

# HELENSVILLE news

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YOUR COMMUNITY • YOUR NEWSPAPER

Issue 274, March 2024

## Welcome to the new-look Helensville News!



The 120th Helensville Show was a huge success, with more than 6000 visitors and a massive range of attractions and events. Thanks to Leo Lemmen from Universal Cranes for lifting *Helensville News* up to a height of around 55m so we could get this amazing aerial shot of the Show. More photos are on pages 8 and 9.

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## editorial

Welcome to the new-look *Helensville News*!

We're pretty excited about our new all-colour format, with a more modern look, larger images, bigger text, and for the advertisers, larger adverts.

There hasn't been a change this big in the quarter century since *Helensville News* was first delivered to local residents and businesses in April, 1999.

We're also more environmentally friendly now too, being printed on paper you can put in the compost.

Expect a few tweaks to the layout and design over the coming months as we come to grips with a very different production system - and if anyone has any suggestions for things they would like to see in your local newspaper, send me an email.

After two years when they were seemingly intent on destroying us, the weather gods turned on a glorious day for the 120th *Helensville Show* on February 24. Following two cancelled events because of the extreme weather and flooding, I think locals - and a fair few city types as well - were all too ready to enjoy our town's biggest annual one-day event, judging by the huge numbers who enjoyed a fabulous Show.

It takes an army of volunteers to run the Show on the day, and I guess a platoon during the rest of the year getting everything planned, organised, and set up. If you see any headless chooks running around *Helensville*, they just might be Show committee members!

As well as our stunning front page, we've got a heap of other photos from the Show on pages 8 and 9, and if we've got room we may print even more next issue.

So enjoy this first tabloid size, full-colour issue of *Helensville News*.

- Dave Addison, Editor  
[dave@helensvillenews.co.nz](mailto:dave@helensvillenews.co.nz)

## Kindy teacher a high flyer




The children at Parakai Kindergarten in Fordyce Road love watching the parachutes from Skydive Auckland from their playground, and will stop what they are doing to count the skydivers as their parachutes open.

In late February they had the extra excitement of watching their teacher Sharon Clayton - known to them as 'Whaea Sharon' - make her own jump. The jump was a special gift to Sharon from the teachers at the kindy, who had overheard her say she would love to do that one day while watching the jumpers with the children.

When Sharon (centre, above) booked her sky dive, she invited the kindergarten whānau to bring along their tamariki to watch. A group of kindy children and their siblings held home-made signs to cheer Sharon on, and had fun seeing the plane and the parachutes up close. Sharon was also supported by two of her adult children who jumped alongside her; her husband came to watch too. Sharon described it an amazing experience.

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Jana Mills



# Coastguard in new home soon

Coastguard Kaipara volunteers are hoping to move into their new purpose-built Rescue Centre by the end of this month.

A public opening ceremony is expected to be held in the next couple of months at the site by the Springs Road wharf at Parakai.

Work on the building began in the last quarter of 2023, and the 270sq.m. shed reached lockup stage by the start of February. Work is now continuing on the electrical and plumbing installation and other interior fit-out.

The volunteers got together in mid-February to cut and install the insulation - a certified carbon zero product made from recycled plastic - in the walls.

"That's a thing we could do as a crew to help reduce costs," says media officer Richard Downer, adding that physically working on the building also helped give the crew ownership of the project.

It's a project that has taken some time, with *Helensville News* first reporting on the plans and fundraising drive back in August 2020.

At the time of publication \$518,000 had been raised toward a goal of \$728,000.

Donations can be made online at: [www.coastguardkaipara.org.nz](http://www.coastguardkaipara.org.nz).

The building will be solar powered, with Richard explaining it cost no more to install a solar system than to connect to the grid, with the bonus of no large monthly bills. The unit's energy usage is low anyway, and the use of things like smart chargers will ensure much of that use is during sunshine hours.

The bulk of the shed is taken up with room for Coastguard Kaipara's boats, tractor, and recently acquired Gibbs Quadski.

The river side of the building features a large general storage room, a workshop for maintenance and small repairs open to the main shed, a room for storage lockers for the crew and other people, and a toilet.

A staircase, not yet installed when we visited, leads up to a mezzanine floor with an office at one end and a large area for crew training plus a small kitchen area. Windows on one side look out over the Kaipara River while those on the other overlook the main shed.

Richard says support from contractors and suppliers has been vital in helping keep costs down. For instance, Chesters at Silverdale are supplying the plumbing fittings for free, while Laser Plumbing

Silverdale are doing the installation at no charge. Helensville's Sean Gray Electrical has been able to talk his supplier Scott Electrical into supplying everything for free, while Sean himself will be doing the installation work at a very special rate. Vantage North Shore are supplying the internal windows free as well.

The new building has been designed to future-proof the local volunteer organisation for at least the next three decades.

It was originally planned to build in two stages, with the interior rooms and mezzanine installed at a later



• Coastguard Kaipara media officer Richard Downer looks out from what will be one of the training room windows overlooking the main shed

date. However, Coastguard NZ was keen for the whole building to be ready at once.

"It's been a big project, but 100 percent worth it," says Richard.

The move from its present location at the Kaipara Cruising Club in Mill Road to the new Parakai site will bring faster response times for distress calls, with rescue craft Winstone Rescue able to reach the harbour at least 10 minutes faster - a potentially vital difference in a life-threatening emergency.

The Springs Road boat ramp will also give Coastguard Kaipara full 24-hour launch capability, while the near-new ramp and floating pontoon will enable fast, easy transfer of any casualties to medical staff.

Coastguard Kaipara has been given a 30-year lease on the land the new building sits on for just \$1 per year from Auckland Council, saving the organisation almost \$17,000 a year in rent - money which will now be available for maintenance, purchasing and upgrading equipment, and crew training - which will also benefit the volunteer members by allowing them to spend more of their two hours of weekly on-water training actually on the harbour, and less time spent reaching it.

