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Leaning pole of Paeroa

Paeroa RSA president John Hallett stands by the damaged belisha beacon that's been left to lean on the building since before Christmas.

Photo: KELLEY TANTAU

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

The Paeroa RSA was told it would be another three months before a belisha beacon that was hit by a car and left to lean against its building would

be repaired.

But a fix looks to be on the horizon, with Waka Kotahi New Zealand Transport Agency claiming all will be resolved come Wednesday.

The belisha beacon - a yellow-

low-coloured globe lamp atop a tall black and white striped pole, marking the pedestrian crossings of roads - was hit by a car before Christmas and left to lean against Paeroa's historic RSA on Belmont Rd.

"A truck backed into our spouting and damaged it, and we realised then that the spouting was in bad condition so we'd replace the whole lot, but we couldn't replace it with the pole leaning against the build-

ing," RSA president John Hallett said.

"I thought: 'Oh well, they'll fix it shortly' and that's when they came along and cemented it into the ground."

CONTINUED ON P2

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Fix on way for leaning beacon of Paeroa

CONTINUED FROM P1

John understood the beacon was concreted in place to make it safe for pedestrians, but he sent a "polite but rather pointed" email to the transport agency asking for it to be rectified.

"After six months of us waiting, they told us it would take another three months to be able to source the parts," he said.

Hauraki District Council was also aware of the issue, with Mayor Toby Adams telling *The Profile* council had "encouraged as nicely as we can" for Waka Kotahi to fix the issue as it was "their pole on their highway".

"It's disappointing when it's something as visual as that in the main street of a town. It makes it look like it's unloved," he said. "There's enough stuff we haven't got control of, but you'd think that NZTA would step up and get this one rectified as soon as they can."

After receiving an email about the issue from *The Profile* on February 29, Waka Kotahi's system manager Waikato Andy Oakley said a repair was on its way.

"Unfortunately [a belisha beacon is] not an item our contractors have in stock and we've had to wait for a replacement. We've just heard today that its arrived and the replacement is scheduled to take place on March 6.



Paeroa RSA couldn't replace its damaged spouting because the pole was leaning on it. Photo: KELLEY TANTAU

ment is scheduled to take place on March 6.

"In the meantime," he said, "we've requested that our contractors take a look at the concrete job and ensure there is no additional damage or risk until the replacement beacon can be installed."

tractors take a look at the concrete job and ensure there is no additional damage or risk until the replacement beacon can be installed."



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Wed Mar 6	Thu Mar 7	Fri Mar 8	Sat Mar 9	Sun Mar 10	Mon Mar 11	Tue Mar 12
 Morning: 3:44am 3.0, 9:56am 1.0 Afternoon: 3:56pm 3.0, 10:22pm 0.9 Sunrise: 7:08am, Sunset: 7:50pm Best At: 9:21am 9:52pm Moon: Rise 1:27am, Set 5:12pm	 Morning: 4:52am 3.0, 11:00am 0.9 Afternoon: 5:02pm 3.0, 11:32pm 0.8 Sunrise: 7:09am, Sunset: 7:48pm Best At: 10:22am 10:52pm Moon: Rise 2:36am, Set 6:00pm	 Morning: 5:56am 3.2, 6:11pm 3.2 Afternoon: 12:03pm 0.8 Sunrise: 7:10am, Sunset: 7:47pm Best At: 11:22am 11:50pm Moon: Rise 3:51am, Set 6:41pm	 Morning: 12:35am 0.6, 6:55am 3.4 Afternoon: 1:01pm 0.6, 7:16pm 3.4 Sunrise: 7:11am, Sunset: 7:45pm Best At: 12:18pm Moon: Rise 5:09am, Set 7:16pm	 Morning: 1:30am 0.4, 7:49am 3.6 Afternoon: 1:56pm 0.4, 8:14pm 3.5 Sunrise: 7:12am, Sunset: 7:44pm Best At: 12:46am 1:13pm Moon: New Moon, Rise 6:27am, Set 7:46pm	 Morning: 2:21am 0.2, 8:40am 3.7 Afternoon: 2:49pm 0.2, 9:06pm 3.7 Sunrise: 7:13am, Sunset: 7:43pm Best At: 1:39am 2:05pm Moon: Rise 7:44am, Set 8:14pm	 Morning: 3:10am 0.2, 9:31am 3.8 Afternoon: 3:39pm 0.1, 9:56pm 3.8 Sunrise: 7:13am, Sunset: 7:41pm Best At: 2:30am 2:56pm Moon: Rise 8:59am, Set 8:43pm

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MOON AND FISH KEYS



TIME DIFFERENCES FOR OTHER PLACES

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

PLACE	Hr	High Mn	Low Mn
Coromandel	-0	04	-0 04
Whitianga	-0	01	-0 05
Tairua	+0	11	+0 21
Whangamata	-0	02	-0 05
Waihi Beach	-0	11	-0 12

Coast community 'at its limit' over roads

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

Voices and passions were high at a public meeting in Te Puru last week, as residents shared their concerns about the safety of Thames Coast Road with the council, Waka Kotahi, and police.

The February 27 meeting was attended by nearly 200 residents. For 90 minutes, they spoke about issues ranging from drivers ignoring speed signs, overtaking dangerously, and causing near misses; to a lack of footpaths and safe walking areas.

Particularly dangerous areas were pointed out: the public toilets in Thornton Bay; the bridge between Tapu and Te Mata; and the higher speed limits in Whakatete Bay.

"I'm feeling rage," one woman from Waiomu said through tears. "We can't cross the road in Waiomu to get to the park because people drive like maniacs. It feels like going through the bureaucratic process is just going to be red tape... everyone's hands are tied but ours aren't, and I feel like it's time for us to do something. The community is at its limit."

A man said of Thornton Bay: "It's been nicknamed Bathurst... Why there hasn't been deaths there I don't know."

Waka Kotahi representative Andrew Wharekawa-Smith took notes as residents tossed out suggestions to improve the road. Ideas included more



Thames-Coromandel Mayor Len Salt speaks to a capacity crowd at the public meeting.

Photo: ALICE PARMINTER

pull-in bays; double yellow lines through the bays; speed humps or other traffic calming measures; speed cameras; pedestrian crossings; electronic speed signs; extra signage including 'children crossing' signs; and more police patrols.

All the officials present at the meeting acknowledged the community's frustration, but their response was largely for the community to "be the squeaky wheel", saying

residents needed to push for change from the government.

Andrew said the temporary speed limit signs, which reduced speeds along the coast in the wake of last year's summer storms, were only allowed to remain until emergency road works were complete. Rules for permanent changes were currently under review by the Ministry of Transport, he said, and he asked residents to email their concerns, saying the new

government would likely pay attention to strong community support.

Sergeant Scott Tyrrell, the officer in charge of Hauraki's road policing unit, said there was only so much his team of five could do to catch speeders.

"My biggest issue is resourcing," he said.

"It's 'see something, do something', and we don't have the resources to see everything."

He encouraged the public to

call *555 with details of dangerous drivers, or take dashcam footage into the police station.

Thames Coromandel District Mayor Len Salt, meanwhile, encouraged everyone to email their concerns and suggestions to local MP Scott Simpson.

"Don't be a passive person sitting in your community; make your voice heard," he said.

Mayor Salt also said the council was aiming to invest heavily in the region's roads, and was in the process of applying for funding from two sources.

Public submissions on the TCDC regional land transport plan, asking for \$811 million plus \$64 million for maintenance and renewals, closed on March 4.

The council's bid for over \$1 billion from the national cyclone recovery fund is still open.

The last word at the meeting came from Senior Constable Gareth Carter, urging personal responsibility on the road.

