

**250th
ISSUE**

Light up town for Xmas and WIN

With Covid and lockdowns it has been a pretty lousy year all round for most people, so to help bring a bit of end-of-year cheer, we're running a 'Best Christmas Lights' competition.

If you live in Helensville, Parakai or Kaukapakapa townships, decorate your house or shop for the festive season and enter for the chance to win a \$100 Countdown voucher for first place, or a \$50 runner-up voucher, courtesy of *Helensville News* and Harcourts the Difference.

Email your entry to us at: xmas@helensvillenews.co.nz with your name and address by Friday, December 17. You can send a photo of your lit-up house if you want, but we'll be driving around all the entered properties to choose the winner and runner-up.

The winner and runner-up will be announced on the *Helensville News* Facebook page just before Christmas.

We don't produce a January issue, but if there's room we'll try to run a photo of the lucky winner in our February edition.

Wellbeing packs for locals who must isolate

A parcel of essential and wellbeing items delivered with aroha and compassion may be just what the doctor orders if you or someone in your family tests positive for Covid-19.

The care packs are being made and distributed by Kindred Family Services, with funding supplied by the Ministry for Social Development.

Each box contains essential items to help when people are at home, recovering from Covid and unable to head out, including things like paracetamol, vapor rub, lozenges, hand sanitiser, tissues, honey, wheat packs, wellbeing cards, and boredom busters like playing cards and activity packs for children.

Katie Hillebrand is coordinating the project for Kindred Family Services. She says it's been a great way to focus her energies while her face-to-face work with clients has quietened down.

"It's been a really lovely project to be involved with because as well as the obvious kindness these packs will deliver for people who'll be at a really low ebb, stuck at home with Covid, it's also been a great way to give a boost to many local businesses who've been doing it really tough."

Katie says many of the suppliers have topped up with donations, samples or discounts where they can.

"There's a really nice sense of community about it," she says. "When I've approached the business owners who had had their doors shut for so many weeks during lockdown they were thrilled to find way to give back and provide their service."

She says it's difficult to know what the demand will be, but as Auckland and the rest of the country transitions to the traffic

light system of managing Covid, it's likely there will be an increased need as cases continue to spread.

"We know Covid is in our community, so what's really important is making sure those people don't feel isolated even when they are in isolation, and instead they feel looked after and thought about."

Anyone in need of a pack will be able to contact Katie directly on katie@kindredservices.org.nz, or phone 09 420 7992. Local GPs will also be able to request packs on their patients' behalf.



• Katie from Kindred Family Services with one of the Covid-19 wellbeing packs

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editorial

Rural broadband is a contentious issue, and if a recent informal poll I ran on several local Facebook community groups is anything to go by, there are many people in our area unhappy with the service they receive. I'd go so far as to say internet access is the second biggest divide between urban and rural residents in New Zealand, after rural roading.

The issue came to a head with the start of Covid lockdowns, with vastly increased numbers of people working or schooling from home.

I get my broadband through Farmside. Pre-lockdown, using their wireless service, I averaged around 15-18Mbps download speed. That's around a quarter to a third of the speed people on the cheapest, lowest-speed fixed-line plans in urban areas get (and I have a data cap limit and pay roughly twice the monthly rate those urban dwellers do).

Since lockdown, my download speeds have dropped by around 75 percent - right at the time we are being asked to work from and stay at home. Not every rural resident has these issues, but judging by the responses on Facebook, I am far from alone in this situation.

Lack of competition in what is a comparatively small market compared to the urban one is undoubtedly a factor, with only two major providers nationwide, Spark and Vodafone.

There is, however, a new player on the block, one which I was surprised to see has already been adopted by quite a few rural residents in the South Head - Helensville - Kaukapakapa areas, considering it is still considered to be in its 'beta' testing phase (a sign I guess of just how disgruntled locals are with their existing services).

It's called Starlink, and uses a vast network of tiny low-orbit satellites to provide what locals are reporting to be city-like speeds, anywhere from 80-350Mbps (but mostly around the 150Mbps mark).

There are, of course, some catches.

The first is philosophical. Starlink is owned by the world's richest man, Elon Musk of Tesla and SpaceX fame, and some people may balk at the idea of their monthly service fee going to support an already extremely wealthy foreigner.

The other is the price, with an up-front equipment cost of close to \$1000, and a monthly charge of \$160. By comparison, Spark's fastest, most expensive urban fibre plan costs \$100 per month, has no initial fee, and gives speeds of over 800Mbps.

So I guess even if us rural folk spend up big on Starlink, we are still comparatively going to be the poor cousins to our urban counterparts.

- Dave Addison, Editor

RSA commemorates Armistice Day

The Kaipara Memorial RSA was able to commemorate the 103rd Armistice Day last month following Auckland's move to Step 2 of lockdown Level 3.

The commemoration was limited to 25 people at the Parakai Cenotaph, where Sid Grace laid a wreath on behalf of the KMRSA.

