

Emergency response plan needed

Local community leaders are in the process of developing a draft South Kaipara Community Emergency Response Plan in the aftermath of Cyclone Gabrielle and other recent extreme weather events.

The need for a formal plan became clear during the ad hoc response put together during the cyclone, led by Helensville-based Rodney Local Board member Mark Dennis.

Mark had made initial contact with Helensville Primary principal Richard Bennett in January with a view to using the school as an emergency centre after realising there was no plan or team in place.

"I started seeing on social media people asking what they should do if there is an emergency, and when I started looking into it, there was no plan," says Mark.

"Civil Defence doesn't have a site out here any more.

"We needed something locally, as South Head, Parakai, and Helensville as a unit gets isolated, and the centralisation of all the emergency systems doesn't recognise that."

The nearest Civil Defence community hub is at Waimauku, often cut off from Helensville by flooding on SH16.

In early February Mark contacted Richard again to say there was a cyclone coming and something needed to be sorted out for the community. Only too happy to help, Richard provided Mark with the keys and codes to the school hall.

Mark contacted Atlas Concrete who donated eight cubic metres of sand, which they delivered to the lower field at Helensville School.

"We got 240 sand bags through Council



• Dan Dale from Parakai 4 Square (left) with Mark Dennis
- Photo: Gemma Donaldson

and local horse people dropped off a whole lot of horse feed sacks which were perfect. We must have done 400 to 500 sandbags," says Mark.

Those were fill-your-own bags, but Mark says everyone packed a few extra so they were available for those who couldn't do it for themselves, like the elderly.

"That night I went home and thought: I need to get a team together because I can't do this myself," says Mark. "I could run it, but I needed a team behind me."

He put a Facebook Messenger group together and started adding names, including Parakai 4 Square owner Dan Dale (who Mark jokingly refers to as the 'Mayor of Parakai'), Christina Norton to represent South Head, Rochelle Gillespie, Ana Christmas from Kindred Services, Gemma Donaldson from South Kaipara Good Food - "all the usual suspects" - along with another dozen or so locals.

The team met in the school hall the following morning.

"Ana and Rochelle were amazing as they

had the admin skills and connections, and started noting down what we needed to organise in terms of bedding, food and supplies," says Mark.

All the food and water came from SKGF and Parakai 4 Square, which donated everything for free. Mattresses were supplied by Kaipara College, and items such as bedding through Lisa Van Duyn.

Mark says they weren't sure anyone would use the hastily assembled emergency centre, "but we wanted it there just in case".

However the need was there, with the first family arriving at 2.30am on February 13 after self-evacuating their house because of fears of flooding.

Following that about half a dozen other families turned up over the next 24 hours, some after suffering storm damage but most simply anxious about what was going to happen to their properties, such as being worried about trees falling on their houses.

Mark says there was a "reasonably small number of people" who spent the night, but around 200 came to the school hall over the next 48 hours, most to use power, internet, and bathroom, or just for food and a drink.

Local police set up a hub at the hall as there was no power or cellphone coverage at the police station.

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See also...

- South Kaipara Good Food - page 4
- Photos - pages 6 & 7
- Making the Difference - page 13

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editorial

I began my editorial last month sending my thoughts to those affected by the storm which had hit much of the North Island. Well, since then we've also had Cyclone Gabrielle and yet another extreme rain event. Yet as devastating as it has been here, it's hard to comprehend the scale of what's happened at Gisborne and Hawke's Bay, which is on another level all together.

I think everyone agrees though, we've had enough.

Looking through back issues the other day, it was cruelly ironic to note an article 10 years prior to this issue, March 2013, which came with a warning from the Helensville Volunteer Fire Brigade to be aware of the fire risk in the near-drought conditions. How times have changed.

Natural disasters are out of our hands of course, but at least now planning is underway locally to improve preparedness and help ease similar future situations. The hastily assembled team headed by Local Board rep Mark Dennis is to be commended for what they achieved during the cyclone, starting from scratch and working things out on the fly. Building on what they achieved should allow a logical and practical response plan to be developed for our specific area and needs.

It's ridiculous there is no Civil Defence hub in the immediate Helensville area. Being directed to Waimauku simply isn't good enough - doesn't Civil Defence know that SH16 is always one of the first places to flood?

This issue largely focuses on the natural disasters which have struck and the aftermath, with articles and photos. My apologies for any other items which have missed the cut because of this extended coverage; hopefully we can bring those to you at a later date.

