

## Lest we forget



Hundreds of locals turned out for a moving Dawn Parade at Kaipātiki Reserve, Parakai, to mark Anzac Day on April 25, with around 60 current and former service personnel taking part.

The 120-car carpark at Parakai Springs was full to overflowing, with cars parked on verges and all along Parkhurst Road, and there was a traffic jam through Parakai after the event.

"It was certainly very well attended, and a good number of people went to the service at the Helensville Services cemetery which was pleasing," says Kaipara Memorial RSA president Rex Keane.

A service was also held at the Kaukapakapa cenotaph, attended by local MP Chris Penk, but as with the past couple of years, there was no midday service at the Helensville War Memorial Hall

cenotaph because of ongoing work there. The RSA was meant to have moved back in before Anzac Day, but Auckland Council has now decided to replace the toilets, and still has to build a new deck out in front of the RSA clubrooms.

"Hopefully it's no more than six weeks away," says Rex.

■ See more Anzac service photos on page 8.

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## editorial

I had an interesting discussion with local businesswoman Holly Southernwood the other day about the inexorable shift to a cashless society - something she is very opposed to.

She made the valid point of the difficulties faced by charities and other organisations holding fundraising events when many people no longer carry any cash. I've found it increasingly common to come across, say, a school sausage sizzle or raffle when I've got no cash on me. It makes you wonder how many fundraisers are feeling the pinch because of this.

They are going to have to adapt - they have no option.

That's already starting to happen. The RSA had QR codes for people to scan with their phones so they could still make a donation on Poppy Day if they had no cash. Helensville Lions Club has Eftpos for its book fairs and even its sausage sizzle caravan due to the prevalence of no-cash customers, even for small amounts.

This conversation came about when Holly alerted me to the fact the ANZ Bank is to remove its Commercial Road ATM machine (see page 13) - leaving just two machines in our area.

I had to laugh when I read the ANZ's explanation, with figures which show that only one in 1000 transactions is now made through a branch, and only 20 through ATMs. I wonder if that's because they have closed almost all their branches, and are also getting rid of the machines...

Looks like the cashless society is coming closer by the day.

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

## Near death experience confirms faith

Tienie Bekker lost an arm, and nearly his life, as ammunition exploded behind him while seated in an anti-mine vehicle, while on compulsory military service in South Africa in 1984.

Until then Tienie hadn't believed in 'near death experiences' - but he describes looking down at his body, seeing everything blown away, people putting bandages into his back to try to stop the bleeding, and thinking: "this can't be happening."

It was a life changing experience for Tienie, who had completed training in theology prior to his military service call-up. It was the point at which his faith became real.

He and his family came to New Zealand in 1999 to minister here, and with wife Monica moved to Auckland last year. They were looking for a spiritual home and start attending Massey Presbyterian Church while still being an itinerant pastor.

The pastor there said they were looking for someone to pastor the church in Helensville and Kaukapakapa. After meeting with the elders from the different churches, Tienie was appointed the interim pastor. He has taken up the role at the Helensville

Community Church in Mill Road, which runs a fairly informal 'cafe style' service, where the auditorium is set out with tables, and food and drinks are available throughout at no cost.

He and Monica are very excited to serve the church and the community here in the Helensville area. Although they currently live in Henderson, they will be in Helensville for two days during the week and on Sundays.

Tienie, an ordained minister, will share his story at 10.30am on Sunday, May 19 at the Helensville Community Church.



• Tienie and Monica Bekker

## Caravaggio talk

An artist talk on Renaissance painter Caravaggio will form the main part of the Helensville Community Church's service on Sunday, May 26.

The talk by Chris Ellwood, a locally-based blacksmith, will be the third in a series of five to be held at the Helensville Community Church at 40 Mill Road.

The service will start at 10.30 am. For more information contact Pauline Denton, email: [paulinekiwidenton@gmail.com](mailto:paulinekiwidenton@gmail.com)

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# Mt Rex fire makes national news



• Firefighters hose burning pampas from SH16

A 25-year-old man found near the scene of the recent Mt Rex scrub fire has been charged with arson.

The third alarm blaze in wilding pines, toetoe, and pampas grass alongside SH16 started in the early hours of April 11, and at its height there were about 50 firefighters at the scene plus additional support crew.

The event made national headlines, including television coverage.

Around a dozen fire appliances including tankers and support vehicles attended from all over the Waitematā district, including Helensville, Kaukapakapa, Shelly Beach, Kumeū, Ahuroa, Silverdale, Waitakere, Bethells Valley, Albany, and the Whenuapai air base.

A helicopter with a monsoon bucket was also called in to help fight the fire.