President Rex Keane paid tribute to the more than 100,000 troops and 550 nurses who served our country in WW1, and the 18,277 troops and 16 nurses who died in the conflict.

Rex describes it as ironic that 103 years ago the world was in the grips of the Spanish Flu pandemic, reportedly brought to New Zealand by the troop ship Niagara in 1918. Within two months, 9000 New Zealanders


had died of the Spanish Flu.

To stop the spread of the flu, many Kiwi troops were encamped (locked down in 2021 terms) in the United Kingdom. To fill in time they played the first Rugby World Cup, which New Zealand won against France to be presented with the Kings Cup by King George.

The Armistice Day ceremony can be viewed on Facebook.

The Kaipara Memorial RSA plans to reopen its club rooms as soon as Auckland moves to Red Level in the new Covid traffic light system. The clubrooms will be limited to 100 people seated and spaced at 1m, and all staff and guest will need to be double vaccinated.

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Jana Mills



Historic factory demolished

The southern entrance to Helensville will never be the same with the demolition in late November of the historic Kaipara Dairy Company factory building.

The building, derelict for more than 30 years and heavily covered in graffiti, has stood at the town's Mill Road entrance since the 1950s.

It was demolished as it had become too much of a health and safety issue, says Harry Harrison, who manages the property for owner Stephen Pryor.

He says children were cutting through the security fence and getting inside what he described as a "really unsafe" building.

"Some really little kids got in two or three weeks ago. I was really worried - it was quite frightening."

Harry says a structural engineer was brought in to see if the building, or even just its art deco facade, could be saved, but the verdict was a definite 'no'. Constructed of a 'soft' sort of concrete, it could never be upgraded to meet current earthquake regulations.

There are no immediate plans for the site - Harry resoundly debunked a rumour of a McDonald's restaurant being built there - and says the demolition was intended to make the highly visible site tidier.

The entire 1.3ha Kaipara Dairy Company site sold at auction in 2013 to Stephen Pryor for \$425,000 - well below its government valuation in excess of \$2 million. He cleared many of the buildings off the site, but said at the time the original, art-



• Demolition underway - photo Megan Paterson

deco dairy factory building would remain.

The three remaining buildings have been re-roofed and reclad and Harry says they are keen to get local businesses into them. He has already had a couple of enquiries.

"Helensville is on the cusp of getting the benefits of Auckland's expansion, so we feel now's the right time to give the place a new start. It would be good if the site could be part of local employment."

The Kaipara Co-operative Dairy Company was established in 1911, and was a successful company during its heyday. It was one of the more innovative dairy enterprises of its time, becoming in the 1970s the first company in New Zealand to manufacture margarine, building an edible oils factory adjacent to the just-demolished main building, and producing the margarine under the 'River Valley' brand.

A decline in farming and an economic downturn saw the factory close in the mid-1980s. In 1987 the buildings were sold to Martec Industries which twice attempted to run a fruit juicing operation there, finally going into liquidation around 1989.

The machinery was stripped out and sold and the building had been vacant ever since.

Explore the KDC

Locals keen to take a look inside the just-demolished Kaipara Dairy Company factory in Mill Road can do so virtually now.

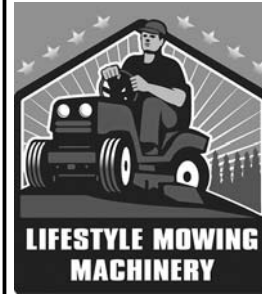
Kiwi YouTube personality 'The Forsaken Explorer' has uploaded a 17-minute video showing a first-person view exploring inside the long-derelict factory, highlighting the extensive graffiti, rickety staircases, and underground tunnels.

The video was made without the permission of the owner.

View at: <https://bit.ly/3nlwOFC>.

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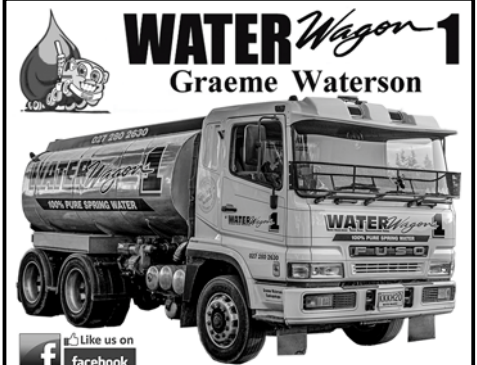


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A&P Show and many other events fall victim of Covid

The biggest event on Helensville's annual events calendar, the Helensville A&P Show, has been cancelled because of Covid.

It joins a list of other events either cancelled or postponed, including the town's Christmas parade, Arts in the Ville, and the Lions Club Christmas Book Fair.

Two other fundraising events for the Helensville Show - a visit to the Gibbs Sculpture Farm and the annual Edwina Francis Memorial Horse Trek, have been postponed, as has the town's first Big Little Local event.