"Everyone here thinks it's Aucklanders speeding... A huge majority of the people we stop are locals."

DETAILS: Concerns about road safety, speed, and requests for improvement can be emailed to nz.simpson@parliament.govt.nz and speedmanagement@nzta.govt.nz



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Extra security helps at Thames Hospital

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

Two additional security staff were stationed at Thames Hospital over the summer period, following a nationwide increase in reported verbal and physical incidents.

Health New Zealand Waikato's interim operations director for community and rural health Rachel Swain told *The Profile* that, as a summer hotspot, the Thames Hospital ED had been allocated two extra security staff per shift, 24 hours a day, seven days a week from December 18, 2023, through to January 15, 2024.

It was one of 24 New Zealand hospitals to receive between two and five additional security staff to help manage pressures over the holiday peak.

"Nationally, in December last year, 200 additional security staff (93 FTEs) were provided to 32 emergency departments over the summer period following an increase in reported verbal and physical incidents in the previous 12 months," Rachel said.

"Health New Zealand Te Whatu Ora identified eight higher risk hospitals, which each received five additional security staff until the end of February.

"Thames Hospital ED was included in the group of 24 hospitals, being located near the summer hotspots in the Coro-



Two additional security staff were stationed at Thames Hospital over the summer period, following a nationwide increase in reported verbal and physical incidents.

File Photo

mandel."

Rachel said the additional staff provided to Thames Hospital's ED over this time matched its busiest ever summer period, and contributed - alongside normal security measures

and additional clinical staff - to achieving "a calm and safe department".

Although the additional security staff had finished their fixed term at Thames Hospital, an extra security team member was

appointed prior to Christmas on a fixed term 12 month contract for the night shift at Thames, she said, while safety and security were "constantly being reviewed across our hospitals".

"In addition, our CCTV, inter-

"Our staff deserve a safe workplace, and we want people who need healthcare to be able to access it in a safe and welcoming environment."

- Rachel Swain

com, and electronic card access used at the hospital are being reviewed, while across Waikato, staff are being provided de-escalation training to help keep them and our patients safe."

Rachel said Te Whatu Ora took the security of its staff, patients, and visitors "incredibly seriously".

"Feedback from frontline ED staff across the country has been very positive; they say the presence of additional security had made a difference to their everyday work," she said.

"Our staff deserve a safe workplace, and we want people who need healthcare to be able to access it in a safe and welcoming environment.

"Emergency departments in particular are a vital part of our health system, and all New Zealanders - and the people caring for them - need to feel confident they will be safe when they walk through our doors."





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Mentors needed for driver licence programme

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

The Thames Community Centre is on the hunt for volunteer mentors for its award-winning driver education programme.

The programme takes people through the driving licencing process, from learner right to a full licence. Students on their restricted licence receive 12 weeks of lessons by a volunteer mentor, involving twice-weekly hour-long sessions behind the wheel.

Centre manager Jeff Whitfield said another six or more mentors were needed to join its current roster of 10.

“The mentors that we have all report how wonderful it is to be involved in the success of the students.

“They love to get to know new people,” he said.

“Some of them were nervous that they didn’t know enough about the road code, but that’s something that they learn as they go along. They’re well supported: we have three workshops a year for them, we give them some initial training with a driving instructor.”

Many of the centre’s current mentors were drivers on their own time - former bus or taxi drivers, or people who drive for a living - and Jeff said the skills and experience they brought to



Ryan receives his restricted licence after a driving mentorship from Thames Community Centre. Photo: SUPPLIED

the role was invaluable.

“There were lots of people sitting a learner licence because they could sit a theory course, but they didn’t have a legal car to do the driving in or a fully qualified driver to sit with them for the practices,” Jeff said.

“We set those people up with individual mentors and they use the Thames Valley Toyota

car that we have and go out for practices.

“We also throw in a few lessons with a professional instructor for that programme as well and that gets them through to their restricted.”

The programme is also part of the centre’s wider commitment to get people connected to and volunteering within the

community, an ethos which saw it named the most outstanding community driver education programme at last year’s Driving Change national conference.

“What we say to the students is that you don’t have to pay any fees; but what we’d really like you to do is to help build our community and also build

yourself, by giving back for what you receive,” Jeff said.

“Depending on how much we ‘invest’ in them, they give back so many hours [of community service]... If somebody does the whole licence and gets pretty much all the services, it’s around 60 hours that they give back over a few years.”

Last year, around 100 people passed through the driver education course. On average, they will then go on to donate around 15 hours each back to the community.

“We place people at community gardens, op shops, special events, have them at the museum... We’ve also had people get jobs through the volunteer work they were doing,” Jeff said.

“We had one young man who went up and did a sausage sizzle for a local health provider at a public park, and they liked his attitude and his energy so much that they said, ‘why don’t you come down and wash a few of our vans’. Now he’s a maintenance guy there.

“It makes the programme really robust, that reciprocal arrangement.”

DETAILS: To find out more about becoming a mentor, contact Jeff Whitfield at tcrc@xtra.co.nz or 027 868 9797.



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New ultra-fast fibre connections planned for Hauraki-Coromandel

The planned expansion of ultra-fast fibre connectivity to more than 2000 homes and businesses is a huge step forward for the Thames-Coromandel and Hauraki districts, Coromandel MP Scott Simpson says.

Chorus' new build programme got underway in mid-February, and is expected to take 18 months to complete.

It will see fibre rolled out to 59 communities across New Zealand in locations adjacent to urban areas or close to the existing Chorus network, from Kerikeri in the north to Winton in the south.

"It means more of our local communities are set to benefit from greater connectivity," Mr Simpson said.

"Pauanui, Wharekaho, Kuaotunu, Te Mata, Onemana, Little Bay, Opoutere, Kerepēhi, and Whiritoa will soon be able to enjoy all the benefits that access to fast and reliable fibre internet brings.

"Greater connectivity across our communities makes the Coromandel and our region even more attractive for people who want to work, raise their families, or simply visit the best part of our country."

Chorus' fibre build programme will be delivered on a staged basis from February, 2024, to June, 2025.

The company said that due to the cost of bringing a fibre network to remote areas, those living in a more rural location would be unlikely to be reached by the programme.

Chorus said the work was expected to be completed by the middle of next year.

The company said it would be targeting "low-hanging fruit": sites close to the existing network.

"Apart from making economic sense, this is good politics: it can be frustrating for users who are near misses for the existing fibre network," it said.

The expansion of its fibre network will reach another 10,000 premises throughout New Zealand.

This was the first official move that took the network beyond areas covered by the government's Ultrafast Broadband programme and the rural extensions, Chorus said.

Around 1.8 million premises or roughly 87 per cent of the population are connected to existing fibre networks.



Car enthusiasts check out the V8s on display at this year's event.

File Photo: TERESA RAMSEY

V8s raise \$10k for community

By TALLIS AUSTEN, Paeroa College Gateway Student

Car and motorcycle enthusiasts flocked to Rotary's annual V8 Show and Swap Meet this year.

Rotary Paeroa president Katie McLaren said the total turnout for the event was between 2000 and 3000 people, with a wide variety of V8 cars, trucks and motorbikes on display at the Paeroa Domain on February 24.

Last year, the domain was unavailable following Cyclone Gabrielle and the show had to be held at a smaller, alternative venue.

"It seemed busier than last year. The difference is in spaces, because the domain is quite big, it seemed a bit more spread out because it's a bigger space, but I think there were more people," Katie said.

In the end, an orange V8 truck, which had been a big crowd favourite, took out the title of People's Choice.

Around \$10,000 was raised from the event, which Katie said would be put back into the community for things like sending kids to school camps, giving donations to local families and life education trusts, and to gener-

ally aid people in need.