- Dave Addison, Editor

Special community edition

For our June 2023 issue this year, *Helensville News* will be producing a special issue listing all the voluntary organisations, community groups, and local clubs in our area. It's an update of the very popular publication we put out in 2015 and 2019 and will follow the same format with organisations and clubs grouped into three main categories:

- Community & Service Groups
- Clubs & General Interest Groups
- Sports & Fitness Clubs/Groups.

Now we need YOU to tell us about your group. It's a great chance to boost the profile of your club or group, and maybe increase your membership.

Many organisations will already have been listed in our 2019 issue, so the first thing you should do is visit: www.helensville.co.nz/helensvillenews/groups. There's a link to a PDF of that issue at the top of the page for you to check if you already have a listing. We will also try to contact directly all previously listed groups just to make sure.

If you do already have a listing but it needs updating, either complete the online form on that page, or email us at: dave@helensvillenews.co.nz with your changes.

Please try to provide as much information as possible - things like what the organisation/club does, membership numbers, how long it's been running, and when meetings or events are held. The more information you provide us with, the better your listing will be. If email isn't an option, feel free to phone us on 021 178 5568.

The deadline for accepting listings is Wednesday, April 19.

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Helensville Show cancelled



• Helensville Showgrounds completely underwater the day after Gabrielle

Helensville Show has been cancelled, a victim of Cyclone Gabrielle.

It had been hoped to postpone the event to a later date, but it was decided the grounds would not recover in time.

The showgrounds were completely flooded in the cyclone, in places to a depth of around half a metre - the worst in living memory. That came on top of three months of record-breaking wet weather which had already seen the grounds so wet that preparation for the Show had been extremely difficult.

Despite a week of fine weather immediately after the cyclone, with the additional flooding there was no way the racetrack infield could be used for public car parking as usual. Similarly it was too wet for any equestrian events to be held, and in the trade area the vehicles and heavy machinery needed for the many displays wouldn't be able to enter the grounds.

On top of that, numerous trees had fallen around the grounds, including several mature poplars, some of which damaged the cattle yards and sheep pens and completely blocked the livestock area.

While the main show hall escaped damage, the office and adjoining rooms were flooded to a depth of around 100mm, damaging furniture and equipment.

The Helensville A&P Association Show Committee considered a number of options to avoid cancellation, including using Rautawhiri Park for public parking and running a free shuttle service to and from the grounds, holding a 'cut-down' event, or delaying the Show until late April or early May - the earliest that attractions like sideshows would again be available.

However the committee voted on February 19 to cancel the event as it was decided even a delayed Show couldn't proceed if there was any more rain in the interim. That call turned out to be prescient, with the most recent deluge on Friday, February 24 - the day before the Show was to be held - again flooding the grounds and the rooms in the showgrounds building.

The committee also didn't think it fair to call on the local farmers and other volunteers who help put the show together and run it on the day, when many of them are struggling with cyclone damage on their own properties.

The cancellation is a double hit for Helensville Show, after last year's was also called off - along with most other local events - because of Covid restrictions.

"We're obviously distraught we are unable to put the Show on for the local community," says Show manager Shona Addison.

"I know many people were looking forward to it for a day of family fun after what has been a pretty bleak time of late."

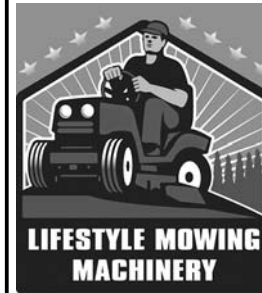
She acknowledged the hard work already put in by committee members and many volunteers, and the "tremendous" support of the Show's sponsors.

After the initial cleanup at the showgrounds, effort will be put into making sure the 120th Show, now to be held on Saturday, February 24 next year, will be a show to remember.

This year's event was to be the first show with an over-arching theme - 'Wool: NZ's Hero Fibre'. That theme will now carry on to next year's show, with 12 months available to tweak and expand it to make it even better.

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Emergency plan cont...

• From page 1

Plenty of volunteers turned up to help as well, with a wide range of skills including a doctor, a park ranger, a navy officer with Civil Defence experience, police, and 4WD drivers. Anglican minister Jacynthia Murphy help run the kitchen, and provided people with emotional support and wisdom.

"We're a community that comes together when they need to," says Mark.

Ana Christmas of Kindred Services agrees, saying: "A beautiful spirit of this community has shone through this disaster. We saw many good-hearted people step forward to support each other, from cooking hot meals, to clearing access ways with chainsaws, local farmers out clearing roads, and volunteer medics and even a GP conducting welfare checks. There was a resilience and deep sense of care for each other."