Even local church Christmas services have been affected, with some holding no in-person services this year (see page 9).

Many local organisations have been hit hard financially by the cancellations, from both expenses incurred and lost income.

The Helensville A&P Association was to have celebrated its 120th Show next February, but with so

much planning and organisation involved prior to the event, and with uncertainty surrounding Covid the Show's executive committee made the difficult decision to cancel the event.

"This is not a decision we took lightly, but we have a duty of care to our volunteers, members, competitors, sponsors, judges and stewards, community groups, trade exhibitors, entertainers, and visitors, as well as the wider Helensville community," says Show president Dave van Dam.

"At the heart of our decision was the wellbeing of these people."

The Show has only been cancelled four times previously - once because of the polio epidemic in 1939, twice during the Second World War years, and most recently in 2018 when extreme rain made the grounds unuseable.

Organisers are planning a range of smaller competitions to keep locals involved - see our separate article for details.

Arts in the Ville was to have celebrated its seventh consecutive three-day arts

celebration over Labour Weekend in October. Delta forced that to be first shortened to a two-day event and postponed until the end of November - but then early that month the call was made to cancel the event completely.

"We waited as long as possible before making this decision, but with all the restrictions still in place and not looking particularly positive for the next two weeks, we decided to cancel this year's event," says event manager Jo Ogilvie.

Helensville Lions made a similar call for their end-of-year book fair, which was to have been held the same weekend, November 27 and 28.

"Auckland's progress through to a level that would allow the public unfettered access to the War Memorial Hall appears to be unachievable before the end of the year," says Lion Chris Clark.

"This is extremely disappointing as this event is a major fund raiser for

Helensville Lions, but we appreciate that the safety of the community must come first."

The book fairs regularly raise up to \$20,000 for the Lions, money which gets distributed throughout the local community. Losing the fair is a major blow to the club's annual fundraising efforts.

Chris says the hall is booked for the club's Autumn Book Fair on the last weekend of May 28 and 29.

"By then hopefully the virus will be under control," he says.

The Helensville Christmas parade was called off in October for a number of reasons, including uncertainty around Covid restrictions - uncertainties which have proved to be well-founded.

Big Little Local, a new event planned for the town by Nicky Horsbrough of Harcourts the Difference with the aim to link people with local suppliers, service providers, and businesses, was originally planned for September. Covid saw it initially deferred a month, and now Nicky says she is looking tentatively at a date in early April next year.

*Many local organisations
have been hit hard financially
by the cancellations*

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Authorised by Marja Lubeck, Parliament Buildings, Wellington

No Show - but plenty of competitions

Show Day next February may be cancelled, but the Helensville Show will hold a whole raft of competitions over the next three months to help keep the community involved.

The contests are all free to enter and will have prizes. And with one exception all entries will be submitted by photograph or video to limit any personal contact.

A full schedule of the competition classes and how to enter are on the Show's website, www.helensvilleshow.co.nz.

First up is a 'Christmas Haybale' competition sponsored by Vets North, for locals to decorate a haybale (or bales) with a Christmas theme. The Show will have a giant one on display at the showgrounds as an example of what they would like to see. Entries will be via emailed photos, although entrants are also encouraged to display their bale creations on road frontages if possible to help create a Christmas vibe.

Also before Christmas are three Carrfields-sponsored pet animal video classes for children, aimed at replicating the Show's traditional 'calf club' competitions.

Finally pre-Christmas is a new take of the Show's traditional decorated cardboard cutout animals, with Piglets available for local families to decorate. They need to be ordered by email by December 10, and collected on December 17, though entries don't close until February 1 next year.

Throughout January and February there will be more than 50 classes for adults and children to enter by emailed photograph, covering many of the Show's traditional competitions such as floral art, baking, garden produce, arts and crafts, photography, and model farms.

Video classes will be mainly for animals and focused on fun, such as 'waggiest tail', 'best trick by a pet lamb, kid, calf or dog', and 'cheekiest animal thief'.

Youth MP chosen

Rodney College student Will Heron will represent Labour MP Marja Lubeck, based in our Kaipara ki Mahurangi electorate, in next year's Youth Parliament.

Will identifies as non-binary and uses the pronouns they and them rather than he or she.

"Will and I had a great first chat over Zoom. They're super excited about this opportunity, and have already started talking to other rangatahi on how they'd like to be represented," says Marja

"Will has been keen on politics since a young age," adds Marja.

"Earlier this year, Will organised a protest against the Dome Valley landfill, and they have been coordinating queer spaces and LGBTQ+ resources at Rodney College. They are an impressive young person that will be a great representative for our community, and a voice for young people across New Zealand.

"I am delighted Will has agreed to be my Youth MP for 2022."

Will, along with the other members of 2022 Youth Parliament, will take part in a



• Will and MP Marja Lubeck during their first Zoom meeting

programme designed to provide young people with an opportunity to advocate on what is important to them, and for Youth MPs to actively work on topics and issues they are passionate about.