Scott Marchant, Group Manager at Fire and Emergency New Zealand and assistant commander for the incident, says the 1ha blaze “wasn’t a big fire but was challenging”, citing the steep site, winds of 50-60 km/h, the proximity to SH16, and the danger of pine trees falling on the steep terrain.

The strong winds and darkness meant firefighting could initially only take place from the ground until daylight, when the helicopter was able to take part.

Firefighters had to work to protect one house that was threatened by the fire.

The state highway was closed the whole day and into the next between Pipitiwai Drive and Inland Road, blanketed by thick smoke and at risk of falling trees. It was under single-lane stop and go traffic management up to four days after the fire. The closure caused delays for both motorists and bus services.

The cause of the fire had yet to be determined at the time of going to print, however a neighbour said they heard fireworks going off in the vicinity of the blaze shortly before the fire was first reported.

■ For some background history on the Mt Rex area, see page 9.

## Are you a Fordyce?

Te Awaroa Museum in Helensville is looking for descendants or close friends of the Fordyce family to help create a family history.

They were clearly an important family at one point, with Fordyce Road in Parakai named after them, and the museum wants to include the family in its history archives.

Anyone related to or with knowledge of the family can contact the museum by phone: 09 420 7881 or email: [info@museum.teawaroa.nz](mailto:info@museum.teawaroa.nz).

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# Pickleball taking off locally

Hands up who knows what pickleball is?

It's a racket game that's only been played locally since the middle of last year, and in fact was only introduced in New Zealand in the last few years despite being created in the United States in 1965.

Pickleball is a cross between

"The hall has some limitations due to it's size. We only have one court, there's not a lot of room around the court, and lobs are limited due to the ceiling height - but we have adapted and have a few 'house rules' and loads of fun!"

There are about 20 players involved aged from 11 to 72, with between six and 12 turning up

"We welcome everyone, we have equipment people can use, and there is always someone available to teach new players. Pretty much anyone can pick it up in a session or two."

At this stage there is no formal club, but members are working to get registered with the national body, Pickleball New Zealand

Association (www.pnza.org.nz). Presently they pay a sub to help cover equipment and hall hire, and casuals can play for \$5.

Janet says they are hoping to find somewhere to play in Helensville as well, to attract more participants.

She says pickleball, the fastest growing sport in the USA, is really popular with slightly older people, especially those with a tennis, badminton, or table tennis background, but is becoming more popular with younger people too.

"Our youngest regular player, Amelia Rapata, is 11 and she is going to be a star," says Janet. Some of my grandchildren play, and we are introducing the game at Waioneke Primary School in coming weeks.

"A couple of us are entering a tournament at Albany. We will be in the Super Womans Doubles (over 60).

"We are expecting it to be very competitive!"

Locals who want to know more can phone Janet on 027 596 4586 or search on Facebook.



• A pickleball match underway in South Head hall

tennis, badminton, and table tennis, played indoors or outside on a badminton doubles-sized court using paddles and a hollow plastic ball with holes - also known as a wiffle ball - with a net slightly lower than a tennis net.

The rules are simple and the game is easy for beginners to learn, and the aim is for it to be fun, social, and friendly.

Locally, Janet and Graeme McLeod started playing a type of social pickleball with friends on their South Head lawn in 2023.

"But we didn't really know much about the game," says Janet.

In Queenstown early last year she saw a sign for pickleball at the events centre; she went along and was hooked from the first game. Back home she played with friends at Kumeu rackets club a few times, but found the drive from South Head a deterrent.

Janet put out a call on local Facebook pages, and ran a successful open day at the South Head hall.

"We have been playing twice a week since mid-2023," she says.

most weeks, usually playing doubles. Games are played from 3:30pm to 6:30pm on Thursday afternoons and 9am to midday on Sundays.

Due to renovations on the hall, play is currently at Waioneke School where there are two courts.

"It's great to have the space and no ceiling restrictions but of course play is weather dependent.

"We love that it's local and it has become a lovely social, physical, and mental workout," says Janet.

"It ticks a lot of wellbeing boxes, for all people but especially those living rurally.

## Village Market

Live music from duo Gillian and Mike will accompany locals as they browse at the next Village Market at the Helensville Showgrounds on Sunday, May 19 from 8.30am to 1pm.

As usual there will be coffee and food, local art and crafts, winter knitwear, candles, gifts, pet health products, preserves, plants, fresh fruit and vegetables, homewares, flowers, used bargains, and more. For children there will be an activity table and free face painting.

No dogs other than assistance dogs please, and there's a gold coin donation for parking, with proceeds going to the Helensville/Kaukapakapa Scouts and St John Youth.

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# 150 kids turn up for free golf day



150 children aged from just four years to 14 turned up for a free 'Have a Go' day for juniors at Helensville Golf Club on Sunday, April 14.