The response team sent out crews of two in 4WDs with chainsaws to clear roads of fallen trees, and other crews including people with first aid experience around Parakai and Helensville to do welfare checks, door knocking properties that looked like they were at risk.

Later on a secondary hub was set up at Waioneke School with help from Christina Norton, and food, petrol and diesel sent up there. South Head hall also became a hub, along with a smaller one at Shelly Beach.

"Following this weather event the

networks which have been built will serve us well if it happens again. We'll be better prepared," says Mark.

"Following this event there will be many of us feeling a range of emotions - alarm, concern, detachment, tearfulness,

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SKGF steps up to help after cyclone

South Kaipara Good Food provided more than 24,000 units of non-perishable items plus more than 160kg of vegetables to local communities including South Head, Muriwai, Kumeū, and Te Aroha Pā since the end of January in response to the cyclone and subsequent weather events, working alongside Auckland Emergency Management, the New Zealand Food Network, the New Zealand Defence Force, local agencies, and community members.

In addition, two pallets of water, plus 500 litres each of petrol and diesel for generators was sent to South Head.

Ongoing support is being provided to specific areas such as Muriwai, as well as locals who now need help through Kai Assist weekly food packs. SKGF normally provides 120-plus kai packs each week, but has had to greatly increase its supply to respond to emergency situations such as Covid 19, floods, and now Cyclone Gabrielle.

"Events such as those over the past month have highlighted the importance of working together with agencies and community in a time of crisis," says SKGF chief executive Gemma Donaldson.

"Special thanks to SKGF volunteers who spent more than 328 hours packing and delivering food in the past month, and to Rodney Local Board member Mark Dennis for strong leadership in an emergency situation."



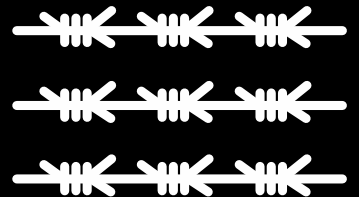
• Volunteers unpack supplies delivered by helicopter to Rautawhiri Park for distribution to Muriwai

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College riders off to Pegasus Cup

A team of six Kaipara College students will represent their school at the Pegasus Cup, a new secondary schools show jumping event. For years nine to 13 students, it will be held at the 240ha Takapoto Estate on the shores of Lake Karapiro on March 20 and 21.

The Kaipara College equestrian team consists of Meadow Stanford-Soons (Year 9), Natasha Fielding (Year 10), Alana England, Millie Limmer, and Rebecca Steffens (all Year 11), and Emma Steffens (Year 13). They will be competing against riders from around 20 other schools from throughout the North Island.

The team was the lucky winner of a \$1000 travel grant from Generate Kiwisaver, after their video entry was chosen as one of three finalists along with Te Aho o Te Kura Pounamu - The Correspondence School, and Carmel College.

Emergency plan cont...

• From page 4

flashbacks, anger," says Ana Christmas.

"These post-trauma responses are all normal reactions and will pass in time, but it is important to reach out and speak to someone if they continue to cause distress. That could be talking to a friend or neighbour, your GP, calling or texting 1737, or popping into the Kindred Centre and having a chat to one of our team."

The temporary emergency response set up for Cyclone Gabrielle has now been formally wound up and development of a draft Community Emergency Response Plan is underway.

"It'll be a community response plan - the key to that is 'community', community volunteer run," says Mark. "The draft will be created by locals, headed by me, and we will provide it as a plan which will have basic roles set out, locations for emergency centres, and plans A and B if things don't go to plan, such as the Helensville War Memorial Hall being out of action."

He says another huge weather event or other emergency could happen "in the next six months, year, or 10 years" and the community needs a plan on paper so people can see what was done this time.

"My role was the coordinator of human resources. People do feel a bit lost in that environment and need a bit of direction and reassurance there is some sort of plan in place."

Adds Ana: "Some people felt alone and scared in our community. Rightly so, there were a number of very real concerns through this event that have heightened our

awareness to be prepared and have resources like the evacuation centre in place."

Part of planning for future emergency events will be finding funding for resources.

"We didn't have any resources other than what we collected from locals, which more or less wasted that first 12 hours," points out Mark. "If we'd had a plan in place and resources available we would have been able to hit the ground running."

Money will be needed for things like generators, first aid packs, cones, high-vis gear, basic food and water that can be stored long-term, and battery packs - "basic supplies so we can get started in between the time an emergency starts and when help arrives from central government, if it ever does come."

Equipment of course needs somewhere to be stored, and Mark is hoping when Helensville Primary upgrades its hall in the coming years, if funds are available they may be able to include a community civil defence centre.

