

Homeowners doing battle with developer

Homeowners in the Kawariki subdivision by the Helensville rail overpass bridge say they are unable to get Codes of Compliance for their houses because of issues with the property developer.

They contacted *Helensville News* just days after Stuff reported a similar case involving the same developer - Eco-Smart Homes - with a group of neighbours in Rongomai Street, opposite Rautawhiri Park.

In that case the neighbours claimed frustration after buying homes off the plans they say were delivered behind schedule, unfinished, and with additional costs.

Stuff reported them as being potentially left out of pocket by property development company Eco-Smart Homes and its director, Ritesh Mani, who was accused of similar behaviour by another homeowner in 2022.

Vicki Mischefski lives with her partner in Taupata Lane which runs off Kawariki Road, a private road off Mill Road overlooking the Les Comer firewood site.

She is fronting "a loose collective" of the 10 homeowners in the two roads developed by Eco-Smart Homes, saying they are facing similar issues to those locals affected in Rongomai Street.

The houses faced lengthy delays in construction, and while all are now occupied, the owners cannot get Code Compliance Certificates (CCC) from Auckland Council.

That's because, Vicki says, the company that built the houses for Eco-Smart, Ace Builderz, can't supply the certificates from sub-contractors that are needed to get the CCCs, because they say the subcontractors haven't been paid by Eco-Smart.

Rongomai Street residents are in

the same situation.

Vicki says despite the home buyers making their progress payments during construction, she has been told by Ace Builderz that they only received their initial payment from Eco-Smart, not the second or third payments.

She adds that none of the 10 homeowners, who have all been in their houses for around 18 months, have paid their final \$5000 payment to Eco-

their case the charge is double that figure.

In both developments, the homeowners state there was no mention of the IGC charge when they signed their contracts with Eco-Smart, and it was only brought up when the houses were almost complete.

Stuff reported Ritesh Mani as saying the infrastructure costs were the landowner's responsibility.

charges, including the IGC.

In all these cases, the houses were purchased off the plans.

Helensville News has seen a copy of a letter from Neilson Lawyers, acting on behalf of Eco-Smart Group Ltd, citing the landowners were liable for the IGC charge at the time of application. However Vicki has confirmation from her lawyer that the IGC was the responsibility of the entity that made the application.

"This was also later confirmed by a representative of Watercare. Watercare is very clear that the developer is responsible for the charge," she says.

The Kawariki situation is a little better as the homes are all on tank water, unlike the Rongomai Street houses which are on town water supply - and in some cases owners have been unable to move into their homes as they can't get water connected because of the unpaid IGC charges.

Vicki is also the chair of the Mill Road Society Incorporated, the 'body corporate' which homeowners in the Kawariki subdivision contribute toward for maintenance and upkeep of the private roads, fire service reservoir, stormwater and beautification.

She says the problems with the developer are causing both emotional and financial strain on all the homeowners.

Stuff reported Ritesh Mani as saying he regrets the delays and other issues with the Rongomai development.

"It was never our intention that homeowners be inconvenienced in this way," he said.

"Eco-Smart acknowledges the homes were delivered with a slight delay on schedule, and the company



• Vicki Mischefski with some of the houses in the Kawariki subdivision

Smart. She believes Ritesh Mani would rather write those payments off than pay any money he owes.

On top of that, Vicki says each homeowner is being asked to cough up an almost \$17,000 Infrastructure Growth Charge (IGC) to Auckland's water provider Watercare, an amount they believe is the responsibility of the property developer.

That's also an issue at the Rongomai development, although in

"The Watercare Customer Contract specifies that the owner and user of the services is liable for the IGC in relation to which Watercare requires payment," he said.

However, Stuff also quoted Kristine King, a director at DK Law who specialises in property, commercial and trust law, as saying if a purchaser is buying pursuant to an 'off the plans' sale and purchase agreement, the developer would be expected to pay all

• To Page 2

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editorial

It's close to 40 years since I last went through the process of building a house. Back in those days things were a lot simpler - a building permit and a couple of council inspections was about it. No resource consents, LIM reports, multiple inspections like today.

Even so, it was a pretty stressful process to go through, so it's hard to imagine the issues being faced by the locals who have had homes built for them by Eco-Smart Homes in two different subdivisions in Helensville. Stuff reported at length recently about the problems residents in Rongomai Street, opposite Rautawhiri Park, are having with the developer.

And now we've discovered another subdivision - done by the same developer - where the homeowners are having virtually the same issues. See page 1 for the story.

On a happier note, it's great to see the return of a Helensville Christmas Parade, albeit in a slightly different form (Page 3). I'm sure our youngsters (and young at heart) will be thrilled.

It's also wonderful to see the official opening of Coastguard Kaipara's new marine rescue centre in Springs Road, Parakai is at long last only days away (Page 4). This is a fantastic facility for our area, and one which will help keep all the boaties on the Kaipara Harbour a bit safer.

- Dave Addison, Editor
dave@helensvillenews.co.nz

letters

Your August editorial re the state of Helensville's retail scene struck a solid note of 'concern' which is likely shared amongst most of us who actually work within the same environment. I am referring to both groups: the commercial property owners like ourselves and the tenants and occupiers.

Some vacant commercial sites have 'absentee owners' who live elsewhere and obviously don't care about their asset or Helensville - there's no simple answer to this.

However, some larger premises (operating passively) could be subdivided to their original smallish spaces which widens their market appeal and gives the tenant lower rent and costs. A good example is the recent subdivision of Barfoot & Thompson's real estate offices to accommodate a women's hairdresser. This is a win-win result that could be replicated many times in our main street.

Finally, the central derelict building (subject to Auckland Council requisitions) creates more negative and disparaging reactions than our vacant and inactive shops. The fire risks are incalculable, demolition is inevitable, and the owners should be held to account. This situation would not be tolerated anywhere else in Auckland and the North West Business Association should therefore demand action by the Council.

- Grev Walker
Helensville retailer and commercial property owner since 1987

Subdivision woes for homeowners cont...

• From Page 1

understands homeowners' frustration and apologises."

He claims the Rongomai project suffered a serious setback when a builder stole \$320,000 before leaving the country.

In 2022 Eco-Smart Homes Auckland Limited was accused of delivering an incomplete home behind schedule in Glenbrook.

Mani was also a salesman, and his family owned a 90 percent share, in failed development company Tribeca Homes which went into liquidation in 2015 according to Stuff.

According to Company Hub, Mani is the director of ten property companies.

Helensville News tried to contact Ritesh Mani for comment but he did not return our call. The Eco-Smart Homes website is also currently offline.

The full Stuff article on the Rongomai Street development case is available online at: <https://tinyurl.com/rongomaiastreet>.

RSA update

Kaipara Memorial RSA is aiming to be open to members again - at long last - on Friday, September 13, subject to the Code Compliance Certificate, Cleared for Public Use, and Building Warrant of Fitness being issued by Council

An official public re-opening is being planned for Saturday, October 12.

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Jana Mills



Christmas parade returns!

The Helensville Christmas Parade will return this December - but with a major difference.

Rather than running the length of Commercial Road and finishing in Mill Road as in former years, the parade will instead drive around the racetrack at the Helensville Showgrounds, and run in conjunction with an all-day Christmas market.