Club manager Sandy March says: "We were really impressed with the response," describing the day as extremely successful.

The day featured a novel putting course set up on the practice putting green, along with areas for the children to take a full swing down the driving range, plus an area for them to practice their chipping skills.

Many also took advantage of the opportunity to play a few holes on the golf course, with most playing from the 'junior-friendly' purple tees.

Sandy says the club was fortunate to secure the services of Dominic Sainsbury, a prominent junior coach in the area who made the event a lot of fun with games that the kids really enjoyed.

Several club members helped on the day,

including running a free sausage sizzle for the children.

Sandy says Helensville Golf Club is keen to encourage more youth into the sport, and is following up the Have a Go day with a youth coaching programme for eight to 14 year olds. It's a 10 week course on Sundays between 3.30pm and 4.30pm and runs until June 30.

Dominic Sainsbury is running the coaching and there is a \$150 fee for the 10 week programme - but those that complete the course will receive a complimentary three month membership to the club.

To register, or for enquiries about the coaching course, contact Dominic on 027 672 3200 or email: [wellnessgolf@outlook.com](mailto:wellnessgolf@outlook.com).

Helensville Golf Club membership has grown by more than 20 percent in the past year and is now at almost 700.

## Rugby Club arsonist jailed again

A man jailed for setting fire to the Helensville Rugby Club rooms in 2009 and throwing a Molotov cocktail at then prime minister John Key's Kumeu electorate office, has now admitted torching the historically significant Huntly Railway Building.

Daniel Vale's latest arson caused about \$650,000 worth of damage according to court documents.

In May last year he entered the railway building through temporary fencing, set it alight shortly after 10pm, then fled the scene. A large number of fire appliances battled the blaze.

The station's owners, Waikato District Council, had moved the building onto the Glasgow St site in preparation for restoration.

Vale pleaded guilty to arson in the Hamilton District Court in mid-April, and was remanded to reappear for sentencing in July. He had been previously been jailed in 2010 for his September 2009 attacks on the Helensville Rugby Club and John Key's office, which caused around \$100,000 worth of damage.

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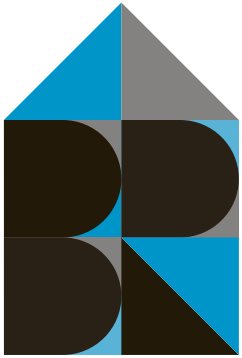
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## Success at St John Youth competition

A young Kaukapakapa woman shone at the 2024 National St John Youth Competition, held at Kings College in Auckland over three days in mid-April.

Competing with more than 60 other cadets from around New Zealand, 17-year-old Libby Pawley (right), a former Kaipara College student, came top in most of her tests - results which contributed to her Northern Region winning the Sir Alfred Robin Memorial Shield as the champion region.

In the competition the cadets first competed in teams of four, then in pairs, and finally individually. They were challenged with realistic scenarios, which this year including a smoking bus, a car crash, an amputation, and a parachuting accident.

Libby's team of four came first in the mass casualty incident scenario and third in Drill and Inspection, out of 11 teams. She then went on to win her pairs test, and finally gained first place in her individual first aid test.

Libby has been a member of the Kaukapakapa St John Youth division since the age of six, and has been competing at this level for five years. Last year she was named West District champion.

She was the sole member from the Kaukapakapa youth division competing this year; last year three local cadets took part.

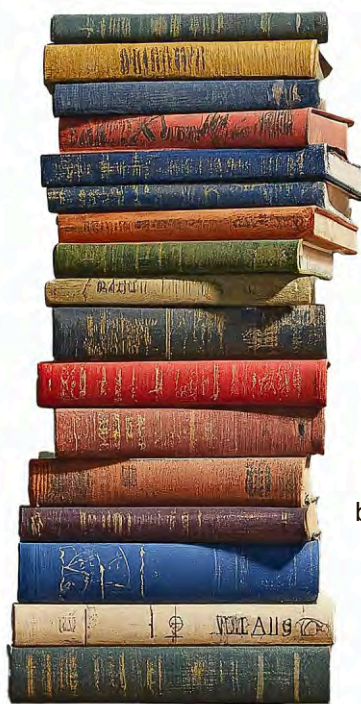
The placings contributed to the Northern Region winning the overall Champion Region trophy.



## Autumn Book Fair this month

The Helensville Lions Club's book fairs have become something of a local institution, with residents always keen to grab a bundle of bargain reads.

And it's a major fundraiser for the club, with all the money raised going back to the local community. The last fair in November raised \$8400 from the sale of



books, and all that money raised went towards helping individuals and organisations in the community.

The club will hold its Autumn Book Fair at the Helensville Showgrounds over the weekend of May 25 and 26, opening from 9am until 4pm on the Saturday and from 10am to 3pm on the Sunday.