"We would ideally need office space, storage room, and a shower block. That would allow us to store equipment on site."

Rochelle Gillespie, one of those Mark called upon to help with the cyclone response, says: "Mark must be acknowledged for the way he stepped up to lead this response."

"Even after the crisis response he has continued to give voice to our concerns, particularly with his advocacy of those who were rurally isolated, cut off by road and without power for many days. We are lucky to have him in our corner."

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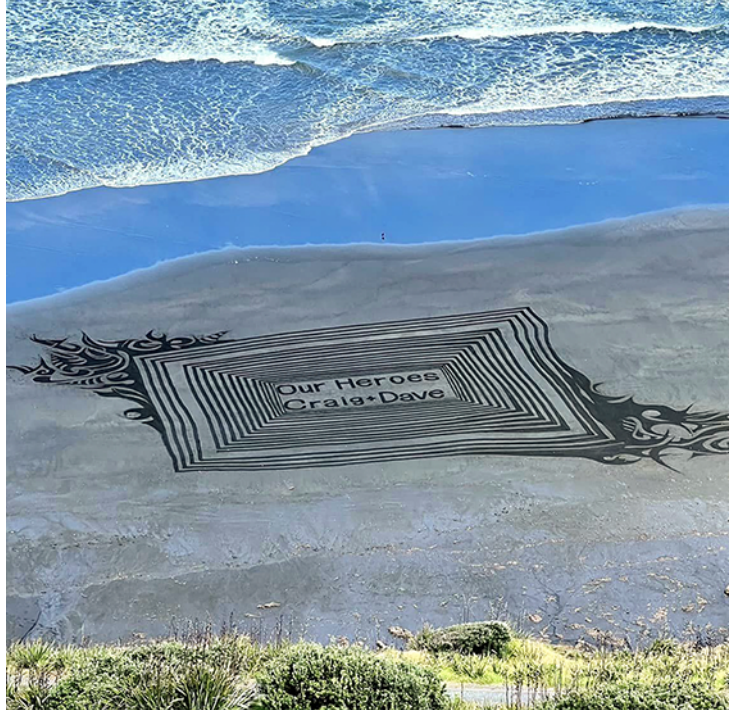
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Storm aftermath in photos



Clockwise from top left:

- A huge slip undermines the Golden Staircase, just south of Higham Road, South Head (photo - Esther Kern)
- A tribute at Māori Bay to fallen Muriwai firefighters Dave van Zwanenberg and Craig Stevens by 'Sand Art Man' Nick Vitasovich
- Fallen trees at the Helensville Showgrounds
- Damage to the Helensville Rugby Club building
- The emergency response team meet in Helensville School hall (photo - Rochelle Gillespie)



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Clockwise from above:

- This slip at a Parakai farm washed away a 15mx8m farm water supply dam and pump along with 300m of boundary fencing
- Beds set up in Helensville School hall (photo - Rochelle Gillespie)
- Three quarters of this plantation blew over in the cyclone (photo - Mark Dennis)
- A fallen giant, one of several mature oak trees which blew over at Kaipātiki Reserve, Parakai



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Rockers D4 to play in Helensville

Kiwi rock band The D4 will perform at the Kaipara Tavern on March 17 as part of a nationwide tour to celebrate the 21st anniversary of its critically acclaimed debut album, '6TWENTY'.

They will be joined by San Diego rock trio, The Schizophonics, an explosive live act making its third visit to New Zealand.

The D4 was formed in Auckland in 1998 by vocalist/guitarists Dion Palmer and Jimmy Christmas, who put together a four-piece combo featuring founding members English Jake and Rich Mixture. The band was later joined by Vaughan Williams (bass) and Daniel Pooley (drums).

Between 1998-2006, The D4 played clubs and festivals in the US, UK, Japan, Europe, Australia and New Zealand, including, SXSW, Glastonbury, Reading, Leeds, Fuji Rock, Pukkelpop, and The Big Day Out.

The band has played alongside many other artists including The New York Dolls, the Dictators, Bo Diddley, the Pretty Things,



Iggy and the Stooges, Guitar Wolf, and the Hives. They also performed live on late night US television shows like David Letterman and Jimmy Kimmel.

Tickets cost \$45 and can be booked at: ticketfairy.com/event/the-d4helensville.

Real estate agent comes out top

Local real estate agent Kelly Davison has notched up some high-performance milestones.

Working for Burmester Realty in Commercial Road, she has been awarded Agent of the Year Suburb Winner for both Helensville and Parakai (she won Helensville last year too) in the Rate My Agent awards for 2023, as well as being ranked 45th in the Top 100 Agents in New Zealand.