The event was run by volunteers, from Rotarians and Lion's club members taking money and checking vehicle numbers at the entrances, to local students sorting recycling from rubbish.

"It was great to have them and also great for us, just to be a bit more environmentally friendly," she said.

Next year will be the 20th show, and Katie said: "We're always happy to take feedback, we're excited to be working towards making the event even bigger and better next year".

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Businesses pleased about timed parking strip

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

Tim Watts was dancing inside his Paeroa supermarket after hearing the news that Hauraki District Council would be implementing a 30 minute parking limit outside his store.

The jovial response comes after the Paeroa Four Square owner requested council establish restricted parking due to the quick turnaround of his customers, and after witnessing a diminishing patronage when large events took place in the town.

“Around early last year we noticed that parking was a big issue, probably made worse with the Kōpū-Hikuai Road being shut,” he said, “but it was more of an issue of locals not being able to get in and visit the store.”

“And while major events are wicked for the town, they don’t tend to support local businesses... we could see pretty easy drops in terms of patronage, and there was frustration from customers and things like that. So, while I’m a big fan of events, we didn’t want them to come at a cost to businesses.”

At its meeting on February 28, council voted to establish a 30 minute parking limit for the eight angled car parks outside Four Square on Normanby Rd. They also voted to create one mobility park along the same strip.



Paeroa Four Square owner Tim Watts is thrilled council will implement a 30-minute parking limit outside his store.

Photo: KELLEY TANTAU

According to a report, on February 10 when the Highland Games and Tattoo was held in the domain, Paeroa Four Square saw a drop in patronage of 20 per cent and a decrease of 30 per cent revenue for the day.

This was backed up by Super Clearance manager Joel Bha-

gat, who also welcomed timed parking.

“Whenever there’s an event in the domain, there’s a lot of trouble with the parking. When we had the Highland Games, what we saw the whole day was full parking. We thought it might be busy for us and we

might do some good business, but that didn’t happen,” he said.

“There’s a lot of unusual parking going on out here, and I think our customers might not come here because of it.”

Mayor Toby Adams told *The Profile* timed parking had been

installed in certain areas along the main street in the past - the last one being in 2015, when council received a similar request from both Subway and Criterion Dairy, which was approved.

He agreed that particularly during events, parking over-stayers did not do any justice to the local businesses. However, while implementing parking limits for the whole main street was pitched back in 2022, Mayor Adams said it wasn’t something the community was “ready for”.

“But if we can do it in a few strategic places, then I think we’re winning.”

The new parking limits will not be actively policed, but “self-policed”, and both Mayor Adams and Tim Watts encouraged people to abide by the signs.

“Our local people aren’t the people who are parking there all day, so I think there’ll now be a visual deterrent for our visitors that come through town and for events,” Tim said.

“Who knows what will happen in the future, but at least first and foremost, it’ll be a good visual to people that this is short-term parking and that’ll allow customers to visit local businesses and get on their way again.”



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Rural Life

From lawn to vege garden



Maurice Cooper spends hours tending the garden he built mostly from scratch. Photos: ALICE PARMINTER

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

Retired mechanic Maurice Cooper's Tararu home is unassuming from the road. The back garden, however, is a vegetarian's dream, overflowing with a supermarket's worth of produce.

When Maurice moved to the coast two years ago, the section was mostly lawn, shaded over by large trees.

"I was in [Te Kouma] for 34 years and I had a big garden. I had the whole lot covered in [so] the butterflies couldn't get

in... I came here and I was horrified," Maurice said.

"In the afternoon it got no sun at all, and this was just a fantastic crop of kikuyu and rubbish; took me weeks to get it all out."

Now, what little lawn remains serves as a transition between garden beds.

The beds themselves are prolific, filled with strawberries, kumara, silverbeet, passion-fruit, lettuce, herbs and rhubarb, to name but a few.

There are some surprises too. Alongside the house is a babaco tree - tastes like "a very mild pineapple" - and in the centre

of the lawn a dying vine sports a zucchetto as tall as a person.

"I must have got 30 off it, and they're absolutely beautiful," Maurice said. "These are better than courgettes... that part's got no seeds in it and it's dry, not like a courgette where it's all squishy and got moisture."

Maurice's gardening philosophy is simple.

"I've got a motto: if you can't eat it don't plant it," Maurice said. "[And] I never need to buy vegetables."

The last of the summer tomatoes are coming out of the garden now, but at their peak they

were lined along the fence in their dozens.

Maurice uses reinforcing rods as stakes; they last longer and are sturdier than the wooden ones, he said. In fact, many of his garden accessories are crafted from found materials: the bottom of plastic water bottles to protect seedlings; drilled pipes for irrigation; plastic supermarket crates.

"I make those out of reinforcing mesh," he said of the plant covers. "And I go down to the people who sell beds and get their plastic they throw away."

You can do a lot with a lit-

tle, Maurice said - just a small patch of lawn, some seeds and a few miscellaneous materials can make a space capable of feeding several.

Gardening is just part of life for Maurice. He spends two or three hours out there every morning, when it's cool, and in return he receives a bounty.

"It keeps me occupied," he said. "I give everybody around here veges all the time, they love it. And I get in return cakes and biscuits. It all does pretty well."



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Rural Life

Hauraki rain outcompetes Shetland Islands

Citizen science can take shape in many forms – from surveying snow patches, logging rare bird sightings and recording pest plant observations. In the Waikato, residents have been voluntarily providing weather data to contribute to the work of the council's hydrology scientists.

For Hilda Jones, a resident of Ngātea in the Hauraki district, recording daily rainfall has not only unlocked her curiosity for weather, it has opened discussions for comparisons with friends – including a brother in the Shetland Islands, in her home country of Scotland.

“We were recently comparing rainfall from this year. The Shetlands have had an unusually dry year – only 840mm up until the end of November. Whereas, we're already at around 1400mm,” she said.

With a gauge placed in her garden, Hilda checks measurements at 9am each day and notes them down on a sheet of paper to post monthly to the council's main office in Hamilton.

“It was something my mother-in-law did. I only started after she passed, so I've been doing it for 14 years now. You become very interested in the weather when you do it.”

Growing up in the more turbulent microclimate of the islands 170 kilometres northeast of mainland Scotland, her family read the weather using a more analog technique.

“My uncle was the local post-



Ngātea resident Hilda Jones checks the rainfall in her backyard. INSET: Hilda's rain gauge.

Photos: SUPPLIED

man on the Shetland Islands, and everyone in the community would ask him what the weather was going to do. He knew if the wind was going to change or pick up. As children, Dad would always tell us to check with our uncle before taking the boat over to the islands where we had sheep.”

Hilda and 18 other households from right across the region are

helping to fill the gaps in the measurements collected from the council's automatic rainfall readers, of which there are around around 50 in total.

Accumulating a large dataset enables in depth analyses – imagine recording a measurement everyday for five years, that's 1825 numbers input to a spreadsheet!

As long as data is sourced accu-

rately, the larger the dataset, the closer statistical findings are to reality. These numbers can tell us a lot about our environment.

“The manual rainfall network is a useful addition to our datasets,” senior water scientist Bevan Jenkins said.

We have our own network of automated rain gauges, and we also connect in near real time to

rain gauges from MetService, NIWA, Fire and Emergency New Zealand, power companies, district councils... Much of the council's network is placed high up in catchments to determine the higher rainfall in the hills that drives floods. The manual reader [volunteer] network by its very nature is where people live.”

This volunteer network has a history that surpasses Waikato Regional Council itself, which was established in 1989. In the Hauraki district, there were at least two rainfall readers recording data in the early 1970s.