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## 2024 Kaipara College & Helensville District High School CENTENARY

The Centenary celebration weekend  
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Community Centenary Meeting

> Monday 4 March <

See the Kaipara College website & Facebook page for more meeting details or call 09 420 8640 - ext 800

# Parakai students in new rooms for start of school year

Parakai School Year 3 to 8 pupils have moved into a block of seven state of the art new classrooms, finished just in time for the start of the new school year.

The classroom block was one part of an ambitious rebuilding project to replace most of the school, apart from the main admin block fronting Fordyce Road which only opened about 20 years ago, and the library.

Work on the project started in mid-2022 with several classrooms moved from the school's Fordyce Road boundary and set up on the playing field for use during construction. While that initial work was done, some children used the hall and other available spaces as temporary rooms.

The school library building was moved to the road frontage beside the main administration building and modernised, and by mid-2023 a huge new double-height hall, twice the size of the school's existing facility, was well under construction adjoining the library.

It is expected to be finished later in March.

The seven new classrooms have the use of two large separate 'maker spaces' with benches, sinks, and running water, one set up for art and the other for science and technology projects.

The classrooms have brightly coloured feature walls, and special 'reading nooks' where two or three children can sit in special niches recessed into the walls. Large sliding doors between all the rooms enable the spaces to be flexible in size and layout.

There's even a purpose-built, soundproof music room, soon to house a relaunch of the school's radio station.

The classroom block is

separated in the middle by a large teacher resource room.

Technology is very evident.

Unlike many schools which require parents to supply their children with a laptop or similar, Parakai School provides a Chromebook for every Year 4 to 8 pupil, and one for every two children in the junior school.

"But we still believe in reading books and writing," assures Principal Yolanda Choromanski.

terracing off the decks facing the playing fields and hard court areas.

Parakai School now has 11 learning spaces counting the existing rooms, for a student roll of 205 at the time of writing (but expected to grow to more than 230 by year's end).

New entrants and Year 1 and 2 children, currently numbering just over 50, now have a huge area to themselves in the main block, spread through four classrooms plus a large shared space.

The drop-off area in front of the school has been greatly expanded, with gardens and large native trees planted.

A large new carpark should be completed by the end of March.

The school's hard surface play area has been doubled in size, and Yolanda says there is sufficient money to astroturf part of it, which will provide an alternative playing surface and mean the children can avoid the grass fields when they become boggy in wet weather.

The existing RTL B (Resource Teacher Learning & Behaviour) building has been relocated behind the new classroom block.

For passers by, probably the most striking feature is the colourful mural which spans the front of the new hall,

designed using concepts dreamt up by the senior students to reflect the local community. Eagle eyed viewers will notice the letters P B 4 L spread across the bottom - they stand for Positive Behaviour For Learning, reflecting the school's culture.

"We're really lucky the Ministry came to the party and really supported Parakai School," says

• To Page 5



• Parakai School principal Yolanda Choromanski with Year 8 students Aroha Hill Hobbs & Thom McDonald, the current head girl and boy

Large flat screen televisions help with teaching, and there are headphones for each student to use for audio work or just to cut out distracting noise.

Withdrawal spaces between every two rooms also give children a space to get away from distractions and work in a peaceful environment.

The new buildings feature large covered outdoor areas for indoor-outdoor flow, and stadium-style

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# College reunion update

Kaipara College is holding a community meeting to discuss the upcoming centenary celebrations over the weekend of September 20-22.

The meeting will be held in the college staffroom, starting 6.30pm on Monday, March 4.

Those attending will learn about the plans already in place, share ideas for the special occasion for the planning team to consider, and connect with the alumni and get to know the team working on the event.

It will also be a chance for interested people to find out about becoming involved in planning and running the centenary celebrations, such as:

- Joining the planning committee;
- Helping with marketing and promotion;
- Helping at the centenary events or with set-up and pack down;
- Assisting with networking with the alumni and



community to make sure as many people as possible know about the celebration;

- Donating services or products to help make the celebration happen;
- Joining as a supporter or sponsor.

The Kaipara College website and Facebook page (and associated Facebook Event) will be updated regularly with the latest news on the centenary, as well as showcasing alumni recollections and profiles throughout the year.

Alumni, students, whānau and members of the community can join a centenary mailing list; the first official newsletter will be sent out following the community meeting and include details from that meeting for those unable to attend.

People can join the list on the News & Events section of the college website, by emailing: [info@kaipara.school.nz](mailto:info@kaipara.school.nz), or by phone: 09 420 8640 ext. 800.

A commemorative Centenary Journal is being planned as part of the celebrations.

There will be more information in the next *Helensville News* about how the community can share stories, memories, photos, and recollections. In the meantime the college would welcome alumni stories - see the website News & Events section 2024 Centenary page for more detail on how to get in touch.

People who miss the community meeting due to receiving this issue too late can sign up to the mailing list to receive the follow-up newsletter, or they can call the school to find out more.

# Parakai School rebuild cont...

• From Page 4

Yolanda, adding her school is now a "school of choice" with locals "choosing with pride to come to Parakai School."

"We want [our children] to be successful, believe in themselves, to work hard, and to have equivalent opportunities with other children across New Zealand," she says.

Yolanda says she is thankful to her staff for the way they handled the 20 months of disruption.

"I'm grateful for the graciousness of the staff and their student-centredness. It's a testimony to all the staff that they put their own discomfort second."

She says they are now "thrilled" with the new buildings and very proud of the school.

The new buildings were designed by Pacific Environments, an architecture firm with broad experience in the education sector, including the new Huapai School

and a rebuild at Riverhead School.

They were designed around Parakai School's principle of a thinking-based curriculum - teaching thinking skills rather than just facts.



• Year 5 pupils are now well at home in their new rooms

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# Off to world waka ama champs

Four local women are off to the world waka ama championships in Hilo on the Big Island of Hawaii in August.

