewish Halakha law tradition). In Islam gossip or backbiting—gheebah— is such a horrible practice that it uses the imagery of eating the flesh of a dead brother (Qur'an, Surah 49:12). In Christianity Jesus reminds every one of us, "You can be sure that on Judgement Day everyone will have to give account of every useless word he [she] has ever spoken. Your words will be used to judge you—to declare you either innocent or guilty" (Matthew 12:36-

37, Good News Bible).

So why is gossiping so enticing? Physically, both good and bad gossip rewards our brain with a feel-good dopamine high. Dopamine functions as a neurotransmitter and hormone also affecting our craving for food, gambling, drugs and pleasure. As a juicy gossip session unfolds oxytocin, often called the love hormone, is also triggered in the brain, bonding those gossiping together. And yet, both of these hormones are helpful in making everyday decisions and enhancing well-being, but not in the case of bad gossip. It is considered a biochemical "addiction" when someone needs repeated feelings of pleasure and bonding by hurting others.

As the victim of gossip, your brain's amygdala acts as a threat detector; it triggers the hypothalamus to activate your adrenal glands and pump the stress hormones cortisol and adrenaline into your bloodstream. It's an intense physical reaction to a threat on your reputation. There's a fight or flight response.

Suggestions when hearing bad gossip: 1.) confront it with silence; 2.) change the subject; 3.) or say, "I'm not comfortable speaking about George who isn't here."

Doesn't our chaotic world need more people to speak words of reconciliation rather than division?

Te Rangimarie ki a koutou,

Adelphos

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**Sue Goble**  
Administrator & Funeral Assistant

Born and raised here in South Taranaki Sue has a dedicated passion for the community she calls home. Having started her working life in farming, the backbone of our community she loves the heartland that is South Taranaki. Serving her community in business for over thirty years has enabled her to support and care for many of you over that time. Sue loves and is dedicated to her new role which still enables her to support and care for her community as a valued member of staff.

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Editorial

# What does it take for someone to be removed from office

As petrol and diesel prices continue to fluctuate and the importing of essential items like fertiliser is threatened by the conflict in the Middle East we, along with the rest of the world, continue to feel the impact of this unnecessary and unprovoked attack by the United States on Iran.

Thousands have now lost their lives in this conflict as President Trump, who once promised to stop wars, continues his reckless, destructive action for which we are all paying.

Having first threatened to annex Canada, then Greenland, Venezuela was next. What happened in Venezuela was a chilling portent of things to come. No doubt the ease with which he "neutralised" fishing vessels in Venezuela using the excuse he was protecting the US from drug couriers, then captured the leader in an extraordinary operation that beggars belief, fuelled his decision to take on Iran. It was a grave miscalculation.

There was no threat from Iran and the hoary old claim

that Iran was in the throes of making a nuclear weapon was just another excuse to bully another country - except this time it had far reaching consequences resulting in the disruption of the oil on which the world so depends.

When the US made its first strikes on Iran an Iranian leader commented they had to defend themselves, "otherwise it would be another Gaza."

Demonstrations all over the world including in Israel are testament to the outrage of what is happening in the Middle East.

A telling interview on the Internet gave an insight into Trump's character. As a child he liked to disrupt. Have an effect. Whether for good or bad was immaterial. He needs to be stopped.

We are all paying for his folly and will continue to for years to come.

Trump should never have reached high office and is there only by dint of a minority of far right extremists without the wisdom or courage to stop



Rising petrol and diesel prices continue to affect all.

him.

It is disappointing that New Zealand still has taken no stance really on the attack on Iran, which is a violation of international law.

It took a former Prime Minister of New Zealand to do that and at the very outset.

Of the unpredictable Trump, the president of France Emmanuel Macron, in a timely rebuke, said that

when we're serious we don't say "the opposite of what we said the day before."

"We are talking about war, we are talking today about women and men who are in combat, about women, men and civilians who are being

killed," he said.

"We're also talking about the impact of this war on our economies."

The Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian, prior to Trump's inflated boast they were "systematically dismantling the regime's ability to threaten America or project power outside of their borders," said in a letter addressed to the American people that his country harbours no enmity towards ordinary Americans.

More recently Trump said on social media that Iran had asked for a ceasefire, but that he would not consider it until Tehran ceased blocking the Strait of Hormuz, which carries a fifth of global oil and liquefied natural gas. Iran denied making any such request.

Recently Iran, using controlling the Hormuz Straits - their main weapon against America's superior military might - agreed to open the straits in return for

a ceasefire. In return the US continued their blockade on Iranian vessels passing through the straits with their valuable cargo of oil and other essential goods, thus prolonging the economic impact on the world.

The terrible toll this illegal, unprovoked, destructive action is a violation of every quality we should all adhere to: empathy, humanity and concern for all our fellow human beings who share our planet.

The man is destructive and needs to be removed from office, likewise his Israeli counterpart Netanyahu.

Both are bullies and a dangerous threat to world peace and need to be stopped.

"The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing" Edmund Burke.



The person responsible, US President Donald John Trump.

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# Questions raised about Ian Baker's wall



Concerns have been raised at the place which Ian Baker's wall will have as part of the Green Space development.

As work continues on Te Manawa Ora (The Green Space) on Napier Street several local people have approached the Opunake & Coastal News expressing

concern at the removal of part of the stone wall which had been laid by the late Ian Baker.

A plaque commemorates the efforts of Mr Baker,

"the designer and sole constructor of these stone walls," who in the years 2002-2004 laid and pointed 200 tonne of local stone.

"This provides a lasting

memorial to his dedication and commitment to Opunake," the plaque reads. South Taranaki District Council community services manager Rob Haveswood says; "Council is retaining the core rock wall features,

including the State Highway frontage walls and the Peter Snell base. Some sections will be temporarily removed and rebuilt to ensure they are structurally sound for the upgrades, including for safety reasons, while small

portions will be adjusted to create new seating and garden spaces. Importantly, removed rock will be reused and repurposed where possible, and the overall design keeps these features as a key part of the space."

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Great buys include, for example, the Raptor 110 Fun Bike with push-button electric starting. The 112cc bike, with its aggressive looks and sporty handling, is available at a special price.

Or another Yamaha alternative could be the Motocross YZ85L, which is a more powerful kids racer at 85cc. Its big wave-style brake disks offer improved self-cleaning and cooler-running performance would



The staff are, from left, Craig Bailey, Tracey Bailey, Simon Stannard, Luke Meynell, Anthony Hunt, and Ryan Buhler.

appeal to many enthusiasts. Available is YMI Yamaha insurance and YMF Yamaha finance. We have some great YMF deals such as 0% on kids' bikes and 1% on YZ/WR MX bikes.

The workshop has been upgraded, which has made conditions more amenable for quick repairs, dismantling and other work. The walls have been relined. Extra work benches have been especially helpful. Plastic welding of plastic tanks and calf feeders have saved farmers the cost of replacement. Outside, the new iron has given a smart modern appearance to the building, as well as protection from inclement weather.

"A business is only as good as its staff," explains Craig. He and Tracy are very pleased with the excellent contribution of the staff, who are both capable and friendly. "I have had some great staff over my 39 years who have helped me build the business. Some have ended up with their own businesses. Some have ended up as good technicians that other businesses have wanted."

Craig's passionate interest in motorbikes goes all the way back to when he was a 10-year-old youngster. He has spent many hours riding dirt and motor cross bikes, over his 65 years. He states, "To own a motorbike shop you have to love

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The revamped workshop. Pictured are, from left, Ryan Buhler, Craig Bailey and Luke Meynell.

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# Bringing cancer treatments to South Taranaki

Over the past decade, we have seen huge advances in the treatment of cancer, mainly in the form of new drugs.

The National-led Government's record \$604 million investment in Pharmac, through Budget 2024, delivered 66 new medicines, including 33 cancer treatments. That is lifechang-

ing for many thousands of people. However, it also requires increased infusion capacity to ensure patients can access these medicines when they need them.

Around 13,000 additional cancer infusions are expected in 2025/26 – a 12% increase compared to the previous year. This creates pressure on existing infu-



**CARL BATES MP**  
FOR WHANGANUI

sion facilities.

To assist with this, Health Minister Hon Simeon Brown recently announced an additional 14 infusion clinic sites nationwide by 2028, one of which will be located in Hāwera.

This is excellent news for the region, as it will mean fewer trips to larger centres, particularly to Taranaki Base Hospital in New Plymouth. Improving cancer outcomes is a key priority for the Government. Our focus is on ensuring patients can access cancer treatment sooner and closer to where they live. That means not only funding new medicines, but making

sure the health system has the capacity to deliver them. This expansion puts patients at the centre, enabling more New Zealanders to start treatment earlier, receive care closer to home, and spend less time travelling for appointments and more time with their families.

Lastly, my thoughts are

with residents of Manutahi and Pihama, who over two nights have lost two community halls to fire. My thanks go to the firefighters, both volunteer and professional, who attended these calls. The Pihama fire was particularly difficult, fanned by gale force southerly winds. These halls, and others like

them throughout the district, hold many memories of significant events over the years. They have been an important part of the social fabric of their districts, and their loss will be keenly felt.

*Carl Bates MP for Whanganui including South Taranaki and Stratford.*



From left, David MacLeod MP, the Hon Simeon Brown MP and Carl Bates MP.

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## Did you get your Maori Electoral Option pack?

Māori voters should have received an information pack in the mail by now about their roll choice for this year's election.

Packs have been sent to 562,000 voters of Māori descent on the general roll and the Māori roll.

"The pack includes a letter

confirming which roll you are currently on," says Chief Electoral Officer Karl Le Quesne.

"If you're happy with the roll you're on, you don't need to do anything. If you'd like to change the roll you're on, sign and date the letter in the pack and send it back, or go online to vote.nz to make

the change. "If you're Māori and haven't received a pack, it means we have an old address for you, or you're not enrolled," says Karl Le Quesne. "You can enrol, update your address, or change rolls at vote.nz, or by filling in an enrolment form." Māori voters who would like

to switch rolls before the 7 November General Election need to make the change before midnight Thursday 6 August.

Visit [vote.nz](http://vote.nz) for more information or call 0800 36 76 56 to ask for an enrolment form to be sent to you.

## Could electric cars balance a renewable heavy energy network?

Electric vehicles could offer a solution to the problems power systems face when transitioning to renewable

energy sources, according to international researchers. They say upgrading EV charging infrastructure

to allow vehicles to communicate with the power grid and feed energy back when needed could be cost-effective and allow for major emissions reductions. This is because EVs can act as a vast network of mobile batteries that can help absorb the unpredictability of renewable energy sources such as wind and solar - drawing power from the grid when supply is high and feeding it back when demand surges. The team

modelled different scenarios in the San Francisco Bay Area in the USA to see how different speeds of EV and solar energy adoption as well as infrastructure upgrades would impact the cost and the environmental impact of eventually integrating EVs into the local power system. They say from their calculations, the most cost-effective way forward is to deploy this kind of technology as soon as possible.

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### Carl Bates MP for Whanganui

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# Community Boards leader is TOPS choice

Another candidate with local body experience is entering the race for the New Plymouth seat at this year's general election.

Sarah Lucas a former chair of the Community Board Executive has been selected as The Opportunities Party (TOP) candidate. She joins the Labour Party's Amanda Clinton-Gohdes, a former New Plymouth District councillor, and sitting MP David MacLeod (National), who before entering Parliament was chair of the Taranaki Regional Council. Sarah served a term on the Inglewood Community Board before having a tilt at both the Kohanga Moa Ward for the New Plymouth District Council which she missed out on narrowly and the mayoralty where she finished third.

"I finished third in a field of nine candidates where there was only one woman, me, and I finished just behind David Publitz who was the



**Sarah Lucas of The Opportunities Party (TOPS) who is standing for election in the New Plymouth electorate.**

deputy mayor," she says. In her time on the Inglewood Community Board she was elected to represent the community boards on Local Government New Zealand and was chair of the Community Board Executive.

She recalls attending the 2024 Local Government New Zealand Conference. "I was the first speaker after Christopher Luxon when he gave his Back-to-Basics speech where he criticised all of local government. I had the opportunity to bring

the room back." So what are her feelings on the state of local government? "Amalgamation will and must occur, but right now it's being done on top of our community," she says. "I believe that reform should be from the ground up. Communities know best and communities are their own experts, and locals know best." She says she is a believer in devolving to communities. "I do support amalgamation for centralization of shared services, payroll, HR etc but we can also create more direct democracy. I'd support more community boards, but with teeth, with real decision-making power, by locals for locals. It's time to take decision making closer to the people. In fact, this was my work at national level for three years. I absolutely loved my time in local government and I'm acutely aware of how policy

can help people live a good life." She says she had never previously had any involvement with party politics. "Like many I was disillusioned with the state of politics and a little disillusioned with democracy. When I was shouldered for the Opportunities Party my first reaction was one of excitement. I had been following the Opportunities Party for years. To me the appeal is that they are an

evidence-based party and not grounded in ideology." She defines herself as a "pragmatic progressive." "It's fundamental that New Zealanders can make good decisions and be able to own their own homes and to swim in rivers. I don't think it's acceptable for living standards to drop for the next generation." "I have my own small business in Inglewood. I have three teenage boys, and they are the reason why I get out of bed every morning."

## Worsening groundwater pollution shows our longterm water problems.

Over a third of monitored groundwaters saw a rise in nitrate levels in the last two decades, likely because of human activities such as farming and wastewater.

That's one of the findings from Our Freshwater 2026, the latest three-yearly report assessing the state of our rivers, lakes, wetlands, groundwater, and glaciers.

It focuses on groundwater as a signal of long-term problems with our freshwater, as pollution that reaches groundwater can take years to decades to flush out. Groundwater supplies drinking water to nearly half the population, and feeds about 80% of everyday flow in most rivers.

Nicholas Ling, Associate Professor in Biodiversity and Ecology, University of Waikato, comments:


"Today's release of the latest report on the state of our freshwater makes for sobering reading. While there are some hopeful signs of small improvements in

some measured outcomes, such as a general decline in phosphorus in rivers, most parameters show either little to no improvement or a continuing worsening of conditions.

"Of particular concern is continued significant deterioration in the state of our lakes, wetlands and groundwaters. Any slight improvements in the nutrient status of rivers does not yet translate to improvements in ecological conditions, with more than half of all river length indicating conditions of moderate to severe organic pollution. Nearly two thirds of all our lakes are in poor health with little signs of improvement, and groundwaters, upon which a large proportion of the population rely on for drinking water, show increasing pollution by nitrogen, pathogens and emerging organic contaminants such as pesticides and pharmaceuticals.

"Nearly half of all rivers and most lakes are unsafe for swimming at times due to either faecal pathogens or toxic algae. Although wetlands today constitute less than 10% of their pre-human extent they continue to decline, with nearly 7,000 hectares lost in the past 30 years. While the physical habitat condition of much of our rivers is assessed as good, that does not translate to a healthy ecological condition. Nearly half of our river network is now inaccessible to migratory fish, and 89% of our indigenous fish species and 43% of indigenous plants are now either threatened with extinction or at risk. Our treatment of wastewater remains a major threat to the state of our freshwaters with most treatment plants either incapable of or inadequately removing pollutants such as pesticides and pharmaceuticals. Exotic invasive species, primarily fish and plants, continue to

spread and contribute to loss of indigenous biodiversity and declines in water quality. "While the report also makes clear the potential threat posed by climate change on the future condition of our freshwater ecosystems, we must acknowledge that the current dire state is due to our parlous historical and ongoing land use management, upon which the changing climate will only add to our woes."



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# Endurance - and the power of the human mind and body

Humans have long had a strange gift for endurance. There is the old Greek story of Pheidippides, the legendary messenger linked with the origins of the marathon, who is said to have covered extraordinary distances to deliver urgent news. Whether for survival, duty, or personal challenge, people have been testing the limits of pain and endurance for thousands of years.

an Ōpunake couple who recently took on one of New Zealand's toughest trail races. What made it even more remarkable was the powerful story behind it. Most of us think we are doing fairly well if we get through the day without a sore back, a dodgy knee, or needing a quiet sit-down with a cup of tea.

Then there are people like Bob Scott, better known to many as 'Bob the Plumber'. Bob, 44, recently



RICHARD HALL

completed the 62km Ring of Fire ultra marathon, one of Aotearoa's toughest trail events, finishing fifth overall and second in the men's 40 to 49 age group. His partner, Anita Powell, who many locals will know through her own business - Flex Massage & Fitness, also had an outstanding race, finishing third in the women's event.

That would already be impressive enough. But Bob's run carries an extra level of grit, because in June 2024 he underwent an eight-hour major hip operation to completely rebuild and correct the shape and position of his hip socket.

In plain terms, this was no small procedure and no quick bounce-back. Yet less than two years later, he was out there tackling 62 kilometres of trail, hills, weather, fatigue, and the sort of deep discomfort most people spend their lives sensibly avoiding.

Bob is not someone who has been running long distances since school. He only started training seriously in 2021. He is not in a running club. In fact, his path into ultra marathons began through Anita, who was already doing running events when they met. She asked whether he wanted to join her on a 50km trail run in 2022.

As tempting as that sort of offer may sound, I suspect quite a few men would suddenly remember they had to wash the dog, mow the lawns, or reorganise the shed. Not Bob. He said yes, and it turned out to be the beginning of a whole new challenge.

Since then, he has completed seven ultra marathons, including two Ring of Fire events. Asked why he does them, Bob gives an answer that is both slightly alarming and wonderfully honest. He

says he loves "building and growing my relationship with pain and learning how to suffer."

That may not be everyone's idea of a healthy weekend pastime, but it does get to the heart of what ultra marathons are about. An ultramarathon is any race longer than the standard marathon distance of 42.2km. It is not simply a matter of running further. It becomes a test of patience, discipline, pacing, mindset, and the ability to keep going when your body starts asking some fairly serious questions.

And that is where Bob's story becomes about more than just sport.

Pain is often the brain's way of trying to protect us. It is an alarm system, a warning sign, and a signal telling us to pay attention. Most of the time, that is useful. But human beings are also remarkably adaptable. We can recover from serious setbacks. We can train both body and mind. We can learn the difference between injury and effort, between damage and discomfort, and between what truly needs rest and what can still move forward.

That does not mean pain is imaginary. It means the brain and body are always working together, trying to keep us safe. With the right care, guidance, and recovery, people are often capable of far more than they first believe.

Bob's return to racing was anything but glamorous. After his operation in June 2024, he could not walk without assistance for 15 weeks. It was also a year before he was able to run again, during which he lost "100 percent" of his fitness.

For a sole operator in the plumbing trade, the impact was not only physical. It hit his livelihood too. His plumbing business was effectively shut down for six months, which, as anyone self-employed will understand, is a serious blow. Recovery did not just mean healing and exercise. It also meant coping with the pressure that comes when work stops and the bills do not.

That part of the story will ring true for many readers.

Serious injury or surgery is never just about the body. It affects confidence, routine, finances, identity, and the ordinary business of everyday life.

At six months after surgery, Bob began slowly training again with the help of a running physiotherapist. He followed the rehab plan, in his words, "to the letter." That may not sound very exciting, but it was likely the most important part of the entire comeback. There were no shortcuts, no rushing, and no pretending he was bulletproof. Just steady, disciplined work.

When he lined up for the 2026 Ring of Fire, he still did not know whether he would be able to complete another ultra post-surgery. Then he went out and did exactly that.

Bob's review of the experience is refreshingly brief. Afterwards, he says with a smile that he felt "broken."

That, it must be said, sounds like a very honest summary of running 62 kilometres.