Though submitting measurements is not a time intensive task, the commitment is meaningful in its intention to support understanding of local environments; a dedicated effort for the sake of science.

Getting a firmer grip on understanding localised rainfall patterns and the dynamics of our microclimates helps the council steer environmental planning and preparation for future extreme weather events.

As hydrology and groundwater team leader Thomas Wilding says: “What we do as a regional council to manage water resources is ultimately constrained by the amount of water falling from the sky.”

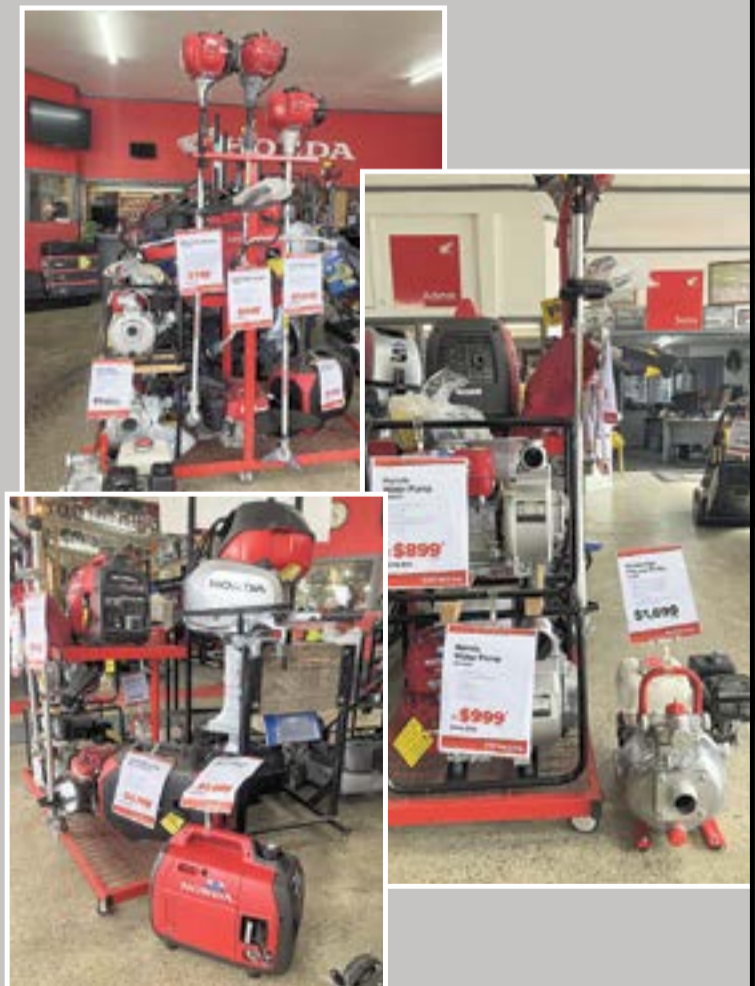
“In science reports, you'll find that many graphs, from river flows to water quality to soil moisture, are all dependent on the nearest rainfall data. You need the rainfall data to understand the pattern you're seeing.”

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Rural Life

Extreme weather events caused increase in 2022-23 carbon emissions

Focused efforts helped Waikato Regional Council make massive reductions in its carbon emissions, but extreme weather last year has taken it back to nearly baseline.

The council has been working to reduce its emissions since 2016-17, and its reduction target for 2022-23 was a 41 per cent reduction of its first inventory.

However, thanks to Anniversary Weekend flooding, cyclones Hale and Gabrielle, and a year of unprecedented rain in general, only a 1 per cent reduction was achieved.

The Climate Action Committee this week heard how the council had to significantly increase flood pumping, which increased the use of electricity and diesel by 266 per cent and 195.5 per cent respectively (53 per cent and 29 per cent of operational emissions respectively).

Committee chair Jennifer Nickel said the council had always been proud but cautious of its progress in lowering its corporate carbon footprint, having achieved a reduction of 44 per cent by 2021-22.

“We did really well, with different ways of working and reductions in air travel in particular,” Cr Nickel said.

“We also had really dry weather.

“By taking the incredibly wet year we’ve just had as an anomaly, we’re still optimistic that we’re on track to meet our target of a 68 per cent emissions reduction

by 2030 as we continue our understanding and implementation of innovative solutions.”

The council is maturing its understanding of its scope 3 emissions, which are emissions from its supply chain, to include in its yearly inventory.

Emissions from public transport has already been introduced, and an understanding of organic soil emissions related to its drainage activities is currently being sought.

Several initiatives are underway to continue lowering emissions, including the installation of solar at all its offices, decarbonising the fleet, and working on a framework to achieve carbon emissions neutrality by 2050.

Cr Nickel said the committee was updated on the development of the framework, which looks at how the council can generate carbon credits as offsets by protecting and restoring indigenous biodiversity on land it owns and in partnership with others.

“There is a great opportunity for the council to do better in the biodiversity space while offsetting hard-to-abate emissions through the creation of new carbon sinks. “Such carbon sinks would provide community benefits like flood attenuation or gains in the freshwater space, or even the sharing of credits in larger partnership activities.”

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Life and rhythm on the coast

Valley Profile welcomes journalism student

OPINION



By MICHAEL WILKES

Recently I was at a family birthday party surrounded by family and friends.

Some who I hadn't seen in over a decade. I found myself in a conversation around the value of silence, solitude, and stillness with my brother-in-law.

He shared of a secret spot he discovered on the coast. A spot where waves and time had carved two hollows beside each other that made perfect seats. He spoke of escaping to that place to sit and be.

He described imagining God sitting in the other seat, and being in awe of the beauty, the power, and size of the view before him. And in that moment, the stress, and the worry for the day to come would feel so small. And a funny thing would happen, the day ahead became so much easier.

And yet he was sharing of this space after two weeks of stress and struggle at work.

Things had got busy, things had got hard, and he found himself



A peaceful spot on the Thames Coast.

File Photo: LOGAN DODDS

too preoccupied to return to that space.

I laughed because I was all too familiar with this story. See, over the years I have discovered the value of rhythms in life. The value of starting my day early in a similar way.

It centres me. It brings balance and perspective. It brings an awareness beyond myself that I return to when things get tough.

And yet too often life gets busy, late nights creep in, I get tired, I allow the stress to build, and I find my rhythm all but obliterated.

I smiled and laughed as I shared this with him. We indeed are our own worst enemies.

Most of us actually know what's good for us. We know what brings us peace, what balances us, what helps bring the best version of ourselves. For me it is a rhythm of stillness and reflection in the morning, meaningful conversations with friends, and a touch of outdoor adventures.

It is the basics too, getting enough sleep, eating well, playing with my family, and staying off my phone. Yet too often I find myself doing the very things I know are not healthy for me and abandoning that which is life giving.

So, as I write this and reflect, I once again commit to making space for the things that are good for me. And may you do the same.

You know the stuff that brings you life, you know the things that bring balance and the best out of you. Let's lean back into those things, let's lean in and turn them into a rhythm.

For my brother-in-law, as we talked and reflected the idea of creating a rhythm was a new concept.

One he was excited to lean into. He had a seat with a friend waiting on the coast and he was planning to return to it in a rhythm that brought him life..

- Michael Wilkes is a Living Well Trust Youth Worker

My name is Tallis Austen, I'm a year 12 student from Paeroa College who has always had a love for writing, photography and everything to do with journalism.

I'm extremely excited to be part of the Valley Profile team for this coming year as part of my studies.

As a senior, I'm able to do something through the school called the Gateway programme, where students get the opportunity to pursue their passions and career goals through weekly work experience at a chosen business.