"In their application, Will had a particular interest in bringing LGBTQ+, Māori/Pasifika, and mental health services to more rural communities, such as Te Tai Tokerau and Rodney. This dedication to access of information and services, and a firm belief in equity, will serve Will and Kaipara ki Mahurangi well," Marja says.

"I cannot wait to see what Will accomplishes, both in Youth Parliament and beyond," says Marja.

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'Good Food' trust set up to run Kai Collective

Helensville's Kai Collective foodbank is now under the auspices of its own charitable trust, the South Kaipara Good Food Trust.

Set up during the first Covid 19 Level 4 lockdown in March 2020, the Kai Collective has until now been run by a collective of local social service agencies, which also referred their clients to the foodbank for support.

They included Kindred Family Services, Te Ha Oranga, Outwest Youth, Parent Aid Northwest, South Kaipara Men's Centre, Kaipara College, the Helensville District Health Trust, and the Angel Fund, with Kindred Family Services acting as the fund and contract holder.

But as the community demand for food parcels has grown, so too have the operational needs of running the foodbank. As such, the Kai Collective Te Awaroa has transitioned to operate as its own charitable trust.

Gemma Donaldson has been appointed the Trust's general manager, and Katherine Salsone-Smith takes on the part-time role of handling the referral process.

The South Kaipara Good Food Trust will be focused not only on providing emergency food to those in need but also on networking and initiating other projects focused on food (see article on page 7).

The aim is that no-one in the South Kaipara should need to worry about where to get their next meal.

"To have a team of dedicated volunteers and staff solely focused on addressing the complex and challenging issues around food security will be hugely beneficial for our community," says Ana Christmas, executive

director of Kindred Family Services.

"It has been a privilege to have played such an

The aim is that no-one in the South Kaipara should need to worry about where to get their next meal

important role in the creation of this much-needed service for our community."

Mike Bridgman, chairman of the new South Kaipara Good Food Trust, says many locals may remember being part of discussions in the first half of the year when a community consultation was carried out asking people what good food meant to them, and what the barriers were to accessing it.

"That consultation resulted in the creation of a South Kaipara Food Plan," he says.

"As we activate the ideas from that plan - things like an urban food forest, or a central food hub for people to meet, share and learn - we should, in time, see the demand for emergency food parcels come down as people learn to grow their own food security."

He adds that those involved in taking the Kai Collective Te Awaroa to its next stage recognise the contribution made by Kindred Family Services and all the other community partners. In the meantime, the Kai Collective Te Awaroa will continue to provide its much-needed service, which has seen demand spike over the recent weeks.

For more information visit the South Kaipara Good Food website at: www.skgf.org.nz.

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New Trust not just about food bags

Supplying food packs to those in need is just one part of the South Kaipara Good Food Trust's remit.

As well as running the Kai Collective Te Awaroa, overseeing the South Kaipara Food Plan is an equally important role, helping members of the community transition from a state of 'food insecurity' through to 'food sovereignty' - whereby they have the knowledge and skills to provide healthy food for themselves.

South Kaipara Good Food Trust general manager Gemma Donaldson says a Community Activator is being sought to implement the food plan, which will revolve around community-led initiatives such as community gardens, a

community kitchen for things like making preserves, and a food hub where people can come together to discuss food issues and learn new skills.

"There are definitely gaps in people's knowledge," says Gemma.

She adds that while the idea of the food plan is to make people food-independent, "the crisis response [food bags] isn't going anywhere, especially when there are additional pressures such as Covid and Christmas."

From starting out distributing around 50 food parcels each week when first set up last year, the need for the Kai Collective has grown dramatically. Gemma says the busiest week so far saw 113 bags sent out, and she expects the final distribution before Christmas, on December 14, will reach a record 120 to 125 bags.

Masked and gloved volunteers pack numbered paper bags with fresh produce, meat, cheese, milk, cereal, rice and pasta, along with a recipe card with instructions to turn the ingredients into three nutritious

meals for a family of four, plus other information on using the ingredients.

The Christmas bags will include an extra treat - a Christmas dessert. Gemma is looking for locals to help support that with either donations of suitable food such as Christmas puddings, mince tarts or pavlovas, or with cash donations.

The Kai Collective has a roster of around 20 volunteers, though during lockdown that has been restricted to two teams of six



• Kai Collective volunteers packing food bags for locals in need

people (plus a back-up team) who each give up around six hours of their time each week to pack the mostly donated food goods into the paper bags ready to be sent out.

"We couldn't do it without our volunteers," says Gemma, pointing out that between them they do the equivalent hours of two full-time paid staff.

Even some of the 'clients' help out, doing things like growing vegetables from seedlings or numbering the food bags.

Clients can receive the food packs for up to 20 weeks, though the frequency with which clients receive kai packs reduces over that period "to avoid the risk of creating dependency" says Gemma.