The women, Yvette Amadia and Helen Lees of Helensville, Rachel Boyd from South Head, and Josie Cameron from Kaukapakapa, qualified for the 2024 IVF World Sprint Championship at the 2024 Waka Ama Sprint Nationals on Lake Karāpiro in January.

In that event, 3200 competitors competed in teams over distances of 500m, 1000m, and 1500m in single-hull waka (six paddlers) and double-hull waka (12 paddlers).

"As this was a qualifying year for the IVF World Sprint Championship the competition was intense," says Yvette, with national titles and a chance to qualify for the world championships up for grabs.

Yvette, a local personal trainer, says all four got involved with the sport as their children went through the Kaipara College Waka Ama programme.

She started paddling five years ago, Helen four years, and Rachel and Josie around seven years ago.



• The 500m final team: from left Yvette Amadia, Mars Dempsey, Rachel Boyd, Betty Ann Monga, Bridget O'Brien, Josie Cameron

commute monthly to do training camps with the team.

Team training is at Ian Shaw Park in Mt Wellington.

"We still do our individual training here on the Kaipara River in single wakas," says Yvette.

At the national championships Yvette, Rachel, and Josie competed in the six-person races, while Helen joined them in the 12-person double-hull race.

"We joined with another club for the double hull and they helped us qualify this boat," says Yvette, adding that's allowed under the rules.

"We spent two to three sessions a week for months paddling on the Kaipara River in all conditions," Yvette says.

"Sometimes it was absolutely stunning out there, especially in the mornings when the water was like glass. We trained hard and explored all parts of the river. It was fantastic to see Helensville from a different perspective.

"All our hard work paid off and we qualified for the worlds in all three races we competed in."

The team had the perfect build up to the nationals by

winning three gold medals in the Auckland Regional event last November, winning the 500m and the 250m six-person waka races and the 500m 12-person double hull waka title.

Josie Cameron's daughter Jess will also be racing at Hilo, having qualified in a single waka with her Far North based club Nga Hoe Horo.

Yvette wants to acknowledge the support they have received from Helensville Lions and St John as they embark on the build-up to the world champs.



• Competing at the Nationals. L-R: Yvette, Rachel, Betty Ann, Mars, Bridget, and Josie steering

"We all paddled for the local club Tu Tangiora, but left to pursue a higher level of competition."

They joined two of the other crew members in the South Auckland-based Te Paerangi club a year ago, with the goal of competing at a world championship event.

Their South Auckland teammates are Betty Ann Monga, lead singer of the band Ardijah, and Bridget O'Brien. Two other crew members, Mars Dempsey from Nelson and Andrea Swanney from Waihi,

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# Time Out Tour visits Helensville

The Rural Support Trust is bringing its Time Out Tour to Helensville.

The keynote speaker will be the Trust's ambassador, farmer and television personality Matt Chisholm.

The event will be held at the Helensville Showgrounds on Friday, March 15 with doors open at 6pm for a buffet dinner and the programme beginning at 7.15pm.

Tickets cost \$10 single or \$15 double and must be purchased in advance online at: <http://tinyurl.com/time-out-helensville>.

14 independent Rural Support Trusts support rural communities throughout the country. They provide free and confidential help to rural people facing challenges related to adverse events, on-farm technical support, financial challenges, relationships, health and wellbeing, animal welfare, and employment matters.

They have experienced, trained rural facilitators who understand the pressures and challenges that come with living rurally and making a livelihood from the land.

The Rural Support Trust

partnered with Matt Chisholm to help rural communities continue the conversation about mental health in a way that resonates with them.

Matt, who hosted television's Survivor NZ, has personal experience with mental health struggles, and the Time Out Tour gives him a chance to share in an entertaining manner with rural people how he found a way through.

The Time Out Tour visit to Helensville will let locals learn how Matt overcame his mental health challenges, and about ways rural communities can support each other. Attendees will learn what tools Matt uses to help manage his anxiety and remain mentally fit, and what tools are available for other people who are struggling.

For Matt, being able to talk about how we're doing is an important part of being proactive about our wellbeing. As his television documentary series Man Enough and Like a Man demonstrated, he isn't averse to delving into the deep issues of mental wellbeing and navigating dark times.

Matt is no stranger to rural New Zealand, having grown up on the land and made the return, along with his family, to his rural roots in Otago.

His love for the country, coupled with a passion for helping others be proactive about their wellbeing, led to Matt becoming an ambassador for the Rural Support Trust.

The Time Out Tour is an R15 event.



**TIME OUT**  
**Tour**  
RuralSupport

# Council installs rural water sites

Locals running short on water over summer can now access an emergency supply of drinking water.

Auckland Council has installed blue water bollards in rural areas around Auckland in response to hotter, drier summer weather.

Locally, bollards are located at:

- The carpark behind Helensville Library;
- At Sinclair Park in Kaukapakapa;
- Beside the toilet block at the Shelly Beach carpark.

Throughout the year the bollards are available for use as drinking fountains.

When there is no predicted rainfall and long waits for water deliveries, the Council will attach hoses to the sides of the water bollards and people will be able to collect 20 litres per person per day for each household.

The council will advertise when the bollards are available for people to use to fill up.

A tank service was implemented temporarily during the summer drought in 2020-2021, but that is no longer operational. Following that drought it was decided permanent water supply sites were needed for those on rain tank supply during times when water tanker supply is facing heavy demand.

Some of the water stations are on mains supply, while others use treated bore or rainwater supply.