Anita's result deserves plenty of attention too. As a local physical and fitness specialist, she understands what the body is capable of, but understanding it and racing it are two different things. Her third placing in the women's event shows she is not just supporting from the sidelines. She is right in the thick of it herself.

Together, they make quite a team. While some couples unwind by watching television, Bob and Anita

appear to prefer hills, mud, effort, and distances that make the rest of us wince just reading about them.

Bob's advice to anyone facing surgery or rehabilitation is clear and direct. Listen to your surgeon. Do your physio properly. Do not cut corners. His view is blunt but hard to fault: if you are not prepared to do the recovery properly, you are only letting yourself down.

And the two of them are not done yet. Next on their list is the Kepler Challenge, another 60km ultra with serious climbing, and beyond that they have ambitions to run or race all of New Zealand's Great Walks.

So what does all this tell us?

Perhaps that the human body is tougher than we think. Perhaps that the mind is stronger too. Perhaps that recovery, when done properly, can be extraordinary.

Or perhaps it simply reminds us that in Taranaki there are still people who approach life in a very practical way. When faced with major surgery, they do the work, rebuild carefully, get back on their feet, and before long are charging through the hills again.

Most of us would call that remarkable.

Bob and Anita probably just call it 'getting on with it'.

Richard Hall,  
Ōpunake

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# Ōpunakē Walking Group steps up to purchase community artwork

Rain, hail or shine, the Ōpunakē Walking Group keeps moving.

Known by its fitting motto, 'Rural & Tough,' the informal local group heads out every Tuesday at 10am from the Club Hotel corner for a walk of about 6km. There are no fees, no formal club structure, and, in a rule many will smile at, no phones to be used on the walk. For around an hour and 15 minutes, members are encouraged to leave the digital world behind and simply enjoy good company, fresh air, and conversation.

That sense of connection is a big part of what keeps people coming back.

Led by Margaret Mullin, the group now has around



**Margaret Mullin and Richard Hall.**

30 members, including four men, and new walkers are warmly welcomed. Members say friendships form quickly,

with community spirit at the heart of the group. Originally formed in Te Kiri in 2008, the walkers shifted their base

to Ōpunakē about 10 years ago and have continued ever since, building not just fitness, but companionship and belonging.

Now the group has done something else for the community as well.

The Ōpunake Walking Group recently raised \$200 towards the purchase of 'Age Is Just A Number', a piece of artwork by Taranaki artist Paul Rangiwahia, created as part of an Age Concern initiative to promote positive ageing. Richard Hall of Mind Support Ōpunake contributed the remaining amount needed so the artwork could be purchased for the town. The piece now has a new home in the waiting room at the Ōpunakē

Medical Centre, where locals can both view it and take time to read it.

The artwork was commissioned through an Age Concern Taranaki project backed by Age Concern New Zealand's Innovation Fund. Its purpose is to challenge the idea that ageing is only about decline and instead present it as a stage of life that can still hold purpose, connection, wellbeing, and optimism. The finished work contains 46 simple insights designed to encourage better health, stronger relationships, mindfulness, and a more fulfilling life. Age Concern

says the project is part of a wider effort to reshape the national conversation around ageing, from limitation to empowerment.

In many ways, that message matches the walking group itself.

Week after week, the members are proving that community, movement, and friendship do not need to be complicated. Sometimes they just begin with turning up, stepping out, and walking together.

New walkers are welcome every Tuesday at 10am from the Club Hotel corner.

*Richard Hall.*

# Volunteers needed for driving programme

South Taranaki Blue Light is inviting the Coastal Taranaki community to join them in making a real difference through their driver licensing programme.

The Blue Light Te Ara Tika Driver Licensing Programme (BLTAT) has been operating in Taranaki since 2019, proudly supporting more than 350 young people to gain a licence and open the door to better opportunities. Now that the programme is running in Ōpunakē, Blue Light is looking for enthusiastic volunteers to be part of this positive journey.

In 2025, Ōpunakē High School's Liz Gasson reached out to South Taranaki Blue Light to help her Gateway students with their driver licensing progressions.

Liz says many of the students were ready to take their next steps beyond school, and gaining a driver's licence was key to boosting their confidence, employability and independence.

"I was very aware of Blue Light's driver licensing programme and they were already actively supporting our students through other programmes."

South Taranaki Blue

Light Coordinator, Leanne Richards says that Blue Light had long wanted to deliver driver licensing to Ōpunakē, but getting students from the coast to Hāwera for driving lessons was problematic, even more so now with the increased cost of fuel.

"Removing barriers for young people is key to what we do, and the lack of a driver's licence is a significant barrier for any young person living in coastal Taranaki, so in the end we had to take the plunge and we managed to relocate a vehicle to help make it happen."

Young people who are referred to the programme are supported by Police and Blue Light staff who guide them through preparing for the learner's licence test.

"We have helped 27 Ōpunakē students achieve their learner's licence in the last year and seven have already progressed to achieve their restricted. Professional driving instructors are currently taking our learner drivers for their initial driver training, but now we're seeking more volunteers to help them get valuable supervised driving hours and keep their momentum going," says

Leanne. The vehicle and fuel are provided by the programme, and community volunteers - known as Driver Navigators - help by supervising driving practise; usually for one hour per week for up to six months while the young person is on their learner's licence. Volunteers receive initial training to help them understand what is required to help prepare a young person for the restricted test, so that they too can feel confident and supported.

"What our volunteers provide is similar to having family members supporting practice between professional lessons. A lot of what our young people need to know can still be learnt driving in Ōpunakē, but they need to be able to get their driving hours up and professional instructors can take them for their initial drives in Hāwera," says Leanne.

"We already have a passionate and long-standing volunteer base in Stratford, Hāwera and Waitara. The majority say the experience is incredibly rewarding - the connections they make, their pride in seeing our young people succeed and

the joy of strengthening their community all keep them coming back year after year."

"We are hoping we can achieve the same on the coast. If you're keen to be part of it, we'd love to hear from you."

Contact Leanne Richards on 027 221 7769 or [leanne@bluelight.co.nz](mailto:leanne@bluelight.co.nz) to learn more or register your interest.

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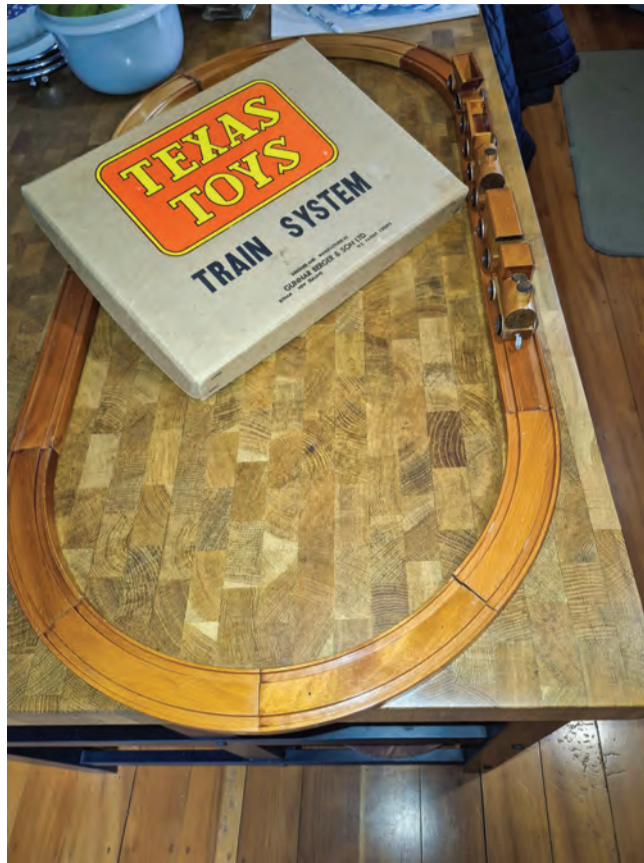
# A Whizz with wood

Inventive toymaker Gunnar Berger came to Eltham on a whim over whey. In 1950, the Swede was looking for a fresh start after falling out with management at Milk Central dairy company in Stockholm. The trigger came the following year, via a Swedish newspaper article about whey being dumped into streams around Eltham in New Zealand.

from whey, the industrial chemist and engineer felt an urge to visit the small central Taranaki town with the idea of setting up a lactose factory there. "After having worked hard for the Milk Central for 17 years I was very aware of the drastic step out in the unknown I was taking" he says in his unpublished autobiography.

Knowing lactose (milk sugar) could be extracted

Within weeks, Gunnar and a financier, Danish



Texas Toys were a big hit with young and old.

millionaire Borup Jorgensen, were standing in the Eltham Pipe Band Hall talking to 300 farmers about the factory proposal. "I held my first speech in English in that hall, and voting for and against my proposal followed" says Gunnar, who learnt the language by reading second-hand novels written in English. The farmers, Eltham Dairy Factory shareholders, voted

in favour of the lactose plan. By August, the Berger family had left for New Zealand. At Gunnar's side were his wife, Margit Leijonflycht (called Flychten), daughter Lena (8) and son Soren (7). Moving from Solna, on the outskirts of Stockholm, to a tiny town in a small country on the other side of the world, was a massive change and one Flychten found it difficult to come to terms with. "It's not an easy thing to have to learn a new language and be away from all extended family" Lena says.

But she and Soren did cope. "As children it was easier to be adaptable" she says. "It seemed OK. Dad sort of described it to us as being the Wild West before we came." The reality was far more civilised. "Actually, Eltham in 1951, I must say, was a much more go-ahead place than what it is now" Lena says in 2004.

Pipe-smoking, bespectacled Gunnar was

one of those leading the way in the mid-1900s. To set up the lactose operation, he called on the expertise of fellow Swedes Birger Nordmark (a chemist) and Erik Persson (a mechanical engineer), plus Eltham men Les McGonagle and Gordon Commerer. They converted an unused part of the Eltham Dairy Factory and installed stainless steel equipment. "Long hours were necessary - at least 12 hours (and) often 16 hours a day for me and the mechanic" Gunnar writes.

In November 1952, the first shipment of 10,000 kilograms of lactose was exported to India. They was transported to the factory in one of the first tankers used in New Zealand's dairy industry. In the following years, the annual sugar milk production was about 500,000kg. The same year India bought the first lot of lactose, Kerstin Berger was born.

Two years later, Peter Berger came into the world - and a new home. "During 1954 we built our dream house just as we wanted it, from our own drawings" Gunnar writes. Lena believes it was the first Eltham home with a basement.

Three years later, Gunnar resigned from the factory because his plan for a second evaporator was vetoed. Lena says her father always needed new challenges. "I think Dad actually found he got more out of actually setting up things. Once things were up and running and it was just production, which was boring..."

In 1958, the operation was bought and closed down by the Kāpuni Lactose Plant.

By then Gunnar had turned to toys. After leaving school at 14, he worked in an engineering workshop where he learnt to use a metal lathe and other equipment. He also had toy-making experience, stemming from a passion he shared with his elder brother, Sven. Gunnar and Sven loved Meccano and even cast their own pieces to expand their construction sets. "It became an addiction and, in the end, when I had

been working for two years and Sven was studying, Kellin (our mother) made us give it away" Gunnar writes.

By this time, it was 1924 and Gunnar, Sven, sister Kerstin and their mother were living in a ground floor flat in the southern city of Lund and renting spare rooms to university students.

And they were all still reeling from tragedy. "In 1923 our whole world collapsed" Gunnar writes. "Suddenly one day Dad was missing. For several days we were all terrified. On the third day, my seven-year-old sister, Kerstin, suddenly said 'Dad could possibly be out at our summer house'."

He was - but it was too late. Erik Berger had taken his own life. He was 39 years old. That was not the only such tragedy in Gunnar's life. The other one happened during the Eltham years. But first, the toys.

During his last months at the lactose factory, the inventive Swede began shaping wood to make his own Meccano-type construction sets. With his sets came words of wisdom: "Please be careful not to spoil your children's feelings of achievement and pride by too many suggestions of improvements to their simple models, which, to them, are perfect."

Gunnar dreamed up, designed and made by a whole range of toys, including a covered wagon on which he wrote the word Texas. "So, that's how the name Texas Toys came about" Lena says.

The business began in the basement of the Glenworth Street home. To afford the fit-out, Gunnar and Flychten cancelled their Swedish retirement insurance and received £2000. With that, they bought tools and machinery to make the toys and spent £400 on a 1939 Chevrolet.

Their two oldest children left school to work in the toy factory, a move Gunnar regretted later in life. "Both

Continued page 13.

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# A Whizz with wood

Continued from page 12.

Lena and Soren sacrificed their education in order to help get our venture going." The teenagers continued their schooling by correspondence. For Soren, especially, this was difficult. "But traditional education is not everything and Soren is now a well-known wood turner in Christchurch, who spends New Zealand winters in the USA doing workshops and lecturing in wood turning" Lena says.

Gunnar was also a whizz with wood - and a man with never-ending ideas. Some people, like Eltham resident Don Drabble, believe Gunnar was a bona-fide genius. "Absolutely, without a doubt. We will never see the likes of Gunnar Berger here again. He was an intense fella."

The Texas Toys factory began in the basement of the Berger home on Collingwood Street. The small business tapped into educational needs and by 1961 was flying along.

That same year, Lena was ready for a career change, with a position secured at a Wellington laboratory. While all appeared to be going well for the Bergers, underlying health problems were unsettling the family. From a young age, Kerstin began to display psychological problems and was difficult at home and school. And Flychten was struggling. As well as living in a foreign land, she was still suffering the long-term effects of tuberculosis, an illness she had battled and beaten in Sweden. However, severe infection can result in permanent organ damage and led to depression.

The family decided Flychten would benefit from a week's holiday with a Swedish friend in Kaitaia before Lena went away. "... she enjoyed the stay and wrote positive letters from there" Gunnar says. On the way home, Flychten had an overnight stay in Auckland. She died in her hotel room from an overdose of pills. "It was a catastrophe for us all" Gunnar writes. Lena had to cancel her Wellington

job and Kerstin went to live at Kimberley Hospital & Training School. "For Peter, losing his mother at seven was very difficult" Lena says.

In his memoirs, Gunnar does not dwell on his Flychten's death. "Life had to go on, with long hours of work and planning" he writes. He then moves on to talk about Texas Toys' success in selling to schools, beginning with Eltham Primary. Products included wooden puzzles, fraction trays, number sets, one-ten-hundred sets, abacus and line rulers for the bright-coloured Cuisenaire rods, used by many Kiwi kids to learn maths.

"A big mail-order trade in teaching aids resulted and we gradually had contact with hundreds of New Zealand schools, leading to exports of teaching aids to Australia and later Sweden" Gunnar writes.

In 1962, the Bergers bought the old power pole factory in Bridge Street. They renovated the run-down building and made it the new home of Texas Toys. The following year, Lena got a job in the laboratory at a New Plymouth chemical factory. In 1966, she went back to Sweden, where she got a job with the State Health Laboratory analysing fish for mercury pollution.

In 1967, she came home and again decided to join the family business. Four years later, the factory was on the move again. Its last premises were in the old Mountain Road Dairy Factory, bought for \$3750. The old pole factory was sold to the Eltham Rifle Club.

The new site was spacious, with room for a shop. "The shop on the main road made a big difference to our economy" Gunnar says. "Lots of tourists passed daily."

While overseas visitors came to Texas Toys, the company also made a splash offshore. The Berger brainteasers were sold in Sweden and Australia, but the big orders came from the United States.

After a visit to the US in

1972 for meetings with a Los Angeles importer, a contract was signed for a minimum of 800 construction sets a year. Texas Toys geared up for the operation, employing staff and working full tilt. After 700 sets had been delivered, the importer wrote and asked to delay the next shipment because he had too many sets in stock.

Gunnar, a decisive man, wasn't happy about being mucked around. "With eight people on the payroll and wholly concentrated on the construction set production, it was unthinkable for me to delay shipments." After a hasty meeting, he decided to drop the contract and cut down staff, keeping enough to fulfil the New Zealand demand.

Lena took over the business in 1973, with Roger Loveridge as her right-hand man. "The next ten years under Lena's management was a pleasant, efficient and relatively profitable period" Gunnar writes.

But at the end of that decade, the business began to wind down. "Postage charges went up, petrol prices went up and consequently our sales started to slide and then the Rubik's Cube arrived" he says. Texas Toys closed in September 1983.

After a world trip in 1987 - Gunnar's fifth such tour - he settled down to old age and new goals. First, he made a tool-grinder and a pantograph, then turned to research, reading hundreds of library books. "I now had all the necessary machine tools to attack a dream I had for a long time - to make from scratch a four-cylinder motor to run first on petrol and later convert to hydrogen gas."

Gunnar spent years on his design, but a foundry in New Plymouth wasn't able to manage a perfect cast of the motor head. Disillusioned, the inventor took all his patterns home to Eltham.

In 1993, at the age of 81, Gunnar made himself a wood lathe specifically to turn spheres. His first creation was a table lamp in the shape of a big round ball.

"The fascination for me of cutting out a perfect sphere from a rough material still remains" he says.

This man's mind was not limited to raw materials and tools - it looked way beyond the known. "Through the years I have read a lot about the solar system and as a chemical engineer I have never been able to accept the astronomers' theories regarding the formation of the planet system - lumps of debris and 'dust' from disintegrated bodies in the universe colliding to form planets" he writes. "It seems to me to be a theory hundreds of years old and never properly criticised."

So, in his Eltham home, Gunnar revised the theory of the universe. "Building on the fact that everything in the universe is built up from the smallest atom, the hydrogen atom, I have made my own theory of the formation of the planets and made a lot of calculations."

The young man who once quit a job because his Milk Central boss didn't have time to read his report on planned improvements for the company, had mellowed considerably in his twilight years. In his memoirs, Gunnar finishes on a philosophical note. "In the story of anybody's life, the flow of happenings, successes and disasters is naturally the result of millions of decisions and circumstances, too many to analyse. Among all these there always stand out decisions and crossroads that can be defined as having

major influence on the end result."

The major decision of his life was coming to New Zealand: "A big step indeed that influenced the whole of family for all future." Gunnar Berger died on 24 November 2000, aged 88. Don Drabble spoke at his funeral: "We have lost a man of great character, of extraordinary insight, ever

keen to seek improved ways and means of observing the order of things and constructing better, more efficient machines." And toys...

You can see one of Gunner precision wood pieces at Cecelia's on Tasman. 89 Tasman Street Opunake.



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# Speech contest won by Evita Morellon

Evita Morellon, of Te Paepae O Aotea College, Hawera has been chosen as one (of 2) Taranaki representatives (Luke Strohmeier of Francis Douglas Memorial College was the other). The speech theme was *Listening to understand* (*Whakarongo Kia Marama*). This statement is fundamental to creating an environment where people can foster respect and trust across racial and ethnic lines.

Without further ado, here is Evita's excellent speech:

## Race Unity Speech 2026—Evita Morellon – Y13 Te Paepae O Aotea College - Hawera

Why must we neglect to hear the voices of our people. Why must we neglect to listen to the voices of children crying out for a

better future, the voices of immigrants who came here with so little, the voices of the oppressed and discriminated who so desperately yearn for change. Their voices are loud. The issues they face are clear. Yet we refuse to listen. Their cries go unheard, lost in the sea of chaos and noise that is our world. Those who refuse to listen begin to hate. They hate because they do not know our stories, who we are. And from hate, grows racism.

Before we can truly listen to others, we must understand ourselves; our story, our identity, and our people. Because, when we understand who we are, we can begin to understand others. Listen to the stories held in your heart. We may not all be from Aotearoa. But Aotearoa has become a



Evita Morellon is awarded her regional representative certificate after an outstanding speech in Hawera. She will soon be heading to Auckland for the Race Unity semi-final.

part of each and every one of our stories. It is our home.