I have been given the awesome opportunity to do that here at The Profile every Friday.

I've written a few stories in past editions of The Profile last year, but now I'm going to be able to really spend time learning the ins and outs of a local paper and get out into the community to do some reporting and write a few articles. I'm interested in a career in journalism or the media, so this is

a great chance for me to get published and get some experience in the industry. I'm also looking forward to connecting with the community and meeting local people and sharing their stories.

When I'm not writing or at school, I love to hike. I'm at my happiest when I can set out with no time limits and walk for hours. I'll usually bring a book and find somewhere to sit down and read or go for a swim.

My family owns Bullswool Farm Park in the Karangahake gorge, where I've lived all my life. I'm very lucky to have been raised there surrounded by animals and beautiful New Zealand bush. I also work in the reception at home so if you've ever visited us you may have met me!

If you've got any news tips or cool stories for me to share, please get in touch with my editor through email at editorvalleyprofile@gmail.com



Journalism student Tallis Austen. Photo: ALICE PARMINTER

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Firefighting footballers fight Brown St fire



As part of a Valley Profile series, **MEGHAN HAWKES** searches through old newspapers to bring you the stories Thames Valley locals once read about themselves.

1930

Footballers abandoned their game - Thames v Mercury Bay in the Binch Cup match - when a dense pall of smoke indicated that a fire had broken out.

The Thames line umpire and several players deserted their posts and hurriedly became members of the fire brigade as they dashed to the fire. A two-storey block of unoccupied shops in Brown St was ablaze. The football firemen had an arduous task owing to the choking smoke and lack of wind, however they helped the brigade save a block containing the Lady Bowen Hotel and a number of houses and shops - the biggest block of wooden buildings in Thames. The building contained ten rooms and had two shop frontages, neither of which had had a tenant for many years.

Fire also completely destroyed the Hikutaia School in an early morning blaze. A railway worker saw the flames reflection but thought it was rubbish burning. On realising it was the school he ran a quarter of a mile and gave the alarm rousing schoolmaster,



Firemen fight the Brown St blaze.

Mr Turner, who lived next door. As there was no water supply, the place was completely destroyed. This was the second fire in the township that week - Mr Rehm's house and grocery were burnt two days before. The unfortunate Rehm family was staying at Mr Turner's, and their car, which was parked alongside the school, was also destroyed. The cause of the school fire was a mystery, as there were neither fires nor lights in the school the day before. Hikutaia residents were much perturbed at the two fires occurring so close together.

Meanwhile, when a youthful motorcyclist from Huntly attempted to round a sharp corner on

the Thames Coast Rd at Western Springs speed he finished up in the tide, a wetter and a wiser man. Another motorist who omitted to put oil in before attempting the Tapu-Coroglen Hill blew a cylinder head and spent the night on the road.

Damage estimated at more than one hundred pounds was done when a car driven by a Puriri farmer ran into the shop front of Say's butchery, in Seddon St, Waihi. The man, who did not know the road, relied on his daughter to tell him when to turn to go to Waihi Beach.

It appeared that she told him too late, and the car crashed into the shop in attempting to negotiate the corner. Two plate-glass windows were broken and the shop

front was shifted about three inches. The car was slightly damaged.

At Paeroa, the opening of the rest room building was accompanied by much fanfare.

Mr Marshall, Mayor, said the day marked the completion of another community effort. He trusted that it was a day of pleasure to everyone present, and that the pleasure would be a lasting one.

The only criticism that he had heard concerning the building was that it was too good. He hoped that the ladies of the district would make themselves quite at home in the building. The rest room had been a long time in coming, for it was many years ago that he had first heard of the necessity for it.

Photo: SUPPLIED

Connector bus trial extended

The free trial of the Connector service between Coromandel Town and Thames has been extended for a further three months until June 18.

Thames-Coromandel District Council said almost 300 trips have been made on the service since it began on December 18 last year. The Connector service is funded by a government storm recovery grant, in order to reconnect our communities with healthcare, education, appointments, work opportunities and whānau.

Council said there was currently no further funding secured for council to continue the trial past June 18.

"Waikato Regional Council (WRC) is responsible for the long-term planning, management and provision of public transport in our region. We will be sharing the data and feedback from the trial with WRC and the Government in order to discuss options for funding local transport options long-term," council said in a statement.

Waikato Regional Council is currently considering the region's transport options for inclusion in their 2024-2034 Long Term Plan and in the Waikato Regional Land Transport Plan 2024-2054 (RLTP).

This includes consideration of potential bus transport options for the Coromandel Peninsula and public transport funding models.

The draft Land Transport Plan also includes funding for long-term road improvements in the Coromandel to make the network more resilient to extreme weather events.

The draft Waikato Regional Land Transport Plan 2024-2054 (RLTP) is open for consultation until March 4.

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The Punjabi language and culture class in action.

Photo: SUPPLIED

Disaster relief grants open for restaurants

Hospitality outlets impacted by natural disasters in New Zealand are now eligible to receive \$16,000 grants to cover vital expenses thanks to DoorDash.

New Zealand restaurants impacted by natural disasters can now apply for funding through the DoorDash Restaurant Disaster Relief Fund.

A week after launching in Auckland, on-demand delivery platform DoorDash is proud to be expanding its Disaster Relief Fund to New Zealand, supporting small businesses across the country who have been adversely impacted by natural disasters.

Kicked off in the United States in October 2021, the fund was created to help small businesses get back on their feet.

Funds can be used for a variety of important expenses including payroll for existing employees, developing a product or service, sourcing or expanding inventory, marketing and advertising, and general operating expenses like utilities or rent.

The fund, run in partnership with the Global Entrepreneurship Network (GEN), is providing 100 more \$16,000 grants this year, with merchants across New Zealand, Australia and Canada now eligible.

To apply for relief, restaurants must have between one

and three brick and mortar locations, fewer than 50 employees per location, have been open for at least six months, and have been impacted by a Civil Defence or government-declared natural disaster.

The latest funding cycles have taken place across three rounds from September, 2023, with a fourth round ending on March 29.

To date, the DoorDash Disaster Relief Fund has provided 100 grants to restaurants across the United States, with the grant extended to Canada, Australia and New Zealand from July last year.

DoorDash is a technology company that connects consumers with their favorite local businesses in more than 25 countries across the globe. Founded in 2013, DoorDash builds products and services to help businesses innovate, grow, and reach more customers.

DoorDash is a commerce platform dedicated to enabling merchants to thrive in the convenience economy, giving consumers access to more of their communities, and providing work that empowers.

Grants are \$10,000 USD, with current conversion rates to approximately \$16,000 NZD. Conversion rates will be subject to change.

DETAILS: To learn more and apply, visit: www.genglobal.org/grants/restaurant-relief

Exploring Punjabi culture in Thames

Last week marked the start of free Punjabi language and culture classes in Thames, thanks to the support of the Thames Indian community.

With a total of 10 students, supported by parents and adults, organiser Jaspreet Kaur said the initiative kicked off with great enthusiasm.

“The involvement of parents was pivotal as they actively participated in teaching their children the intricacies of the Punjabi language,” Jaspreet said.

“The support extended beyond the community, as the principal of Moanataiari School graced the occasion with a warm welcome speech, further

motivating the young learners.” The classes take place at Moanataiari School on Mondays from 5-6pm.

Lessons include all aspects of Punjabi culture; including the language, heritage and philosophy, Gurbani santhya (the correct pronunciation of scripture), gatka (martial arts), kirtan (devotional music), turban tying, and bhangra (folk dance).

“The curriculum began with an introduction to the Punjabi alphabet, known as Gurmukhi, and all children eagerly absorbed the lessons,” Jaspreet said. “To maintain a structured learning environment, group

rules were established and children were assessed at various learning levels.