As always entry will be free.

"We have had an unprecedented number of books donated this year so there will be plenty of choice in all genres", says chief book

fair organiser Chris Clark.

In these days of rising prices and a cost of living crisis, locals will be pleased to see prices haven't changed, with books priced to sell with nothing over \$2. A large selection of children's and young adult books will be just \$1. Also available will be many jigsaw puzzles, board games, DVDs, CDs, and quality magazines.

The Helensville Lions book fairs are renowned for their organisation, which makes finding books very easy.

Non-fiction will be split into 20 categories, including one dedicated to New Zealand subjects - still the largest section. This year there will be two new sections, Art and Music, which have been split off from the Craft and Hobbies section. There will also be plenty of general non-fiction for locals to spend hours browsing through.

Fiction will be arranged alphabetically by authors to make it simple to find a favourite writer. There will be six special interest groups, the largest being fantasy/science fiction.

Small donations of books for the fair can be left at Burmester Realty in Commercial Road, Helensville. For larger lots phone Chris on 027 646 3324, or contact any member of the Helensville Lions.

The last date books can be accepted for the Autumn Book Fair is Friday, May 17. Donations cannot be accepted during the fair.

*\*Note: AI-generated image.*



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# Centenary registrations open soon

Information on registration and event ticketing for the Kaipara College and Helensville District High School Centenary will be released during May.

Final information on the event schedule, registrations and ticket sales will be shared via email and post to everyone on the centenary mailing list. Phone: 09 420 8640 ext 800 to join the list or visit the Kaipara College website 'News & Events' section to sign up online in the Alumni Hub.

Registrations and event tickets sales should be open by the end of the month on the college website - [www.kaipara.school.nz](http://www.kaipara.school.nz). The site will also showcase centenary

merchandise and the commemorative book being produced for the event.

People unable to register online should phone the school office on: 09 420 8640 ext 800 - or call in at the school office to register and buy tickets in person.

"We don't want anyone to miss the opportunity to come along for this celebration or purchase a commemorative item," says event co-ordinator Erin Stuckey. "The centenary team is happy to help - please get in touch for support as needed."

With event planning continuing, the event team is seeking support or sponsorship from alumni-led organisations and local

businesses.

Support can range from sponsoring a particular aspect of one of the events over the two-day celebration, to sponsoring the printing of the commemorative book, or simply supporting the event on a smaller scale. Sponsorship will help ensure funds raised from the sale of books and event tickets go to the school legacy fund rather than being absorbed by the costs of running the event.

Details of what the legacy funds raised will be used for will be shared on the school's website over the coming weeks.

Businesses who support the event will be promoted through communications with the school's community and alumni.

Information on supporting or sponsoring the centenary in some way is on the college website, or phone: 09 420 8640 ext 800 or email the centenary organisers at: [centenary@kaipara.school.nz](mailto:centenary@kaipara.school.nz).



## Local author pens fourth novel

Local author Janice McMurdo has published her fourth book - *The Druids' Daughter*.

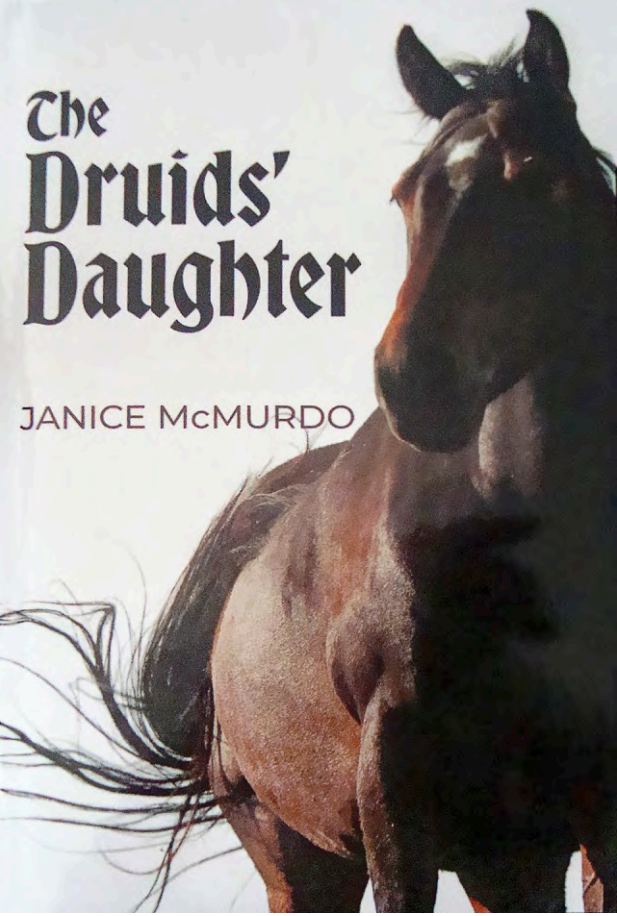
Unlike her previous three novels, which all revolved around the South Head peninsula and the Kaipara Harbour, the new novel is set 'somewhere' in England in the late 1880s.