"The intention is not to have people on [food] parcels for a year," she says, but rather to help them with any issues they are facing which prevent them from accessing good food on their own.

The Kai Collective moved on November 29 to a new base at 16 Commercial Road, Helensville. All contact details stay the same.



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medical centre notes

We are sad to announce that two of our GPs - Dr Phillip Barter and Dr Martine Gerritsen - will both soon be leaving Kaipara Medical Centre.

Dr Barter has dedicated the last 19 years to the KMC and looking after the local community. He is a loved and well respected local GP and there are many in our community who will be sad to hear he is leaving. Phill will be leaving at the end of January 2022.



Dr Martine Gerritsen has been with us for almost two years will be leaving in mid-December to work closer to her home on the North Shore.

We are pleased to welcome Dr Nicole Badie to the team at Kaipara Medical Centre. She was recruited by the centre earlier this year after Dr Vaughan Lock left the practice, and she will be taking over the care of his patient list, working Tuesday to Friday. Dr Badie is originally from the United States where she received her medical license and family medicine training at the University of Cincinnati College of Medicine. She was a part of the Kaipara Medical team back in 2013-2014 and we are glad to welcome her back.

As many of my patients are aware, Dr Tomos Longworth and I are expecting our third child in January 2022. I will be away on maternity leave from December 17 until late July next year. You may see a couple of new doctors around in coming months - we have some long term locums coming to work for us from December onwards to cover maternity leave and make sure we are fully staffed early next year.

On the Covid vaccination front, Kaipara Medical Centre is now offering Covid-19 vaccinations on site. If you would like to book then please phone reception to make an appointment.

If you think you may be eligible for the third dose due to being immuno-compromised, please book a free appointment with a GP to discuss that as this dose must be prescribed by a GP. Certain criteria apply to this third dose, and more information can be found on the Ministry of Health website: <https://bit.ly/3COCm0K>.

We are also now offering booster doses for those who had their first two doses more than six months ago.

Those not enrolled at Kaipara Medical Centre and wanting a first or second dose of the vaccine can still go to the vaccination clinic run daily by Unichem Pharmacy in Helensville. You can book online for that at: <https://bookmyvaccine.covid19.health.nz>

- Dr Kathryn Elcock

CHRISTMAS CHURCH SERVICES

PLEASE NOTE: ALL SERVICES DEPENDENT ON COVID LEVELS

ST MATTHEWS ANGLICAN-METHODIST, HELENSVILLE

60 Garfield Rd, Helensville. Contact Administrator, 420 8868

- Thursday, Dec 16th: 7pm, Blue Christmas (a service of remembrance and hope).
- Sunday, Dec 19th: 9.30am, Carol Service.
- Saturday, Dec 25th: 9.30 am, Christmas Day Service.
- Sunday, Dec 26th: 9.30 am, Holy Communion.

ALL SAINTS ANGLICAN-METHODIST, KAUKAPAKAPA

Corner Peak Rd & Highway 16. Contact Administrator, 420 8868

- Saturday, Dec 25th: 9am, Christmas Day Service

ST JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC CHURCH, HELENSVILLE

1 Puriri St, Helensville. Contact Fr. Carlos Guleng. 420 8110

- Friday, Dec 24th: 6pm, Christmas Carols; 6.30pm Christmas Vigil Mass.
- Saturday, Dec 25th: 9am, Christmas Day Mass.

ST PATRICK'S CATHOLIC CHURCH, HUAPAI

380 SH16, Huapai. Contact Fr. Carlos Guleng. 420 8110


- Friday, Dec 24th: 6pm**, Christmas Carols; 6.30pm** Christmas Vigil Mass.
10.30pm, Christmas Carols; 11pm, Midnight Mass, finish midnight.
- Saturday, Dec 25th: 9am, Christmas Day Mass; 11am**, Christmas Day Mass.
**Please call Fr Carlos on (09) 420 8110 to confirm the week before Christmas

RIVER VALLEY BAPTIST CHURCH, PARAKAI

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Emily Hutchison on 021 120 8467

point of view

Here in Kaipara ki Mahurangi we've all worked incredibly hard over the past few months to keep ourselves and the rest of New Zealand safe. Our hard work has paid off, but that doesn't mean it hasn't been tough going, and I know Aucklanders are tired from our Covid fight.



I hope you're all looking forward to connecting with loved ones over summer, going back to doing the things we love doing, as we transition into a new way of managing Covid-19.

Our approach so far has served us well. We're entering this new phase better placed than many other countries, with high vaccination rates, a strong economy, and fewer hospitalisations and deaths. Many countries that recently removed restrictions are now putting them back in place as they face a surge in fourth and fifth waves. I worry about my elderly parents in the Netherlands, where they are again seeing tens of thousands of new Covid-19 cases daily, health systems getting overwhelmed, and signs of another lockdown over Christmas.