“Recognising the importance of accessible education, free stationery and books were provided to all students, facilitating their weekly attendance.”

The inaugural class included children ranging in age from 2-13.

As a token of appreciation for their dedication, treats were distributed at the end of the session, accompanied by a small homework assignment to reinforce their learning.

DETAILS: For more information, contact Jaspreet, Ph 021 0295 2879, or Tajinder, Ph 022 183 5515.

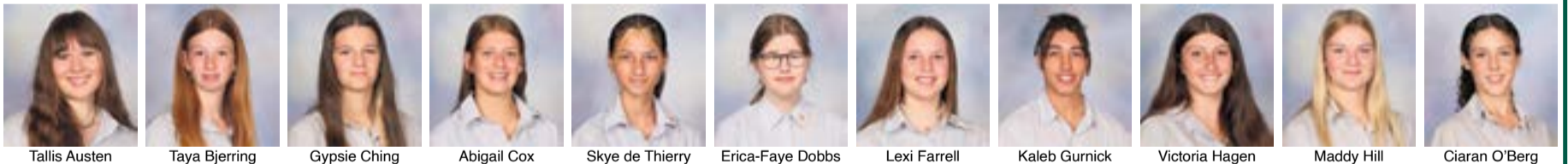


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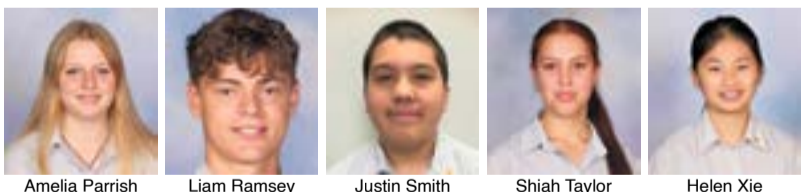
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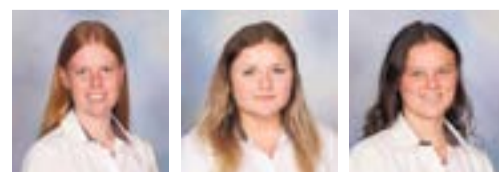
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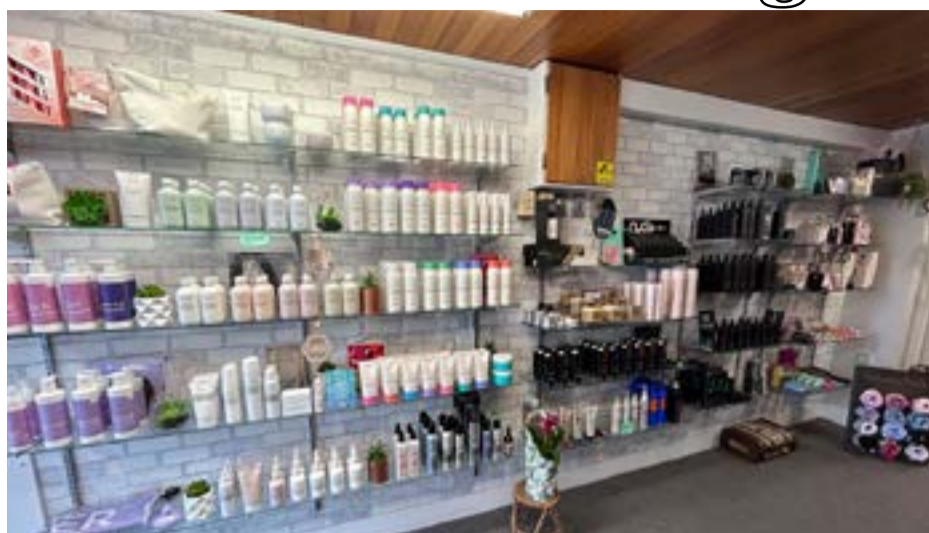
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"I am from a farming background, having grown up around the Waikato. I then did my Bachelor of Nursing in Rotorua, before heading back to the Waikato where I worked in an emergency department for approximately 10 years. I then moved to primary health care.



I completed my Master of Nursing through Otago University last year and am planning to complete my nurse practitioner qualifications later on this year.

I have a real passion for the outdoors and love tramping. I also have an avid interest in photography, having completed a diploma through the Photography Institute of New Zealand.

I look forward to meeting and working in this community.

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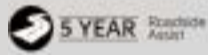
Freephone: 0508 111 555



New Kia Stonic



FROM
\$25,990 +ORC

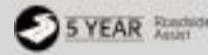


The Kia 5 Year Warranty Programme runs for 5 years or up to 150,000 kms (whichever occurs first). All other on road costs (ORC) are additional. Terms and conditions apply, see kia.co.nz for full details.

New Kia Seltos LX 2.0L Petrol



SRP **\$29,990** +ORC



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Mike Wright says barbeque cuts are "booming".

Photo: GORDON PREECE

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Hunts Home Kills, based on the flanks of Paeroa, aims to provide top quality meats and pride in their products.

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"There's a full list on the website - you can go through from pigs, sheep and beef... and we process a lot of wild game especially during hunting seasons.

"We also do a full range of small goods, bacon, ham, flavoured sausages, kransky, chorizo, salami, biersticks and meat patties.

"As long as everything goes well, everyone's wrapped, that's probably why we're so busy."

Mike said Hunts Home Kills had always aimed to be a "step ahead" with vacuum packing, which makes meat last longer in the freezer. "We're also getting right into our barbecue cuts... and they're booming at the moment," he said.

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Public Notice

PAEROA RSA & CITIZENS CLUB INC.
The Annual General Meeting will be held in the RSA Clubrooms Sunday 24th March 2024 at 1pm
Election of Officers & General Business
A. Rohrlach Secretary

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Death Notice

BREBNER, Robert Geoffrey (Geoff):
After several months of decline with Alzheimer's, Geoff's Big Wheel stopped turning and he passed peacefully in his sleep on 14 February 2024, aged 84 years.
Dad to Kerrie and Sharyn, father-in-law to John and Ray, Grandad to Zane, Betsy, Ruby, Jake, Isaac, Jono, and Fraser. Loved friend of Christine Mckenzie.
Fifth of six siblings: Marjorie, Billie, Joan, Pat, and Lindsay.
Dad didn't want a funeral, so we'll say hoo-roo and scatter his ashes at a private family memorial.
Grateful thanks for the outstanding care from Ryman's Murray Halberg SCU.

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Public Notice

Hauraki RSA & Memorial Club and Hauraki RSA Poppy Trust Annual General Meeting
to be held on Wednesday 17th April 2024
at the Hauraki RSA & Memorial Club, 14 Pipiroa Road, Ngatea, 7.00pm
"Proposal to amalgamate the Hauraki RSA & Memorial Club under one identity"
The Hauraki RSA

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Handyman

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Last month's winner of the lotto ticket was Vivien Ritchie, who found Pete in the February 7th edition in the Thames Centre Pharmacy advert. Go to page 2 for details on how to enter.

Powerco explores portable batteries

Powerco has used battery energy to power an early childhood centre in Hauraki during an electricity outage as it works to decarbonise and reduce its emissions.

The electricity and gas distribution company said it was committed to helping Aotearoa New Zealand achieve its net-zero by 2050 goal, by enabling the sustainable energy transition.

As part of this, Powerco aimed to reduce its emissions from the use of temporary diesel generators.

“When an early childcare centre, primary or secondary school experiences a temporary planned outage on Powerco’s network, and other practical outage mitigation options are not available, we consider a diesel generator for power supply,” Powerco General Manager Electricity Karen Frew said.