The parade, to be held on Sunday, December 15, is being organised by Danielle Hancock of the North West Country Business Association, which along with Rodney Local Board is putting money towards running the event.

The last Commercial Road parade was in 2019 and various factors contributed toward the traditional parade being abandoned. Chief among those were the enormous costs and red tape associated with both traffic management and waste management, and difficulty finding the large number of volunteers needed to run the event on what is a state highway.

"But it was Covid that finally killed it," says former organiser Holly Southernwood.

Holding the parade at the showgrounds gets around those issues, while providing the benefit of plenty of free parking, a safer family environment to hold the parade, and being able to hold it in conjunction with the market to give locals a chance to buy last-minute Christmas gifts.

There will be food trucks on site, giveaways, and family games. It will be a zero-waste event.

The market will open at 8.30am, and the parade will get underway at midday. The usual monthly market closes at 1pm, but for this special

Christmas event organiser Sarah Legg says the market will stay open until 3pm.

The parade itself should look familiar, with both driven floats and 'walking' displays such as a marching band - and of course, Santa.

Registrations for organisations and companies wanting to enter floats will be available online at: www.northwestcountry.co.nz in the near future. There will be three float categories - education, business, and other.

One difference will be that floats from businesses will have to be fully decorated, rather than in previous years where there have been, for example, sign-written company vehicles with just a bit of tinsel.

Danielle can be contacted at 020 4002 7008 or email: manager@northwestcountry.co.nz.

Helensville News will bring more information of the parade and market when it becomes available.



• Santa Claus is coming to town...

Roads up for sealing

Three local rural roads are slated for sealing under Auckland Transport's (AT) Unsealed Road Improvement Programme.

Number one on AT's 2024/25 and 2026/27 priority list of unsealed roads for all of Auckland is Fordyce Road in Parakai, which is to receive 2.5km of maintenance seal from number 2861 to number 5365. That's planned to happen some time over summer during the 2024/25 programme.

AT defines 'maintenance seal' as "the lowest cost seal applied to an unsealed road where expensive ongoing maintenance has been required."

The two other roads are Wilson Road at South Head, and Kiwitahi Road, both set down to be done in the 2026/27 period.

Wilson Road will receive seal from number 110 all the way to number 3706, while Kiwitahi Road will get a seal extension from number 2123 to number 3767.

Approximately 12 percent of all roads in Auckland - 894km - are currently unsealed.

New market proposed

Helensville businesswoman Holly Southernwood wants to set up a car-boot type monthly market in the centre of town.

Initially planned for people to have a clear out of old, unwanted items and get some money in before Christmas, she plans for it to be held on the second Saturday of each month behind the buildings adjoining Creek Lane (from WINZ down to Unichem). The first market is set for Saturday, September 14 from 8.30am to 12.30pm.

The market is planned to specifically not compete with local businesses. There will be no food or drink allowed, and nothing can be sold which directly competes with existing businesses. Holly will vet all stalls, which must be purely second hand, garage sale type stalls. Tickets for stalls cost \$15 and may be purchased ahead at FIGG, 44 Commercial Road.

With no undercover spaces the market will be weather dependent.

Phone Holly on 021 488 427 for more information.

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Locals invited to check out new Coastguard building

Locals are invited to have a look around Coastguard Kaipara's brand new Marine Rescue Centre when it is officially opened on Saturday, September 14.

The Springs Road, Parakai building will receive a dawn blessing by local iwi at 6am. Then starting at 9.30am will be the official opening ceremony.

The \$720,000-plus building will then be open from 1pm for the public to explore until around mid-afternoon. Two rescue craft - Winstone Rescue and Joe Hawke Rescue - plus the Gibbs Quadski and giant New Holland tractor will be on display outside the building, while inside a video showing a time-lapse of the building's construction along with other Coastguard activities will be projected onto the huge rear wall, and local Coastguard volunteers will be on hand to answer questions.

Coastguard Kaipara Media spokesperson Amy Phongam expects up to 200 people will attend the official opening, including current and former volunteers and those that helped with the construction, along with VIPs and senior Coastguard members.

The Marine Rescue Centre is the culmination of four years' work by the local voluntary organisation. *Helensville News* first reported on it in August 2020, revealing the initial plans and the benefits of the new facility.

Work on the building began in the last quarter of 2023 after a July groundbreaking and blessing ceremony, and the 270sq.m. shed reached lockup stage in February.

Joe Davison, Coastguard Kaipara's current equipment and training officer, managed the building project.

"She's 99.5 percent there," he says, detailing a few minor jobs like some finishing painting, cupboard handles and such like that still need tidying up. The main thing still needing to be done when we visited was the installation of outdoor signage - a requirement before Auckland Council can provide a Code of Compliance.

He says the crew love the new shed - "why wouldn't they!"

The new 15m by 18m building has been designed to future-proof the organisation for at least the next three decades, and Joe says nothing else is planned for the future.

"We've put a lot of training things on hold for the last six to eight months, so now the emphasis is to go

hard on training."

He says the organisation is a bit short on qualified crew at the moment, especially with the recent departure of one of their two qualified skippers.

"It's quite a long process to get qualified," Joe explains.

The new Marine Rescue Centre is completely off the grid, with all power from solar panels on the roof, stored in a large internal battery. It's extremely light inside - a huge improvement on the previous rented Mill Road premises, which were the exact opposite.

There is a massive roughly 4m by 4m map of the



• Amy Phongam and Joe Davison at the new Marine Rescue Centre

Kaipara Harbour on the back wall, and along the wall fronting the storage room, maintenance and repair workshop, storage lockers, and toilet, are a series of panels detailing the Coastguard training programme.

As you head up stairs to the mezzanine training room and kitchen there is a small 'museum' of historic artifacts on the right.

Outside is a large chip-sealed parking area, a native garden, and security cameras and lighting.

Joe says all the equipment was moved in over the past few weeks, and as often happens with moves, quite a lot of surplus items like old out of date flares were disposed of.

The new Parakai site will bring faster response times for distress calls compared to the Mill Road location, with rescue craft able to reach the harbour at least 10 minutes faster - a potentially life-saving difference in an emergency. Being closer to the harbour will also allow more time for training.

The Springs Road boat ramp also gives Coastguard Kaipara a full 24-hour launch capability, and the ramp and floating pontoon will allow safe and easy transfer to shore of any casualties.

• To Page 5



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\$1000 in prizes on offer in new Arts in the Ville young artist competition

An 'Any Media' competition for young emerging artists will be a new feature of Arts in the Ville, to be held around Helensville over Labour Weekend in October.

Open to 14 to 18 year olds who live in the Helensville area - including Woodhill, South Head, Parakai, Kaukapakapa, Waitoki, and Wainui - the competition will feature \$1000 in prize money, with half going to a first prize of \$500, \$300 to second place, and a third prize of \$200.

Entries will need to be in by Monday, September 30, and all works will be exhibited during Labour Weekend as part of Arts in the Ville 2024, at a venue yet to be decided on.

For entry forms and more information, email: events@artcentrehelensville.org.nz.