• The Helensville water station - Photo: Auckland Council



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## Helensville Railway Museum



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• Above: Waitemata Hunt's display was popular with the horse crowd at Helensville Show  
 • Below: The Pan Indian Rifles dance troupe got the crowd up and dancing



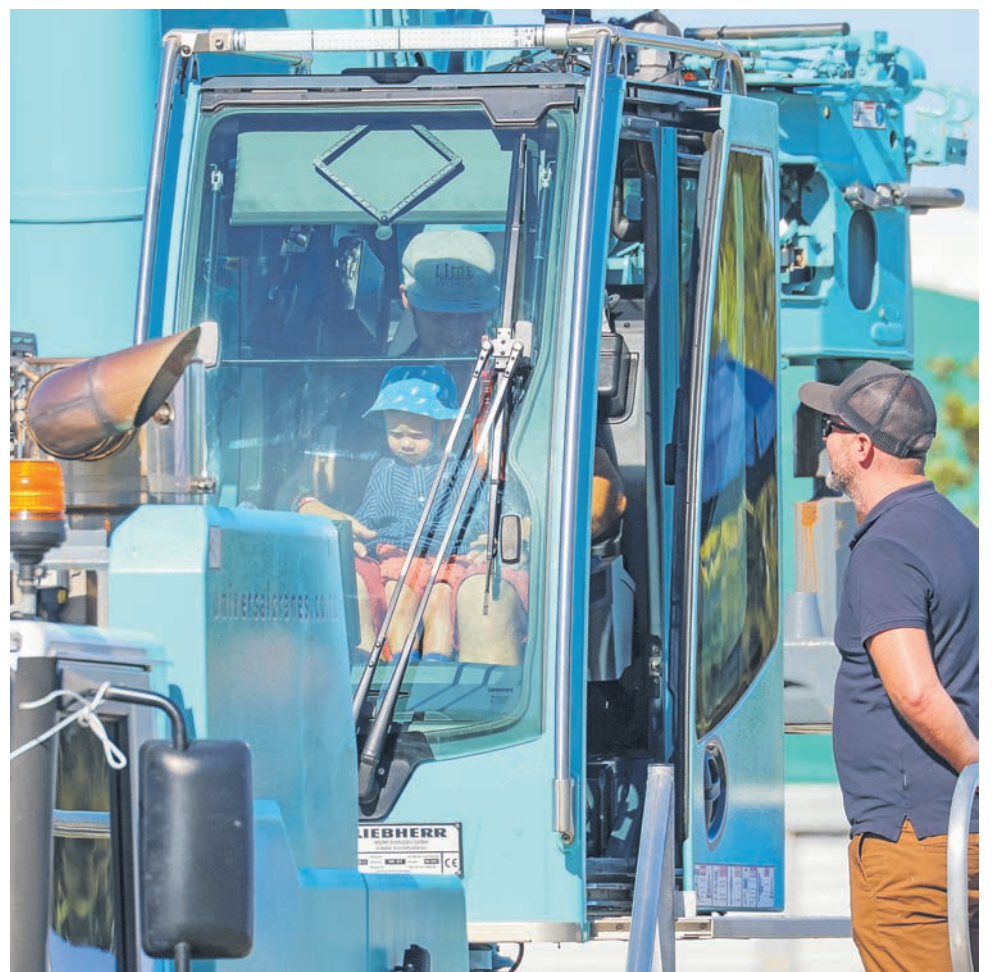
• Above: Fire + Emergency showed visitors how not to douse a kitchen fire  
 • Below: The Wool Fashion Parade featured clothes covering a century



• Above: Champion blade shearer Allan Oldfield demonstrating in the 'old' shearing shed



• Above: Choreodgraphy - dogs dancing to music with their owners - was a crowd pleaser  
 • Below: Visitors old, and especially young, enjoyed the massive machinery on display







• Above: Chaos reigned as 37 Fox Terriers took part in Helensville Show's first Terrier Race - hugely popular with the hundreds of Show visitors who watched. The winner was Betty



• From left: The Rainbow Toboggan Slide was new at this year's Show ... as was the NZ Strongman Competition. Sheep dog demonstrations drew good sized crowds



# Thanks Helensville!

## for coming to our 120th Helensville Show

We're proud to have supported the following community organisations through this year's Helensville Show:

- Kaipara College + Tū Rangatira students
- Lions Club of Helensville
- Helensville Zero Waste
- Waitemata Hunt
- CAB Helensville
- Coastguard Kaipara
- NZ Fire Service
- St John Youth Helensville & Kaukapakapa
- NZ Police
- St John Op Shop Helensville
- Rural Women NZ
- L'Arche Mt Tabor Trust
- Rodney Beekeepers Association
- Kaukapakapa Scout Group
- Waimauku Scout Group
- Kumeu Small Landowners Association
- Rodney Neighbourhood Support
- Brightside Spinners
- Helensville Museum

Congratulations to all the Grand Champions and prize winners in our livestock, equestrian, and indoor competitions.

And thanks to our sponsors - we really appreciate your continued support of our community's iconic Helensville Show.

The day wouldn't happen without our countless volunteers. Your efforts before, during and after the event are what make Helensville Show such a success. Special thanks to all our judges and stewards, and those who made an extra effort for this year's special 'Wool - NZ's Hero Fibre' theme.

Helensville A&P Association Executive Committee

Enjoy these photos from the 2024 Show!

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# Blacksmith to talk on Renaissance artworks

Local blacksmith Chris Ellwood will be holding talks on famous paintings at Helensville Community Church over the coming months.

Chris will be starting with Renaissance artist Michelangelo's 'Creation' on Sunday, March 24.



• Chris Ellwood

Although Michelangelo trained as a sculptor, he is possibly most famous for painting the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, which he did in two halves - the first being very detailed and the second less so as, having painted close up on scaffolding then viewing his work from the ground, he realised much of the detail was lost in the distance.

As well as two of Michelangelo's masterpieces, Chris will hold talks on works by Caravaggio and Rembrandt, while his wife Karyn, a painter and potter, will finish the talk series with a more modern artist, Vincent Van Gogh.

Chris hopes through these talks to show the humanity, strengths, and weaknesses of the artists who lived in very different times to us and had to grapple with their personal beliefs whilst existing within society's prevailing systems.

The talks will be in the form of a Powerpoint presentation and will be very interactive, with questions welcomed throughout. Although neither Chris nor Karyn are academics, they have a real passion for these artists.