In the last 12 months Kelly has sold 35 properties worth a total of more than \$40m.

Kelly has a background in marketing, sales and event management, and 30 years' experience in house building, renovations, and house removals - with one property featured on the Grand Designs New Zealand television show.

She has lived in the Helensville-Kaukapakapa area for 25 years with her husband and six children, with involvement in the local netball community and local schools.

5% cut to Local Board budget mooted

Auckland Council is proposing to cut almost \$1 million from Rodney Local Board's 2023/24 funding in response to the council's \$295 million budget shortfall.

Local boards combined would see their funding slashed by \$16 million, with Rodney's operational spend cut by \$921,000 - the fourth largest drop among the 21 local boards.

Those cuts, if adopted, could impact money available for a range of local events, community grants, community and environmental programmes, and opening hours or levels of service at council facilities.

The cuts would not affect capital spending or projects funded through the Rodney transport targeted rate.

Among areas of saving being considered are stopping or reducing funding for grants, community events like ANZAC ceremonies and A&P shows, waste minimisation programmes, pest reduction programmes and environmental volunteer groups, and art centre funding. Subsidies for hall users could be axed, along with funding for local community workers who run a range of activities, events and programmes.

Full information: <https://bit.ly/3xXGafe>

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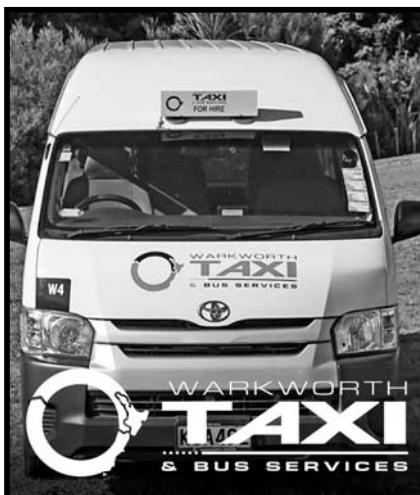
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Rare poster for sale

An historic 1935 poster promoting Helensville and the hot springs at Parakai has come up for sale on a specialist Danish poster website.

The 57.5 cm x 89.5 cm original lithograph was printed by G. H. Loney, the government printer in Wellington in the mid-1930s, and features a jumping girl with pools in the background. The designer is unknown.

Text on the poster reads: "Helensville For Health and Sport. Hot Springs at the Hotels at Parakai. Cheap Rail Fares." The printer's name appears in small text at the bottom.

The poster's condition is rated as 10/10, with a "little patina, but the poster is in perfect condition."

It doesn't come cheap however - the sale

price is NZ \$4209.00, plus shipping (based on the exchange rate at the time of going to press).

The website describes the poster as an "original vintage poster [which] promotes the hot springs in the area, with a focus on health and sport. New Zealand has many hot springs, with mineral-rich, soothing waters said to be more than just relaxing.

"We have never seen this poster before, nor can we find it anywhere else on the internet. This copy is also in perfect condition, so it is therefore a very unique vintage poster."

The poster can be purchased at: plakatkunst.com/producs/helensville-hot-springs.

The name 'plakatkunst' means 'poster art' in Danish and German.



Art Centre at museum a bit longer

With extreme weather delaying rebuilding work on the Helensville War Memorial Hall building the Helensville Art Centre remains operating from Helensville Museum for March.

The Art Centre has a March exhibition on titled 'Reflections at the Museum' which runs from March 8 to April 1, with a special opening evening on March 10.

In April local artist and ceramicist Rachel Murphy will start a six-week ceramics course at the Art Centre. Rachel is a well-established artist, exhibitor and tutor who has moved to the Helensville area. Details of her courses will be posted on the centre's website, or contact Art Centre manager Yvonne Abercrombie by email at: manager@artcentrehelensville.org.nz.

Creative Matters will be running holiday programmes at the Art Centre during the April school holidays -

bookings can be made online at: creativematters.co.nz.

Also in April will be another member artists' exhibition. Members, or anyone who would like to join as a member to enter the show, should refer to the website for details:



• Creative Matters holiday programmes

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point of view

It's been a really tough few weeks for communities across the Kaipara. Cyclone Gabrielle is the most significant weather event New Zealand has seen this century, and I know the events have taken a huge toll on many.

Over the past weeks I connected and worked with the local Civil Defence and community-organised emergency centres across the region and was impressed with the way people from all walks of life came together and pitched in to help clear properties inundated by the floods.

I was especially sorry the Helensville Show was cancelled as a result of Cyclone Gabrielle. I was looking forward to being there and taking part in the Amazing Wool fashion parade.