Janice says it's the story of a young woman with extraordinary powers of energy healing who encounters trouble when people become suspicious of her powers and she is faced with hostility from those who believe she might be a witch.

Janice's first three books, *The Bird's Nest*, *Wait for the Tide*, and *The House Down the Hill* are all set around South Head and the Kaipara where Janice was raised, an area she says is "very dear" to her.

While *The House down the Hill* is about an Auckland drug boss trying to set up a meth operation at South Head, with some amusing consequences, both *The Bird's Nest* and *Wait for the Tide* have a magical or spiritual element - something Janice says she has taken to "another level" in *The Druids' Daughter*.

All of Janice's books are available at Paper Plus Select and Food for Thought in Commercial Road, and at the Helensville Library.



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# ANZAC Day 2024

## Parakai & Helensville



• Above: Currently serving and former military personnel fall in for the Dawn Service at Kaipātiki Reserve

• Below: Playing the haunting Last Post, Kaipātiki Reserve, Parakai



• Below: Members of the public pay their respects at the Helensville Service Cemetery after the Anzac service there



• Top: The Last Post being played at the Helensville Service Cemetery Anzac Day commemoration

• Second from top: Kaipara Memorial RSA president Rex Keane lays a wreath at the Service Cemetery

• Above: The Anzac Day motto adorns a Helensville grave

• Below: Many graves at Helensville Cemetery were adorned with these knitted poppies





# Mt Rex history - Part 1

With Mt Rex in the news with the recent scrub fire there (page 3), we thought we would bring you some background on the area.

Mt Rex played an important role as a staging post for Dargaville people travelling to Auckland in the early water transport days.

Situated close to the junction of the Kaipara and Kaukapakapa Rivers, these days Mt Rex is the home of Mount Rex Shipping which operates a sand extraction operation on the Kaipara Harbour.

In times gone by Mt Rex boasted a large wharf and played a big part in Kaipara Harbour transport, especially in the early days when steamer ships were the main method of transport on the harbour.

A major reason for Helensville's early growth and development was its location at the southern end of the harbour, where it served as a trans-shipment point for people and goods from the places served by the marine traffic on the Kaipara Harbour, there being no real road or rail links in those early times.

The establishment of a rail link between Helensville and Point Harkin at the outlet of Brighams Creek on the Waitematā Harbour eventually provided



• The long-gone Mt Rex railway station

# Mt Rex history - Part 2

Mt Rex - or is it?

What we now know as Mt Rex was originally called Kaikai, and was then named Mt Rix after George Rix, an early Kaukapakapa settler.

George was born in 1805 either in Cape Town or Norfolk. That's important because there are two possible backgrounds for Mr Rix - one fascinating and the other a bit more humdrum.

Rix arrived in the Kaipara aboard H.M.S. Buffalo in 1838. He possibly lived, but was definitely associated with, Kaikai pa, opposite Wakatiwai pa and at the entrance to the Kaukapakapa River.

As local mailman Rix would stop at Kaikai pa - the area we now know as Mt Rex - where he would send smoke signals to Wakatiwai pa across the river. A map of the Kaipara Harbour engraved in 1852 by J & C Walker names the area as Mt Rix.

It is understood that Mt Rix was named after George - but why the change of name? There's speculation it was just a mistake, and Rix became Rex over time. By 1939 the name Mt Rex was taken as correct, as shown on map NZMS13 published by Lands & Survey.

But the most interesting possibility takes us back to the dilemma of where George Rix was born. Was he born in Cape Town, and was he of royal descent?

On June 24, 1997 footballer Frank Bunce revealed a possible family link to British royalty. It seems King George III had three sons before he took the throne and married in the 18th century. They and their mother were banished to South Africa and given large sums of money to keep quiet about their royal connection. They were given the surname Rex - the Latin word for king (King Charles is officially called Charles Rex).

The three sons went in different directions: George stayed in South Africa; John went to Australia and became Governor General; and Henry went to Utah.

Frank Bunce is the grand-nephew of the late Sir Robert Rex (Niue Premier) and apparently has blue blood running back to the King's son George and therefore the British royal family.

If it could be proved that the Kaukapakapa George Rix/Rex was a descendant of the king's son George, it would explain why he would want his family name of Rex kept in obscurity - but still be proud to name Mount Rex after his true ancestry.