The three-day Arts in the Ville is now in its 10th year and is firmly established both on Auckland's arts scene and as one of our town's biggest annual events, bringing many visitors to the town from around Auckland.

This year it will be held over the long weekend of October 26 to 28.

It's an arts festival and art trail that celebrates the many local artists and artisans in the South Kaipara area, with the public able to view, discuss, and purchase



• Helensville's Ruth Sumner was one of many local artists who opened their workshops and galleries for last year's Arts in the Ville

artworks from a diverse range of artists and crafts people across many different venues. Those will include open studios, pop-up galleries, and a range of special venues such as the Helensville Floral Art group in the Masonic Lodge building in Kowhai Street with a 'Wedding Breakfast' theme, the Helensville Library, and the Helensville Railway Museum.

Helensville Zero Waste will be exhibiting and selling upcycled artworks at The Everything Shop in Mill Road.

As usual, organisers are promising some new artists who haven't taken part before, along with the return of many popular former Arts in the Ville participants.

Almost 40 artists plus three groups were already signed up at the time of writing, and Festival coordinator Jo Ogilvie expects "the usual 70-plus" to take part over the weekend.

Expect artworks in a variety of media from sculpture, embroidery, painting, pottery, and ceramics through to etchings, glasswork, millinery, repurposed mixed media, and engineered creations, with works for both indoor and outdoor spaces.

What's become a regular and highly popular feature of Arts in the Ville - the visual treasure hunt - will

be on again. As in previous years, it will feature a prize by renowned local corrugated iron artist Jeff Thomson (whose studio will again be open for the festival).

Jo says after two festivals in the Helensville Primary School, the Arts in the Ville Makers' Market will this year be set up in the newly-refurbished Helensville War Memorial Hall in Commercial Road.

The market will feature a wide variety of stalls covering everything from cards and handmade books through to toys and clothes, with artists and crafts people only allowed to sell items they have created themselves.

The hall's smaller meeting room will feature a 'salon' with examples of participating artists' works - the idea being visitors can see the range available at the various venues and prioritise their visits.

The Arts in the Ville organisers will be calling the hall foyer between those two exhibits home for the weekend..

Most Arts in the Ville venues will be open from 10am to 4pm each day.

For more information about Arts in the Ville email: events@artcentrehelensville.org.nz.

Coastguard opening cont

• From Page 4

Auckland Council has granted Coastguard Kaipara a 30-year lease on the new site for just \$1 per year, saving the organisation almost \$17,000 a year in rent - money now available for maintenance, purchasing and upgrading equipment, and crew training.

The 100 percent volunteer crew are on call 24 hours a day.

Donations toward the cost of the building can be made online at: www.coastguardkaipara.org.nz.

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Local wins US business award



• Vicki Kenny speaking at the AmCham awards event

Helensville-based business woman Vicki Kenny has received the American Chamber of Commerce DHL Bilateral Connections with the USA Award.

The award was one of just five given out as part of the 2024 AmCham-DHL Express Success & Innovation Awards, held in mid-August at the Pullman Hotel in Auckland. The awards, in their 25th year, honour companies using entrepreneurship and innovation to achieve success in the highly competitive US market.

Vicki is the owner and managing director of International Working Holidays, which she set up in 1994 to arrange working holidays for Kiwis mainly in the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom, with a specialty in hands-on wildlife projects. In the US she deals extensively with Camp America, Au Pair in America, and Educare in America.

"We have been in business 30 years this year so it was a nice way to celebrate that," says Vicki.

"This win means so much, especially after the tough times we've been through. Covid, lockdowns, and travel restrictions made things really challenging - there were moments when it felt impossible to keep going. But we pushed through, adapted, and came out stronger on the other side.

"I'm beyond proud of what we've achieved, and so grateful for the amazing support from our team."

Local facilities to benefit from investment

Rodney's parks, libraries, arts centres, rural halls, and community centres will benefit from a \$15.2 million investment during the next financial year.

The Rodney Local Board agreement adopted recently sets out key priorities for funding and includes a further \$10.2 million in capital investment.

Board chair Brent Bailey says the last year has been challenging for elected members as recovery efforts got underway after Cyclone Gabrielle.

"It will take tremendous effort and investment to rebuild our damaged infrastructure, road networks, parks, and community facilities," he explains.

"That's not all that's going on, as our council's

recovery office works through the acquisition of high-risk properties, and healthy waters staff develop and roll out the Making Space for Water programme to build more resilience in extreme weather events.

"Our local board has taken a pragmatic approach, as some things are clearly going to take a little longer to deliver than we had previously hoped."

Key initiatives include: overseeing Rodney's full facilities contracts; improving open spaces, streetscapes, and townships; supporting arts centres and extending arts outreach across Rodney; and holding more programmes for children and young people at council facilities.

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Fencing invention aimed at lifestylers

The humble fence batten staple has been a staple - pun intended - in the toolbox of farmers and lifestyle block owners as long as there have been fences.

But as anyone who has owned a wire and batten fence knows, over time the staples come loose and when livestock rub against the fence the battens slide along the fence wires - not only becoming unsightly but making it easier and more likely for livestock to escape.

Step in Lloyd Altham, a Kaukapakapa-based lifestyle block owner. When he and wife Stacey purchased their 2ha block of land in 2000 he says the state of the fences was terrible.

A retired engineer who also spent 25 years in the fastenings industry, Lloyd put his thinking cap on and has come up with an invention he says gives around 20 times the grip of the traditional batten staple.

Like all good inventions it's deceptively simple, but Lloyd says it has taken him around five years and numerous prototypes to perfect the Batten Buddy.

"The idea is relatively simple, but it took several years and many prototypes to develop a product that goes on quick and easy and stands the test of time in a rural environment," he explains.

Lloyd is proud of the fact the Batten Buddy clips are a true Kiwi product - designed in Kaukapakapa, with the tooling made at Mt Wellington, and the actual product made on the North Shore. Only the screws are imported, as none are made here. The clips are made from the same



• Lloyd with one of his Batten Buddies

zinc coated steel used in roofing washers to ensure a long life.

Designed to work on popular 2.5mm high tensile fence wire, they are made to give maximum grip without damaging the plating on the wire, which could lead to rust.

Lloyd says development was an expensive process with tooling costs, fees for registering the design, and getting both New Zealand and Australian patents (international pending), plus all the ancillary items like packaging.

Aimed directly at lifestyle block owners and small scale farmers, the Batten Buddy isn't intended to replace every staple on a batten. Lloyd says one near the top and another near the bottom is enough to secure a batten properly.

With most farmers and lifestylers already owning a battery-operated drill, there are no expensive tools needed to use the product.

He says Batten Buddy is a "great alternative" to using barbed wire to help keep battens straight. And he adds that hammering loose batten staples back in is only a temporary solution as they come loose again very quickly.

Batten Buddy is available in packs of 50, 100, 250 or 1000 from Falloons Stock Food shop at Dairy Flat, or Lloyd can be contacted directly through his website, battenbuddy.co.nz. He is also in discussion with other distributors.

Rugby Club grant

Helensville District Rugby Club has received a \$188,000 grant from Auckland Council for shower and changing room upgrades.

The grant was one of 18 given to sports organisations throughout the city from a pool of \$13.6m, allocated through the council's Sport and Recreation Facilities Investment Fund.