“We’ve been investigating the use of battery energy storage as an alternative to diesel generation for these types of temporary planned outages. Batteries have instant power, reduced noise, no fuel usage and low emissions.”

Recently, during a planned outage to install a new power line to Ngātea township, in the Hauraki district, Powerco connected Ngātea Early Learning Centre to a portable Battery Energy Storage System (BESS). “We partnered with Genera-



Members of the Powerco, Generator Rental Services and Northpower team with the BESS at Ngātea Early Learning Centre.

Photo: SUPPLIED

tor Rental Services, who provided the portable BESS, and Northpower, who installed a logger to check the load requirements at the early learning centre,” Karen said.

On the day of the outage, the battery was taken to site, connected, and monitored throughout. It used an average of just six per cent battery capacity per hour.

At the completion of the outage, there was still 57 per cent capacity available.

“At times throughout the day when the load on the battery increased, we’d ask the learning centre staff what electrical

equipment they were using, such as turning on the air conditioners or using the hot water for washing hands or dishes. This helped us determine what demand the battery could meet. The children at the day care also found this exciting, she said.

“We’re thrilled that in this instance we were able to supply the early learning centre without emissions from diesel generation.

“As diesel fuel was not required, this reduced the cost of the project, as the cost of hiring the battery alone was comparable to a diesel generator.”

With 27 outages to early learn-

ing centres across the Powerco electricity network last year, Karen Frew says there is potential benefits using a BESS for these types of customers.

“Being on a trailer, the portable BESS can be moved quickly to site and connected efficiently.

“As larger portable battery units become available, we’ll also look at using them on other types of customer outages, and we also want to trial them on longer unplanned outages. The ability to pair with small-scale portable solar panels will also increase the range of uses.

“The potential is encouraging,” she said.

100 years for Paeroa Tennis and Squash Club

A good turnout of 80 past and present members enjoyed an afternoon of catching up on old memories at the Paeroa Tennis and Squash Club’s 100 year celebrations last month.

President Bruce Nicol welcomed the guests and gave a rundown of the club’s recent improvements, while Steven Pett gave a talk on behalf of the Pett family about their memories - between them they won 16 tennis championships.

James Thorp spoke about the early history of the club, which was started in 1923 by his father Hal Thorp, and how he used timber from their farm in building the early clubrooms.

Cliff Pett and Rita Bedford cut the celebratory cake and all the guests enjoyed supper while watching a closely contested tennis match, won by Sven van Touw and Brad van Hellemond over Bodin Aleksic and Paul Bowman.

At the end of the celebrations the club took the opportunity to present Life Memberships to four deserving members: Raewyn Rasmussen, tennis champ 13 times from 1982-2013; Kae Petch, squash champ eight times between 1989-2000; Frances Nicol, ran Juniors for over 10 years, mid 90’s to 2010; and Mandy Souchon, tennis champ three times and squash champ four times, 2009-2018.

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SUPPORT LOCAL



SUDOKU

140

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

3						2	5	4
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HARD

140

HARD

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EASY

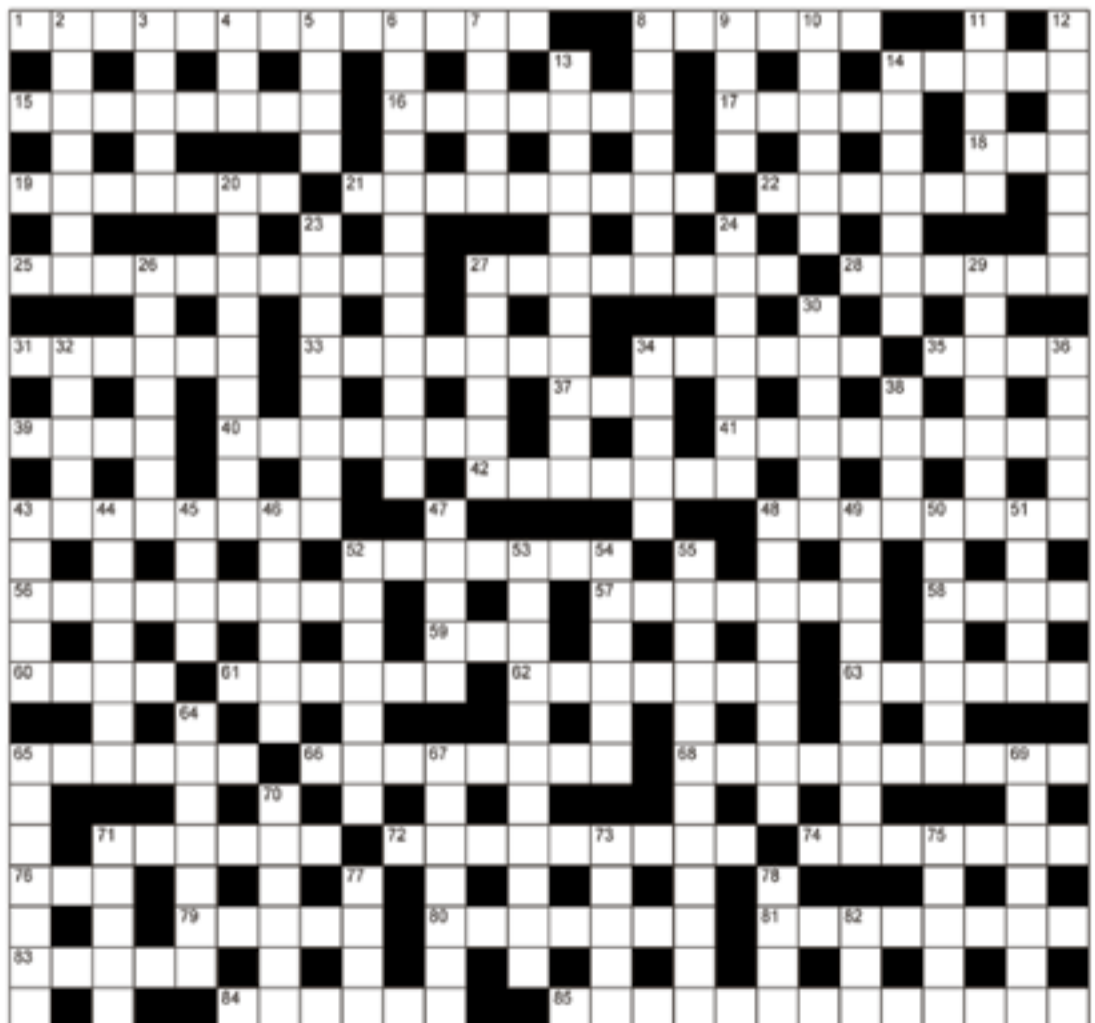
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4	5	3	8	7	2	9	1	6
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JUMBO CROSSWORD