They will be held on the fourth Sundays of March, April, May, June, and August.

The talks aim to take the audience through the artists' spiritual journeys as the 'sermon' part of 'Cafe Church' at Helensville Community Church.

Cafe Church has been running for more than a

year, with the church laid out cafe-style with tables that people sit at around three sides, helping themselves to tea, coffee, and cake throughout. Services run for an hour from 10.30am at 40 Mill Road.



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## Free diabetes course

A free one-day course for people with pre-diabetes and Type 2 Diabetes will be held in Helensville on Saturday, March 16 in the St Matthews Church lounge, 60 Garfield Road, from 9am to 3pm.

The course can help people better understand diabetes, its causes, and how to maintain or improve their health, and will be presented by a diabetes nurse educator and dietitian, with support from a podiatrist and a health psychologist. Each person attending will receive a bag of seasonal fruit and vegetables. Food and refreshments will be provided.

Registration in advance is essential. Contact Margot McDonald, 09 448 0019, phone or text 021 818 568, or email: [dsme@comprehensivecare.co.nz](mailto:dsme@comprehensivecare.co.nz).

# Rural Support



# TIME OUT Tour



**Together with our proud partners**


**Matt Chisholm is coming back in 2024 to host his new tour for the rural community - IN HELENSVILLE**

Join Matt for an important and entertaining yarn that'll help you look after your greatest rural assets - you and the people around you. The Rural Support Trust's Time Out Tour is designed to support the rural community and this year we'll be hearing from a panel of farmers along with Matt. It's set to be a great night out!

-  **Date:** Friday 15th March 2024
-  **Time:** Doors open from 6.00pm with a buffet dinner and the programme begins at 7.15pm
-  **Venue:** Helensville Showgrounds, 63 Railway Street

Tickets are essential.  
\$10 single/ \$15 double.  
Tickets are non-refundable.  
[rural-support.org.nz/Time-Out-Tour](http://rural-support.org.nz/Time-Out-Tour)  
R15 Event

# from our MP

On the eve of the Helensville Show (as I write this column) I'm hoping for a great day of community as we all come together to see what everyone else has been up to. From the packed programme, it appears as though the best spirit of the Show's long tradition will be maintained.

Recently while in Helensville township I was paying particular attention to the heritage values of the area. There are some delightful old buildings that have been beautifully restored or simply maintained really well through the years.

There are also some older buildings that could probably benefit from such care too - but I am conscious that the strict rules around touching heritage buildings can render this exercise prohibitively expensive.

One of my ministerial responsibilities these days is the 'building and construction' portfolio, which includes thinking about how earthquake strengthening rules affect the ability of Kiwis to live, work, and play in the nation's buildings.

In my view the balance needs to be reset, so that community organisations, businesses, and households have access to the buildings they need, in a way that makes sense, in 2024.

It seems to me that the aesthetic value of a building (according to the subjective opinion of a nominal heritage expert) should not prevail over the ability of someone else to live there safely and affordably. Sadly, this is the case with many buildings in another place I spend a lot of time these days, Wellington.

Other cities around New Zealand face the same challenge too.

I am keen to start a national conversation about whether we can afford to maintain these purist policies.

I hope that a more pragmatic approach will benefit areas like Helensville. Ideally we would see a mix of old and new buildings but with the overriding priority to be providing enough housing, and other essential elements of the built environment.

I would be interested in your views on this, if you see me out and about any time soon! Take care.



- Chris Penk  
MP for Kaipara ki Mahurangi  
chris.penkmp@parliament.govt.nz

# the business

The Business Hub at 103C Mill Road, Helensville is proving to be a much needed community resource.

North West Country Inc. was facing the issue of not having anywhere to hold board meetings, and for the last 10 years has been asking local businesses to host us. After talking to other businesses we realised that everyone else was having similar issues.

In November 2023 we opened the Business Hub in Helensville, acting as a board room with video conferencing facilities which have been regularly booked since day one.

We have now launched the next phase of our hub and that is introducing hot desks. We have four desks available for daily hire, with an easy online booking system.

With a clean and light open plan work space, large bathroom and kitchen facilities, and free Starlink, this is a facility that many local business owners and 'work from home' community members can enjoy.

Simply head to [www.northwestcountry.co.nz/venue\\_hire/](http://www.northwestcountry.co.nz/venue_hire/) to set up an account and start booking your space.



• The Mill Road Business Hub

The Ultimate Day Out competition has come to a close, where anyone who spent more than \$50 at an Association member business during January and February could enter. The winner will be drawn at our stand at the Kumeū Show. Check out our Facebook page and website for details of the lucky winner.

Thank you to all businesses who took the opportunity to promote North West Country and showcase our amazing businesses.

- Danielle Hancock  
Manager, North West Country Business Assn  
manager@northwestcountry.co.nz



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# Alice Rimmer celebrated for International Women's Day

To celebrate International Women's Day on Friday, March 8, Helensville Museum is shining a light on a lesser known but highly talented Helensville woman, Alice Rimmer.

Single and child-free, a singer, pianist, and music teacher, Alice had a formidable reputation and her musical talents were in high demand all over New Zealand.

Alice Jane Rimmer (right), possibly born in the Southport area of Southwest Lancashire, was seven years old when she travelled to New Zealand with her siblings and parents, Thomas and Alice Rimmer, in 1876.

After a three-month journey and a stopover in Auckland, the Rimmer family arrived in Helensville in the winter of 1877. All seven of the Rimmer children would later play a part in the life of the town and district, and there is still a road named after the family.

By the time Alice was nine her musical talents had been noted. The story goes that an influential man (name unknown) present at her first singing performance was so impressed by her talent he offered to pay for several terms of tuition, thus starting her music education and career. Herr Tutscha, a well-known, well-regarded professor of music, was appointed and Alice made rapid progress under his tutelage.