• A Batten Buddy in action



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Annual General Meeting

Invitation for Nominations for the positions of Voluntary Community Trustees

The Helensville District Health Trust invites nominations for three available positions as Voluntary Community Trustees for a one-year term.

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Historic organ donated to museum

Helensville's Te Awaroa Museum has been gifted the original organ from St Joseph's Catholic Church.

It was given to the museum by the late Jacoba (Coby) van Ommering. 35 years ago she donated \$25 to the church for the organ; a tractor loaned by Richard & Pat Bradly was required to move it.

Little more is known about the organ's history other than the church organist at one stage was Lorna McCarthy of Evans Road, South Head.

Anyone with information about it is asked to contact the museum, phone: 09 420 7881 or email: info@museum.teawaroa.nz.

St Joseph's was opened and blessed by Bishop John Edmond Luck on February 28, 1886. One of the oldest buildings in Helensville, it was originally located on Garfield Road and was built under the watch of Father Hackett from Te Kopuru.

The church was built after Bishop Luck had travelled here from Auckland to minister to the Catholic congregation in the town hall. He called for subscriptions, and the new St Joseph's was born.

At the time no bishop lived in the area, so clergy had to travel by train, boat or buggy once a month to celebrate Mass.

In 1899 land was purchased on the corner of Commercial Road and Porter Crescent and A. Becroft and Sons were charged with moving the church building. On March 11, 1900, St Joseph's was dismantled and a team of bullocks pulled it to its new home. The move was paid for by Mr George Sydney Smith, who also paid for the statues and the original stations of the cross.

On May 6, 1900 the church was reopened by Dean O'Reilly and Father Brodie - but it wasn't until 1918 that St Joseph's finally became a parish with the appointment of Father Mansfield.

In 1938, under the direction of Sam White and Son of Auckland, St Joseph's was moved again, this time



• The donated historic organ

to its current location on the corner of Puriri and Kowhai Streets.

The external look of the church has changed little since it was built in the 1880s - only the small original porch was replaced by a larger foyer, paid for by parishioner David Blake.

New acting manager at Craigweil



• From left: Preet, assistant manager Deb Presland, and Roop

Registered nurse Roop Bhullar will take over the helm as acting facility manager at Craigweil House in Parakai while manager Preet Bual is away on maternity leave for seven months.

Roop, who lives in West Auckland, worked as a clinical nurse manager at Catherine Lodge Home and Hospital, a sister facility of Craigweil in Mt Albert, and has worked previously with Ryman. She will oversee the day to day running of Craigweil House during her time as acting manager.

Preet, a Helensville resident who migrated from India 12 years ago, has been the facility manager at Craigweil since September last year, starting as a healthcare assistant, and has worked for parent company Henrikwest Care Group for more than 10 years.

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Members' art exhibition

Helensville Art Centre's September exhibition is 'New Beginnings', a members' show. It runs from Wednesday, September 4 to Saturday 28, with an opening night on Friday, September 6 from 5pm to 7pm.

"New Beginnings marks the start of a new season for the Art Centre with construction coming to it's end," says centre coordinator Yvonne Abercrombie. "The show will represent growth and new life. Come down and support local art!"

Mike Rowland's six-week drawing course continues this month, running from September 12 to October 17. Mike will be covering the basics of object drawing and perspective - his skillset from training at Elam and work as a graphic artist will be instrumental to this course.



• Participants in Mike Rowland's drawing class

Each student will come away with practical instructions and confidence that can be used in all artistic avenues. Enquire at the Art Centre for payment details.

Art Kaipara memberships are now due for renewal. Existing members should visit the Art Centre website for

membership details or email: manager@artcentrehelensville.org.nz. Members are entitled to enter into three members' shows each year with no cost to exhibit, and also receive a 10 percent discount on Art Centre-run classes.

Yvonne is calling for proposals for exhibitions for 2025. Artists with an idea for a show can find more information under 'Gallery Hire' on the centre's website, artcentrehelensville.org.nz.

Helensville Art Centre will be part of Arts in the Ville over Labour weekend with an exhibition in the main gallery by local artist Arwen Flowers, who will be showing work from her Master's project alongside new pieces.

Coach one of five business mentors

Helensville business coach Leanne Coste is one of the five experts now providing mentoring services to local businesses through the North West Country Business Association.

In addition to those mentoring duties, her home-based business coaching company has a number of Helensville businesses on its books.

She says the new business association mentoring programme seems to be quite successful and says a number of businesses have already sought her help.

"I'm getting good feedback," she says.

Leanne, who has lived in Helensville since 2009, also runs a business networking group which meets every second Friday at a café in Helensville. It's a way for her to provide free help to local business owners - and even those who just work in a business - and she says there are usually around eight business people at each meeting. Businesses do need to register with Leanne before taking part in the group.



• Leanne Coste

With her Better Your Biz company Leanne specialises in marketing, business systems, and online visibility.

She says she is passionate about helping local business owners to grow their sales through marketing, and to increase profits through system and process improvement so they can have more time free to pursue non-business interests. She also provides advice on scaling or selling businesses.

After streamlining and automating her first multi award-winning business, Leanne sold it and moved on to provide advice and knowledge to other business owners.

She helps business owners with their online presence, marketing, award entries, social media, systems, accountability, getting a business ready for selling, and general business coaching.