And if he was born in Norfolk? Well, he was married three times, was a mailman for 17 years from 1865 until his death on March 28th 1882, and was well liked but - not quite as interesting!

Thanks to Fiona Wilton, and Ina Stevens whose writing helped with this article.

a daily service between the two harbours.

The Kaipara, although very large is also a fairly shallow harbour and consequently many of the wharves were built quite long to allow for the steamers' varying draughts at different tides.

Helensville had two ports, one of which was at Mt Rex which became quite important to the steamer passenger trade because of its location on the river.

The Peter Reeves book 'The Kaipara Line', published in 2000 to mark the 125th anniversary of the rail line, has a 1936 timetable which describes Mt Rex as a "stops if required" station, but it also notes that "special trains run between Helensville and Mt Rex, when tide is low, for steamer passengers (4d and 5d)".

So it appears that boats to or from Dargaville only docked at Mr Rex if the tide upriver precluded them getting to Helensville. With Mt Rex more accessible at low tides, passengers could change to rail travel there; you can see the station ticket window in the photo.

The old Mt Rex wharf was demolished in 1942, it is believed during the impending threat of a Japanese invasion. The rail station building lasted a bit longer, closing as a station in 1960. It is thought to have been sold in the early to mid-60s and moved to become a farm building. The Mt Rex sign from the building came into the possession of the late Alan Moore, who erected it on his Mt Rex property in view of the state highway. The sign remained there until the Moores sold their farm a few years ago, when it was donated to the Helensville Railway Museum.

- Thanks to Bob Homewood and Scott Osmond



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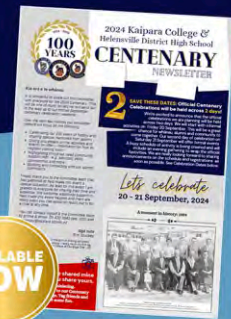
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# Music therapy false 'best kept secret'

Local health workers call it "the best kept secret," says local music therapist Marietta (Retts) van Dam.

World Music Therapy Week in April marked the seventh birthday of her community music therapy centre - Māpū-ī-Musika-Therapy Fālē to give it its formal name -

at 84 Commercial Road.

Retts, a New Zealand Registered Music Therapy Practitioner, describes music therapy as a unique, non-pharmacological, clinical and research-based treatment.

"It's a place for mind, body, and spirit - to rest, restore and find healing via deep tissue connection creating sounds, enjoying freedom to move, dance, hum, chant, drum, sing, kōrero," says Retts, who offers person-specific, holistic therapeutic health care.

Retts co-founded MiMT Fālē with her husband Dave and family, and says music therapy is for everyone, from those with no music training through to experienced musicians.

She can provide music therapy sessions for a vast range of conditions and situations, including autism; help with speech development; strengthening balance and coordination after a medical event; palliative care; and support to meet academic goals, post-partum depression, or feeling down for whatever reason.

Retts has provided music therapy for clients from as far away as Whangarei.

She came to music therapy through clowning around - literally.

Retts trained for two years as a Medical Clown using music and humour. At Starship Hospital she met Professor Ati Citron, director of the Medical Clowning bachelors course at the University of Haifa in Israel, who with his wife, a New York neurologist, recommended Retts study for a Master of Music Therapy degree at Victoria University in Wellington.

She undertook clinical placement at an Acquired Brain Injury Rehabilitation Clinic as well as at schools, and rest home care training on her path to become NZ

Music Therapy Registered (NZMTh). Her study is ongoing, and includes attending conferences and other training.

In a music therapy session, participants explore via dialogue, music or other art forms - which could be anything from composing a rap or a song, painting and drawing, or indigenous dance - to express themselves via music instruments, pre-composed music choices, singing, chanting, body percussion or drumming.

"Music therapy uses music to support your non-musical needs, whether it is speech, or physiological, and daily tasks of life," says Retts. She says it is about enabling and strengthening emotional and mental health, or when needed encouraging people to seek other help, be it medical, physical or counselling.

Participants have sought help for a broad range of reasons, from emotional and mental health care, managing negative or self-harming behaviours, or recovery after a traumatic event, through to living with dementia or other



• Paula Clarke (left) on djembe and Jan Scott on Djun Djun at a Women's Drum, Tone, Chant, Sing & Dance Group, held for free on Wednesdays

neurological conditions, recovery from stroke, or domestic or sexual abuse - and those who just wanted to sing for joy or improve their quality of life through drumming, singing, and dance.

"It's been humbling to witness the effects of this clinical and arts-based modality: it is rewarding just seeing participants re-connect deeply through the elements of music, with their inner child, clown or musical self."

"To see them engage, discover themselves anew as beautiful, amazing and musical human beings who recognise their self-esteem, sense of belonging and agency, to me is witnessing [a] miracle of life. It's indescribable."