160

- ACROSS**
- 1 Undecided elector (8,5)
 - 8 Sudden (6)
 - 14 At hand (5)
 - 15 Precious metal (8)
 - 16 Paper hankies (7)
 - 17 Around (5)
 - 18 Facial twitch (3)
 - 19 Root vegetable (7)
 - 21 Issue (9)
 - 22 Shine (6)
 - 25 From this time on (10)
 - 27 Soaked (8)
 - 28 Universe (6)
 - 31 Accounts-keeping ship's officer (6)
 - 33 Soapy spheres (7)
 - 34 Comment (6)
 - 35 Says further (4)
 - 37 Mined rock (3)
 - 39 Peak of perfection (4)
 - 40 Flabbergast (7)
 - 41 Sixth sense (9)
 - 42 Green gem (7)
 - 43 Royal person (8)
 - 48 Holidaymaker's communication (8)
 - 52 Of the heart (7)
 - 56 The existing state of affairs (6,3)
 - 57 Liable to sudden unpredictable change (7)
 - 58 Dry (4)
 - 59 Gratuity (3)
 - 60 Islamic chieftain (4)
 - 61 Go back on a deal (6)
 - 62 Supporter's badge (7)
 - 63 Cricket team (6)
 - 65 Old gun (6)
 - 66 Looks over carefully (8)
 - 68 Horse or dog track (10)
 - 71 Large birdcage (6)
 - 72 Truce (9)
 - 74 Suddenly comprehended (7)
 - 76 Passenger vehicle (3)
 - 79 Slight colouring (5)
 - 80 Staying power (7)
 - 81 Lozenge (8)
 - 83 Thrill (5)
 - 84 Of service (6)
 - 85 Unexpected rejection or affront (4,2,3,4)
 - DOWN**
 - 2 Feel raw (anag) (7)
 - 3 Paper money (5)
 - 4 Public house (3)
 - 5 Plucky (4)
 - 6 Unexpectedly (3,2,3,4)
 - 7 Alleviates (5)
 - 8 A deadly poison (7)
 - 9 Boulder (4)
 - 10 Chase (6)
 - 11 Strong point, speciality (5)
 - 12 Gets to (7)
 - 13 Argumentative (11)
 - 14 Illustration title (7)
 - 20 Madden (9)
 - 23 Is butter (anag)(8)
 - 24 Woman-fish (7)
 - 26 Water tank (7)
 - 27 Mislead (6)
 - 29 Fortified white wine (7)
 - 30 Small cave (6)
 - 32 Open sore (5)
 - 34 Of the kidneys (5)
 - 36 Church council (5)
 - 38 Forsake (4)
 - 43 Skiing slope (5)
 - 44 Sloping letters (7)
 - 45 Hint (4)
 - 46 Film, book continuing a previous storyline (6)
 - 47 Corny (5)
 - 48 Forbearance (8)
 - 49 Something unreasonably held to be above criticism (6,3)
 - 50 French castle (7)
 - 51 River in Europe (5)
 - 52 An analgesic drug (7)
 - 53 Unworkable (11)
 - 54 Official count (6)
 - 55 Scribe's complaint (7,5)
 - 64 Depart from an accepted standard or convention (7)
 - 65 Children's game (7)
 - 67 Sunshade (7)
 - 69 Varnish ingredient (7)
 - 70 Planet (6)
 - 71 Ore test (5)
 - 73 Spin (5)
 - 75 Heartbreak (5)
 - 77 Meat from cow (4)
 - 78 Bridge (4)
 - 82 Fifth note (3)



PREVIOUS SOLUTION

ACROSS: 1 Scoring, 4 Precaution, 9 At issue, 13 Ruin, 14 Matter, 15 Acetic, 16 Quibble, 19 Genuine, 20 Splice the main brace, 21 Stalls, 22 Belfry, 24 Economist, 29 Immobile, 30 Phobia, 31 Know-how, 35 Downturn, 36 Resist, 37 Thaw, 38 Civil, 39 Lag, 41 Chest, 43 Sketch, 47 Fetch, 50 Bet, 54 Began, 55 Solo, 56 Troupe, 57 Disagree, 60 Surplus, 61 Reveal, 62 Eyeglass, 65 Submarine, 67 Easier, 68 Troops, 72 Red carpet treatment, 75 Tinfoil, 77 Nervous, 78 Armada, 79 Budget, 80 Bomb, 81 Hybrids, 82 Topsy-turvy, 83 Slavery.

DOWN: 1 Shrug, 2 Oriental, 3 Gravel, 4 Patisserie, 5 Enrol, 6 Anarchy, 7 Treaty, 8 Olive, 10 Tournament, 11 Suburbs, 12 Unlock, 17 Diplomatic, 18 Fauna, 21 Strudel, 23 Feelers, 25 Chintz, 26 Coerce, 27 Poetic, 28 Docile, 30 Poise, 32 Weir, 33 Twig, 34 Fake, 40 Avenue, 42 Spot, 44 Kitten, 45 Troll, 46 Hapless, 48 Trifle, 49 Headstrong, 50 Bark, 51 Trellis, 52 Wasp, 53 Solemn, 58 Cummerbund, 59 Repeatedly, 63 Cruel, 64 Monotone, 66 Uncover, 67 Extract, 69 Remedy, 70 Decays, 71 Stress, 73 Torso, 74 Ember, 76 Lobby.

Pen pal letter survives fatal plane crash

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

Letters that made their way from rural New Zealand to a Parisian commune in France survived 56 years, a sporadic post, and even a fatal plane crash.

Half of the letters belonged to Sybil Woolmore's mum, Molly May Woodward, while the other half belonged to Molly's life-long penpal, Helene Marthe Madeleine Messageot.

The discovery of the women's friendship, plus the serendipity of some of the snail mail stories, had been a "great journey" for both families, Sybil said.

Molly and Helene began a pen pal relationship back in 1938, when they were both 16.

Growing up in similar environments - Molly in rural Waikaretu in the Waikato, and Helene in Chelles, an eastern suburb of Paris, France - the young women sparked a friendship that spanned more than five decades, despite neither being able to read in the other's language.

"I [translated] some of mum's letters earlier on because I was taking French at high school," Sybil, from Paeroa, said, "but mine was just school-girl French so then she found somebody who could translate them for her, and Helene would've done the same."

A lot of the recovered letters



Helene's children meet with Molly's family in New Zealand.

Photos: SUPPLIED

talked about their isolated hometowns, as well as family life. For Sybil, who went away to boarding school at 13, they "filled a few gaps" of her mother's history.

She has Helene's family to thank for that.

"I didn't really get to know anything much about my mum's earlier life, and she died when she was 72 - 30 years ago," Sybil said. "Helene died in 2018 and her children were clearing out her house. They found all these

letters that mum had sent over and wondered if any of her children were still alive."

Using the internet, Helene's children found Sybil's family and made contact in February, 2023, and even though the two women never got a chance to meet, their children did.

Last month, Helene's family spent five days in New Zealand with Molly's family, and will depart back to France on March 8.

"It was so exciting," Sybil said.

"We all knew about Helene but we never really talked to mum about her."

Two weeks before Helene's family flew out to New Zealand, they discovered another letter sent by Molly - dated 1954. It had been stamped with a note that said: 'Salvaged Mail. Aircraft Crash. Singapore'. Notable scorch marks were evident.

It came to light that Molly's letter was travelling via Air Mail on a BOAC Lockheed Constella-



One of Molly's letters survived the BOAC Lockheed Constellation crash.

tion aircraft, flying from Sydney to London. The plane exploded on March 13, 1954, shortly after landing at Singapore-Kallang Airport, killing 33 of the 40 passengers and crew. The crash remains the deadliest of any aviation accident in Singapore, with a public inquiry finding that the accident occurred when the aircraft struck a seawall on approach to the runway, attributed by crew tiredness.

The letter was still readable and spoke more of Molly's life with her six children.

"It's sad that they never got a chance to meet," Sybil said. "But this has blown us all away. It's been a great journey and the fact that [Helene's children] bothered to come over here and meet our whole family has been really special."



The advertisement features a grid of images showcasing different types of construction projects and services. Top left: A building under construction with extensive scaffolding. Top middle: A modern, single-story building with a large garage door, featuring the 'KIWISPAN' logo. Middle left: A white building with a 'SKYLINE BUILDINGS' sign. Middle right: A blue, modern building with a large garage door. Bottom left: A collection of blue and white electronic devices, likely garage door remotes or sensors, with the 'Garador' logo. Bottom right: A close-up of a white garage door.

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