Alice's talents were soon well known in Auckland choral circles, and she was a frequent soloist for the Auckland Choral Society in her early twenties. Among her many accomplishments were solo performances in prestigious works like 'The Crusaders', 'Judas Macabeus', and 'Messiah'.

Such was her talent that when the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall (later to become King George V and Queen Mary) came to New Zealand, Alice was asked to perform a solo at one of their functions. Later, she was one of three local women awarded the Jubilee Medal to commemorate the 25th year of their reign.

Alice had an extremely busy life.

Not only was she a constant on stages in Auckland and Helensville, she also taught piano and voice in both locations. Her music students, for example, gave annual concerts in Helensville's Town Hall.

Alice was an adventurer, travelling the country singing and living in many places.

Devotedly pious, Alice Rimmer engaged with the YMCA as their soloist, and was a frequent voice at several churches in Auckland. She sang mostly religious pieces and by the late 1890s refused to perform any other vocal works. She was twice

president of Helensville's Women's Christian Temperance Union.

Alice was one of the first women to enrol to vote in the 1893 New Zealand General Election and was registered in the Waitemata electorate as a music teacher from Helensville. She died on August 5, 1939, aged 70 and is buried at Helensville Cemetery.

The Helensville Museum team wish everyone a wonderful International Women's Day and ask readers to celebrate the inspirational women in their lives.

Thanks to Gay Skinner (Alice's great-niece) who compiled much of this information.



## Coming to the Art Centre

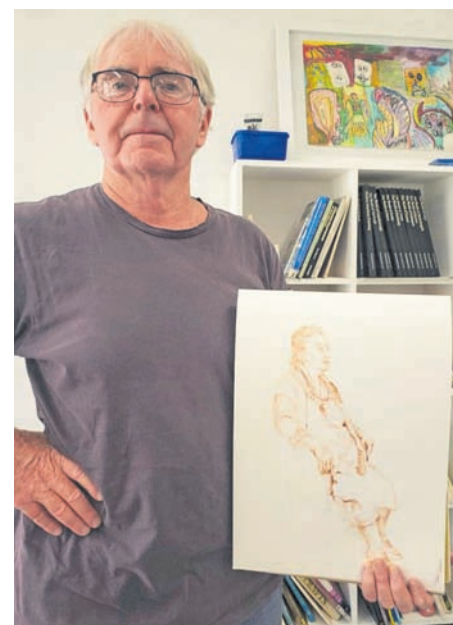
Local artists Shona Cameron and Emma Springford-Gough's exhibition at the Helensville Art Centre runs until March 28. The pair occupy the artist studio at the Helensville Railway Station in Helensville and their works range from kitsch to complex drawing, and abstract to observational painting.

Emma and Shona will hold a workshop on Saturday, March 16 from 11am to 1pm. The cost is \$25 per person, and to book, email: [manager@artcentrehelensville.org.nz](mailto:manager@artcentrehelensville.org.nz).

Workshops in March at the Art Centre are adult portrait classes with Olga Atkins, drawing with Mike Rowland (right), and kids' illustration after school class, also with Olga. For details on these classes visit: [www.artcentrehelensville.org.nz](http://www.artcentrehelensville.org.nz).

Mike's six-week course runs on Fridays until April 5 from 1pm to 3pm. The cost is \$220 with all materials provided; drop-in sessions are available - email Art Centre Manager Yvonne at: [manager@artcentrehelensville.org.nz](mailto:manager@artcentrehelensville.org.nz).

The six-week kids' course is already underway, but one-day sessions are available for \$25 on Wednesdays from 3:30pm to 5pm.



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# Referrals to Men's Centre rise post-Covid

Post-Covid the Helensville Men's Centre has seen its number of referrals and self-referrals rise sharply.

The financial year 2022-2023 saw the number of client engagements rise over the previous year by 60 percent, says manager since 2017 Mike Bridgman.

"The profiles stay much the same, predominately pākehā men in the most common age bracket of 25-35 years of age," says Mike. "However our clients range from 17 years of age to over 60 years."

He says the Men's Centre is an open, non-judgmental environment

where any issue can be discussed in a completely confidential manner.

"The Trust is there for all men," says Mike.

"As is commonly said, men tend to 'bottle up' issues until they begin to impact on those closest to them in the often mistaken belief there is no issue, or they are capable of solving it themselves - until they can't.

"Issues such as addictions (alcohol and drugs), anger management, relationship issues, and grief are common," adds Mike.

Referrals can be made

to professional services when necessary, and financial help for that looked at on a case-by-case basis. Support for those in the justice system can also be provided.

"In many cases men know deep down what they need to do to improve their lives, and the lives of those important to them - they often just need guidance and someone independent to talk to, to lower the pressure that has built up."

The South Kaipara Men's Trust which runs the Men's Centre is able to

do this work through funding from organisations such as the Community Organisation Grant Scheme, Foundation North, and the Lotteries Community Fund.

The founders of the Trust aimed to help men be better leaders within their families, to contribute to healthier and happier family structures, and in turn contribute to a safer and healthier community - that aim remains today.

"This laudable aim remains at the heart of what the Trust sets out to achieve each year," says Mike.

## councillor comment

When running for election Wayne Brown promised to "fix Auckland".

That promise included reining-in the overspending of Auckland Council controlled organisations like Watercare and Auckland Transport, as well as cutting-back the council's top heavy bureaucracy.

Mayor Brown has been in the job for over a year and has had enough time to pinpoint how the spending of the Council Group should be reprioritised, including cutting costs.

He has produced a new 10 Year Budget for Auckland. This suggests how the \$6 billion of revenue collected from Aucklanders should be spent on council projects and services for the next 10 years.

It sets the direction for Auckland Council, Auckland Transport, Watercare, and the other CCOs for the next decade.

The future of the Ports of Auckland, the North Harbour Stadium, shareholdings in Auckland Airport, and rate increase options are also included.

If you are keen to see your rates spent on a particular project or service for your community, then now is your chance to put it to the Mayor.

The 10 Year Budget is open for feedback until Thursday, March 28.