Retts was convent school educated and the sisters instilled in her a sense of environmental and conservation responsibilities, and a deeply practical sense of social justice.

She volunteered with St Vincent de Paul until leaving school, and while working a summer job at Auckland District Court and applying to Teacher Training College Retts volunteered with migrants and refugee communities.

"They taught me and my then boyfriend Dave (now her husband of 35-plus years) a lot about courage, faith, and harnessing the strength to get up after being felled to the ground, and starting to rebuild one's life again - with a generous, cheerful, musical heart."

As a member of the St Vincent de Paul Youth Parish Conference, Retts became part of the liturgical music team at Paremoro Prison's ecumenical services from 1990 to 1996. While there she became involved in women's refuge work.

She believes in "doing it because you can, not for publicity or recognition" and has accepted her deep roots in faith-in-action.

Retts was also employed from 2007 to 2009 as a pastoral care worker for the St Joseph's & St Patrick's Parish, spanning from Brigham's Creek to Wellsford, dropping off food support to food banks in that area, something she continued to do until the "miracle of Kai Collective got off the ground."

Now, due to health reasons, Retts is seeking volunteers to take on the music therapy mahi, and is appealing to prospective sponsors to fund music therapy sessions because she can no longer afford to partially or to fully-subsidise every participant - something MiMT Fālē has done for the seven years it's been running.

She has been inspired by World Music Therapy Week to embark on music therapy clinical research, and to start up a community gospel choir.

Anyone keen to help as a volunteer, or financially, can email Retts at: rettsmusictherapy@gmail.com.

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# med centre notes

This month I'd like to introduce our Health Coach Roz, who works alongside our GPs, Nurse Practitioners, and Registered Nurses to help you achieve your long-term health goals.

Whether you're dealing with conditions like diabetes, asthma, gout, high cholesterol, smoking or wanting to reduce your alcohol intake or looking to make progress with weight loss, Roz has the expertise to guide you towards success.

Roz has 17 years' experience in health and fitness coaching, and takes group fitness classes. She is also a mum and loves working with other mothers to support their ongoing lifestyle health.

But it's not just about managing health conditions. Roz can also provide support to achieve lifestyle goals, perimenopause/menopause, and improving sleep quality and reducing stress levels. Working with Roz you'll have access to



• Health Coach Roz working with a client

personalised coaching and tools to help you make sustainable changes that will benefit your health for years to come. Or you can join our weekly walking group with Roz every Monday at 9.30am, leaving from Kaipara Medical Centre. Phone 09 420 8400 to register.

This service is FREE if you are a registered patient at Kaipara Medical Centre - please call us to book. Roz works Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday and has same-day bookings available.

In other news:

- Our duty clinic, for when

you need an appointment on the day, is available 9am to 3pm Monday to Friday weekly - please phone from 8am for an appointment.

- If you missed our walk-in flu jab clinics in April, you can still get your flu jab at Kaipara Medical Centre by phoning to book with the nurse. For Covid jabs our friends at Unichem Helensville Pharmacy provide these.

- If you missed the mammogram bus in April, Breastscreen Aotearoa will be back again providing mammograms from July 1 to 6, in the same place outside Mitre 10. If you think your mammogram is due, phone 0800 270 200 or text 'breastscreen' to 4040.

For more information or to enrol at Kaipara Medical Centre, visit: [www.kaiparamedicalcentre.co.nz](http://www.kaiparamedicalcentre.co.nz) or email: [admin@kaiparamed.co.nz](mailto:admin@kaiparamed.co.nz).

- Dr Kathryn Elcock

Clinical Lead, Kaipara Medical Centre

# the business

We have had a great response to our call for Business Mentors - thank you to everyone who is coming on board to help as we roll out our Business Solutions programme.

We are in the process now of pulling together profiles of all mentors and we will pop these up on our website.

Members of the business association will be able to book a free introductory session with a mentor of their choice to discuss anything about their business. We will send out additional information later in May, with services due to launch in June.

The Business Hub on Mill Road, Helensville is now completed, with separate hot desk and boardroom facilities. The North West Country executive committee hosted a grand opening on Tuesday, April 16 with a great turn out. Not only could we showcase the facilities that are here to help our members run their businesses and provide a training facility, we celebrated local artists whose work we have on display.

A big thank you to Coopers Creek Wines, Hallertau Brewery, and The Riverhead for providing refreshments for the evening.

Keep an eye out on our website for upcoming training and networking opportunities at the hub, such as our marketing workshop and 3 Steps for Life workshop that we are running in May.

Don't forget, if you have any enquiries about business association membership, benefits, or accessing our free marketing services, please reach out to me at: [manager@northwestcountry.co.nz](mailto:manager@northwestcountry.co.nz).