In New Zealand, our decisive action in August slowed the spread and bought us time to drive up vaccination rates. Here in Waitemata DHB, 490,000 people have received at least one dose of the vaccination. That's an amazing response, and I thank all of you who have stepped up. The entire country is on track to reach 90% fully vaccinated next month - one of the highest vaccination rates in the world.

With less than a month until Christmas, I would like to wish you all a Merry Christmas, and a happy and healthy New Year filled with hope and silver linings.

- Marja Lubeck

Labour List MP in Kaipara ki Mahurangi
marja.lubeck@parliament.govt.nz



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Email: bookings@helensvillebirthingcentre.co.nz

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local board matters

I'm guessing for many people 2021 is a year to be quickly moving on from, so I thought I'd talk about some of the things the Local Board will do in 2022.

Rodney Local Board has been working to continue to deliver for our community in the face of incredibly challenging circumstances. Not only have there been project delays due to lockdown and rising construction and material costs, but council budgets have been hard hit by the pandemic. There have been millions of dollars of savings and significant staff costs, which all ultimately have a negative impact on services, repairs and renewals of assets.

This situation seems set to continue.

At the same time there are moves at central government level, supported by both major political parties, to speed up housing developments by removing councils' ability to guide local planning. This will put more pressure on inadequate local facilities and transport infrastructure - worsened by Waka Kotahi's inability to speed up delivery of long-delayed SH16 transport improvements.

What this all means for 2022 is hard to tell with the uncertainty around the pandemic.

Pre-Christmas 'Cash & Carry' art exhibition

Helensville Art Centre has a 'cash and carry' exhibition running until Saturday, December 18 with all the artworks priced under \$250 - a "perfect opportunity to buy someone a creative gift for Christmas" says manager Yvonne Abercrombie.

The exhibition follows a one-week 'pop-up' show that marked the Art Centre's reopening on November 17 following months of being closed over lockdown. The show highlighted local artists who work behind the scenes supporting the Art Centre and included works by Jeff Thompson, Raywin Cruickshank, Leda Daniel, Jacky Pieper, and Yvonne herself.

People who enquire about holding an exhibition at the Art Centre next year, or who are interested in teaching classes or workshops, should email Yvonne at: manager@artcentrehelensville.org.nz.

We are supporting volunteer environmental groups via our two locally-based Pest Free coordinators, Boyd Steel and Shona Oliver. They've used their local knowledge and experience to make contact with groups throughout the district, and also to help form new groups so we can get wider community engagement in improving our environment. Two new groups are underway in Helensville and Kumeū/Huapai. Our aim is to help groups access council funding from the Natural Environment & Water Quality Targeted Rates and other funding sources.



Getting involved these groups will be a positive, constructive way for you to do something for the environment and your community. The contact people for the new groups are: Kumeū/Huapai - Jeremy Dean: jeremy@jeremydean.com and Helensville - Tora McKenzie: manuintheville@gmail.com.

In the transport space we have a number of new footpaths and pedestrian safety improvements starting next year in Riverhead, Huapai, Taupaki, Helensville, and Kaukapakapa. We're also working on a park & ride at Huapai, with construction starting in the second half of 2022. We are also investigating additional public transport options via an on-demand bus services.

Next year we're getting underway with new and replacement playgrounds including ones in Cabeleigh Drive in Helensville, Riverhead War Memorial Park, Shelly Beach, and Matua Rd in Huapai. In addition, we are going to be doing design and engagement on improvements to the Rautawhiri Playground in Helensville, Harry James Playground in Taupaki, and a replacement skate & bike facility in Huapai.

I hope everyone has a relaxing and safe Christmas break, and look forward to working both with, and for you, in 2022.

- Phelan Pirrie

Chair, Rodney Local Board
021 837 167

phelan.pirrie@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz

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HELENSVILLE NEWS - PUBLICATION INFORMATION

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■ **Editorial Enquiries, Letters to the Editor, and Advertising:**

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■ **Free Subscriptions to Online Edition:**

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■ **Editorial:** Ph 420 7215 or 021 178 5568.

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Hospital dolls keep Women's Institute members busy over lockdown

The members of the Helensville Women's Institute - celebrating its 90th anniversary this year - have been flat out during lockdowns knitting toys, beanies, rugs, and fingerless mittens for Waitakere Hospital and making calico dolls for Starship Hospital.

The toys are mostly teddybears which go to the children's ward, while the beanies are for new-borns, the rugs for geriatrics, and the mittens for the dialysis unit.

The calico or 'hospital dolls' for Starship are made of plain white or unbleached calico. Seriously ill children needing operations or procedures are given a doll on which they draw a face. Medical staff then demonstrate aspects of the procedures on the dolls to help the child to understand what is going to happen to them and thus be more confident and less frightened.

The calico dolls are seen as important tools in the treatment of very ill children at the hospital. Helensville Women's Institute sent 70 to Starship earlier in the year, but in September received a request for more as none were left.