Since the cyclone hit we've seen whānau, friends and neighbours pulling together to keep each other safe, warm and fed. The resilience and community spirit shown by everyone has been remarkable, but I know there's still a long road ahead for many, especially those who live at Muriwai. My thoughts go out to the family, friends and colleagues of the volunteer firefighters who lost their lives at Muriwai. They were protecting their community and the lives of others - leaving their own homes and loved ones to do so.

Our volunteer firefighters play a vital role in our communities - critical frontline response and support to us through some of our hardest times.

My aroha goes to all who have been impacted by the cyclone. The loss of life and destruction is heartbreaking.

As we recover from the cyclone it is obvious Auckland needs to review its ability to respond to such serious disasters and climate events, and to recognise the impact of climate change as well as the need to build and maintain our water infrastructure to cope with the demands such changes cause.

As you are aware it is only the third time in our history the government has declared a National State of Emergency. This lets us support affected regions, provide additional resources as needed, and help set the priorities across the country for the response.

The government has provided an \$11.5m community support package of immediate relief for individuals, families and households as well as putting in place funding to help farmers, growers, and rural communities mobilise and co-ordinate recovery efforts. It will provide even more support once the full extent of the damage is known.

- Marja Lubeck

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



KAIPARA MEMORIAL RSA

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Thursday 30th March 2023, 6.30pm

To be held at the
Helensville Bowling Club
38 Awaroa Road, Helensville

Apologies to: kaipararsa@xtra.co.nz
All members are urged to attend.



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New sandpit toys for Playcentre



• Three-year-olds Finn Chamberlain (left) and Charlie Clayton hard at play

Helensville Playcentre has received a grant from the Helensville Lions Club to upgrade its sandpit toys.

"Our tamariki are thrilled with the diggers and trucks and they will be a delight for many more for years to come," says Helen Smith. "A big thank you to the Lions for their support."

Helensville Playcentre, at 7 Stewart Street, has been running for more than 60 years. Sessions are held every Monday, Thursday and Friday from 9am to 12.30pm for children aged 0-6 years, with their caregivers.

For more information email: helensville@playcentre.org.nz or visit: facebook.com/helensvilleplaycentre.

"We would love to welcome you for a visit and show you what we are about," says Helen.

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THANK YOU

I have one simple message today: thank you.

On behalf of this community I'd like to take this opportunity to express the gratitude that we collectively feel towards our courageous firefighters, NZ Police, St John ambulance service, surf lifesaving clubs, Coastguard and other first responders.



You are our heroes.

In particular we think of the volunteers and staff of Muriwai Fire Station and affected friends and family following the tragedy in Muriwai, grappling with loss beyond imagination.

In my visits to as many flood-ravaged areas as possible these past few weeks, I've seen many others stepping up as well. I want to thank the many community groups and locals who have worked tirelessly before, during and after the floods to organise help for their fellow Kiwi in need.

In the coming weeks I will have plenty to say about systemic shortcomings that will have cost many of you dearly. These include



planning and maintenance practices, along with budgetary focus on anything but the basics - such as stormwater management - all too often. Lessons have clearly not been learned from the August 2021 flooding, despite warnings delivered by many of us since then.

There will be time enough for all that soon. But today I say again, to everyone who has displayed such incredible community spirit and bravery in these tough times: while we can never fully repay you, please know that you have the admiration, respect and heartfelt thanks of a grateful community.



National  **Chris Penk**
MP for Kaipara ki Mahurangi

Your local MP

A | 134 Main Road, Kumeu 0810
P | 09 412 2496

Funded by the Parliamentary Service. Authorised by Chris Penk, 134 Main Road, Kumeu 0810.



making the difference

Is there someone special who has done something that's made a difference for you, your family or our town? To nominate someone, write to: Nicky Horsbrough, Harcourts Helensville, 92 Commercial Road, Helensville 0800 or fill out the form online at: nickyhorsbrough.harcourts.co.nz. This month is a little different, with a special morning tea at Butcher Baker being shouted for the lucky recipients.

March's recipients are Mark Dennis and his emergency response team.

Mark and his team was nominated by James Scott, who says: "On Tuesday, February 14 my wife and I and our 7-year-old daughter had to self-evacuate our home due to rising floodwaters associated with



• Mark Dennis (left) with Nicky

Cyclone Gabrielle. (Thankfully the house was spared by a matter of inches - the garage, workshop and sleepout not so lucky!)

Our place of refuge was the Helensville Primary School hall, which had been set up as an evacuation centre.