The stories we hold inside our hearts, the heritage and ancestry we carry are a part of us, as well as the places we live and things we experience. We each have our own, unique stories. And this is mine. Me llamo Evita Morellon, y soy un inmigrante de los Estados Unidos. Soy de Mexico, y de los Estados Unidos. Cuando era una nina, yo tenia confusion entre mis dos culturas y identidad. Me encontraba atrapado entre dos culturas, ninguna de las cuales me aceptaba completamente. Pero, yo escuche. Escuche de los cuentos familiares de mi Abuelita, y tambien, a los cuentos de mi familia en America. Empecé a entender a mí mismo, y las historias que llevaba, la cultura que crecio en, el orgullo que tengo de mi patria, y que corrio en mi sangre.

My name is Evita Morellon,

and I am an immigrant from the United States. I am Mexican, and American. Growing up, I had a lot confusion as to who I was, and what story I carried. I was caught between two cultures, two identities, neither of which accepted me completely. I was considered too Mexican for the US. But too American for Mexico. Through this conflict, I began to listen. I listened to the stories my Abuelita told me about her town in Chiapas, and the stories my American side of the family shared about our heritage. I listened to the voices of my people, who experienced the same conflict as I. When I listened, I understood. I understood that though my cultures are caught at crossroads, never intersecting, I am the bridge that brings my families, my cultures, and my people together. I began to understand myself, and the stories I carried with me, the cultures I was raised in, and the legacy and pride

that ran through my blood. And I understood, through listening to my family, my people, and my heart.

No hay peor sordo que el que no quiere oir. "There is none so deaf as those who will not hear". My first grade teacher, who scolded me for speaking Spanish to my friend in class did not listen. She did not understand. She did not know that Spanish was my first language, and I wasn't yet fully comfortable speaking in English. And from that lack of understanding came judgement and prejudice. She generalized and stereotyped because of what she saw, and a language she heard yet didn't understand. This was in the US. Yet, Aotearoa has treated me no differently. That man in the supermarket, who told my family "go back to your country" after he heard us speaking spanish, did not listen. He saw our brown skin, and heard fragments of a foreign language, and did not understand. He did not know our story. He did not know the sacrifices we made to come to Aotearoa, and the risks we faced going back home. And from his lack of understanding, unfair judgement and racism emerged.

My stories and experiences are not isolated. They reflect the reality of Aotearoa. Our nation prides itself on being a multicultural society. But time and time again, teachers, friends, leaders in the community tell me that New Zealand is a bicultural society, and it will stay that way, always. On paper, New Zealand may be considered bicultural. Te Tiriti o Waitangi, the very founding document of our nation says so itself. The entirety of Te Tiriti refers to "nga Rangatira", and "te Kuini o Ingarani", the chiefs and British Crown. But, I'd like to ask, what about the rest of us? Te Tiriti established a partnership between Māori and the Crown. It created a bicultural foundation. Yet today, Aotearoa is

undeniably multicultural, and that foundation must grow to reflect all who call this land home. Asian, Pasifika, African, Middle Eastern, Latin American. New Zealand is home to us too.

We may be a minority. But that doesn't make us insignificant. Prejudice and xenophobia make immigrants feel small and invisible. Claims that we 'take jobs' or don't belong ignore the contributions we make in our communities. Racist jokes that ridicule our people and our cultures degrade us. The internal conflict we hold in our hearts every day make us question if coming to Aotearoa was the right choice. We like to think of New Zealand as being inclusive. Free of discrimination and stereotypes. Yet the true issues that are rooted into New Zealand culture since colonization in Aotearoa began are swept under the rug, concealed, and never spoken about.

But, it is felt. It is felt by the diverse peoples of this nation. It is felt by the immigrants and refugees. It is felt by Maori, tangata whenua. Yet it is never spoken about. We must begin acknowledging these issues and normalising conversations around them. From Parliament, to local district councils, to around the dinner table, discussions around race relations need to start happening. Until we start having conversations, and listening to what each and every one of us has to say, we will never solve the issue of racism.

As humans, we must stop hating each other. We must end these prejudices and stereotypes. We must begin to accept one another with open arms. We are all human. No matter your size, shape, color, culture, religion,

*Continued on next page*

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# Speech contest won by Evita Morellon

*Continued from previous page*

abilities, we are all human. And our humanity connects us. No race is superior. No culture is superior. We

can't keep creating these invisible borders that divide us. Hatred fuels racism. But something stronger exists. Aroha. Because the only thing more powerful than hate is love.

I am Mexican American, and i am proud of my identity. Yet, I feel afraid to share my culture, afraid of the racism and hate that may follow. And I know I am not the only one. It is a different

type of pain. It is the pain of feeling silenced. Society silences us. Assimilation silences us. The racist ideas that this country was built on silence us. But we must fight back, by telling our

stories, sharing our cultures, and being our own, authentic selves, unapologetically. El que calle, otorga. Silence is consent. And we will not stay silent. We will not give racism our consent. We are

here. Our voices are loud.

The issues we face are clear. And we will be listened to. Seguimos Aqui.

# Keep an eye out and ear open for kiwi

New Zealanders heading out naturing into the country's native forests are being urged to keep their senses tuned for the signs and sounds of our iconic national bird – the kiwi.

After the surprise discovery of a western brown kiwi in the Pureora Forest Park's Waipapa Block in March, DOC has echoed the Save The Kiwi call to action encouraging human Kiwis to report the signs of their feathered namesakes.

The message to report kiwi comes during Conservation Week 2026, when people are being encouraged to make small actions to support nature.

Tineke Joustra, Save the Kiwi Operations Manager, says the organisation's push for people to report kiwi signs or sightings coincides with a seasonal increase in the birds' calling activity.

"Kiwi call throughout the year, but more over winter," Tineke says. The male call is shrill and has eight to 25 repetitions, while the female call is more guttural and has 10-20 repetitions."

Tineke says there are several clear indicators of kiwi presence in forested areas, including their distinctive three-toed footprints in puddles and soil or mud, the holes created by their long probing beaks, and the occasional discovery of their hair-like



**Kiwi in a burrow.**

feathers.

"Kiwi are nocturnal, so daytime sightings are rare in the North Island. That's why these signs are so important – they help us understand where kiwi are, even when we don't see them"

We would like to encourage everyone to help build a greater picture of the distribution and location of the birds by submitting observations (with photos and videos) through [savethekiwi.nz/report-a-kiwi/](http://savethekiwi.nz/report-a-kiwi/), Tineke says.

DOC's Pureora Forest Programme Lead Tama Blackburn says the capturing on camera of the western brown at Waipapa reflected the excitement the national bird can still create.

"Our DOC whānau and local conservation contributors were thrilled to

discover this kiwi had been spotted on the camera – and that can be a shared feeling among people heading out into the ngahere if they see signs of kiwi."

Tama says the Pureora Forest is a biodiversity hotspot popular with a range of recreational users, including cyclists on The Timber Trail, and more adventurous trampers. At this time of year – The Roar-the deer hunting community heads into the forest in numbers.

"If we can get those visitors reporting signs or calls from kiwi in this beautiful forest, that'll help our friends at Save The Kiwi with their mahi, and also give us a greater understanding of the outcomes achieved through the efforts of our staff, iwi partners and volunteers

working to protect these taonga manu.

"Reporting a kiwi sighting is one small action contributing to a bigger conservation kaupapa."



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# Licorice has something for everybody

As of April 1, the new owners of Licorice are Sarndra and Gus Wallis. It's early days, but everything is off to a positive start. "It's going great. It's great fun including meeting the community." The recent opening went down well with whanau and friends enjoying a few drinks and nibbles as they explored the merchandise. Sarndra was heartened by the many positive comments of the "very impressed" local populace.

Sarndra, who was born and bred in New Plymouth, recalls her parent's business enterprises, such as Ross Clarke her father's butcher shop in Westown and her



Licorice has an inviting atmosphere.

Sarndra has many interests and much of the merchandise is a reflection of this. She is a keen reader (especially autobiographies, non-fiction, self-help and cooking books) and the attractive book display in the shop is wide-ranging. There are art books such as *Self Portrait of a Paua* by well-known artist Margaret Scott, *Home is an Island* by Neville Peat and *Rakiura: The Wild Landscape* by Rob Brown, as well as some intriguing cooking books.

Here is a selection of some of the merchandise available at Licorice:

There is a good selection of clothing, as well as hats, gloves, bags, belts and wallets. A well-appointed changing room is provided for customer wanting to try clothes on for size.

There are plenty of homeware items, such as ornate cups and saucers, tumblers, bio-napkins and fragrant soy candles to enhance the atmosphere.

Some aesthetically eye-catching art is on display such as Julie Moore's work



Licorice at 84 Tasman Street, Opunake.

(acrylic and pastel) entitled *Gabrielle*.

For the youngsters there are toys, slimey creepy things and balls, as well as a great selection of sweets – including licorice (of course).

With winter approaching the wood baskets would be an appropriate purchase.

And there is so much more!

Licorice is open 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday and 9am to 4pm Saturday and Sunday. Make sure you find time to visit this superb store where friendly service complements a wide range of quality merchandise, accompanied by a well-lit vibrant atmosphere.

Pauline Clarke her mother working in a New Plymouth bag shop. Now it is her turn to have a successful business.

Licorice, which is located at 84 Tasman Street, Opunake has a huge selection of quality merchandise on offer – something of interest to everyone.

Now living locally, Sarndra lived in London for many years until Covid struck; meeting her husband Gus Wallis while back home meant that she was destined to stay. However, she brings many good ideas from her time overseas. One worthwhile idea is to have

a suggestion box so local shoppers can share their ideas of what Licorice could possibly supply.

Sarndra is pleased to take over a shop with an excellent range of merchandise and service, but does she have any ideas for change in the future? She explains that she's keen to "keep what we've got" and gradually seek other initiatives.



Sarndra Wallis the new owner (with husband Gus) of Licorice in Opunake.



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# Taranaki businesses call for clarity amid fuel cost pressures

A new rapid survey of Taranaki businesses indicates fuel price increases are placing significant pressure on local enterprises, with many warning that continued uncertainty could lead to job losses, reduced services, and higher prices for consumers.

The survey, conducted by Te Puna Umanga Venture Taranaki and Taranaki Chamber of Commerce, gathered responses of more than 80 local businesses across manufacturing, construction, primary industries, tourism, professional services and transport.

Findings from the survey will be used to inform engagement with Government Ministers and support advocacy for practical, short-term measures.

Key findings include:

- Nearly two-thirds of respondents say fuel costs are significantly higher or threatening business viability
- Almost half say fuel rationing would cause severe disruption to their operations
- More than one in five are uncertain about their medium-term viability if

current conditions continue

- Businesses report that the impact extends well beyond transport, with fuel costs driving increases in supplier pricing, placing pressure on margins, and influencing customer demand.

When asked what would make the biggest difference right now, businesses delivered a consistent message with priority actions identified as:

- Temporary fuel tax and Road User Charge relief, to ease immediate

cost pressures

- Clear information and advance warning about fuel supply and any prioritisation
- Targeted support for freight, primary sector and other fuel-dependent businesses

Many businesses compared the current situation to COVID-era shocks, saying fuel costs are an external crisis beyond the control of individual businesses.

Jennifer Patterson, GM Economic Development at Te Puna Umanga Venture

Taranaki says the findings point to a clear need for coordinated Government action.

“This survey highlights a consistent message from our local businesses, the need for practical, timely, and transparent action to support continuity through a period of heightened cost pressure and uncertainty.”

One survey respondent noted: “Businesses are absorbing costs, delaying investment and cutting back where they can, but there is

only so much they can carry before it flows through to jobs and prices.”

Arun Chaudhari, CEO, Taranaki Chamber of Commerce says, Businesses should take a multi-pronged approach to rising fuel uncertainty, tighten efficiency, build flexibility into pricing, and actively review supply chains to reduce exposure.

“Good business is about not putting all your eggs in one basket. Diversification is no longer optional, whether

it’s transport partners, energy sources, or routes to market, resilience comes from not relying on a single point of failure.”

Chaudhari adds, “We also urge government to accelerate access to alternative energy options while ensuring a pragmatic and accelerated approach to domestic oil and gas development. A balanced forward-looking energy strategy is essential to give businesses the confidence and continuity they need to operate and grow.”

## Kaponga WI

Most of our members braved the weather on April 13 to attend our monthly meeting held at our President’s house in New Plymouth.

The thought of the month was “Count your life by smiles and not tears, count your age by friends and not years.”

Our roll call was “What sport did you or do you play?”. Most of our members gave basketball (now known as netball) a go when they were at school with a couple of members making it into Taranaki rep teams.

President Dene was

presented the silver dish as she had attended a meeting late on daylight saving, even though she turned her clock back the day beforehand.

Dene gave an informative report on the recent STFVI AGM held last month.

Raylene McDonald won the raffle.

Our competition results were: Prettiest Necklace – 1. Rosalie Gibson. 2. Diane West. 3. Jo Ellis. Three Pieces Ginger Crunch - 1. Rosalie Gibson. 2. Jo Ellis. 3. Nan Stokes. One Chrysanthemum. 1. Jo Ellis. 2. Dene Lines. Third place was not given, even

though Carolyn’s rose was lovely it didn’t pass as a Chrysanthemum.

After a lovely shared lunch we were enlightened by Amy Denham from the Salvation Army. We were absolutely amazed by the work that the Salvation Army do within the community. The work is extensive and eye opening, especially as they only have a few paid staff and the rest of the work is provided by volunteers.

Another great day was had.



Jo Ellis Rosalie Gibson thanking Amy Denham from the Salvation Army.

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# St Patrick's Okato celebrating 145 years

On Sunday March 22 a large group of people attended 9.30am Mass at St Patrick's, Okato to celebrate 145 years of the church community and a belated opportunity to celebrate St Patrick's day. We were blessed with a wonderful day, with Mass being celebrated by Fr Tom, joined by many of our families and those parishioners who have since moved from our area. Morning tea and fellowship

followed Mass which was enjoyed by all who attended and followed an Irish theme with decorations and green sweets loved by the children. A celebration cake was cut by Fr Tom and Mrs Kath Julian. Fr Simon and Fr Sobin joined our celebration later in the morning following their other Sunday commitments.

In 1880 the design for a small church in Okato was



St Patricks Church in Okato. Pippa Lawn and Bella Pollard have joined the celebration.

of the building was extended which doubled the seating capacity of the church. Since then, the physical appearance of the church has remained the same and recently was uplifted with an external repaint.

Over the years St Patrick's has been part of the Opunake, New Plymouth and Pungarehu Parishes, returning to the Catholic Parish of New Plymouth - Te Pārihi Katorika ki Ngāmotu in 2015. St Patrick's church has witnessed 145yrs of prayers and tears within the warmth of its rimu walls, with many sermons, weddings, baptisms, first communions, confirmations and funerals, calling the people of Okato and the surrounding area. Currently we celebrate a weekly Vigil Mass on Saturday evenings at 6.00pm. We encourage you to join us, parking is not an issue and there is plenty of seating!

completed by Fr Etienne Chastagnon. Once completed

it was formally opened on 4 May 1881 and dedicated to St Patrick. By March 1886 a larger church had been built and was blessed and opened by Archbishop Redwood. This church still stands today. During the same year a two storied presbytery was opened next to the church to house Marish priests. Okato became the base for a permanent mission for the Taranaki Māori. For several years this was used but closed in 1927. In the early 1940's the Mission was re-opened but in 1947 a fire completely destroyed the Okato presbytery. In 1954 St Patrick's the main body



Father Tom Lawn and Mrs Kath Julian cutting the celebratory cake.

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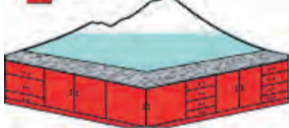
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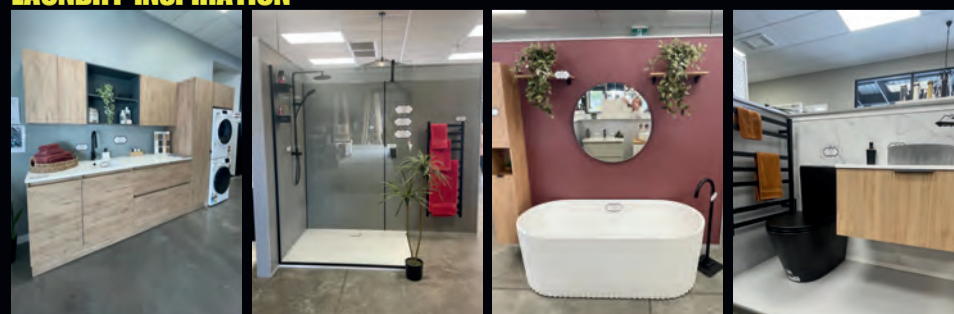
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# Talking Taranaki

April 2026 update



## Improved Taranaki bus network launched

A new era has dawned for public transport and connectivity across Taranaki with the launch of Te Pahi, the improved and updated bus network for the region.

April 7 marked the start of revamped services with Te Pahi buses now sporting their distinctive green livery, the tepahi.govt.nz website live with journey planning and real-time tracking and new routes and timetables operational.

Taranaki Regional Council Chair Craig Williamson says staff, drivers, councillors and bus users have been eagerly awaiting Te Pahi hitting the road.

"The launch marks a major milestone on our journey to improve public transport in our region," says Mr Williamson.

"The network has been designed by the people, for the people and we think it's going to strengthen connectivity in Taranaki, allowing users to easily travel by bus to get to work, school, college, the hospital or to the shops.

"All the improvements come at the same time that there has been a shift away from funding public transport by the government, so it's been a balancing act to provide an updated network within severe funding constraints.

"Having said that, the list of upgrades is impressive. We think Te Pahi is a great first step on the road to creating a modern, fit-for-purpose and easy-to-use public transport service."

The launch follows extensive consultation on what the network should look like with feedback shaping the development of services based on the aspirations of the public.

"With the new website providing lots of user-friendly features like journey planning and real-time tracking and a recognisable and striking brand, the new network has a strong Taranaki identity we can be proud of," adds Mr Williamson.

For updated routes and timetables, head to tepahi.govt.nz

### Network goes green with 11 new e-buses

Te Pahi Taranaki bus network's fleet of electric buses is a win-win for people wanting to go green and switch to a more affordable means of getting around.

The New Plymouth urban fleet now features 11 brand new electric buses, a long-planned but timely switch from diesel power given the recent hike in fuel prices caused by the Iran conflict.

The new e-buses will join an electric bus which has been operating since March 2025 and the reductions in CO<sup>2</sup> with the shift away from diesel will remove the equivalent of 85 cars off the road each year.

In total, the 12 electric buses are set to save around 560 litres of diesel each weekday – that's about 1.51 tonnes of CO<sup>2</sup>.

Transport Engagement Manager Cheryl Gazley says the electric fleet is a huge step towards helping the Council achieve its goal of having a zero-emission public transport network by 2035.

"There has never been a better time to ditch the car and get on the bus, especially as we've launched our improved and streamlined network that's super easy to use," says Ms Gazley.

"With the recent hike in fuel prices, as well as being an eco-friendly form of transport for commuters, shoppers and whānau, switching to the bus is friendly to your wallet too!"

Ms Gazley said at just \$2.50 per journey for adults (with a Bee Card) within the New Plymouth district (from Waitara to Ōākura) or \$6.25 (with Bee Card) from Hāwera to New Plymouth, hopping on a bus is a cost-effective alternative to private cars.

There are also no additional costs for parking when heading into New Plymouth.

Colin Shotter, Tranzit Coachlines Taranaki Manager, says the new electric buses represent a further step in Tranzit's commitment to reducing emissions across its fleet and operating footprint, while acknowledging the leadership shown by Taranaki Regional Council in investing in electric vehicle technology.