There will be a significant number of senior bureaucrats cut from Council under his proposal. These are the people on the highest wages. This is part of the general cost savings the Mayor desires.

Using this saved money, to benefit Helensville rural ratepayers, the Mayor would like to triple the Unsealed Road Improvement Program (road sealing) for rural ratepayers. This is an increase from \$40 million to \$124 million for the 10-year period.

The Mayor is championing this - however, as with everything in the budget, it will have to go to the vote of the 20 councillors and the Mayor.

Of the 21 votes available there will need to be 11 votes to pass such an increase. Therefore it is crucial to get feedback from all the vote-makers whether you

support unsealed roads being better maintained and sealed, or not.

You can do this by completing the 10 Year Budget feedback form available from the library, or online at: [akhaveyoursay.nz/ourplan](http://akhaveyoursay.nz/ourplan).

Because the new coalition government has repealed the fuel tax used for funding transport projects, every Auckland transport project has been paused to be re-evaluated.

This includes the Kumeū bypass for Helensville commuters which the National Party promised would become a Road of National Significance and would be funded. You can submit to the Mayor of Auckland for him to campaign for this with the Minister of Transport (Simeon Brown).

What do you believe should be being done about protecting our area from future flooding? Again, you can read about the council's plans in the Budget documentation available online, or from the library, and give your feedback - along with any alternative suggestions.

There may be other roading, transport, civic, social, environmental, economic or cultural projects you believe your community needs ratepayer money spent on. What is your opinion on the need-to-haves versus the nice-to-haves?

Please take the time to make your voice heard. Every submission will be read by the Mayor and myself, the other councillors, and bodies like the Board of Directors at Auckland Transport - who ultimately decide what transport projects will be funded for the next decade.



- Greg Sayers  
Rodney Ward Councillor  
[greg.sayers@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz](mailto:greg.sayers@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz)  
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# local board matters

Yet another Auckland Council Long Term Plan public consultation is about to begin.

I know we are all pretty used to being asked for our views, interests, and concerns, but very little of substance seems to come from all this effort. Clearly there is a big gap between the community expectation and the eventual outcome.

How can we do this better?

First up, a quick primer on who is responsible for what, and how to share your feedback with them:

State Highways are a central government asset and provision of them is a Ministry of Transport matter. If you have concerns about SH16 you really should take them up with our local MP, Chris Penk (email: [chris.penk@parliament.govt.nz](mailto:chris.penk@parliament.govt.nz)). Funding for these comes from fuel taxes and road user charges.

It would be fair to suggest that insufficient investment has been made in SH16, and the future looks bleak for relief from the congestion created by out of sequence development and the Special Housing Areas legislated by central government.

Urban sprawl is at the root of our transport issues and your Local Board has advocated for a moratorium on development until the future Rapid Transport Network has been implemented.

This is something that Auckland Council can regulate through the Unitary Plan, and our Rodney Ward Councillor, Greg Sayers (email:

[greg.sayers@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz](mailto:greg.sayers@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz)), is best placed to pursue this for us.

This is also something that could inform some of your feedback on the Long Term Plan, as typically infrastructure and community facility upgrades are funded in part from growth. This has not worked well for Northwest Rodney as our population has doubled in only a decade or two without the many obvious deficits being addressed.



Maintenance of our roading network has also been underfunded for many years. Sadly, this is being exacerbated due to the increased traffic as our population has grown and heavy transport tonnage has increased.

Provision for increased capacity and improved maintenance of our roads is something that Mayor Wayne Brown and Councillor Greg Sayers seem to agree on, so support them by providing feedback on this.

Provision of improved public transport is going to be the only sustainable response to the congestion of our roading network. This will require additional routes, increased frequency of services, increased capacity at Park n Rides - and a change in behaviour by commuters.

Basically, the cost of parking, congestion charging, and increased transport-related taxes are going to make taking the bus more attractive.

In the past this has been an 'either/or' discussion between increased roading capacity and provision of public transport, but we actually need to do both.

Again, this is something to provide feedback on, but this time I suggest that our MP and our Councillor need our support - so in addition to having your say on the Long Term Plan, write to Chris Penk as central government support for the Rapid Transit Network is required.

Community facilities, parks, and public toilets are the business of the Local Board, and we also need support.

By providing feedback on the Long Term Plan that prioritises funding for our efforts to improve our parks and playspaces, provide additional recreational opportunities for young people, and ensure our communities enjoy clean and safe town centres, you can help us make a difference.

Rodney Local Board email: [rodneylocalboard@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz](mailto:rodneylocalboard@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz).

To place feedback on the long-term plan visit: <https://akhaveyoursay.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/hub-page/long-term-plan-2024-2034>.

- Brent Bailey  
Chair, Rodney Local Board  
[brent.bailey@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz](mailto:brent.bailey@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz)

## Library update

Helensville Library has begun regular outreach visits to local early childhood education centres and schools. Any that have yet to be contacted and would like a visit should email: [helenlib@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz](mailto:helenlib@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz).

The remedial building work in the library area of the Helensville War Memorial Hall building continues, still with no date set for the library to reopen. Any changes to opening hours or availability caused by the work will be notified on the Facebook page.

Half hour Kids Time sessions for under-6s are held on Wednesdays from 10am, with each session different and content depending on the day's audience.

Crafternoon sessions are on Thursdays from 3.30pm to 4.30pm. Locals can bring any portable craft they are working on to meet other crafters, share your knowledge, and learn new things.

Children's crafts are aimed at under-10s, who will need someone over 14 with them. The theme for March is pets and animals.

Helensville Library and Service Centre is open Monday to Friday: 9.30am to 5pm and Saturday: 9.30am to 4pm.