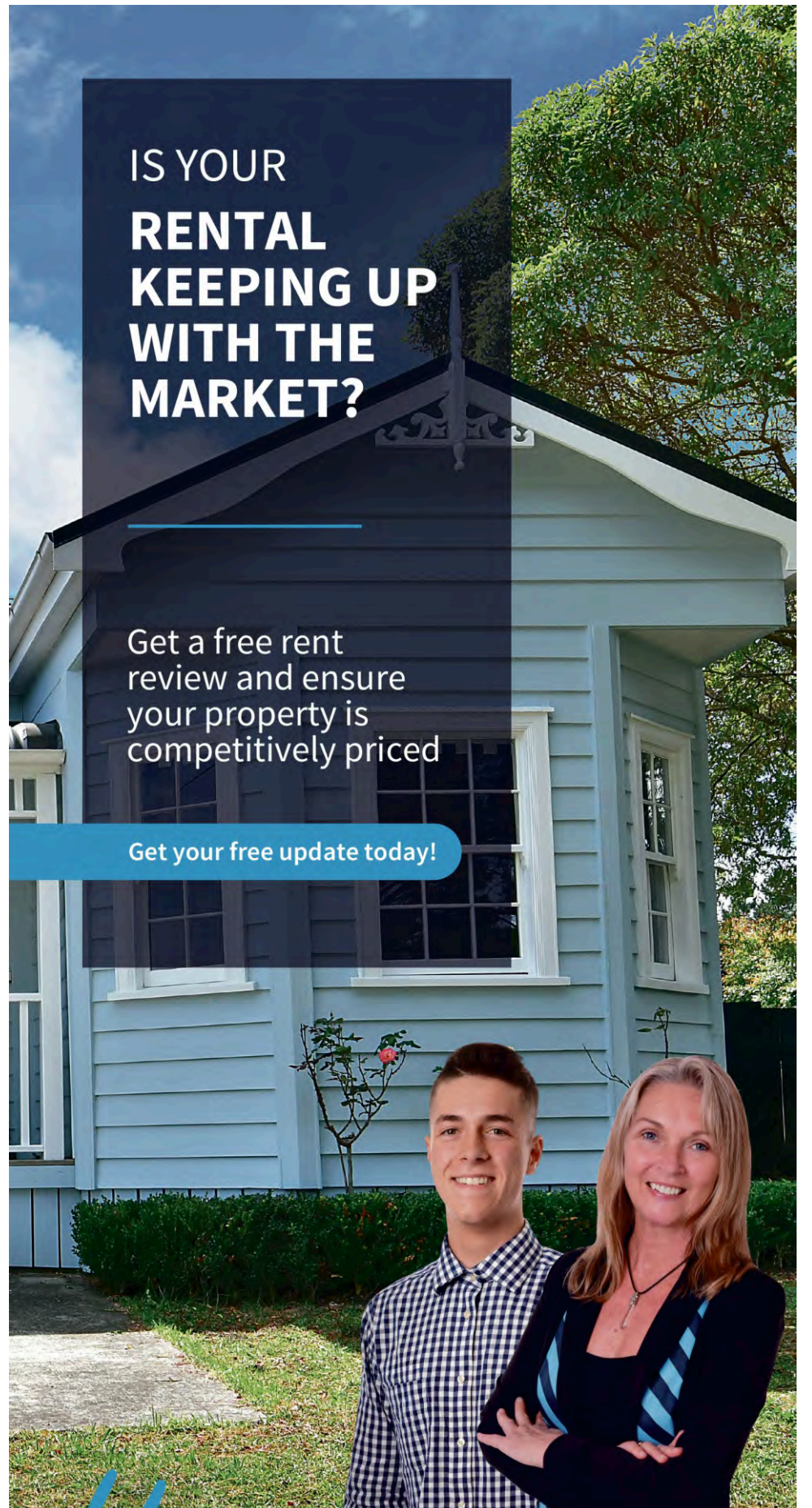
Under its new mentoring program, North West Country is providing member businesses with a free one-hour mentoring session with their choice from the five mentors available. To reserve a session with Leanne or one of the other mentors, email: manager@northwestcountry.co.nz.

Local business people wanting to contact Leanne direct can email: leanne@betteryourbiz.co.nz or phone her on: 021 632 585.

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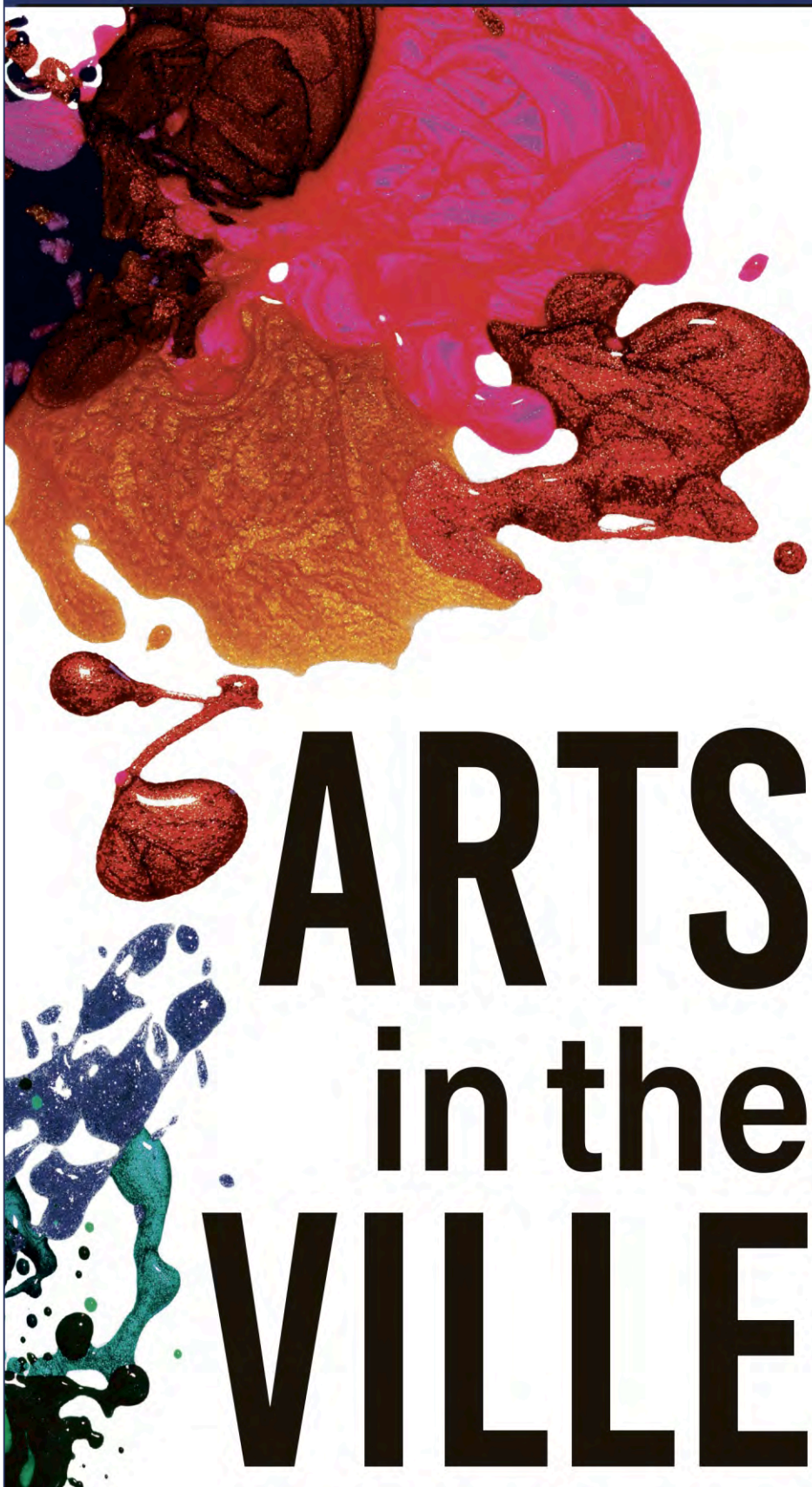
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South Head planting day



• South Head farmer Ross Webber (left) with Dillon Blair of CVNZ at the planting day, while volunteers plant in the background

Kaipara Moana Remediation has again partnered with Conservation Volunteers New Zealand for a successful native planting day - this time on an award-winning South Head Farm.

The Webber Family Farm, owned and operated by Ross and Eleanore Webber, was Regional Supreme Winner of the Auckland Ballance Farm Environment Award in 2019.

Landowners Ross and Eleanore were thrilled to work with KMR as they have been advocates of protecting the Kaipara Harbour for decades. The husband and wife team were pleased to add another 3661 stems to their latest project with the help of CVNZ and KMR.

In total, the Webbers will plant 20,061 sedges, rushes, plants, and trees in partnership with KMR on their 200ha beef breeding unit.