"As a New Zealand family owned business, Tranzit is proud to continue its partnership with the Council in delivering public transport services for the region. Council's foresight in investing in electric buses is particularly significant given current economic pressures and rising fuel costs, and it demonstrates a long-term commitment to more sustainable and cost-effective transport for the Taranaki community," says Mr Shotter.

### Key improvements

- Streamlined urban routes – more direct, faster and efficient services.
- Improved hospital access through Westown and Hurdon via Tukapa and David Streets.
- Better Saturday coverage, with Saturday trips between Hāwera–New Plymouth and new Waitara–New Plymouth trips.
- A trial Waitara morning loop operating on weekday mornings during school terms to support access to Waitara schools.
- A new dedicated website – tepahi.govt.nz.
- The new unified Te Pahi brand replaces the old Citylink, Southlink and Connector brands.
- Accessibility in Omata is also being boosted by new bus stops.

### Service changes

- The Ōpunake–New Plymouth middle of the day service reduced from five to two days a week.
- Hāwera to Pātea once a week (no longer extending to Waverley).
- Removal of some 7am services due to low patronage. Evening services from Monday–Wednesday (6.20pm) removed, with Thursday and Friday evening services remaining.
- Minor updates to South Taranaki fare zones to align with the wider network.
- Ōpunake–Hāwera route no longer travels via Kaponga due to low demand.
- Removal of 6am southbound and 5.20pm northbound trips on the service between Hāwera and New Plymouth.

### E-bus fast facts

- There are 11 new e-buses, owned and operated by Tranzit Group and made by Chinese firm CRRC.
- They all have USB ports, so passengers can charge their devices while travelling.
- The buses are air-conditioned for a comfortable ride.
- The large front and rear doors help with a roomy bus feel.
- The vehicles have bike racks meaning passengers have greater access to cycle ways in the region.
- There are two wheelchair bays on each vehicle with an easy access ramp on and off that the driver will assist with.



0800 233 872 | tepahi.govt.nz

### YOUR COUNCILLORS

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- Taranaki Māori Constituency** Bonita Bigham: bonita.bigham@trc.govt.nz (Deputy Chair)

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# Edgar Lawrence Burke of Manaia a victim of World War II

In the early hours of May 22, 1944 Captain Edgar Burke's Lancaster Bomber (ME690 AA-Z) was hit by enemy fire and crashed near a village in Belgium. All seven servicemen on board the aircraft were killed. Evidently, Captain Burke, on this his 20th (and final) mission, took pains to ensure the stricken aeroplane did not crash into the village. The attacker was Kapitan Wolfgram Schemer, a German ace who had been attributed with 64 kills.

The seven airmen, now buried in the Heverlee War Cemetery, Leuven, Vlaams-Brabant, Belgium are:

F/S Edgar Lawrence Burke, pilot RNZAF NZ 417016

F/O John Wallace Downing, Navigator RAFVR 136351

Sgt Frank Albert Page, Air bomber RAAFAUS 409481

Sgt Alan Stevens Bromley, Wireless Operator RAFVR 1247614

Sgt Walter Pickering, Flight Engineer RAFVR 1434290

Sgt James Hery Cooper, Mid Upper Gunner RAFVR 1308375

Sgt Alfred Newnham Rear Gunner

The men were members of the 75 Squadron RNZAF (1916-1990) and their bombing target was the city of Dortmund when they left from RAF Mepal, Cambridgeshire at 22:49 on May 22, 1944 along with 360 other Lancasters and 14



Captain Edgar Lawrence Burke of Manaia

Mosquitos.

Captain Edgar Burke was just 26 when he died. Born March 10, 1918, he spent his formative years on the family dairy farm on Rama Road, Manaia. The farm was the second one on the left when heading east towards Taranaki Maunga.

His parents were Tillie May and Charles Augustine Burke (Known as Charlie). Edgar was the youngest of 8 children, two boys and 6 girls.

Local identity John Washer recalls his father Charlie sharing that he rode a horse in the company of Edgar on their way to Manaia School where they were probably in the same class.

Edgar was reputedly good-looking with a very good sense of humour. Because he was employed in farming (an essential service) he was not obliged to go to war and

his mother in particular, was angry that he did enlist. His family never really got over his tragic loss.

Incidentally, in 2006 Jenny Washer, youngest daughter of Charlie Washer bought the Burke farm and farmed it until 2017, when it was sold.

As regards his military training Edgar commenced training on December 20, 1941 at Ohakea Air Base. As early as January 17 1942 he was headed to the United Kingdom.

A local man in the village Peter Lonkes became very interested in the tragedy because it was his uncle who was first to arrive at the crash scene, actually swimming in a nearby canal to reach the shattered plane. He found that there were no survivors so he took possession of the escape map and log book before the German military arrived on the crash scene.

Peter, around 1979, located and dug up pieces of the wrecked Lancaster. Some of these ended up at New Zealand House. Other pieces and the log book are on display at Wigram Air Base. Sadly, Peter died in 2011.

Thanks to the dedication of Margaret Still (nee Burke), Secretary of the UK Friends of 75 (NZ) Squadron Association, and Kevin King who is the reunion chairman, yearly reunions are held, with as many as 30 people participating including daughters, sons, nieces and nephews.

Margaret is the daughter of Maurice Burke, who was one of Charlie and Tillie's sons. Now 84, she lives in London.

Tragically, both Margaret and Kevin both had uncles who were killed while flying with 75 (NZ) Squadron during the second World War.

A special occasion was the dedication of a stained glass at St Joseph's Church in Overpelt, Belgium on May 23 1986, in memory

shared Margaret.

Edgar joined EFTS on April 4 1942. His first sole flight took place on April 22, 1942. He received his Pilot's Badge on September 2, 1942. Promotion was swift because he was assigned the rank of sergeant on November 1942.

Initially he was involved with Stirlings with 1651 HCU and after several postings he joined the 75 (NZ) Squadron. He completed 13 missions on Stirlings before turning to Lancasters, eventually completing seven missions. On January 23, 1944 he was commissioned an officer. By now, he had 608 hours of flying under his belt.

John Washer has a special connection to this sad story as Edgar and John's father Charles Gordon Washer were schoolboy friends in Manaia. Charles joined the 75 (NZ) Squadron after Edgar's death and reached the rank of Flight Lieutenant. He received an official citation in 1944. Flight Lieutenant Washer



The Otakeho War Memorial which has Edgar Burke's name encrined.

of the seven airmen. Three hundred were present on the special occasion including NZ House and RAF dignitaries. A memorial plaque was also unveiled. "This was probably the most moving time of my life and one of the times when I couldn't stop crying,"

has completed numerous operations against the enemy, in the course of which he had invariably displayed the utmost courage, fortitude and devotion to duty.

*Continued next page.*

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# Recognition long time coming for forgotten deployment

ANZAC Day was originally a commemoration of those who served in World War I but now includes all wars, conflicts and peacekeeping operations New Zealand has been involved in.

"New Zealand has been involved in a lot of stuff apart from Malaya and Vietnam," says Stan Barnett, referring to two of the better-known post-World War II conflicts.

Stan, who is vice-president of the Kaponga RSA is a veteran of one of these later operations, an operation which he says gets little recognition today.

From early June 1984 to mid-December in the same year he was in the Sinai peninsula as an aircraft engineer with the Rotary Wing Aviation Unit, a combined Australia-New Zealand 10-strong Iroqui helicopter unit that was part of the Multi-National Force and Observers (MFO).

The MFO was an independent unit separate from the United Nations but acted along the same lines as UN peacekeepers with berets coloured orange, rather than the standard UN blue.

It was set up to supervise the security provisions of the 1979 Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty which United States President Jimmy Carter thrashed out with Menachem



Stan Barnett with his orange peacekeeper's beret and medals.

Begin of Egypt and Anwar Sadat of Egypt.

New Zealand was one of thirteen countries involved.

"One of our functions was to make sure both sides weren't rearming," says Stan.

As well as checking borders, the helicopters would carry observers, carry out medical evacuation, supply peacekeeping outposts in the desert and

rescue crews of helicopters that had gone down in the desert.

"We had good days and bad days," says Stan. "The good days were when we got out there and rescued a downed helicopter crew. It was a bad day when we were putting the body bags on to the helicopter."

At the time the PLO was fighting Israel. Stan recalls leaving a shop five minutes before it was blown up.

"You could never trust anybody. We stuck out like a sore thumb because we were military," says Stan. He recalls doing the survival training needed for the desert.

"As young men we tended to be blasé as it was an exciting and dangerous job. You trained for it and didn't think about it until you came home."

After he got home he realised how much his experiences had affected him. One example of this was wanting to be able to see the exit when seated in a café.

Although the Australian and New Zealand helicopter

unit was later replaced by Canadians, there is still a New Zealand presence in the Sinai Peninsula.

"The Kiwis are still there," says Stan. "There's a small army contingent of about 80 people in the Sinai. To this day most people have never heard of it."

This was reflected in the attitudes Stan encountered in later years.

"I wore my Sinai medals at an RSA dawn parade in Blenheim in the late 80s and I was confronted by a man who demanded to know what my service was, because he said you're not World War II or Vietnam. Several times I've been confronted by people who've said those medals are not genuine. It put me off going to ANZAC parades for about 10 years."

His medals include the MFO Observers Medal, the Operational Service Medal,

as well as regular service and good conduct medals, and the Sinai Medal.

"That one was a long time coming," says Stan. "Other governments had issued it, but the New Zealand government was a bit reticent and there were lots of petitions to get them to do it."

Auckland he was pleased to see a small display at the Auckland War Memorial Museum dedicated to the Sinai operation.

"Until a few years ago you would go to the Hall of Remembrance and there's nothing there. Now it's nice to know we're recognised," says Stan.

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## Edgar Lawrence Burke of Manaia a victim of World War II

Continued from previous page

When visiting Mepal last June John Washer encountered a local historian who showed him a photo of a stainless steel remnant from Lancaster Bomber ME 690 AA-Z; engraved were the names of the seven who

lost their lives on May 22, 1944.

However, unlike his good friend Edgar, Charles did return from the war. Evidently, Edgar's family never got over his death.

We are grateful to John Washer who was very helpful in the drafting of this article.

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# Contemporary veterans deserve recognition

Staff Sergeant Kirsty Meynell joined the army in 2000 after a previous boss told her she would never make it in life. She wanted to prove that boss wrong.

On Poppy Day she was on the streets of Opunake raising money for the RSA, in full dress uniform with the medals she had earned from her deployments overseas, to East Timor (Timor Leste) and Afghanistan. She liked the new look poppies which she said were cheaper to make and biodegradable.

“The funds stay in the community which a lot of people don’t realise,” she said. “They go directly to our RSA to support veterans in our rohe.”

Her first deployment to Timor Leste in 2001 was followed by deployments to Afghanistan in 2009 and 2013. She is currently a logistics officer at the Army Communications School at Waiouru, dividing her time between there and her home at Opunake.

She says there have been times when she’s had people tell her she was wearing her father’s medals on the wrong side, only to have her point out to them that those medals were her own.

“It’s important that female



Staff Sergeant Kirsty Meynell with medals from Afghanistan and Timor-Leste raising funds for the RSA on Poppy Day.

veterans are seen, and people realise we don’t get our medals from sitting in an office,” she says. “I think it’s important that as a community we recognise and see our contemporary veterans. I do get annoyed in ANZAC services where

the language is all about the men, and the men who died. Women died too.”

Kirsty’s first deployment in Timor Leste was in a peacekeeping role and “A lot lower stress than Afghanistan.”

That’s not to say there

weren’t dangers.

“One of the biggest risks was the roads,” says Kirsty. “You got the afternoon rain and the roads were quite slippery, and you were going through mountainous terrain.”

Two of the five New Zealand fatalities during

that deployment came from vehicle accidents. Kirsty recalls one close shave she had while driving a Unimog with diesel on the back.

“I was sliding towards the drop and just managed to steer it into the bank and gain traction.”

Afghanistan was a different experience, where dangers included repeated rocket attacks on the camp where she was based at Kabul Airport.

She recalls one of these, which took out two helicopters.

“I heard them go overhead with a kind of high-pitched whirring noise. I was standing with an officer who was my commander at the time, and I pulled her into a container.”

“With contemporary veterans there is no front line. In the old days this army would march and run into this army and the one that was left standing was the winner. Today your enemy could be the person who’s in your camp, working in the laundry. It was a stressful time. You were always in an active engagement area.”

Her second Afghanistan deployment was at a time when the government was looking to scale down its

involvement, so Kirsty was given three fulltime roles. One of these was as force protection driver which involved driving armoured vehicles in Kabul, a job for which she had been given no training. Before going out she would be given an intelligence report pointing out any risks to look out for. One time she was told to keep an eye out for a white Toyota Corolla.

“I got out the gate, and guess how many white Toyota Corollas there were?”

Today Kirsty says the changes to ANZAC Day including the passing of the Anzac Day Amendment Act 2026 covering all New Zealanders who served in wars or conflicts, including non-military personnel, reinforces the need to look after contemporary veterans.

“There’s a whole lot of support issues for current veterans,” she says. Suicide among current veterans is a problem, something which the Australian government has recognised by setting up an inquiry to deal with this issue.

“There are a whole lot of veterans organisations trying to fill the gap,” says Kirsty. “They really need to work together better.”



## 10 CELTIC SEA SALT BENEFITS

Humans cannot survive without salt because it helps regulate the water content in the body. Most people think they should eliminate salt from their diet, which is not a complete truth. While table salt or refined salt is toxic and unhealthy, your body needs natural pure salt to complete several processes. It means you should avoid the wrong type of salt but look for a better alternative such as Celtic sea salt, harvested through the Celtic method that uses wooden rakes to prevent exposure to metals.

- 1 IT IS HIGH IN SODIUM**  
Sodium is an essential mineral needed by the body to control blood pressure and volume.
- 2 IT HAS HEALING PROPERTIES**  
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- 3 IT IMPROVES YOUR CARDIOVASCULAR HEALTH**  
Unlike refined salt, Celtic sea salt is actually good for your cardiovascular health. Consuming Celtic sea salt with adequate amount of water actually helps stabilize irregular heartbeats.
- 4 IT PROMOTES BRAIN FUNCTION**  
Regular consumption of sea salt improves the health of nerve cells. This makes it easier for them to communicate and process information.

- 6 IT STABILIZES BLOOD SUGARS**  
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- 7 IT IMPROVES ENERGY**  
You are going to feel tired when your body does not have enough sodium and trace minerals. The solution is to include Celtic sea salt in your diet, which helps regenerate hydroelectric energy in the cells.
- 8 IT PREVENTS MUSCLE CRAMPS**  
Your body will start cramping up when there is an electrolyte imbalance. In other words, you experience muscle cramps when your body loses sodium.
- 9 IT HELPS WITH KIDNEY STONES**  
If you have been dealing with kidney stones for a while now, consider replacing refined salt with Celtic sea salt..

- 5 IT ALKALIZES THE BODY**  
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# No rest for Taranaki soldier in his Gaza grave

ANZAC day in 2026 will have special significance for Waitara resident Janice Liddle.



GNR. ALF. E. BISHOP, of Bell Block.

Alfred Bishop. Courtesy Janice Liddle.

In February of this year she learned that the Gaza grave of her great uncle Trooper Alfred Bishop, had been bulldozed by the Israeli military in March 2025, along with the graves of 100 other ANZACS from WWI and WWII.

“ This news was very upsetting’ said Janice, “ My great uncle was not only buried on a foreign shore, victim of a foreign war, but he has also suffered the further indignity of having his resting place destroyed during another Gaza war over one hundred years later.”

Born in New Plymouth, Alfred Bishop served in the New Zealand Mounted Machine Gun battalion during WWI as the Palestinian city of Gaza was captured, lost to the Turkish opposition and then captured again, leaving the city in complete ruin. Eric died on 16 August 1918, at just 21 years of age and within a few short weeks of war’s end, victim to an illness contracted during

his service. He was buried in the Gaza War cemetery, administered by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

The grave of another Taranaki soldier, that of Charles Hughes from Kapuni, was also destroyed by the bulldozers of the Israeli Defence Force. The systematic destruction of the cemetery is a clear violation of International Humanitarian Law which commands respect for the dead, their graves and burial records. In addition, the denial of the rights of

family members to know the fate of their loved ones is considered an ‘outrage against personal dignity.’

“NZ officials should have been more forthright in bringing attention to these crimes. And why did it take so long for this to come to light?” asked Janice.

The graves were dutifully and impeccably tended since the 1920s by generations of one Palestinian family. Like his father and his grandfather before him, former Gaza cemetery caretaker Essam Jaradah tended the graves

for decades, passing on the responsibility to his son Ibrahim before the start of the Gaza War in 2023.

“The cemetery was considered one of the most beautiful archaeological sites in Gaza. Pain and bitterness grip my heart over the cemetery, just as deeply as the pain of losing my home entirely.”

The Jaradah family have been divided by the war with some members forced to leave including Ibrahim. It is understood that Essam has remained.



Alf Bishop in Palestine. Courtesy Janice Liddle.



A special wreath will be laid at the New Plymouth Cenotaph on ANZAC Day this year to commemorate Troopers Eric Bishop and Charles Hughes, and to recognise the work of the Jaradah family in the care of their graves.

At left Gaza War Cemetery, prior to the Gaza War. This cemetery is funded by the Commonwealth countries, including New Zealand.

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## ANZAC Holiday Kerbside Collection

Kerbside collection will continue as normal over the public holiday, so please put your bins out on your usual day. Visit [www.southtaranaki.com/anzacday](http://www.southtaranaki.com/anzacday) for more information on Council facility open hours.

# Your nearest ANZAC Day Services Saturday 25 April

## ELTHAM

**8.45am:** Assemble at the Eltham Fire Station.  
**9.00am:** Service at War Memorial Gates, Conway Road, followed immediately by the RSA Commemorative Service at the Services Cemetery, Anderson Road.

## ELTHAM CEMETERY

**10am:** RSA Commemorative Service at the Eltham Cemetery, Anderson Road.

## RĀWHITIROA

**11.15am:** Assemble at the Rāwhitiroa Pool Gates and Memorial Wall.

**11.30am:** Service at ANZAC Lawn and Memorial Wall.

**12noon:** Community lunch at Rāwhitiroa Hall - bring a plate to share.

## KAPONGA

**10.15am:** Assemble at the Kaponga Hotel, march to the Memorial Hall at 10.30am.

**10.45am:** Service at the Memorial Hall/Cenotaph.

## OTAKEHO

**6.00pm:** Small service will be held at Otakeho Hall on **24 April**.

## MANAIA

**6.15am:** Assemble at Manaia Bowling Club,

Riemenschneider Street, then march to Cenotaph/Rotunda.

**6.30am:** Service at Cenotaph/Rotunda. Refreshments will be served at the Manaia Bowling Club at the end of the service.

## ŌPUNAKĒ

**6.00am:** Assemble at Ōpunakē Town Hall and march to the Cenotaph.

**6.10am:** Service at the Cenotaph.

**8.00am:** Service at the Ōpunakē Services Cemetery. Refreshments will be served at the Ōpunakē Town Hall at the end of the service.