The call went out to institute members, and within a week they had finished another 110, with more still being made.

As well as 2021 being the 90th anniversary of the local branch, it marks one hundred years since the first Women's Institute in New Zealand was established in Hawkes Bay.

Known then as Country Women's Institutes, as they were then known, were formed to connect rural women within their communities. Members would meet monthly and share and compete at household skills, arts and crafts, drama, singing and more.

The Institute meets monthly at the Masonic Lodge Hall in Kowhai St, at 1.30pm

on the third Thursday of each month. All women are welcome.



• Helensville Women's Institute members with some of the dolls and toys they have been making

town talk

■ KAUKAPAKAPA MARKET

The Kaukapakapa market on Sunday, December 19 (8.30am to 1pm) will be a chance to buy Christmas gifts locally, with craft and gift stall holders, as well as fresh produce, artisan food and preserves, plants, books, cakes, doughnuts, and coffee. There will be entertainment and music - plus Santa and his elves will be visiting. For more information phone Sarah on 0274 831 542, email: sarah1@maxnet.co.nz or check Facebook: @kaukapakapavillagemarket.

■ KAUKAPAKAPA LIBRARY

Kaukapakapa Library plans to open in conjunction with the local market from 9am to 1pm on Sunday, December 19, with a range of local gifts on sale to help support Helensville Museum.

They include the just released 2022 Museum Calendar, kauri trays made from timber reclaimed kauri from the 1865 Helensville Courthouse, plus copies of two popular local books, 'Men Came Voyaging' and 'Pioneering Women of South Kaipara'.

For more information phone Megan 021 959 017, or email: threehorses@xtra.co.nz.

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the business

Shop local this year - that's what I would love to encourage this Christmas. With the festive season on the horizon we are all rushing to get our Christmas shopping done early to avoid the dreaded queues and packed shops, now more than ever. Wearing masks, scanning-in and social distancing, while fighting for car parks and waiting in line, isn't what any of us want to do this year.



Unfortunately this will be a festive season with the uninvited guest being Covid-19, but as we inch towards higher vaccination rates, this will still be a great time to get out and spend some money and enjoy yourself! Remember, much of our Christmas shopping can be done locally and with smaller queues, easier parking and far less drama. It is the safer way to shop, and more of our local stores are online with fast delivery.

It's been really tough for local businesses lately so if you can redirect any of your Christmas spending to a local shop or service provider it will be really appreciated.

The Government has promised that Auckland will be open for Christmas, but we are yet to see what it will look like in detail. What we do know is that it will rely on a good vaccine rate. Helensville is currently (as of November 17) only 287 jabs away from getting to the 90% fully vaccinated goal and Parakai only 114. That's something to be excited about and shows that as a community we are doing our part to fight Covid-19.

With the new traffic light system coming out soon, many businesses will soon require you to show your vaccine certificate, either printed or on your phone. I just got mine and it is really easy. Once you have sorted your login details it only takes a minute and you will have it emailed to you. Just Google 'My Covid Record' and follow the link on the Ministry of Health website.

With the unfortunate news the Helensville Christmas parade won't be going ahead this year due to Covid-19 risks, the North West Country Business Association is excited to announce we have ordered an additional 4.5m tall Christmas tree to be placed in the Kaukapakapa township to go alongside the other giant trees in Kumeu and Helensville to help create some much needed festive cheer for our district.

On behalf of North West Country and all our members I would like to wish everyone a fantastic Christmas season, we have all worked hard to get here so make sure you enjoy yourself and stay safe.

- Mark Dennis
Chair, North West Country Business Assn

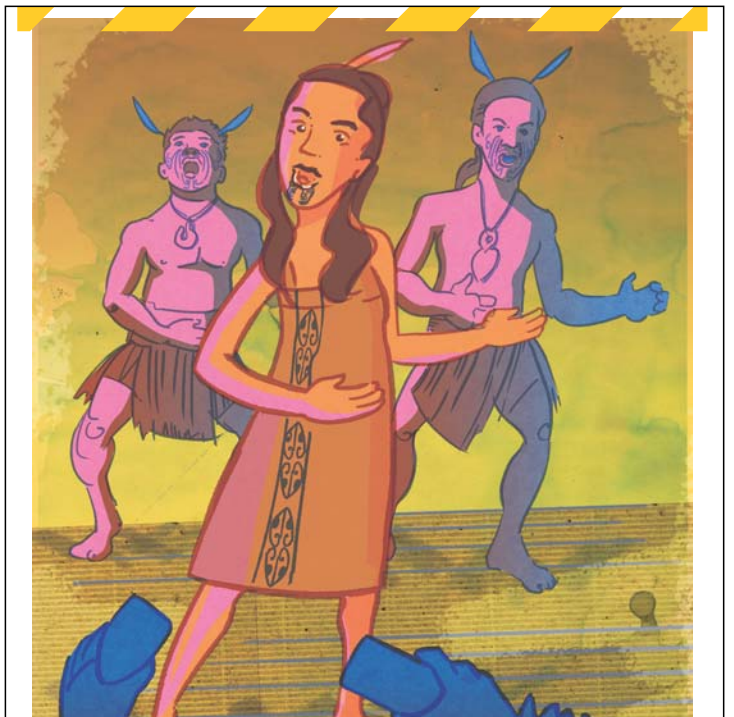


• Business Association chair Mark Dennis decorating one of the giant Christmas trees last year

Looking back...