"Decades ago, I was given the opportunity to be the guardian of this farm, which was very humbling. Eleanore and I have worked hard since then to fence off waterways and wetlands and gradually plant them out. This partnership with KMR is very special as it gets us closer to completing what we set out to do," says Ross

"The people at KMR are awesome.

"They have been fizzing to get in here and get planting. We need to get more people on board with KMR because the more of this sort of work we all do, the better off our environment will be in the long-term and that's great for the entire country and our wider communities," he says.

"We have a 29ha QEII National Trust covenant which dates back 20 years and the area we have planted with KMR support has also had QEII support in the form of deer proof fencing to keep feral deer away from the natives.

"We have made a point of fencing off any parts of the farm we deemed uneconomic, so we have around 15 blocks on the farm protected and planted with natives, which total 40ha. With KMR we will end up with another 10ha on top of that."

KMR Pou Tātaki Justine Daw says the planting day was significant as KMR approaches planting two million trees in only two and a half years. At the end of July, 1.91 million plants were already in the ground or contracted to be planted this winter, covering 540ha.

"Projects like Ross and Eleanore's are living examples of really great sediment reduction initiatives, with multiple agencies contributing. It is great to be mobilising the community to support the important projects going on across the 600,000ha Kaipara Moana catchment."

Justine adds many people at South Head are taking action for the good of the environment and the harbour, and KMR is looking forward to doing more work to support them.

CVNZ regional manager Kiri Huddleston says she is delighted with the turnout at the joint planting with well over 50 volunteers helping.

"It has been a joy to see the community get behind the initiative."

College building clarification

In our article last month on the new Whare Ako build at Kaipara College we mentioned that the building was the only one remaining of a three-part project originally intended to include a \$30m Innovation Centre and a new Faculty of Special Education building.

While that information was correct as provided to us, we want to clarify that the Special Education build will eventually go ahead at a yet-to-be-determined time, but as a stand-alone project. We'll bring coverage of that project when it happens.

Kaipara ki Mahurangi MP Chris Penk's office would also like to clarify that the decision to 'pause' the Innovation Centre project was made during the previous government. When Chris learned of the situation in early December 2023 he began to advocate for the school, including with the Minister of Education, to determine what options might have been available to enable the project to proceed.

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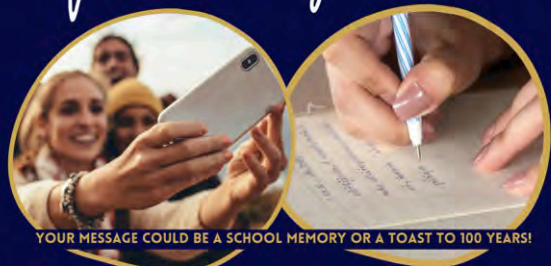
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2024 KAIPARA COLLEGE & HELENSVILLE DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOL CENTENARY

from our MP

In this regular column I tend to focus very much on local issues and I am really grateful to have the opportunity to do that.

Obviously sometimes there are wider political dimensions to issues affecting Auckland's northwest but I try to play these down, within reason. I prefer that approach to campaigning relentlessly between elections and I suspect most readers of *Helensville News* would too! A couple of local issues currently in my mind do have national political dimensions, however, so I think it's worth discussing how these fit within the bigger picture.

Space precludes me from getting into local medical centre fees this time around, but the current fragile state of our health system deserves some commentary soon.

For now, building works planned at Kaipara College are worth considering in context. A delay to its Innovation Centre is hugely frustrating for all concerned. The excellent staff, Board of Trustees, and school community had planned an exciting project in good faith, on the basis of Ministry of Education advice. As evidenced by a construction contract failing to materialise by the middle of last year (the cheque is always in the post, it seems) funding was never allocated by the Ministry for this purpose.

Across New Zealand, and my large electorate, many school improvement projects were promised without realistic prospect of delivery in the near future. I was told of a school infrastructure project in rural north Auckland allegedly about to take place for the past decade - and then supposedly it would have got underway right after last year's general election. Forgive my cynicism but that cheque was probably in the post too.

Then we have the case of the additional secondary school supposedly planned for further down SH16, perhaps in the vicinity of Kumeū. After years of negotiations by the Ministry of Education, not a single square metre of land has been purchased for this purpose.

I have learnt not to trust any promises the Ministry makes about 'cheques in the post', until such time as the envelopes arrive and the cheques clear. They tend to bounce, in my experience.

In the case of the Innovation Centre planned for Kaipara College, I would love to be proven wrong in my scepticism about the ability of the Ministry to deliver ... and of course I will continue to advocate for more investment in our great local schools.

A responsible government does not make promises it has no intention or ability to deliver on. Sadly that has been the case far too often in the past six years. After all, the education of our next generation of young citizens, here and all throughout New Zealand, is much too important for politics.



- Chris Penk

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

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. The lucky recipient will receive a \$100 voucher for a local business of their choice.

September's shared recipients are Sharon Thompson and Sharron King. Vouchers chosen: Sharon Thompson - Eleventh Hour, Sharron King - Paper Plus

Sharon and Sharron were nominated by Megan Somerville-Ryan, who says:

"Whaea Sharon Thompson and Sharron King run the school office at Helensville Primary School. They have both worked there for many years (Sharron recently retired).

"These two incredible women treat all students like their own tamariki or mokopuna. The pastoral care they give to our young tamariki and which also often extends to their families is so incredibly special. They both approach their jobs with kindness and compassion and are so capable in all of the myriad of things that crop up during a school day. I believe Sharon and Sharron make a huge difference in our children's lives as well as the whole school community every day."



• Sharon Thompson with Nicky Horsbrough

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med centre notes

This month I would like to introduce Trish Hammond, a wonderful addition to the team at Kaipara Medical centre.

Trish is a clinical pharmacist who joined the team at Kaipara Medical Centre recently. She can answer questions you and your whānau may have about your medications.

One of our team at Kaipara Medical may refer you to see Trish for a free consultation when:

- Your medicines are complex;
- You may be experiencing side-effects;
- You have recently been in hospital;
- When there have been changes made to the medications you take.

She works closely with our GPs, nurse practitioners, and nurses to make sure the medications you take are right for you. Trish can also help with monitoring and reviewing your medications, and can recommend changes to your medications when they are needed - and make sure everyone involved with your care is aware of your current medication plan.

Speak to our reception team if you have any questions or would like to book in for a funded consultation. Trish looks forward to meeting some of you over the coming months.

In other news:

- Cervical screening - just a reminder to come in and see our nursing team for your cervical screening. Most women can do the self-taken HPV test and this service is free at Kaipara Medical Centre.
- Diabetes care - if you or someone in your family has diabetes, contact us to book in for a free annual diabetes check.



• Clinical pharmacist Trish Hammond

- Daily acute care clinic - this runs from 9am to 3pm Monday to Friday for your immediate medical needs. Please phone the clinic from 8am daily to get an 'on the day' appointment.

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- Dr Kathryn Elcock
Clinical Lead, Kaipara Medical Centre

the business

We are offering tickets to our Meet the Advisors networking lunch at Allely Estate.

This event is on Friday, September 13 from 11am. Attendees will enjoy a light lunch while meeting our five business advisors and catching up with fellow business owners. The cost is only \$10 for members and \$20 for non-members, and bookings can be made through our website.