## TE KIRI

**10.45am:** Service at Te Kiri Cenotaph.

## PIHAMA

**5.30pm:** Service at Pihama Cenotaph (Lizzy Bell).

## CAPE EGMONT

**1.00pm:** Wreath laying ceremony at Cape Egmont Boat Club, Bayly Road, Warea.

## HĀWERA

**6.15am:** Assemble at Ngāti Ruanui, Princes Street, then march to Memorial Arch.

**6.30am:** Service at Memorial Arch, Princes Street. Morning tea will be served at the RSA at the end of the service.

## ARARĀTĀ

**9.30am:** Service at Ararātā War Memorial, opposite Ararātā Hall.

## ALTON

**11am:** Service at Alton Memorial. Bring a plate for a shared lunch afterwards in the hall.

## PĀTEA

**6.20am:** Assemble on Chester Street by Pātea LibraryPlus.

**6.30am:** Parade falls into a march from Chester Street to the Cenotaph. A cup of tea will be served at the Old Folks Hall at the end of the service.

## WAVERLEY

**8.45am:** Parade assemble outside Waverley Community Centre.

**9.00am:** Service at Waverley Community Centre, then march to the town clock for wreath laying ceremony. Refreshments to follow at the Community Centre.

## WAITŌTARA

**11.00am:** Wreath laying ceremony at Waitōtara Memorial Gates, Waitōtara Domain. Refreshments will be served at the Waitōtara Hall after the wreath laying.

## Upcoming Meetings

**Eltham-Kaponga Community Board**  
Tuesday 28 April, 10.30am  
Taumata Recreation Centre  
Preston Street, Eltham

**Te Hāwera Community Board**  
Tuesday 28 April, 4pm  
Hāwera Senior Citizens Association,  
81 Victoria Street, Hāwera

**Taranaki Coastal Community Board**  
Wednesday 29 April, 10.30am  
Ōpunakē Town Hall, Domett Street,  
Ōpunakē

**Pātea Community Board**  
Wednesday 29 April, 4pm  
Aotea Utanganui, 127 Egmont  
Street, Pātea

**Te Kāhui Matauraura**  
Wednesday 6 May, 10.30am

**Environment and Hearings  
Committee**  
Wednesday 6 May, 4pm

**Extraordinary Council**  
*To consider and adopt the Speed  
Management Plan*  
Monday 11 May, 3pm



Unless otherwise specified, meetings are held in the Council Chamber, Administration Building, Albion Street, Hāwera.

# Natural Processes at the Heart of Pātea Dune Protection

Council is reinforcing its long-term approach to protecting the Pātea coastline by using natural processes to stabilise sand dunes, minimise erosion and safeguard beach access for the community. For decades, strong winds and shifting sands have caused significant dune instability at Pātea Beach. In the 1980s, wind-blown sand even encroached into nearby homes and roads, partially burying sections in the beach settlement. Council's environment and sustainability manager, Cindy Koen, says controlled placement of clean greenwaste remains one of the most effective tools for strengthening dune systems in this high-energy coastal environment.

"We're working with nature, not against it. Clean greenwaste helps trap windblown sand, rebuilds dune shape, and provides the structure native plants need to establish. This method is scientifically supported, environmentally safe, and essential for protecting the integrity of the dune system," says Cindy. Long-term trials and monitoring show that greenwaste plays a crucial role in preventing blowouts and reducing sand drift, which can otherwise place significant burden on nearby homes, public spaces and infrastructure. Stabilised dunes also support local ecology and improve safe access to the beach. Since 2016, greenwaste placement at the site has followed strict controls. Today, only uncontaminated material from authorised transfer stations in Hāwera and Pātea can be used, and it is applied solely in approved areas under a monitored resource consent. "This is no longer a dumping site. The historic issues with illegal

greenwaste and general rubbish were addressed years ago. What happens now is carefully managed, clean, and fully consented," says Cindy.

Council's resource consent includes 16 conditions covering environmental monitoring, placement practices and safeguards against issues such as odour, runoff, contamination or erosion effects. The Taranaki Regional Council regularly monitors compliance.

Placement on Bourkes Lookout Road was completed in September 2025, and work is now focused on the top lookout area. On placement days, only the immediate work zone will be temporarily coned off for safety, with no broader access restrictions expected.

"Our coastal communities deserve confidence that dune management is both responsible and effective. We're committed to transparency and to using the best available methods to protect Pātea Beach for future generations," says Cindy.

By mimicking natural dune-building processes, the approach reduces sand encroachment into residential areas, minimises collapse risks in weakened dune sections, and supports native vegetation to take over long-term stabilisation.

"The community has a long history of caring for these dunes. Today's approach builds on that legacy but with stronger environmental safeguards and a focus on long-term resilience." Council will continue to monitor the site closely and work with iwi, residents and coastal groups to support a healthier and more stable coastline at Pātea Beach.

## Download Antenno to get weekly kerbside collection reminders!

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# Goodbye to half century of purebred genetics

Ararata farmers Garry and Kath Rowlands are closing the door on 47 years breeding pedigree Jersey cattle. On May 7 191 head of purebred Jersey cattle will go under the hammer.

It is a hard wrench for the couple who have been breeding pedigree cattle with their Tyndale Jersey Stud since 1980.

“Most cattle are based on indexes, and we’re not interested in indexes,” says Garry. “We’re interested in families, production and what pays the mortgage.”

Garry and Kath are founder members of the Purebred Jersey Breeders Society(NZ) and Kath was a longtime secretary of the Taranaki club. Four years ago Garry and Kath were awarded the Distinguished Members Award.

Garry says a big influence in their early years had been the Tarnhowe breeds



Kath and Garry Rowlands are saying goodbye to their pedigree jerseys.

of Waikato breeder Tony Mossop who had one of the biggest studs in New Zealand.

“He had one of the biggest influences on our herds,” says Garry. “There are other studs we have bought from, but they lead back to his

breeding.”

The Rowlands’ milk 135-140 cows on the 91ha(53ha effective) farm which they bought 19 years ago. They run the young stock in the gullies. Garry’s parents had farmed 28 ha near Manaia, and he and Kath had gone

sharemilking then leased a farm at Ngaere before buying their current property.

“It would have been nice to have a Waimate West flat, but this was all we could afford,” says Garry. “This was a sheep farm 30-35 years ago, and this area used

to have lots of sheep sales.”

Garry says they had never looked at going big, and with their current operation being the size it is, it hasn’t been economic to employ labour. The pressures involved with this, as well as health issues have led to them deciding to

sell the herd.

Kath says that in their younger days they showed their cattle a lot more, winning the Purebred On-Farm show four years in a row.

Longtime Jersey breeder Alan Jenkins says the Rowlands have achieved a lot in their time breeding pedigree Jersey cattle.

“There are a lot of good cows there,” he says. “There are a lot at the 90 threshold which is in the top bracket. There are a lot of good families, so anybody who buys them shouldn’t regret buying them, as if you mate them right, they should breed right.”

The cattle may be moving off the farm, but Garry and Kath aren’t. They are looking to take in dry stock and grazing.

“We want to be doing something,” says Kath

## Manaia WI

The April meeting of the Manaia Women’s institute was held at Colonel Malones in Stratford on April 7. President Phyllis Malcolm welcomed members to the meeting.

Members had donated Easter eggs at the last meeting, and they were delivered to residents of Trinity Rest home.

The motto was “small changes can lead to big changes as long as we put one foot in front of the other.”

Several members had

attended the South Taranaki annual meeting where they served morning tea and lunch.

Manaia gained second place in the competition for their programme. Nicola Ashley gained first place for six individual cards and second place for the decorated candle.

Phyllis Malcolm gained first place for the photo of a single bloom, first place for a painted rock paper weight and first place for the Kete basket.

Members enjoyed lunch

and then visited the Percy Thomson Gallery.

Competition results. Home Craft - 3 stems of rhubarb. 1. Phyllis Malcolm. 2. Neda Howes. 3. Ann Chisnall. Hand Craft – Thimble. 1. Raewyn Fredrickson. 2. Neda Howes.

3. Phyllis Malcolm.



## Apology

In the “Remembering the Country Girls” story (Opunake & Coastal News April 9 page 23) about Nancy Riddick’s memories of her time in Country Girls, the end of the story had been left out.

This should read “After being in Country Girls, Nancy joined the Hawera Women’s Club, of which she is a life member, and was active in the Women’s Division of Federated Farmers (now Rural Women).

She also helped out at

Calvary Hospital (now Trinity Home & Hospital) for 15 years.

“The Sisters of Calvary and the Company of St Mary who owned it then said I had missed my profession and should have been a nurse,” says Nancy.

In 2006 she received a South Taranaki District Council Community Award from mayor Mary Bourke.

For the last six years Nancy, who is 95 years-old, has been living in an apartment at Annie Brydon Life Care in Hawera.”

The Opunake & Coastal

News apologises for this omission.



Nancy Riddick



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# Diesel shortages squeeze primary industry – Expert reaction

As diesel supplies fall and prices soar, NZ's primary industries like farming and forestry will feel the strain, experts say.

Emeritus Professor Ralph Sims, Sustainable Energy and Climate Mitigation,

Massey University,

comments:

“Diesel engines provide energy for heavy transport, construction vehicles, forest harvesters, farm tractors and crop harvesters, off-grid electricity generators



Every truck on the road and every diesel generator on a building site faces the same cost pressures.

on islands etc. If diesel fuel becomes constrained, under a worst case scenario some form of rationing may have to be imposed and priority uses identified – a challenging task.

“During the oil shocks of the late 1970s, farmers in Southland ran their tractors and harvesters on locally grown vegetable oils – it works as an emergency fuel to get the crops harvested, but without chemical treatment to form “esters” such raw fuels can cause engine damage especially in cold conditions. Farmers elsewhere produced ethanol from cereal crops (a bit like home-brewing beer) to use in petrol blends. Biodiesel esters can also be produced from inedible animal fat

(called tallow), a by-product from the meat industry.

“In the 1970s, NZ exported a similar volume of tallow to our total diesel demand. A major research programme at Massey University at the time confirmed biodiesel was a safe fuel and could be blended with diesel at any proportion as a ‘drop-in biofuel.’

“Forty years later, Z Energy built a biodiesel plant in Wiri and then added a 5% blend to their diesel. The plant was mothballed when the export price of tallow made it no longer competitive. Whether the plant can be resurrected to produce biodiesel for emergency purposes, should we ever reach that stage of poor supply, is uncertain but worth investigating now. I suspect Z Energy are doing just that.”

Dr Murat Üngör, Department of Economics, University of Otago, comments: “The tightening of global diesel stocks poses a systemic threat to New Zealand’s economy, starting at the foundation of our farming and forestry sectors. Diesel drives primary production, powering everything from tractors and harvesters to the delivery of essential inputs like

fertiliser.

“For farming, the consequences are immediate: with rural fuel deliveries reportedly running weeks behind schedule, the sector faces a double squeeze where both tightening supply and rising costs erode margins simultaneously.

“Forestry faces an equally direct hit. Logging trucks and processing equipment are entirely diesel-dependent, and the sector has little capacity to absorb sustained supply interruptions.

“These primary sector pressures quickly ripple into food price inflation, the most widely felt consequence for ordinary New Zealanders. Diesel underpins every stage of the food system, from milk tankers and refrigeration to the final delivery to supermarket shelves. While major retailers have attempted to absorb these costs, such a position is unsustainable. We should expect food price inflation to outpace general inflation in the months ahead, building on an already strained baseline.

“Beyond farming and food, the transport and construction sectors are also acutely exposed. Every truck on the road and every diesel

generator on a building site faces the same cost pressures.

“The deeper vulnerability lies in our fuel security architecture. Since the 2022 conversion of Marsden Point to an import terminal, New Zealand has surrendered its domestic processing capacity, becoming entirely dependent on refined products shipped from Asian refineries. These refineries are themselves reliant on Middle Eastern crude, meaning any disruption to Gulf supply routes—such as tensions in the Strait of Hormuz—travels the full length of the chain to the New Zealand farm gate.

“While countries like South Korea have responded aggressively, including by holding discussions with Saudi Arabia and Oman on bypass pipelines and offshore storage facilities outside the Strait of Hormuz to mitigate blockade risks, New Zealand remains very exposed. Without comparable strategic arrangements or domestic refining as a buffer, we are effectively price takers on the global stage, left to manage the domestic fallout of international volatility with very few levers to pull.”

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# Fonterra and Greenpeace reach settlement

Fonterra and Greenpeace have settled a case brought by Greenpeace in 2024 concerning the use of the two phrases "100% New Zealand" and "Grass Fed" in combination.

Greenpeace claimed that the combined use of the phrases was misleading and in breach of the Fair Trading Act.

"This is an open-and-shut case of greenwashing," said

Greenpeace spokesperson Sinéad Deighton-O'Flynn. "Fonterra claimed that its Anchor Butter was '100% New Zealand Grass-Fed', but that isn't true. Fonterra dairy cows can be fed up to 3 kilograms of palm kernel a day - an imported feed linked to rainforest destruction.

"Palm kernel is a dry, gravelly cow feed that comes from the destroyed

paradise rainforests of Southeast Asia. It isn't grass, and to claim otherwise is misleading and deceptive."

In a statement Fonterra said it accepted that the use of the two phrases on the label, '100% New Zealand' and 'Grass Fed' in combination, was likely to mislead some New Zealand consumers, particularly those unaware of the nature of dairy cows' diet which may include some

supplementary feed.

"The claim did not concern the phrase 'Grass Fed' in isolation and Fonterra stands by its 'Grass Fed' claims," the statement read.

"The New Zealand Government's Ministry for Primary Industries has created a national New Zealand Dairy Grass-Fed Administrative Standard to define what constitutes a Grass Fed system in New Zealand. This reflects New Zealand's temperate climate, which provides the ideal conditions for pasture-based farming that has been practiced by generations of New Zealand farmers. This national Grass-Fed Standard specifies the requirements and attributes that must be met for Grass Fed certification to be issued.

Fonterra's farmers' cows are 96% Grass Fed, with "grass" defined as including grass, grass silage, hay and forage crops (including brassicas and legumes). Fonterra's definition of grass is consistent with the grass-fed feed types in the New Zealand Dairy Grass-Fed Administrative Standard. The 96% statistic is calculated as an average across Fonterra's farmers' dairy herds, and on an 'as consumed' basis.

"Fonterra is proud that our New Zealand milk is independently verified as meeting the requirements of the New Zealand Dairy Grass-Fed Administrative Standard."

Deighton-O'Flynn said the butter packaging had a prominently displayed logo with the words '100% New Zealand Grass-Fed', a claim inconsistent with the fact that Fonterra cows can be fed up to 3kg of palm kernel expeller every day.

"In a cost of living crisis, New Zealanders have been getting ripped off. We've been paying at times

upwards of \$20 a kilo for butter, while also being misled about the quality of that butter."

Greenpeace say companies selling palm kernel into New Zealand have links to deforestation in Indonesia's Rawa Singkil Wildlife Reserve.

"When palm kernel suppliers are involved in illegal deforestation, it is highly likely that some of that illegal rainforest destroying palm kernel ends up here - in the butter New Zealanders spread on their toast," says Deighton-O'Flynn.

## Survey shows dairy workers want to stay

Dairy farm employees remain positive about the sector with new survey results showing that over 80% intend to stay in the industry.

DairyNZ has released the results of the 2025 Dairy Farm Employee survey which explores what dairy farm employees value most at work.

Working with animals, being outdoors, and the lifestyle were the key reasons people entered the dairy sector, according to the survey findings.

These same factors also play a role in retaining people, alongside opportunities to build new skills and progress their careers within the industry.

DairyNZ Senior People Specialist Jane Muir said it was encouraging to see the high level of people looking to stay in dairy.

"The results showed that people of all ages and stages of their careers are



Jane Muir.

passionate about dairy and see it in their long-term plans," Jane says.

"It is particularly encouraging to see young people feeling positive about the sector, though we can be doing more on-farm by supporting early career leadership and training and ensuring workable rosters."

Working hours remain an opportunity for the sector to improve with time off a common reason employees leave the sector alongside insufficient pay and poor relationships with management or colleagues.

The survey also showed that having a good boss and

feeling valued were the top drivers of well-being.

When asked how well-being could be improved, the top responses were better leadership and communication, fair pay, and improved rosters and work-life balance.

The results come as the 2026 Dairy Farm Employee survey opens.

The survey, open until May, is part of DairyNZ's Increasing Workplace Productivity programme, which focuses on research that highlights great practices, and technology that increases productivity and profitability whilst improving job conditions on farm.

"The survey findings provide valuable insight into what truly matters to farm teams," Jane says.

"The insights gathered help us better advocate and develop resources and partnerships that benefit both dairy farmers and employees."

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# Feds applauds fuel support for rural schools

Extra support for small, rural and isolated schools to help them manage fuel cost pressures is timely and very welcome, Federated Farmers says.

prices - particularly diesel - from the Middle East conflict has hit rural schools particularly hard," Federated Farmers education spokesperson Richard Dawkins says.

"The huge spike in fuel

in rural areas face longer distances when travelling to and from school.

"Smaller rural schools have the same or similar fixed costs to much bigger schools but when your roll is a couple of dozen, vs 200-300-plus, dividing costs that are per-pupil based across that smaller roll is a lot tougher."

The Government this week announced a package of targeted relief, including \$37 million to accelerate work to replace diesel boilers at up to 70 schools, and a temporary increase to Relief Teacher Transport Allowance mileage rates.

It will also provide one-time cash grants of \$2,500 to all schools with under 100 students to cover extra mileage costs.

There will also be a 30% increase in the conveyance allowance to help eligible families with the cost of getting children to school or the nearest bus route, benefiting 5,000 further students.

"This is sensible, financially prudent and targeted assistance that will make a difference for rural schools," Dawkins says.

"Federated Farmers has been working closely



**Rahotu School Students working in the ngahere.**

with the Rural School Leadership Association and Rural Women NZ over our successful campaign for a review of school bus routes and eligibility criteria.

"I think through that campaign we've heightened awareness among MPs that schools are an essential part of rural communities, and that they enable families and farm staff to live and work in more isolated areas."

Earlier in the month the

three groups had written to the Government seeking an increase in the conveyance allowance, which hadn't been reviewed since 1985.

"The rural National Party MPs have been supportive of our advocacy and we thank Education Minister Erica Stanford and Cabinet for listening, and taking this action," Dawkins says.

In the medium term, the Government is to invest \$2.35 million per year for

two initiatives to grow the workforce and ensure rural schools have a good pipeline of teachers, funded through reprioritisations.

The Go Rural programme, where student teachers receive \$4,000 to cover the costs of undertaking a professional experience placement in a rural and isolated school is being expanded by a further 87 places per year, from the 2026/27 financial year.

The number of places available in the Teacher Bonding Scheme will increase by 50, from 185 places to 235 per year. This scheme supports teachers with up to an additional \$40,000 over five years for working in hard to staff schools, the majority of which are rural and isolated.

"These changes are positive for the future of rural schools - an investment not just in education of rural school children but in farming and rural communities,"

Dawkins says.

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## Fonterra names new CEO

Fonterra Co-operative Group Ltd has announced the appointment of Richard Allen as its next Chief Executive Officer, succeeding Miles Hurrell.

Chair Peter McBride says Richard is an exceptional leader who will bring to the CEO role a strong connection with farmer shareholders and customers and a deep knowledge of Fonterra's global operations and markets. "The Board is really pleased to announce Richard as Fonterra's next CEO, who will lead the Co-op into the next phase of its strategic implementation. "Richard is passionate about our Co-operative," says Mr McBride. "His most recent role is President Global Ingredients, responsible for Fonterra's Ingredients sales, optimisation, risk

management, trading and global manufacturing. "He joined Fonterra as a graduate in 2008 and since then his career has spanned our global supply chain. He led our farmer facing business Farm Source for five years, has worked in China as Vice President of our Foodservice business, was the founding CEO of MyMilk, and more recently served as President Atlantic based in Chicago, responsible for relationships with a number of our global key accounts," says Mr McBride. Richard Allen says he is incredibly humbled to be appointed CEO and feels great pride to be leading the Co-op. "I've built my career with Fonterra and understand the important role the Co-op plays both for farmers here in New Zealand and our customers around the world.