The huge task to implement this facility was undertaken by many members of local not-for-profits (see article starting on page 1) who gave their time and enabled this without funding.

We were the first to arrive at the centre at 3am with torrential rain still falling and the incredibly powerful winds blowing. These selfless people left their homes to open up the centre which was set up with beds, tea and coffee, food, and a friendly face.

Not only did they help us but went on to support countless people in our community in the following days with a place to shelter and coordinating assistance to the community with food, water, supplies, tree clearing etc."

the business

With the sun shining it is hard to believe the events of the last few weeks.

Our deepest sympathy goes out to all affected by the recent weather events, and our most heartfelt condolences to the fire-fighters and their families in Muriwai.

The events of the last month have shown how important it is for businesses to put together resilience plans to deal with natural disasters.

Following the floods in 2021 we put information on our website to help local businesses to plan. This year the Kumeū-Huapai Emergency Plan was completed and businesses should read this to see what the risks are and what they can do to mitigate them: <https://bit.ly/3ZvdBRW>.

We will be lobbying council to prepare more of these plans and engage with our local communities so people are better prepared and understand more about what the council response will be.

Once again the North West Country Business Association provided quick access flood-relief grant funding to local businesses to aid them in the aftermath.

Let's hope with the arrival of autumn we see the end of La Niña.

- James Scott
Chair

North West Country Business Assn



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from our local MP

It seems clear to me that as the dust settles - or rather, as the last water drains - from the most recent flooding event, serious questions remain.

We have now entered a new phase, with the initial shock of the emergency situation having receded. Frustration is mounting as medium-term issues, such as relief for flood damage, need to be addressed. Long-term issues, such as the development of north and northwest Auckland, are clearly needing solutions as well.

My personal view is that no further development should be consented until fundamental aspects of infrastructure are resolved. To put it bluntly, it's been years now since any serious attempt at coherent area planning has been undertaken, but the housing growth has continued unabated.

Let us not forget that Auckland Council exists to provide infrastructure to support the local population.

I've advocated at length for better roads and other transport connections, along with additional schooling capacity. And water infrastructure is a bit like power connections, internet connectivity, and mobile reception (on which I've also been shouting into the wind): it's less obvious but no less crucial.

As local MP I've been trying to get Wellington to listen to the concerns of northwest Auckland, with mixed success (at best). The trouble with banging your head against a brick wall is you get a headache while the wall remains in place.

In the last edition of *Helensville News* I noted the call of the Rodney Local Board chair that MPs support his call that further development not proceed without infrastructure being put in place. Infrastructure and planning to match population growth is exactly what I've been seeking these past five years.

It would be good to have support in arguing for the infrastructure needed. Anyone who has gained elected office needs to stand up and be counted: it's not good enough simply to hope housing won't create planning headaches for this area. It has and it will. This problem will endure until solutions are put in place.

In particular, I would welcome a shared commitment to halt the 'Rapid Transit Corridor' plans that would exacerbate the issue of SH16 being an impermeable tunnel of stormwater. This project is being touted in the vain hope of generating more walking and cycling activity. We need to get real about what's planned, what good it'll do, and at what cost. As we've seen all too clearly in the past month, the cost is way too high. Enough.

- Chris Penk, MP for Kaipara ki Mahurangi

chris.penkmp@parliament.govt.nz
Ph: 09 412 2496.



Local Māori win court ruling on paper road

South Head Māori have won a High Court ruling to reinstate access to Muriwai Beach from Tarawera Road.

It's the culmination of a 13-year battle led by kaumātua George Hill and a group of his Ngāti Whātua Tuturu hapu to regain access to the legal paper road which leads from the end of Tarawera Road to the beach.

The road had been blocked by a padlocked gate for several decades, and negotiations with the farmland leaseholders and with Auckland Transport failed to reach a solution.

In December a favourable High Court ruling was given and the padlock removed, but the group didn't want to make the decision public until they were satisfied the gate would remain unlocked.

Generations of Haranui Māori have historically used the road to ride out on horseback to gather toheroa, says George.

"About 2kms up the road is our sacred maunga, Tarawera. Many of our tupuna are buried on Tarawera."

Although it is a public 'road', the beach is only accessible by 4x4 vehicles, or by horseback or walking.

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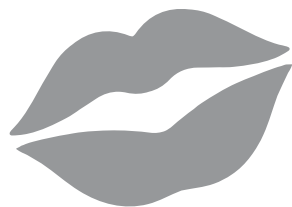
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local board matters

What a summer it has been.