Remember, all Business Association members are entitled to a free one-hour coaching session with a one of our business advisors, so don't miss out! Find out who they are at www.northwestcountry.co.nz/businessmentors.

For September we will be focusing on digital marketing.

This is a huge area to get your head around as a business owner and manager, and we have a team of experts here to help. We put a survey out to everyone to ask what you would like to learn most, and are preparing a one-day workshop for October to take you through the basics.

This will be a chance to get your head around social media platforms, Facebook Meta, LinkedIn Advertiser, Google Adwords, websites, and search engine optimisation, as well as identifying your audience and how best to get your message in front of them.

Finally, North West Country is releasing a Business Assistance Fund grant scheme. Building on our Training Grant scheme, we are extending this to open up the grant categories to other needs you might have. During September we will be updating our website with the new fund terms and conditions, and we look forward to supporting you in your next endeavours.

Don't forget to come to me with any questions, ideas, issues, or support that you might need. I'm here to help.

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



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Dairy theme, new indoor classes for 2025 Show

There will be a swathe of new classes for locals to enter in the indoor section at next February's Helensville Show, a number of them designed to tie in with the Show's 2025 theme of 'Dairy'.

The 2025 theme follows the successful introduction of a first Show theme this year with 'Wool - NZ's Hero Fibre'.

With the dairy theme there will be lots of action in the livestock area with milking displays, a tanker, products made from dairy, and competition of not just dairy cattle but also dairy goats and sheep, and of course pet calves.

New indoor classes to tie into the dairy theme include:

- A 'Farm' class in the photography section;
- A 'Holy cow' floral arrangement;
- A knitted 'beanie for the cowshed';
- A 'Cowshed Buns' Recipe Class (where you follow a provided recipe);

- The Rural Women's class will be 'Dairy Delight', which must include something cheesy, something made from yoghurt, and something made from custard, all displayed with accessories to convey the theme.

Other new indoor classes being introduced for 2025 will include:

- A decorated gumboot in all children's age groups;
- Pom Pom Pets for the 5 year olds and under;
- Decorated pumpkin - a class each for both adults and children, with any weird and wonderful theme;
- A Bloke's Baking Class, described as 'any flavour or size cake, made by a good keen bloke. Naked in all its glory - that's the cake, not the cook! (ie. not iced)';

- An adult's original Lego class;
- 'Birds of a Feather' wreath;
- A 'Rural Rusty' creation - a rural artwork made of things like wire, metal, wood, or driftwood, for either outdoors or inside;
- A hank of homespun wool;
- A homespun creation - any item knitted or crocheted from your own homespun wool;
- Any woven item;
- 'Biggest Thistle' - your best, worst or gnarliest thistle of any breed.

The 2025 Helensville Show is on Saturday, February 22. Show schedules listing all classes will be available in November (see the Show Facebook page) and entries will open on January 1.

councillor comment

Residents on unsealed roads have had a major win in the final Auckland Regional Land Transport Plan (RLTP) approved by Auckland Council.

The budget for unsealed road improvements will be \$12.5m annually for the next 10 years resulting in a total spend of \$125 million. Initially, council had budgeted to spend just \$6.2 million and \$6.4 million in the first two years.

Never in the history of the Super City has such a large amount been won for sealing and upgrading rural roads. A list of the roads to be sealed and upgraded can be found on the Auckland Transport website.

The campaign to significantly increase the amount of money being returned to rural ratepayers was led by myself, with support from Rodney Local Board, as well as a public petition presented to the Mayor with over 1300 signatures seeking the increase.

Much credit has to go to the Mayor Wayne Brown who applied continual pressure on Auckland Transport's leadership team to ensure the money was allocated more fairly back into Rodney's rural sector.

The unsealed roads programme will focus on infrastructure improvements to withstand extreme weather events, as well as normal daily activity from vehicle use, by addressing surface works, safety, seal extensions, and drainage conditions.

The RLTP sets out the transport priorities that Auckland Transport, the NZ Transport Agency, and KiwiRail are seeking to fund or partly fund through the National Land Transport Fund over the next decade.

Of the total \$63 billion Auckland hopes to secure under the plan, the largest shares (\$28 billion) will be spent on public transport and state highway improvements (\$17 billion).

In a response to last year's weather events, AT has already spent \$50 million on road recovery work in the Rodney area. From the RLTP budget AT plans to spend a further \$186 million over 10 years on:

- Restoring and grading surface water channels and road shoulders;
- Scouring protection works for surface water channels and at culvert inlets/outlets;
- Removing and clearing debris from road carriageways, surface water channels, and bridge abutment;
- Temporary protection measures such as bunding, covering of slip faces, and crack sealing;
- Cutting back of banks to retreat from underslips;
- Stabilising slips with soil nailing, retaining walls, shotcrete, planting, and hydroseeding;
- Unblocking culverts;
- Restoring damaged road pavements, footpaths, cycleways, kerb and channel, and road drainage structures.

Nearly \$13m will be spent over 10 years on stormwater improvements on 23 priority roads to improve the quality of water run-off from the road network into local streams and rivers.

At a national level the coalition government has announced the Kumeū bypass road (North West Alternative State Highway 16) as a road of national significance. This road would link to the Brigham Creek Rd roundabout at one end, and at a point between Huapai and Waimauku at the other. The estimated cost is \$2.3 billion with a start date four to 10 years away.

In the meantime road works along SH16 started under the previous government will be continued according to the NZTA.

- Greg Sayers, Rodney Ward Councillor
greg.sayers@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz
Ph: 021 285 9900



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local board matters

It is quite liberating to have announced I will be retiring from the Local Board at the end of this term.

Trying to find a way to navigate the disparate interests and concerns of the present groups of elected representatives has been a real challenge - especially so when members are off on personal campaigns that focus on matters outside the sphere of Local Board decision making.

That and the ongoing harassment and social media bullying by unelected groups that appears to be the norm these days.

So, with the clarity that my impending retirement provides, what are the big issues that Rodney Local Board will face in coming terms?

Managed Retreat:

Following the effects of cyclone Gabrielle, Council has updated flooding and coastal inundation models. These updated models have been applied to hazard mapping and are now viewable on Council GeoMaps, and will appear on property files. Research of this information will become a part of any property purchase and likely be a consideration for property insurance.

Following the flooding and slips associated with the recent extreme weather, central government and Council (taxpayers and ratepayers) implemented a voluntary property buyout programme where intolerable risk to life exists.

However, this buyout applies solely to residential properties, and there are no plans to extend it to

commercial properties.

Stormwater management projects to reduce risks to townships, commercial property, and infrastructure are being modelled and costed but no funding has been earmarked for implementing any of these options - and in fact the business case for these potential interventions appears embryonic. Given the potential benefit from any intervention will accrue to small numbers of properties, there will be resistance by general ratepayers to undertaking many of these potential mitigation projects.

Nationally, the recommended response to these sorts of hazards has been managed retreat. This will be especially true where the most significant hazard is coastal inundation, as sea level rise is predicted to impact vast areas of New Zealand coastline over the next century.

Productivity:

The impact of decades of under-investment in transport infrastructure and mass transit provision has impacted New Zealand's productivity, and this has been particularly so in the North West of Auckland.