"I'm committed to maintaining the momentum in our performance, focused delivery of strategy and financial discipline that has been developed over recent years. "Fonterra has a strong platform to build from and I'm excited by our prospects as we move forward as a New Zealand farmer-owned global B2B dairy provider," says Mr Allen. Richard will step into the CEO role on 1 May, with Miles staying with Fonterra in an advisory role until September 2026 to assist with the leadership transition. "Miles has worked well with the Board to develop leadership talent and plan succession, which has allowed us to run an efficient appointment process for Fonterra's next CEO," says Mr McBride.

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# Celebrating the birthday of Potatoes New Zealand

Potatoes New Zealand marked its birthday on Friday 17 April, reflecting on a legacy built on innovation, resilience, and a deep commitment to the growers who form the backbone of Aotearoa's potato industry — at a time when many are facing significant pressure.

From its early beginnings in 2012, Potatoes New Zealand has evolved into a modern, future-focused organisation supporting one of the country's most valuable vegetable crops.

What began as a collective effort to represent growers has grown into a national voice championing potatoes in all forms and practical advocacy for the industry as a whole.

Over the years, the organisation has strengthened its role as an advocate and guardian for the sector, particularly during periods of challenge and change. It has led major research programmes to improve crop performance, invested in science to protect



Potatoes New Zealand CEO Kate Truffitt.

against pests and disease, and worked closely with government and partners to support the long-term viability of potato production in New Zealand. These efforts have helped growers navigate uncertainty, adapt

to changing conditions, and manage risk in an increasingly complex operating environment.

Today, Potatoes New Zealand continues to evolve, guided by a clear purpose: to

put growers at the heart of everything they do. Their work spans biosecurity readiness, environmental stewardship, innovation in sustainable farming systems, data-driven insights, and targeted support for

domestic and export markets — with a strong focus on helping growers respond to rising costs, tight margins, and market volatility.

Kate Truffitt, Chief Executive of Potatoes New Zealand, says: "This birthday comes at a time when many growers are under real pressure. Input costs remain high, markets

are tight, and uncertainty continues to weigh heavily across the sector."

"While it's important to acknowledge how far we've come as an organisation, our focus is firmly on supporting growers through the challenges they are facing right now — with practical tools, strong advocacy, and science-based solutions that help build resilience for the future." marks this milestone, it acknowledges the generations of growers, industry partners, researchers, and supporters who have shaped the sector through both good seasons and difficult ones. Their resilience and commitment continue to underpin the strength of the industry today.

Looking ahead, Potatoes New Zealand remains focused on building a resilient, sustainable, and viable future for growers.

Our commitment is unwavering: to champion the industry, to advocate strongly during tough market conditions, and to work alongside growers to ensure the long-term strength of New Zealand's potato sector.

## Lions potting for profit and charity

Gardening and green fingers kept Opunake Lions Club members really busy before the cyclonic weather dampened a fundraising project

The Lions "Gardens Treasures" project took a huge step forward on Saturday, April 11, with

Kathy Stanley, a Lions Club member, and a team including Kaye Mourie, Trish Anderson, Rachel Norgate, Tracey Crawford, and Kathryn Baylis

Everyone agreed that gardening and potting up each beautiful plant is a "labour of love."

Kaye Mourie, another Lions organiser,

commented that some of the plants donated had been specially grown in Coastal situations.

"We had fun and ate delicious food at Arty Tarts Cafe," Kaye remarked.

Next stop was at the Mourie's farm. By the end of the afternoon there were over 100 pots all named and ready to grow well.

Colleen and Michael Starsmore will host this Lions project in the Camtiki Country Lodge grounds of their Patiki Road farm.

This will be a big attraction in the Taranaki Fringe Festival to be held from October 30 to November 8, 2026.



Kathy Stanley was all smiles at the array of potted plants which grow well for the Lions project this spring.

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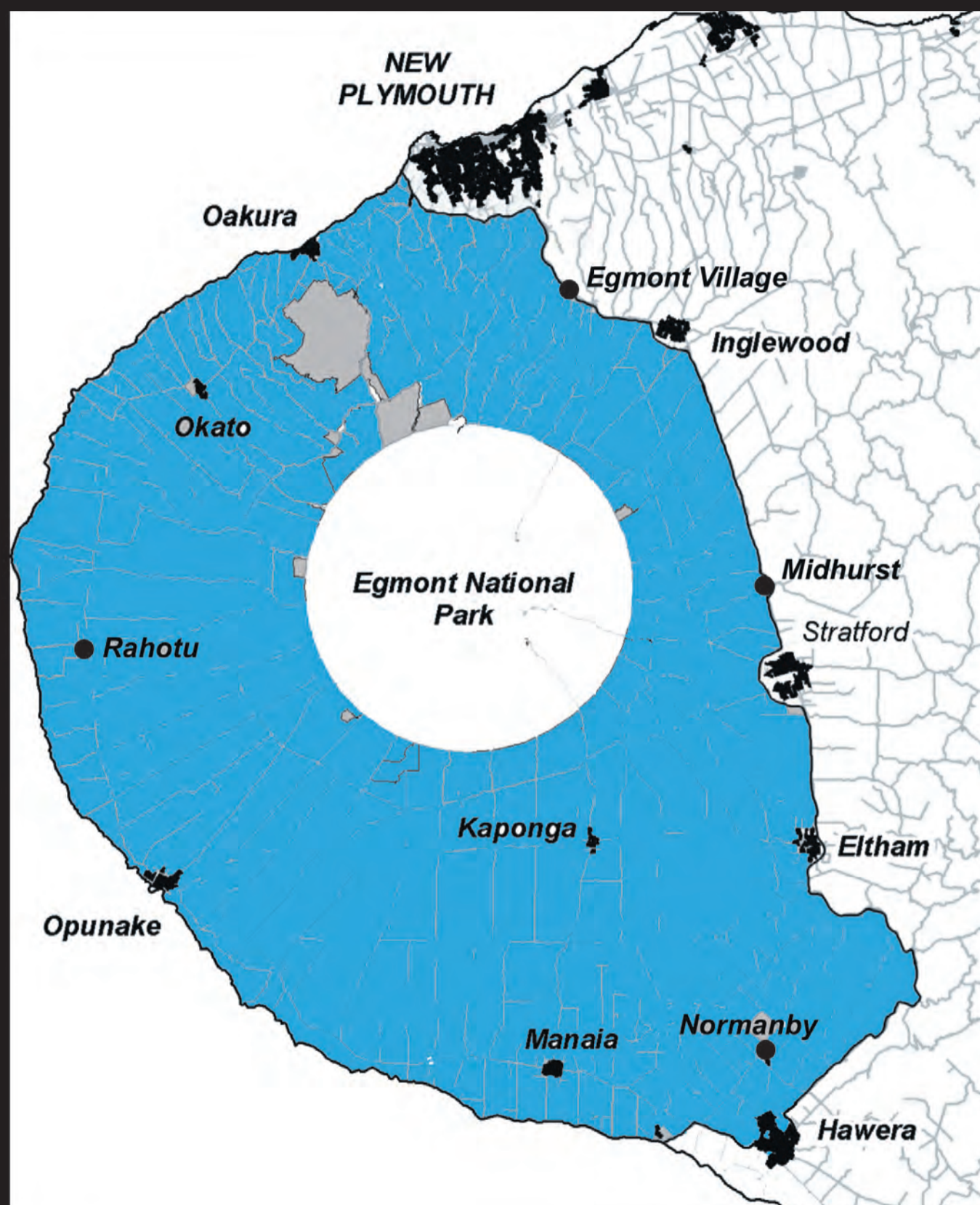
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# Coastal Rugby kicks off the season

## Round 4 vs Southern 18th April

Property Brokers Premier Men Round four saw the Coastal Prens travel to Hawera to face Southern. The weather provided some challenging conditions, with the wind blowing for most of the game and rain on and off. Games against Southern are always a bit of a grudge match, but our boys played with mana and took the win.

Coastal scored the first try of the game around the nine minute mark, scored and converted by Jackson Sinclair. Soon after that, Coastal scored another try, this time scored by Jerram Sinclair, and converted by Jackson Sinclair. Jerram then scored for the second time around the 30 minute mark, converted again by Jackson Sinclair. This took the half time score to 21-0, to Coastal.

Southern scored early in the second half and successfully converted it taking the score to 21-7. This was where the score was to remain 21-7 with Coastal taking a well deserved win.

Three points went to Jackson Pari, two points to Scott Quinnell and one point to Callum Tito.

This coming Saturday the Prens are back at Rahotu, against New Plymouth Old Boys.

## Corkill System Colts

It was a wet and wild Saturday, but the Coastal Colts boys showed grit, discipline, and a proper never-back-down attitude to get the job done against Southern.

We struck first through Liam Drought, crossing the line to open the scoring 5-0. Not long after, Jackson Hewson Baldwin added another, pushing us out to 10-0 despite the tough conditions making conversions a challenge. The momentum kept rolling as Tom Picard powered over, before Brayden Shaw dotted down and added the extras to stretch the lead out to 22-0 heading into halftime. Southern came out firing



Daniel Crowley is Prens vs Tukapa.

Photo: Spinna Photography

in the second half, grabbing a converted try to close the gap to 22-7. But Jackson Hewson Baldwin wasn't done yet — turning on the jets for a near 50m sideline runaway to extend the lead to 27-7. Southern responded again with another converted try (27-14), but Coastal kept control. Koby Bird-Luke added another try to keep the scoreboard ticking over at 32-14. To cap off a standout performance, Jackson Hewson Baldwin completed his hat-trick, sealing the match with our final try and locking in a 37-14 win.

Massive thanks to everyone who came out and supported in some seriously rough weather - that's proper Coastal spirit. Next up, we're back home in Rahotu taking on NPOB. Ride the Wave.

**Players of the day:**  
 3 Points- Troy Le Quesne  
 2 Points- Rhyan Dobson  
 1 Point- Jono Lang



Scott Anderson is Div 1 vs Tukapa. In Tukapa photos they're representing the Mellowpuff Charity.

Photo: Spinna Photography

## Round 3 vs Tukapa 11th April

Property Brokers Premier Men

For round three, our Coastal Prens were up against Tukapa at home where our lads were wearing pink jerseys to support the Mellowpuff charity. It was a stunning day at Rahotu and it was great to see a big crowd. Tukapa are always a tough team to come up against, our

boys put in the effort but the result wasn't what we were looking for.

An early try from Tukapa put them on the board first, however a penalty conversion by Jackson Sinclair put Coastal on the board soon after making the score to 3-5 to Tukapa. Just before half time, Tomai Collins-Taiapo scored a try that was unfortunately not converted making the halftime score 8-15 to Tukapa.

To kick off the second half, our bench took the field and provided some strong impact up front. Jerram Sinclair scored just after the 60 minute mark, successfully converted by brother Jackson taking the score to 15 all. Soon after that, Tukapa managed to get a converted try. Coastal then responded with a try to Reeve Nelly which went unconverted to make the score 22-20 to Tukapa. The game finished shortly after with the full

time score remaining 22-20 to Tukapa.

Toni Tuitupou made his return for the 2026 season, coming off the bench with a wicked performance granting him player of the day (three points). Two points went to Daniel Crowley, one point went to Reeve Nelly.

This coming Saturday we head down the coast to face Southern at Hicks Park in Hawera. We hope to see some sideline support!



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# Coastal Rugby kicks off the season

## FBT/Osflo Div 1

The boys played Tukapa on Saturday just gone. It was a beautiful day for footy and they were representing the Mellowpuff charity. For the first 10 mins handling was a problem for both teams. Once both teams sorted that out the game started to flow. Coastal got on the board with a well worked try to Dylan Schuler. This was followed up with another try to Bailey Watson which was converted by Scott Anderson. This gave Coastal a 12-7 lead going into the halftime break.

After halftime the boys were pretty flat for the first 10-15 mins which gave Tukapa an opportunity and they pounced. Tukapa managed to score 2 converted tries going out to 21-12 lead.

With 20 mins to go the boys finally woke up and started playing and working hard. They got back into the game with 2 well worked tries to Mark Martin and Scott Anderson. Both were converted by Scott to give Coastal the lead 26-21. As the game wound down Tukapa took a penalty shot with Scott Anderson responding with one for Coastal to give us the win 29-24.

There were strong performances from players of the day Dylan Schuler and Rory Mulligan. It was a hard fought game by both teams. Next week we travel to Hawera to play Southern.

setting the stage for a fast-paced and entertaining game.

It was a big day for the Hewson Baldwin brothers, with Jackson Hewson Baldwin crossing the line twice, matched by his brother Lachlan Hewson

Baldwin who also bagged a double. The brothers proved a handful all game, combining well and finishing their opportunities in style. Sam Douglas added to the scoreboard with a solid try of his own, helping keep the momentum firmly in our

favour.

A special mention to the team who took the field in the pink Mellowpuff jerseys, showing support for the Mellowpuff charity. It was a proud moment to represent something bigger than the game, and the boys wore it

with pride.

Overall, a strong team performance with great energy and execution across the park.

Looking ahead to Round 4, we hit the road to Hawera where we'll take

on Southern. Another big challenge awaits, and we're looking forward to building on this week's performance.

### Players of the day:

- 3 Points- Zane MacDonald
- 2 Points- Lachlan Hewson Baldwin
- 1 Point- Kobe Bird-Luke



Jackson Hewson-Baldwin is in the Colts team playing vs Southern.

Photo: Spinna Photography

## Corkill System Colts

Round 3 saw the boys take on Tukapa in absolute perfect rugby conditions,



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# Jason Avery to lead Central Roofing Taranaki Whio into 2026

Taranaki Rugby has confirmed the coaching group that will lead the Central Roofing Taranaki Whio in the 2026 Northern Regions Development competition.

Jason Avery has been appointed head coach, supported by assistant coaches Matt Goodwin and Greg Plimmer, with Emma Edwards joining the group as manager.

Avery has an extensive background in the game, vast experience coaching females, a track record of building people first cultures and a deep passion for rugby.

A Sport Taranaki Heathy Active learning advisor and proud father of two daughters and a son, Avery is a World Rugby Level 3 qualified coach. He co-coached the newly established Tukapa Toa Premier Women's in

2024 and 2025 (finalists) as well as the Sacred Heart Girls College First XV between 2022-2024.

Avery has experience leading Taranaki Rugby campaigns having led the Taranaki Under 18 Boys (2008-2013) and Under 16 Boys (2004-2007) teams.

He is excited about the new challenge of leading the Central Roofing Taranaki Whio programme.

"I feel privileged to be entrusted to lead this important programme and would like to thank Taranaki Rugby for offering me this opportunity and my wife Carly and daughters Anais and Alyssa for strongly encouraging me to accept the position. I am genuinely excited about the vision Taranaki Rugby has to continue to grow female rugby here in Taranaki, across all levels



The Taranaki Whio coaching group. From left. Emma Edwards (manager), Greg Plimmer (assistant coach), Jason Avery (head coach), Matt Goodwin (assistant coach).

of our beautiful game. I am also blessed to be working alongside a high calibre team in Plims, Mattie and Emma who will all add wonderful strengths and are committed to helping to

make the Central Roofing Taranaki Whio a team the people of Taranaki can be proud of."

Plimmer has co-coached the Tukapa Toa Premier Women's side with Avery

over the last two years after an extensive playing career locally and in Western Australia.

Goodwin is a United Rugby & Sports Club Centurion who has stepped into

coaching in recent seasons and Edwards is Taranaki Rugby's Community Operations Leader who brings a wealth of rugby operations experience to the campaign.

"Jason and his management team bring a wealth of experience to a new look Central Roofing Taranaki Whio campaign," says Taranaki Rugby chief executive officer Jimmy Fastier. "While the move out of the Farah Palmer Cup in 2025 was a difficult one, the focus has firmly shifted to how Taranaki Rugby can best support the players coming through the system. This programme will sit alongside Taranaki Rugby's wider work to grow the female game across CMK Club Rugby, the female academy and Glass Group age-grade representative campaigns."

# Jarrad Hoeata appointed Yarrows Taranaki Bulls Head Coach for 2026

Taranaki Rugby has announced Jarrad Hoeata has been appointed as Head Coach of the Yarrows Taranaki Bulls for the 2026 NPC season.

The appointment follows the recent elevation of Neil Barnes to the role of All Blacks Assistant Coach.

Hoeata, a former All Black and Yarrows Taranaki Bulls stalwart, brings proven coaching ability to the role, having served as Assistant Coach with the Yarrows

Taranaki Bulls since 2019.

He was part of the coaching group that guided the Yarrows Taranaki Bulls to the 2023 NPC title and the memorable Ranfurly Shield tenure of 2024-2025.

Hoeata has broadened his coaching credentials in recent years as an Assistant Coach (2024) and Co-Coach (2025) of the New Zealand Under 20 team for the Junior World Championships. At the end of 2025, Hoeata stepped up to Super Rugby Pacific when he



Jarrad Hoeata has been appointed as Head Coach of the Yarrows Taranaki Bulls for the 2026 NPC season.

was appointed as a Chiefs Assistant Coach.

Taranaki Rugby Chief Executive Officer Jimmy Fastier on Hoeata's appointment:

"Jarrad is a proud

Taranaki man, who has grown into a very well-respected coach. With Neil Barnes All Blacks elevation, Jarrad's appointment ensures continuity for the Yarrows Taranaki Bulls programme ahead of the 2026 season. Jarrad has the respect of the playing group, alongside Brad Cooper he has a deep understanding of

the expansive game plan that the squad have adopted, and his appointment supports a smooth transition with squad assembly three month away."

Jarrad Hoeata on his appointment as Yarrows Taranaki Bulls Head Coach: "I'm incredibly proud to step into the Head Coach role with the Yarrows

Taranaki Bulls. I've been part of this team for over 15 years as a player and coach, and it means a lot to me. I'm motivated to build on the standards and success we've created since starting my coaching journey with Barnesy in 2019. There is a really positive culture, great players and management, exceptional leaders and a community that truly gets behind the team. I'm excited to continue the journey and drive the programme forward."

With Hoeata having Super Rugby Pacific commitments with the Chiefs through until June, vastly experienced local coach Leo Crowley has been appointed as a Resource Coach to lead the local programme until Hoeata returns to Taranaki full time.

Over the next three months, Crowley will view CMK Premier Club Rugby matches, support locally based NPC athletes on their game, run wider training group sessions, and work closely with Hoeata and the management team on campaign planning.

The Yarrows Taranaki Bulls Assistant Coaches for 2026 will be confirmed in the coming weeks.

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# Full squads announced for ANZAC Day Classic rugby match at Stadium Taranaki

Full squads have been confirmed for The ANZAC Day Classic, with The Classics of New Zealand set to face Classic Australia at NPDC's Stadium Taranaki in New Plymouth on Saturday 25 April.

The ANZAC Day Classic will bring together some of the most recognisable names in rugby for a one-off match marking ANZAC Day through sporting connection, remembrance and respect.

The fixture is expected to draw strong interest from both local supporters and rugby fans nationwide, showcasing high-profile former internationals and crowd favourites from both sides of the Tasman.

"The ANZAC Day long weekend provides the perfect setting for a family day out.



Stadium Taranaki to host ANZAC Day Classic.

The family activation zone opens from 1pm, where fans can enjoy games, entertainment and player meet-and-greets before settling in for the match.

We're also excited to see this exceptional line-

up of players take the field for what promises to be a standout ANZAC Day occasion." Said Chade Julie manager venues and events, New Plymouth District Council.

Squads named last week.