Who could have predicted we would have floods, cyclones, more floods, and throughout this a huge number of landslides and slips. Rodney has shouldered a disproportionate share of the carnage and it may take decades to recover fully.

Our roading network has been so badly affected it is likely some roads will need to be abandoned and new ones constructed to replace them. This process takes years. In some places roads will be reduced to a single lane with lower speeds that will frustrate users and if not used responsibly, increase the likelihood of accidents.

Patience will be a virtue.

In addition, lives have been lost.

The Muriwai Volunteer Fire Brigade tragically lost two key team members in a landslide on February 13. Funerals for Dave van Zwanenberg and Craig Stevens were held on Wednesday, February 22 and Wednesday, March 1 respectively. Both these men gave their lives in service of their community, and I am sure all our thoughts and prayers are with their families.

It is also worth noting that more than half of all Auckland's properties which have been red stickered are at Muriwai. This could see up to 500 people relocate out of the community in the medium term, which will have a tremendous impact on families, local schools, and businesses.

Sadly these events, and others nationally, highlight some serious issues in our land use and planning in New Zealand.

For many years we have talked about managed retreat from coastal inundation, flood risk, and land instability, but little has been done to make our communities more resilient to extreme weather events.

Ultimately land use must change. Some places will simply be retired.

In future, town planning, architecture, infrastructure, roading, and community facilities will need to be climate resilient by design. If folk can live in The Netherlands below sea level then surely there must be solutions to our challenges.

How will we pay for this? Clearly rate and taxpayers are in for some tough times.

Perhaps we will need to focus on local issues and leave the rest of the planet to sort itself out. New Zealand could simply focus our investment on our resilience, preparedness, self-sufficiency, productivity, and global competitiveness. We need a period of being hyper-local.



- Brent Bailey
Chair, Rodney Local Board
brent.bailey@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz

Meeting to discuss the future of ratepayers assn

Te Awaroa Residents & Ratepayers Association Incorporated (TARRA) will hold a public meeting on Wednesday, March 15 to discuss the future of the organisation.

The meeting aims to gauge whether there is still an appetite within the Helensville and Parakai community for an organisation representing community and business interests to liaise with and lobby both Auckland Council (at both councillor and Local Board levels), and with the North West Country Business Association.

Members who have kept TARRA 'alive' over recent years are getting older, and some believe ratepayer associations have been rendered largely obsolete with so much interaction with Council done online and accessible to people individually. Facebook community pages also now play some of the role of ratepayer associations.

If there is a lack of support for continuing with TARRA, the existing Incorporated Society could be passed to another group (with name and constitution changes).

The meeting will start at 7pm in the Catholic Church Hall in Kowhai Street, Helensville. Everyone is welcome.

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community tidbits from town and around

■ FLAXWEAVING WORKSHOP

Helensville Museum will hold a harakeke (flax weaving) workshop on Saturday, March 18 from 10am to 1pm.

This entry-level workshop will show locals how to correctly and respectfully harvest harakeke and how to create a simple rourou (pārō) food basket.

Katriona and Leigh will teach the fundamentals and practical skills of working with New Zealand flax. All materials will be provided, and the course is open to anyone 13 years old and over; cost is \$25 per person. Book through Eventfinda (search for Helensville Museum). Numbers are limited.

■ KAUKAPAKAPA MARKET

Because of flooding which damaged the Kaukapakapa hall, the next Kaukapakapa market will be held at the Helensville Showgrounds on Sunday, March 19 from 8.30am to 1pm. The monthly market will remain at this location until further notice.

The venue isn't the only thing that's new, with new stall holders joining the market each month. Stalls will feature everything from locally hand-made crafts and fresh fruit and vegetables to used items, clothing and collectibles, books, plants, freshly made coffee, ice cream, and food - plus live music

from Ralphe and free face painting for children. For more information phone Sarah on 0274 831542 or email her at: sarah@riversidecrafts.co.nz.

■ KAIPARA MEMORIAL RSA AGM

Kaipara Memorial RSA will hold its annual general meeting on Thursday, March 30 from 6.30pm at the Helensville Bowling Club rooms, 38 Awaroa Road. All members are urged to attend; any apologies should be emailed to: kaipararsa@xtra.co.nz.

MP standing down

Marja Lubeck, the Labour list MP for our Kaipara ki Mahurangi electorate, will not be standing for re-election this year 2023.

"This hasn't been an easy decision - I love my job," she says.

"Those who know me know how important family is to me - while I love my job as an MP the time away from home at Parliament and travelling throughout our region has been hard to balance with the needs of my family. My family have been very supportive of me for a long time, and I need to give them my all."

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