We urgently need a Rapid Transit Network that supports a mode shift to public transport. This is the most cost-effective way to increase network capacity and improve productivity. For too long this has been an ideological debate between single interest groups but in reality, we need investment in the network itself and in a mode shift to public transport.

Quality of Life:

Rodney has always offered an enviable lifestyle with our regional and local parks, beaches, and range of small communities distributed over a vast and interesting geography.

Urban sprawl continues to erode this as development encroaches on our communities. Typically, these developments have exacerbated the infrastructure and community facilities deficits in Kumeū, Dairy Flat, and Warkworth.

A firm line needs to be taken, and feedback provided to central government and Auckland Council planners to ensure that where we face these assaults on our quality of life, we are supported with appropriate investment in infrastructure, transport, and community facilities.

Run for the Local Board:

If these are things you care about, then please consider running for the Local Board at the election next year. Talk with existing board members if you want to learn more.



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

College history on show at Museum during Centenary

Helensville's Te Awaroa Museum in Mill Road is holding a special exhibition of Kaipara College items to coincide with the centenary celebrations.

Anyone attending the Kaipara College Centenary, is invited to the museum on Sunday, September 22 between 10am and 1pm to view vintage uniforms and College memorabilia - and maybe help fill in some of the missing names from old class and sports photographs.

The rest of the museum will be open as well so visitors can learn about the area's local history. Entry by koha.

For more information phone 09 420 7881 or email: info@museum.teawaroa.nz.



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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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HEALTH TRUST AGM

Nominations for three voluntary community trustees positions on the Helensville District Health Trust close at 5pm on Monday, September 16. The Trust will hold its annual general meeting on Wednesday, October 30.

RODNEY LOCAL BOARD MEETING

The next meeting of Rodney Local Board will be on Wednesday, September 18 starting at 10am in the Kumeū Meeting Room, 296 Main Road, Kumeū. October's meeting will be on October 16 at Warkworth.

KUMEŪ CLOTHING SWAP AND SHOP

The Kumeū Clothing Swap and Shop will be held at the Kumeū Showgrounds on Sunday, September 22 from 10am to 4pm, with all funds raised going to help local young families through Parent Aid North West. Organiser Bex Holland hopes to raise \$20,000.

The event works by women dropping off their lightly used clothing, shoes, and accessories at one of the pre-swap drop-off days, September 19 to 21. They then get a wristband with the number of items they have donated which lets them 'buy' clothing items at the main swap event. Additional items can be purchased for \$5. Email bex.holland@outlook.com.

Last chance to register for Centenary

Almost 250 people had registered at the time of going to print for the Kaipara College and Helensville District High School Centenary, which will be held later this month.

"We are really looking forward to bringing what is currently nearing 250 registered attendees, plus our staff, students, and whānau together to mark this occasion," says centenary coordinator Erin Stuckey.

Erin says there are former students, staff, and whānau travelling from as far away as Canada and a contingent is coming from Australia, as well as those from around New Zealand.

Registrations are still open online and through the school office, but Erin says to ensure

registration packs have personalised printed items registrations should be completed by Tuesday, September 10.

Locals can go to the school's Centenary web pages to find out all the information on the event at: www.kaipara.school.nz/news/centenary-2024 and to register and buy tickets.

Organisers can provide support for registrations by phone, 09 420 8640, ext 800, or by email to: centenary@kaipara.school.nz - and also in person during school hours.

Erin suggests people attending book tickets for the golf tournament, the special morning tea, and the celebration dinner as soon as possible to help the team preparing for their arrival.

The College is giving the

community and alumni the chance to share a short message to mark this Centenary occasion.

A short written message can be emailed or mailed to the school, or a video message no longer than three minutes can also be emailed.

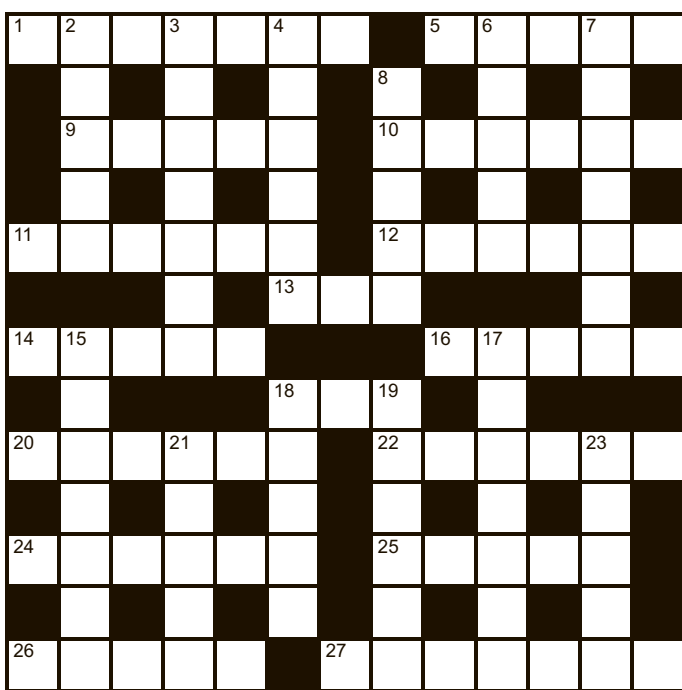
"This is your opportunity to share a memory from your time at school, a celebratory message to the school if you aren't able to attend, a message to celebrate the past 100 years, or to mark the future 100," says Erin.

"Our goal is to showcase these on a large screen continuously during the Saturday programme, and they will be kept as a precious taonga for our school archives."

Guests who attend are welcome to be part of the message sharing. Messages should be emailed to: centenary@kaipara.school.nz or mailed to Kaipara College - Centenary Team, 36 Rautawhiri Road, Helensville 0800.



crossword



Across

1. Stonework (7)
5. Hirsute (5)
9. Rephrase (5)
10. Once ruled by Idi Amin (6)
11. Largest Japanese island (6)
12. Second-smallest banknote (6)
13. Extinct flightless bird (3)
14. Heaps (5)
16. Fill with high spirits (5)
18. Highest mountain in Crete (3)
20. Institution for mentally ill (6)
22. Dried strip of egg dough (6)
24. Convex cylindrical wooden container (6)
25. Wary (5)
26. E.g. Tarka (5)
27. Struggle hand-to-hand (7)

Down

2. Texan mission (5)
3. Supervise (7)
4. Highly radioactive metallic element (6)
6. Once more (5)
7. Beef or lamb (3,4)
8. Allotted quantity (5)
15. Moment (7)
17. Elsa, perhaps (7)
18. Suggest (5)
19. Fisherman (6)
21. Big (5)
23. Faithful (5)

August's Answers

Across: 1. Station 5. Feta 9. Thankful 10. Rare 11. Gene 13. Hohhot 14. Rhino 15. Spry 17. Into 18. Nests 19. Goblet 21. Lope 23. Item 24. Steamers 26. Date 27. Stick-up.
Down: 2. Tahoe 3. Tannery 4. Off 6. Earth 7. Airport 8. Alehouse 12. Giantess 16. Plotted 17. Islamic 20. Limit 22. Perdu 25. Eat.

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