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## HELENSVILLE NEWS - PUBLICATION INFORMATION

### April 2024 deadline: Tuesday, 21st November, 2024

ISSUE DUE OUT TUESDAY, April 2nd 2024

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#### 2024 issue dates and deadlines:

Due out: April 2nd

Copy by: March 21st

Due out: May 7th

Copy by: April 25th

Due out: June 4th

Copy by: May 23rd

Due out: July 2nd

Copy by: \*\*May 27th\*\*

■ **Editorial:** Ph 021 178 5568.

■ **Editor & Publisher:** Dave Addison, Helensville News (2011) Ltd, 502 Fordyce Rd, RD1, Helensville 0874.

■ **Design & Layout:** Dash Design, 021 178 5568.

■ **Printing:** NZME Print.

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■ **Letters to the Editor:** Should be kept to around 250 words and may be edited as space dictates.

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## ■ BRYNDERWYN EXHIBITION

Helensville Museum has extended the run for its exhibition on the Brynderwyn bus tragedy into March owing to high demand.

## ■ KAIPARA BAR SEMINAR

Coastguard NZ will host a bar awareness seminar at Helensville Primary School on Thursday, March 21 from 7pm to 9pm.

Aimed at all levels of skippers, the seminar will focus on the complexities of crossing the Kaipara Bar. Those attending will gain insights into how bars work, best practices for handling their boats when crossing bars, optimal crossing times, guidance for safe navigation, and the importance of creating trip reports and bar watch reports.

Register for the seminar online at: [www.boatingeducation.org.nz/courses/38/bar-awareness-seminars](http://www.boatingeducation.org.nz/courses/38/bar-awareness-seminars).

For those unable to attend, Coastguard has several bar-specific educational videos on its website.

## ■ RIVER VALLEY BAPTIST GALA

River Valley Baptist Church will hold a Family Gala day on Saturday, March 23. It'll run in the church grounds at 1 Fordyce Road, Parakai from 10am to 2pm.

Designed as a fun, budget-friendly community event, there will be a range of activities including a bouncy castle, magic carpet rides, an Easter egg hunt, games, races, cornhole, and face painting.

There will be a café, a barbeque, and ice cream to stave off hunger, and stalls with second hand goods and clothes, produce, plants, jam, and baking.

## ■ KAIPARA MEMORIAL RSA AGM

The Kaipara Memorial RSA will hold its Annual General Meeting on Thursday, April 11 starting at 6.30pm in the RSA rooms at 49 Commercial Road. A Notice of Motion will be put to nominate Noel Bodle for Life Membership.

Email: [kaipararsa@xtra.co.nz](mailto:kaipararsa@xtra.co.nz) or phone Carol on: 021 415 474 for more information.

## Special community edition

For our July issue this year, *Helensville News* will again 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've put out several times over the past decade, 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.

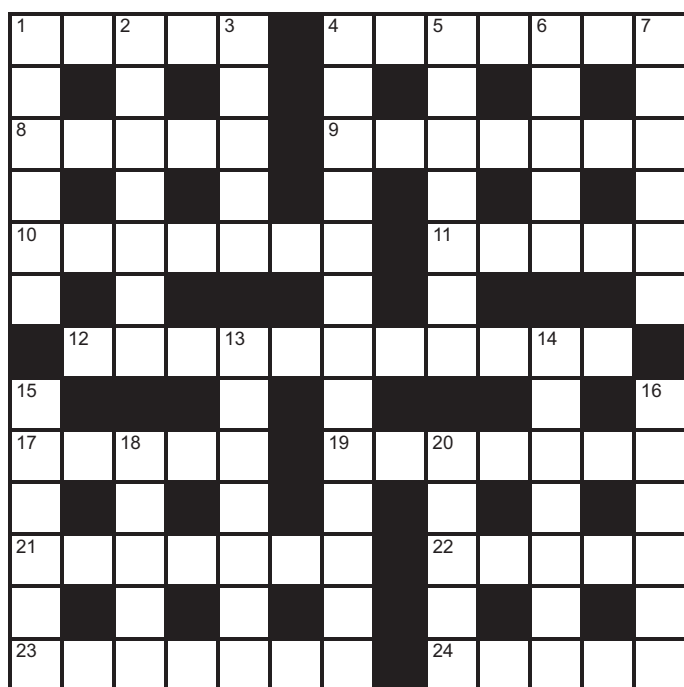
Now we need you to tell us about your group. It's a great chance to boost the profile of your club or group, and maybe increase your membership.

Many organisations will already have been listed in our 2023 issue, so the first thing you should do is visit: [www.helensville.co.nz/helensvilleneews/groups](http://www.helensville.co.nz/helensvilleneews/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: [dave@helensvilleneews.co.nz](mailto:dave@helensvilleneews.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. If your organisation has a logo, email that to us, too. 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 Monday, May 27.

## crossword



### Across

1. Minor Biblical prophet (5)
4. Used for treating malaria (7)
8. Small house (5)
9. Something unpleasant to look at (7)
10. Notice (7)
11. Map within a map (5)
12. Temperature measuring instrument (11)
17. Racecourse (5)
19. Human air intake? (7)
21. Warrior of feudal Japan (7)
22. Visible vapour (5)
23. Setback (7)
24. Very steep (5)

### Down

1. Barrack (6)
2. Seventh day (7)
3. Invalidate (5)
4. Form (13)
5. List (7)
6. Golf clubs (5)
7. Builds (6)
13. Ramshackle building (3,4)
14. Body part pierced for rings (7)
15. Roman general (6)
16. Unpowered aircraft (6)
18. Ship of the desert (5)
20. Draws into the mouth (5)

### Last Month's Answers

**Across:** 1. Abbot 4. Arabic 9. Oilskin 10. Cocoa 11. Lemon 12. Uncanny, 13. Bastille Day 17. Lead off 19. Aaron 20. Steep 21. Enlarge 22. Return, 23. Bowel.  
**Down:** 1. Apollo 2. Bulimia 3. Taken 5. Recycle 6. Bacon 7. Crazy 8. Unqualified 14. Trooper 15. Aircrew 16. Unreal 17. Laser 18. Adept 19. Ad lib.