The Classics (New Zealand): Forwards: Michael Bent; Colin Bourke; Mitchell Crosswell; Nick Crosswell; Jason Eaton; Charlie Faumuina; Mike Kainga; Faifili Levave; Chris Masoe (C); Hoani Matenga; Joe

Royal; Jason Rutledge; Mose Tuiali'i. Backs: Orene Ai'i; Toby Arnold; Stephen Donald; Jordan Hyland; Brendon Leonard; Alby Mathewson; Nehe Milner-Skudder; Waisake Naholo; Charlie Ngatai; Bryce

Robins; Andre Taylor; Isaea Toeava; Anthony Tuitavake. Management: Chris Haden; Laura Haden.

Classic Australia: Forwards: Curtis Browning; Nathan Charles; Pek Cowan; Tom Cusack (tbc); Makoni Mafi; Siaoisi Mafi; Pat McCutcheon; Jesse Parahi (tbc); Beau Robinson; Jimmy Tuivaiti; Jordan Tuapou; Laurie Weeks. Backs: Alofa Alofa; Simon Bartley; Kris Burton; Tom English; Pama Fou; Mike Harris; Richard Kingi; Arthur Little; Curtis Rona; Paul Sheedy; Henry Speight; Nick Storzaker; Brendan Williams. Management: David Campese, Matt Kassulke.

Match day officials: Conrad Smith, Cam Stone, Trent Mischefski, Ollie Knowles.

# Tryathlon and fine weather draw big crowd



Gritty determination on the cycle leg.

New Plymouth turned on a (slightly) blue-sky on Wednesday (March 25) as more than 1500 tamariki descended on Ngāmotu Beach Reserve for the Sanitarium Weet-Bix Kids TRYathlon. It was a stellar turnout to an incredible day.

Children aged 6 to 15 splashed, pedalled and ran their hearts out at the iconic multisport event, cheered on by crowds of whānau and friends.

Ambassadors on site encouraging participants and handing out medals were NZ sporting legends – Anna Crowley (hockey), Teihorangi Walden (rugby), and Logan Crowley (rugby).

Some commentary from Sanitarium NZ General Manager Michael Barton –

"The energy in New Plymouth was fantastic, with huge support from friends and families cheering on our TRY

stars," he said. "After 33 years, the TRYathlon has firmly cemented itself as a community favourite,

It's great to see so many kids of all abilities taking part, building confidence and enjoying the experience."

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# Sister Act - it'd be a sin to miss it!

Hāwera Repertory Society is delighted to announce that Elicia May Hitchcock will take on the iconic role of Deloris Van Cartier in its upcoming production of *Sister Act*, directed by Shaun Campbell. The uplifting musical will be staged 24 June – 4 July 2026 at the Hawera Memorial Theatre.



**Elicia May Hitchcock aka Deloris Van Cartier.**

Based on the beloved 1992 film *Sister Act*, famously starring Whoopi Goldberg, the story follows aspiring nightclub singer Deloris Van Cartier who is placed in witness protection inside a convent after witnessing

a crime. Completely out of her element among the quiet routines of convent life, Deloris soon discovers a way to bring energy and joy to the struggling church choir. With rhythm, humour and a whole lot of soul, she

transforms the choir into a vibrant musical force— while also helping the sisters discover confidence, friendship and their own voices along the way.

Taking on the role of Deloris requires a powerhouse performer with exceptional vocals, comedic timing and commanding stage presence. Hitchcock brings all of this and more to the role. Deloris is bold, charismatic and fiercely independent, and her journey from glamorous nightclub performer to unlikely convent leader sits at the heart of the show.

Hitchcock is well known

to Taranaki musical theatre audiences for her work with the New Plymouth Operatic Society, where she delivered a standout performance as Killer Queen in the hit musical *We Will Rock You*. She also appeared in the 2016 Australasian premiere of *Sister Act* with the society, making this upcoming production a special return to a show she already knows and loves.

Beyond the musical theatre stage, Hitchcock has also been a regular vocalist at Taranaki Mountainairs home games, performing the national anthem and

entertaining crowds at the region's premier basketball fixtures. She has also appeared in numerous theatre productions with societies across the Taranaki rohe, building a reputation as a versatile and engaging performer.

Director Shaun Campbell says Hitchcock's experience, vocal strength and stage charisma make her an ideal choice to lead the production. With its infectious music, heartfelt story and uplifting spirit, *Sister Act – The Musical* promises to deliver a joyful night of theatre for audiences across the region.

Packed with memorable songs, laugh-out-loud moments and a celebration of friendship and finding your voice, this production from Hāwera Repertory Society is shaping up to be one of the highlights of the Taranaki theatre calendar.

*Sister Act* runs 24 June – 4 July 2026 at the Hawera Memorial Theatre. Audiences are encouraged to book early to avoid missing out on this limited season and get ready for a feel-good musical filled with energy, laughter and plenty of soul. Tickets are now on sale through iTicket.

# Panui Papaho ANZAC 2026 Maia I Te Kotahitanga – on Whakaata Maori & Maori+

This Anzac Day, Whakaata Māori invites Aotearoa to pause in remembrance and reflection to honour the service and sacrifice of our servicemen and women and their whānau.

Live coverage begins at 5.45AM with the Dawn Service from the Auckland War Memorial Museum in Tāmaki Makaurau on Saturday 25 April on Whakaata Māori and MĀORI+.

The theme of this year's commemorations is *Māia i te Kotahitanga – Courage through Unity*, recognising the collective strength forged through shared sacrifice and remembrance.

Guiding viewers through the morning will be the multi-award-winning Moana Maniapoto (Te Arawa, Ngāti Tūwharetoa).

A focus this year is D Company of the 28th Māori Battalion, colloquially known as Ngāti Walkabout because of the broad recruiting area they were drawn from – the lower North Island, Te Waipounamu, Rēkohu (the Chatham Islands) and the Pacific Islands.

Although coming from many iwi and regions, D Company fought as one, earning a reputation for courage and resilience across campaigns in Greece, Crete, North Africa and Italy. Their story is one of unity in action, a powerful embodiment of this year's theme.

The special Anzac broadcast includes expert commentary, historical context and moving features, as well as crossing live to Gallipoli commemorations in Turkey, reinforcing the enduring connection between Aotearoa and the place where so many lives were lost.

Following the Dawn Service, are a collection of reflective stories that extend the themes of remembrance



**Courage through Unity.**

and legacy. These stories centre on people and whānau, exploring service and sacrifice. Together, they reinforce the guiding theme of *Māia i te Kotahitanga*, highlighting courage expressed not only in wartime, but in the enduring bonds of unity that follow.

Whakaata Māori offers an NZSL-supported broadcast. The Dawn Service coverage is sponsored by Triton Hearing.

ANZAC Day viewing highlights. Please note programmes can be streamed any time on Maori+

5.45AM: ANZAC 2026: Auckland Dawn Services – Live coverage of the Anzac Day Dawn Service. This year from the dawn service at the Auckland War Memorial Museum

8.00AM: Devils on Horses – Premiere: Set against the brutal backdrop of the Sinai-Palestine campaigns in WWI, this powerful story reveals the unbreakable bond between soldiers and their horses. Note: Programme repeats at 6.30PM.

9.30AM: Ngati Walkabout - The story of D Company 28 Maori Battalion –

Premiere: The story of Edward Te Whiti 'Tiwi' Love, of D Company, who served in Greece and Crete

and during one stage of the 1942 Libyan campaign.

11:30AM: *One Life* – Premiere Anthony Hopkins stars in the uplifting true story of British humanitarian Nicholas Winton, who helped rescue hundreds of children from Nazi-occupied Europe on the eve of World War II.

1:30PM: *Paradise Soldiers* – Reveals the sacrifices, the personal stories, and celebrates the contribution of Cook Island soldiers to the New Zealand armed forces from World War I through Vietnam and to present day. (R)

2:30PM: ANZAC Day Gallipoli Service 2026 – Live from Anzac Cove in Gallipoli.

4:00PM: *Spitfire* – Premiere: Traces the legendary Supermarine Spitfire – from its origin and design to its pivotal role in the Battle of Britain and beyond. Narrated by Charles Dance and enriched with rare archival footage and interviews with surviving pilots.

8.00PM: *When We Go To War* – Chronicles a New Zealand family at the outbreak of WWI, from optimism to despair as war's toll mounts. It follows their experiences from the home-front to the battlefields of Gallipoli and Egypt. (R)

9.00PM: *Midway* – Premiere: Dramatisation

of the Battle of Midway, a turning point in the Pacific during WWII.

About Maori+: Maori+ is the digital gateway to te ao Māori – a free streaming app that brings together the best in Māori storytelling, language, news, haka and entertainment. Designed with whānau in mind, the platform is easy to navigate, available across devices, and constantly updated with fresh content. Download the app from Google Play or the Apple store. Watch online at [www.maoriplus.co.nz](http://www.maoriplus.co.nz)

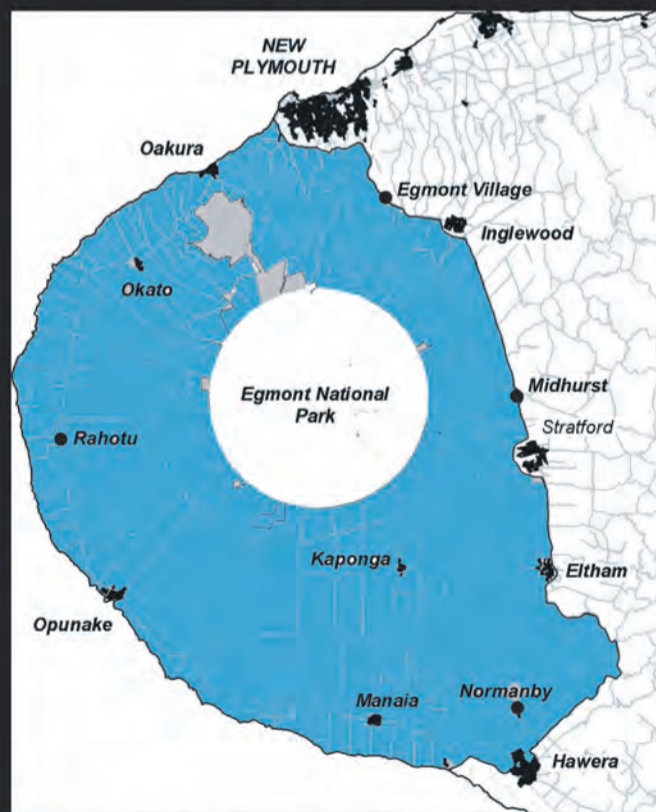
About Whakaata Māori: Whakaata Māori is Aotearoa New Zealand's national indigenous media organisation, dedicated to revitalising and empowering te reo Māori, culture, and identity through storytelling. Guided by the vision, *kia mauriora te reo* - a future where te reo Māori is spoken everywhere, every day - Whakaata Māori fosters an environment where the language and its cultural heritage can thrive.

Established in 2004 Whakaata Māori has

delivered some of Aotearoa New Zealand's most cherished content, connecting audiences with stories that celebrate and uplift te reo Māori and Māori culture.

Māori Television trades under its reo Māori name to better reflect the role it plays in revitalising te reo Māori, our culture, and sharing our stories across multiple platforms. Whakaata means 'to mirror', 'to reflect' or 'to display.' <https://whakaatamaori.co.nz>

## WANT TO DO BUSINESS IN OUR AREA? TALK TO US



Opunake and Coastal News is distributed free to every home and business within the rural area, bounded in the north by the New Plymouth city border, extending east to Egmont Village, and around to the edge of Stratford, south to and including Hawera township, and inland to Kaponga and through Eltham.

We are an independent paper based in Opunake, which is targeting both the towns' and rural communities. We aim to have news coverage within all the areas of our distribution.

We want to be involved with your business. Call today and discuss your marketing options with the team.

COVERING THE COAST

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# The Invisible Man of NZ Music

When you look through the photos on their website of the bands inducted into the NZ Music Hall of Fame, you realise that even the most famous names appear only once. Sir Dave Dobbyn is there in his own right, and with Th' Dudes, and that's it – one band only. But last year a favourite son of Upper Hutt and Paekākāriki sneaked in there unnoticed for the second time in a band. That's because the induction happened anonymously.

Taranaki-born Wayne Mason co-founded and wrote hit songs for both The Fourmyula ("Nature") in the late 60s, and The Warratahs ("Hands of my Heart") in the 80s, both

bands are in the Hall of Fame, and both bands were based in the Wellington/Hutt Valley region. For extra measure he co-wrote Song of the Year in 1975, "Thru the Southern Moonlight" by Rockinghorse. Wayne has his own Wikipedia article, but somehow, he is missing from their "List of NZ Musicians," even though he has been a solo artist since 1995.

The good news is that if you google images of "Dave Dobbyn Neil Finn", Wayne does appear. It's the 2001 celebration of NZ's best songs for the first 75 years of APRA, and there is Wayne beside Neil and Dave – 1st, 2nd and 3rd, in that order. But not in order of fame. For Wayne it has always been about the band, rather

than himself as a marketable face, and he is an expert at not attracting or inviting personal publicity. How to rescue this legendary NZ musician from obscurity?

"People need to know about this amazing talent and these amazing achievements," thought Wayne's younger brother (he could be the one writing this article.) And so, the Mason Brothers project was launched in 2019 at 4th Wall Theatre in New Plymouth, playing fifty years of Wayne's beautiful songs with two slight impediments: Paul's zero social media skills and Wayne's non-self-promotion. Their show rolls into Taranaki again in early May.

The brothers first toured in 2020, playing at the

Ōpunakē Events Centre, but with Covid restrictions. This time they return to the Ōpunakē Playhouse and are looking forward to the sort of warm welcome they have also experienced in smaller Taranaki centres like Inglewood, Eltham, Kaponga and Mangamingi. The back-up show on the following night is at Kakaramea.

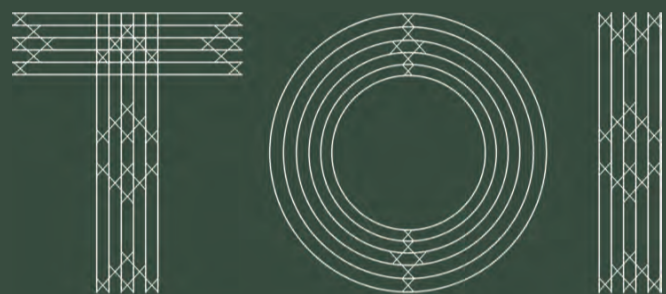
Can Aotearoa New Zealand rescue Wayne Mason from relative anonymity in the 100th year of APRA? Taranaki, your help is needed.

Another nice connection with Ōpunakē is that Wayne's first solo CD was recorded at the Painting Studio at the top of Oeo Rd – a famous local place.

What: Mason Brothers.



**The Mason Brothers.**  
Where and when: Friday 8 May, 7.30pm, Ōpunakē Playhouse, Layard St; and Saturday 9 May, 7.30pm, Kakaramea Hall. Cost: \$20 cash door sales.



## FOUNDATION ŌPUNAKE DROP IN SESSIONS

**Toi Foundation drop In weekly sessions, 11 am – 3pm every Wednesday**

Come and meet with us and find out how to register, apply or complete reports.

**No appointment necessary**

**Where: Ōpunake Library, 43 Tasman Street**

### Live entertainment



Bert Treffers and Stephanie MacKenzie playing at Opunake's Green Cow last Friday night.

### Mason Brothers

*Kiwi music legend Wayne Mason (ex-Fourmyula, ex-Warratahs - both inducted into Hall of Fame), writer of NZ's no.1 song "Nature", is joined by brother Paul Bowers-Mason as they play through 60 years of Wayne's songs. The acoustic feel of guitar and bass, vocal harmonies, Wayne's blues and boogie keyboards, and the stories behind the songs.*



**Friday 8 May 7.30pm**  
**Opunake Playhouse, Layard St**  
**Tickets available at Sinclairs**  
**\$20 cash door sales**

Photography by Derek's Darkroom Limited



# A rootin'-tootin' celebration of country music's greatest hits

Saddle up, New Zealand! Operatunity, the country's favourite daytime concert company, invites you to a wild ride through the heart of classic country with its toe-tapping, barnstorming new show: Hoedown Showdown which runs from April 20 to May 22.

Get ready for a boot-scootin' celebration of country music, filled with frenzied fiddling and heartfelt ballads. This all-out country party features hits from legends like John Denver, Dolly Parton, Tammy Wynette, Johnny Cash, and Willie Nelson – the songs that defined a genre and continue to steal our hearts.

Headlining this hoedown is the electrifying Marian Burns, lighting up the stage with her world-renowned, foot-stomping fiddling, and the incomparable Karl Perigo, whose yodelling and powerhouse vocals bring the house down every time. They'll be joined by a phenomenal live country band and a line-up of favourite Operatunity artists, delivering high-energy performances, heartfelt harmonies, and pure country magic.



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"It's joy, it's fun, it's music that gets people clapping and singing and grinning from ear to ear," says leading resident artist Karl Perigo. "Whether you're a die-hard country fan or just love a good time, this show's for you!"

Expect singalongs, banter, barn-dance spirit, and a feel-good atmosphere that only Operatunity can deliver.

Hoedown Showdown is part of a series of special concerts throughout

2026, marking 25 years of Operatunity concerts across New Zealand. With nearly 1 million tickets sold and hundreds of New Zealand artists employed, Operatunity has become one of the country's most treasured live performance companies.

For more information and to book visit Operatunity's website [www.operatunity.co.nz](http://www.operatunity.co.nz) or call their friendly office team on 0508 266 237. Patrons are encouraged to secure their seats early to avoid disappointment.

About Operatunity:

Operatunity is New Zealand's leading producer of daytime concerts, bringing world-class music and entertainment to retired communities across New Zealand. They present nearly 200 concerts a year

spanning rock 'n' roll, musical theatre, country, classical, and more, across 24 venues from Whangarei to Invercargill. Committed to caring for senior communities, all venues have been carefully selected for their convenience, accessibility, and easy parking. This ensures that patrons can enjoy a stress-free and comfortable experience. In addition to the performance, audiences have the opportunity to enjoy complimentary morning tea and mingle with the stars of the show. With a focus on supporting local artists and providing exceptional musical experiences,

Operatunity continues to captivate audiences with its diverse and delightful performances.

## Scandal and Secrets: 'The Cottage' Brings Farce to Cue Theatre



L-R: Shawn Stanley, Chris Morrison, Lydia Marston, Lisa Beynon, Nathan Eriwata, Kaitlyn Bingham

Get ready for a night of high-energy hilarity as Cue Theatre in Inglewood presents its latest production, The Cottage. Written by Sandy Rustin and directed by Sharren Read, this delightfully silly British-style drawing-room farce transports audiences back to 1923 for a whirlwind of love, infidelity, and impeccable comedic timing.

The story centres on Sylvia, a woman who decides to throw caution to the wind by exposing her secret affair to both her husband and her lover's wife. What follows is a chaotic chain of events that unravels a messy web of secrets. Expect the unexpected as the plot takes hilarious twists, delivering a fast-paced comedic style that will keep you laughing until the final curtain.

The play features a talented cast of six local Taranaki actors who bring this 1920s romp to life, proving that performing arts are thriving right here in our backyard.