• Swimmers at the Parakai Hot Pools, around 1930



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from the archives

What was happening this month in Helensville 10, or even 20, years ago? We've trawled through our archives to bring you the highlights from past issues.

- Dave Addison, Editor

■ 10 Years Ago - December 2011, Issue # 140

Our front page featured an article about Helensville Primary School children competing in the Auckland Kids' Marathon, plus the introduction of a *Helensville News*-sponsored short story competition in conjunction with the Helensville Show.

Other major articles included:

- The old Kaipara Dairy Factory property in Mill Road up for auction (see page 3 of this issue for an update!)
- Introduction to new doctor Willemijn Baneke.
- Parakai School principal Sean Valvoi keen to introduce new education ideas after sabbatical in Europe.
- Targa New Zealand Rally stops in at Rautawhiri Park after local special stages in Taylors Road and Old North Road.
- 'Survivor'-style summer camp for local youth planned at Highams Beach, South Head, by Te Awaroa Youth Club.
- Helensville Primary receives top ERO report.
- Free local youth development programme.
- Just-retired doctors Adrian and Maryanne Gane made honorary members of Helensville Fire Brigade.

■ 20 Years Ago - December 2001, Issue # 31

This early issue led with an article about plans to move Helensville Museum to its current location on the Helensville Riverside Reserve in Mill Road. Other articles included:

- Plans for development of the Kaipara River riverbank.
- A review and photos from the Helensville Christmas parade.
- Helensville Wine & Food Festival.

councillor comment



The Government's decision to forge ahead with its Three Waters proposals, despite widespread opposition from local councils, has prompted me to seek a judicial review.

Local Government Minister Nanaia Mahuta has made an unforgivable U-turn by removing the promised option for councils to opt in or opt out of the Three Waters reform process.

This is because the vast majority of New Zealand councils, including Auckland, have kicked the idea for a touch.

A judicial review looks at whether the Government acted fairly, followed correct procedures, and acted within its powers.

Such a review would require the majority of Auckland councillors to support it. Once this is done, other councils from around New Zealand would be invited to also lend their support. However, Auckland Mayor Phil Goff is not supporting a judicial review.

His response to my call for the review reads:

"The advice I have received is that parliamentary sovereignty and the fact that local government is a creature of central government statute, means the Government is free to legislate changes which are then binding on Council.

"We have therefore chosen not to follow that route but to participate through the Working Group to seek to persuade the Government to make the changes we believe are necessary."

That Working Group, set up by the Labour Government, has an Auckland representative on it - former Labour Party leader Phil Goff.

Let's also not forget that Minister Mahuta, as Minister of Foreign Affairs, is the person responsible for making overseas diplomatic appointments such as New Zealand's Ambassador to the United States, a posting Mayor Goff's name has been associated with.

Can anyone else see a conflict of interests?

Ratepayers across Auckland should now, more than ever, rally to put pressure on Auckland councillors to have a judicial review initiated. This is the only independent and legal option left available to ratepayers to appeal the reform.

A possible solution would be for Auckland Council to continue to retain control of Watercare, which currently manages Auckland's wastewater and drinking water supply. Watercare is governed by a board of directors, answerable to elected councillors who are in turn answerable to ratepayers. The Government's proposal seeks to distance ratepayers from such a powerful governance role. I believe this is wrong.

Watercare could even invite struggling northern councils to consider consolidating their water assets under its management. Elected members of those northern councils could then have a seat on Watercare's board. In that way, Watercare would become the overarching water controlling entity for the north - but still be accountable to ratepayers.

That could potentially achieve the Government's desired overall outcomes, but without removing ratepayers from being a strong part of the governance framework.

I draw little comfort from the fact the Government says that it will gather public feedback on Three Waters, but only via a select committee process. Ordinary ratepayers will be intimidated by such a high level process, and are being manipulated from having a voice over the future of the assets they paid for and own.

The Government's intention is to push forward to create four publicly-owned entities to manage drinking water, stormwater, and wastewater infrastructure throughout New Zealand. It is disgraceful behaviour from Minister Mahuta and it flies in the face of any Treaty-based principles.

On a more positive note, may I take this opportunity to wish you and your families a very Merry Christmas and a safe and enjoyable summer.

- Greg Sayers

Rodney Ward Councillor, Auckland Council
greg.sayers@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz

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