Enjoy a fabulously fun night out at The Cottage

- Venue: Cue Theatre, 34 Matai Street, Inglewood
- Dates: Wednesday 13th May – Saturday 23rd May 2026
- Showtimes: 7:30 PM (Evening); Sunday 17th May Matinee at 2:00 PM
- Tickets: Purchase online at [www.trybooking.com/nz/BBPJ](http://www.trybooking.com/nz/BBPJ)

Cue Theatre Inglewood presents

# the COTTAGE

A COMEDY BEHIND CLOSED DOORS

BY SANDY RUSTIN

**13-23 MAY**

CUE THEATRE INGLEWOOD

DIRECTED BY SHARREN READ

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By arrangement with ORIGIN Theatrical, on behalf of Dramatists Play Service, Inc and Broadway Licensing Global

## Coastal Taranaki

### ON-FARM MACHINERY & HERD DISPERSAL

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**Wednesday 6th May, 2026**

**10.30am Machinery**

**11.30am Cows**

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Gillian Gibbon as Rose, Jo Fuller as Pauline, Christine King as Ivy and Stephanie McKellar as Angela.

plans pay off in the most satisfying of ways.  
Call Girls will be opening at New Plymouth's Little Theatre on April 29 and will run till May 9. Don't miss it.  
*Mary Barron.*



Stephanie McKellar bidding all come along.

The next issue of the Opunake & Coastal News will be published on May 7.

## Call Girls opening on April 29

When Beach Haven Rest Home located on prime beachfront real estate faces closure at the hands of a large-scale developer and a dodgy councillor, the residents resolve to raise the money required to stay put. With the blessing of Sarah, the rest home manager, and the help of some younger allies, four senior ladies who are long-time residents adopt alter egos to attract paying chat line clients. Some residents embrace their new vocation effortlessly, while others find their stride more slowly (and hilariously). This play features many characters you'll swear you've met before, laugh-out-loud moments, and heartwarming interactions that will have you reaching for the tissues. One thing's for certain: the residents'



### Merry Month of May

- 2nd May Saturday 11am onwards  
Family Fun day out at Coastal School Gym  
Heart of Okato  
May day Morris Dancing  
Medieval Knights display  
Children dress up take part  
Afternoon tea Me old china  
Pumpkins need a home  
Lions food stall ice cream  
Family ticket \$10 Renovating Plunket rooms.

3rd May Sunday 10 am harvest festival Service food to community St Pauls church Carthew Street

## A lot of good reading at Hawera Genealogy Book Fair

If you are wanting to stock up on winter reading the Hawera Genealogy Book Fair is the place to go on Saturday 2nd or Sunday 3rd May. Held at their rooms in Union Street the fair is open from 9.30 am to 5pm. Hawera Genealogy book fairs have the reputation of offering good quality books and people from out of the province have labelled it as the best kept secret in New Zealand. The books are displayed on library shelves with all fiction alphabetically sorted by author and non-fiction into categories, making for easy finding if you have a particular interest or favourite author. The popular New Zealand section is vast – recent and classic authors, biographies, poetry, history, sports, farming, travel and much more. Reduced Prices - for the May fair all fiction is down from \$2.00 to just \$1.00 making it a great opportunity for people to really stock up on their reading material in these hard times. Children's picture books are only 50c each, while teens can fill a paper carry-bag with junior and senior fiction for just \$1.00 a bag. The popular specialty section which includes rare and often hard to find books are at marked prices. There is a big selection of DVDs, CDs and records available. Payment is by cash or on-line banking. The book sales room is also open every Wednesday 1-3pm and the first Saturday of each month from 9.30 to noon. Donations of books are gratefully received and can be dropped off during these hours or phone Jill on 0274 310 145 to arrange an alternative time. The Genealogy research room is open during the public hours for the public to get advice on how to research their family history, both locally and overseas. Maybe you have a family mystery you would love to solve? Our research material includes a large selection of South Taranaki publications. The Hawera Genealogy and Local History Group can be contacted via email at haweragenealogy.org.nz or phone 0274 310 145. We also have a Facebook page.

## Coastal Folk Music Club meet in Okato

Well what an amazing amount of talent in Okato and district. Despite a deluge of rain, thunder and lightning, quite a few hearty souls gathered to attend the first session of the Coastal Folk Music Club either to play or listen. There was a real variety of talent, piano accordion, small flute, recorder, guitar, small pipes, singing and storytelling. Most songs were home-grown. The time passed quickly. The afternoon was a great success with plenty of hot coffee, cake, tea and great company. The gathering will be on the third Sunday of every month starting at 2pm and going till 4pm at St Pauls Hall Okato. A koha goes toward renovations of the hall and Plunket rooms. Winter is on its way so come and enjoy a once a month gathering as an audience or participant.



**MOVING?**  
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**Autumn Chrysanthemum & Flower Show**  
Saturday May 2, 12pm to 4pm  
Sunday May 3, 10am to 3pm  
Hawera Community Centre, Albion Street  
Displays with goods for sale .. plants, seeds, seedlings, crafts.  
Refreshments available  
Admission \$5 - Children free  
Society Sales Table  
Entries & Enquiries  
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hedgehog.dreaming@gmail.com  
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NP LITTLE THEATRE and THE ACCOUNTING ROOM present  
**Call Girls**  
by James Carrick  
29 APRIL-9 MAY 2026  
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# 2026 NZ Rose Selection 15 & 16 May

The countdown is on for the New Zealand Rose Selection happening in New Plymouth from the 14 – 16 May, organised and co-hosted by the NZ Rose Centre and the Taranaki Irish Social Club Incorporated.

Special Guest Ambassador of Ireland Jane Connolly will be in attendance. Hoping to following in the footsteps of the 2025 NZ Rose Ciara Jo Hanlon, 12 entrants from throughout New Zealand will gather in New Plymouth for the Rose Selection where the 2026 New Zealand Rose will be announced and in August will travel to Ireland for the Rose of Tralee International Festival.

The largest festival in Ireland filled with music, arts, entertainment, family fun, parades and, of course, at the heart of the festival is the 32 Roses from around the world hoping to follow in the footsteps of the 2025



2025 Rose of Tralee Katelyn Cummins.

Rose of Tralee Katelyn Cummins.

The 2026 NZ Rose entrants will represent their region as well as a sponsor who will be advertised on their sash. Sponsors logos will be advertised in the Official Rose Programme, the projector screens at the events and on social media to show our appreciation.

Each of our 12 NZ finalists will be twined with a Rose Bud, they will have a social outing together and attend the two main events on Friday and Saturday to be held at the Devon Hotel in New Plymouth. This year the New Zealand Rose Centre will celebrate 60 years of the selecting Roses in New Zealand 1966-2026.

The Rose of Tralee is a festival that celebrates women of Irish heritage around the world, and aims to select an international ambassador to represent the festival and all it encompasses. Our Roses aim to be role models for young people everywhere, and to share their time and story about their rose journey itself

is really special. Come meet our 2025 NZ Rose and hear about her year, and enjoy the Irish culture entertainment and atmosphere of the weekend's events.

The Roses involved with the competition are all incredible woman doing amazing things in their local communities and are inspirational ambassadors. Our 2026 NZ Entrants are already getting to know each other and making connections ahead of the fun filled weekend planned for them in Taranaki.

Zealand Rose final events will be held at the Devon Hotel with the winner announced on Saturday 16 May. Tickets can be purchased by emailing [tisc@xtra.co.nz](mailto:tisc@xtra.co.nz) for a ticket order form with online payment. Links and posters for the supporters and Rose events "Meet the Roses" and "Rose Final" are on our social media pages Facebook and Instagram 'New Zealand Rose of Tralee' & "Taranaki Irish Club" Follow us for Rose updates and more details about the events.

Rose of Tralee International Festival visit the official website [www.roseoftralee.ie](http://www.roseoftralee.ie)

The two 2026 New

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We are open **Mon - Fri 9am to 4pm**

## Bowel screening age lowered to 58

The bowel screening starting age for people in Taranaki has been lowered from 60 to 58. People turning 58 or 59 years old will receive a bowel screening kit around the time of their birthday.

The simple bowel screening test can help find bowel cancer early, when it can often be successfully treated. Further investigation can also find pre-cancerous growths that can be removed.

You will be mailed a bowel screening kit around your next birthday or contacted by a local health provider. If you have any bowel symptoms that you are worried about, please see your doctor straight away – don't wait for a bowel screening kit.

Once people start the programme, a bowel screening test kit will be provided to them every two years, usually mailed to their home. The bowel screening test is simple and easy to do. It's free, and you can do it at home.

When you get your bowel screening kit, make sure



Bowel screening age lowered.

you do the test as soon as possible and send it back that day or the next day. It's best not to do the test just before the weekend or a public holiday to avoid the sample being delayed in the post.

For further information visit the [healthnz.govt.nz](http://healthnz.govt.nz) website

or call 0800 924 432, or talk to your doctor.

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[www.fultonswimschool.co.nz](http://www.fultonswimschool.co.nz)

### 2026 NZ Rose Final Events

15 & 16 May - Devon Hotel New Plymouth

**Friday 15 May - Meet the Roses - 7pm**

Live Rose interviews & performances  
Ceili dance & live music Adrian Whelan  
Cash bar : Raffle **Tickets \$40** includes supper

**Saturday 16 May - NZ Rose Final - 7pm**

Live Rose interviews & 2026 NZ Rose announced  
live music **CAMPBELL VIBE** Cash bar : Raffle  
**Tickets \$65** includes supper

Tickets email [tisc@xtra.co.nz](mailto:tisc@xtra.co.nz) 027 330 8510  
[www.roseoftralee.ie](http://www.roseoftralee.ie) Celebrating 60 years of NZ Roses 1966 - 2026  
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Via an appointment from the Opuake Medical Centre

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11.30am-12.30pm

**DID YOU KNOW?**  
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### CoastalCare Haumarū ki Tai

Permanently residing in the building are:

**OPUNAKE PHARMACY, OPUNAKE MEDICAL CENTRE, ST. JOHN AMBULANCE, PLUNKET & TDHB SERVICES.**

For a full list of services & happenings here

**Find us on Facebook**

or visit us at [www.coastalcare.co.nz](http://www.coastalcare.co.nz)  
CONTACT ARETHA LEMON  
Facility Manager on 06 761 8488

### COASTAL FOLK

VENUE: OLD ST PAUL'S CHURCH HALL

EVERY 3<sup>RD</sup> SUNDAY OF THE MONTH FROM 2PM - 4PM

DONATION ENTRY AT THE DOOR  
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SO COME ALONG!  
PUT YOUR NAME ON THE BOARD  
PLAY A COUPLE OF TUNES EACH  
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& A CUP OF TEA OR COFFEE

OLD ST PAUL'S CHURCH HALL, EVERY LAST SUNDAY, 2-4PM

## What's On Listings

### ONGOING

#### Movies at Everybodys Theatre in

**Opunake:** Playing several days and nights

### CHURCH NOTICES



*Church Services - Manaia, Kaponga, Opunake, Pungarehu, Okata, Oakura*

#### Opunake Co-operating Parish

Havelock Street, Opunake - St Pauls - every Sunday

9am: Coffee prior to service

9.30am: Service

Rahotu - Wesley - 11am first Sunday of the month

#### Okato Co-operating Parish

St. James, Oakura - Sunday Service every Sunday,

10.00am

St. Paul's, Okato - 1st and 2nd Sundays - Worship Service;

3rd Sunday - Communion Service and 4th Sunday at

7.00pm

4th Sunday at 2pm - Cake & Debate

Open church for silent reflection, Pew for You, every 3rd

Wednesday of each month, 4-5pm

#### Opunake Catholic Church

St Martins, Pungarehu: Temporarily closed - no Masses

Our Lady Star of the Sea, Opunake: 10am every Sunday

#### Other areas

Sacred Heart, Manaia - Temporarily closed - No Masses

St Joseph's, Hawera - Every Sat at 5pm; Every Sun at 9am

St Patrick's, Patea - 4th Sunday of month; 11.00am

St Francis de Sales, Waverley - 2nd Sunday of month;

11.00am

#### St Patricks Catholic Church, Kaponga

Sunday Mass 8.45am.

Thursday Mass 10.00am (subject to change).

#### St Patricks Catholic Church, Okato

Saturday Vigil 6.00pm - weekly

#### The Wave

Pentecostal Church 64 Domett St, Opunake

Sunday Services 10.30am

Women's Group 10am Tuesday

Men's Group 7pm Wednesday

Come along or contact

Belinda Philp

027 935 6191

#### St. Barnabas Anglican Church

141 Tasman St, Opunake

Sunday Services 9am

Communion 1st, 2nd, & 3rd Sunday

Prayer & Praise 4th Sunday

Every 5th Sunday all 4 churches gather for

a Combined Service

#### Okato Community Church

Meets 10.30am Sunday at Hempton Hall.

Everyone welcome

#### St John's Community Church. Kaponga

Cnr West and Egmont Streets.

Sunday Services 10.30am followed by morning tea

#### Manaia Union Fellowship

Terou St. Manaia.

Meet 10am every 3rd Sunday of the month with communion

#### Friend & Fellowship Group

Thursdays @ Manaia

Support our Faith and support each other with Prayer

and Bible study

Encouraging interactive discussion and Praise

All are welcome

We would love it if you could come

Rodney & Val 274 8550 or 0272384187

#### St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church

90 Regan St., Stratford,

9:00am Sunday: Breakfast and Study

10:30am: Breakfast is followed by "Coming Together

Worship Service"

Thursday: Study Group at 2 pm at 96b Brecon Rd.,

Stratford.

Contact Rev. John Mattock 027 2039799

#### Methodist Church Hawera

Regent Street 10am, 2nd and 4th Sundays each month

#### Manaia Community Church part of the Global Anglicans

Robert Gibson Hall, Manaia

1st, 2nd, 4th, 5th Sundays at 10 am

3rd Sunday Family Service at 4pm with shared meal to

follow

Contact: Rev Phil Woodmass 027 424 8318

each week. Refer timetable in newspaper.

**MONDAYS: The Barnabas Centre Exercise and Social Morning:** St. Barnabas Church Hall, 141 Tasman

Street Opunake: Each Monday 10 am - 12:30 pm. Information call Jenny 027 379 6844 or Ian 027 622 4878.

**Beginners Social Dance Classes:** Central School Hall, New Plymouth, 7pm.

### TUESDAYS

**Opunake Walking Group:** Every Tuesday 10am. Meet outside Club Hotel on Havelock St. Phone Margaret 027 477 5600 for more info if needed, or just turn up.

**Pungarehu Golf Club Twilight:** Tee-off between 4.30 & 6.30pm.

**Brazilian Jiu Jitsu:** Adult classes, 7pm, Sinclair Events Centre, Opunake.

**Opunake District RSA:** Meet 1st Tuesday of every month at 5.30pm at the Opunake Fire Station. Financial Members are welcome to attend.

### WEDNESDAYS

**Coastal Young Farmers:** Meet 2nd Wednesday of every month at 7pm at Butlers Reef Bar & Cafe, Oakura.

**Lisa Keen Audiology at Coastal Care, Opunake:** Wednesdays 9am - 5pm, for an appointment call 027 591 4222 - 0800 555 676

**Okato & District Historical Society open every Wednesday:** At the Okato Community Trust Hall, 47 Cumming St, Okato. phone Meg on 06 752 4566.

**Opunake Embroiders Guild:** Meet 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of the month, 10.30am-3pm at the Opunake Business Centre, Napier St, Opunake. Just come along or phone Sheryl 06 761 8769.

**Toi Foundation drop-in sessions:** Opunake Library, 11am-3pm.

**Okato Community Market:** In Hempton Hall, Okato 4pm to 5.30pm.

**Sober and Drug Support Group:** Coastal Care Meeting Room, 7pm

**Free singing experience with Taranaki**

**Harmony Chorus:** Meet every Wednesday at Inglewood Mamaku Centre, 7-9.30 pm Phone

Helen 021 296 0700.

### THURSDAYS

**Egmont Euchre Club:** Every Thursday 1pm at the Opunake Bowling Club. Inquiries, 06 761 8337 or 06 761 8607.

**Brazilian Jiu Jitsu:** Adult classes, 7pm, Sinclair Events Centre, Opunake

**Taranaki Country Music Hall of Fame, Manaia:** Running every Thursday night from 7.30pm, 11 Surf Highway, South Road, Manaia.

### FRIDAYS

**Eltham Business Association Friday Markets:** 9:30am to 1pm, Carpark of Touch Point, High Street, Eltham.

**Beginners Social Dance Classes:** Oakura Hall, 6.15pm..

**Hawera Country & Variety Music Club:** Held every 2nd & 4th Friday monthly. Held at Hawera Pipe Band Hall, 89 Collins Street, Hawera @ 7pm. All welcome. Supper provided. Ph 021 2622 166.

### MARCH 18 TO APRIL 28

**Pink Hammer:** A production by Hawera Repertory Societ.y. At Repertory House.

### APRIL 7 TO MAY 2

**Turning Point Exhibition:** At the Village Gallery, Eltham.

### APRIL 24

**79th Annual Incalf Heifer Sale:** 923 Oeo Rd, Awatuna, 12 noon.

### APRIL 29 TO MAY 9

**Call Girls:** A production by NP Little Theatre.

### MAY 2

**Harvest Festival:** Coastal School Gym, 11am.

### MAY 2 & 3

**Autumn Flower Show:** Hawera Community Centre. See ad more more details.

**Book Fair:** Hawera Genealogy Building, Union St, Hawera. 9.30am-5pm.

### MAY 8

**Mason Brothers:** Opunake Playhouse, 7.30pm.

### MAY 8 & 9

**Living Well After 55 Expo:** Stratford War Memorial Hall, 10am-2pm.

### MAY 13 TO 23

**The Cottage:** A production by Cue Theatre. At Cue Theatre, Inglewood.

### MAY 15 & 16

**2026 NZ Rose Final Events:** Devon Hotel, New Plymouth. See story and ad for more details.

### JUNE 13

**Community Garden Workshop:** St Marys Community Garden, Hawera. 10am-2pm.

The next issue of Opunake & Coastal News will be out on the 7th of May. If you would like to contribute, phone us on 06 761 7016.



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**PUBLIC NOTICES**



**25<sup>th</sup> April 2026**

**Okato & District Anzac Day Service,  
10am Parade, Main Street  
Cenotaph Wreaths,  
10.30am Hempton Hall  
Tributes  
Coastal Taranaki School  
Guest speaker:  
Taranaki Rescue Helicopter**

**OKATO COMMUNITY MARKET**

Every Wednesday  
4 - 5.30pm

Hempton Hall  
Veges, Baking, Op Shop, Chocolate,  
Crafts, Books, and more

HAWERA GENEALOGY & LOCAL HISTORY GROUP

**BOOK FAIR**

Saturday 2 & Sunday 3 May 2026  
9.30am-5pm  
Hawera Genealogy Building  
48 Union Street, Hawera

**BRAZILIAN JIU JITSU,** Adults, Tuesday & Thursday 7pm at Sinclair Events Centre.



**OPUNAKE & COASTAL NEWS**  
06 761 7016

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craig.mcgill65@gmail.com

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The Opunake & Coastal News is distributed free to every home and business within the rural area, bounded in the north by the New Plymouth City border, extending east to Egmont Village and around to the edge of Stratford, south to and including Hawera township, inland to Kaponga and through Eltham.

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06 761 7016

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**2020 Ford Escape ECOBOOST**  
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**\$23,995**

**2012 Nissan JUKE**  
NZ New, Tinted Windows, Auto Headlights & Wipers, Keyless Entry & Ignition, Petrol, 1.6, CVT, 136kms



**\$10,995**

**2017 Ssangyong KORANDO LIMITED**  
Parking Sensors, Reversing Cameras, Tow Bar, Roof Rails, Tinted Windows, Driving Lights, NZ New, 2.0, Petrol, Auto, 63kms



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**2022 Honda Jazz CROSSTAR**  
Driving Lights, Monsoons, Stability Control, Keyless entry & Ignition, NZ New, Tinted Windows, 1.5, Petrol, Auto, 21kms



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**2016 Mazda 6 GSX**  
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