- Danielle Hancock

Manager, North West Country Business Assn  
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## HAT exhibition

Don't expect to see any hats at Helensville Art Centre's HAT exhibition, on this month in the centre's gallery beneath Helensville Library.

That's because HAT stands for Helensville Art Trail, a group of 12 local artists who hold open studios on the third Sunday of each month.

Until Saturday, May 25, they are holding a joint exhibition at the centre, uniting their diverse range of styles, media, and artworks.

Artists exhibiting include sculptors Joanne Sullivan and Jeff Thomson; wood artist Ray Scott; painters Ruth Sumner, Michael Rowland, Raywin Cruickshank, and William Robert Boyd; mixed media artist Leda Daniel; ceramic artist Tom Somerville; and jeweller Ron Clark.

Helensville Art Centre will run two six-week sessions of its after school children's program with Olga Atkins in Term 2, starting in the first week of May. To enrol or for more information email: [manager@artcentrehelensville.org.nz](mailto:manager@artcentrehelensville.org.nz); details will also be on the centre's Facebook page and website.

A photography exhibition titled 'f/30 and other locals' will run at the Art Centre from Wednesday, May 29 to Saturday, June 15, as part of the annual Auckland Festival of Photography. On show will be works by 30 up-and-coming photographers from the South Kaipara region including Year 12 and 13 Kaipara College photography students and other local photographers.

The works will explore a wide variety of themes from portraiture and still life through to landscape photography.



• Children's after school programme

More information on the Auckland Festival of Photography is at: [photographyfestival.org.nz](http://photographyfestival.org.nz), and for local photographers who would like to enter the Helensville exhibition, forms and details can be found at: [artcentrehelensville.org.nz](http://artcentrehelensville.org.nz) under exhibitions to enter. Entries are due on May 25.

## 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](http://nickyhorsbrough.harcourts.co.nz). The lucky recipient will receive a \$100 voucher for a local business of their choice.*

*May's recipients are Katherine and Amisha, who chose a voucher for The Butcher Baker.*

Katherine and Amisha were nominated by Cathy Houten, who says: "I would love to nominate Katherine Smith from South Kaipara Good Food and Amisha O'Brien, because Amisha is wonderful and helped us out so much when Riley was in hospital! Helping to make sure my husband didn't stress about food for our two under-tuos when newborn Riley was on life support in Starship. Forever grateful for the help of those two wonderful ladies. Amisha even set up food trains for us which was wonderful too, contacting all the locals who have known me for years asking if they wanted to help us, and we had such overwhelming support!"



• Amisha with Nicky Horsbrough



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# Pony Club Ribbon Day

Thirty one riders aged from just two years to over 50 took part in Helensville Pony Club's recent ribbon day at the Helensville Showgrounds.

The riders competed in flat classes in the morning, which show off the ponies' obedience and movement, and then moved on to jumping classes in the afternoon.

The club holds ribbon days each April and December as fundraisers to help cover club expenses such as instructors and grounds lease. They are run as a low key, fun events for all ages and capabilities.



• Emily Bennett (2) on Waffle, with handler Geo Alexander

## ANZ withdraws ATM

The ANZ bank is removing its ATM machine from the front of Helensville Unichem in Commercial Road - but no date is yet confirmed for its removal.

The bank is also removing its Huapai ATM machine - one capable of accepting cash deposits - at the end of this month. Once the Helensville machine is also gone, the closest ANZ money machines will be at either Westgate or Silverdale.

A bank spokesperson says ANZ cardholders can use any banks' ATMs free of charge, including the Allpoint machine (previously a Kiwibank ATM) outside Paper Plus Select in Commercial Road, and the ASB ATM near the WINZ office. Neither of those machines can accept cash deposits.

"We continually review our ATM network, with ATM and branch use having fluctuated quite a bit in recent years."

## 'Wormwise' workshop

Beef+Lamb NZ will hold a Wormwise for Cattle Workshop at the Helensville Showgrounds on Tuesday, May 28.

Participants will hear about the latest in worm management strategies for cattle grazing systems, including practical examples of changes being made by farmers.

Resistance to commonly used drenches is on the rise on New Zealand cattle farms, and the workshop will look at what can be done to avoid this and the 'handbrake' it can put on cattle weight gain.

The workshop will run from 10am to 2pm and lunch will be provided.

Workshop registration is essential - visit: <https://tinyurl.com/wormwise>.



• Ella Morris, riding Scooby-Doo

## Cartoon life

Local MP Chris Penk has been immortalised in a New Zealand Herald cartoon.

Chris was the subject of Rod Emmerson's cartoon in the Saturday, April 6 Herald, poking fun at him in his role as Minister for Building and Construction.

Days earlier he had announced a major shakeup of New Zealand's construction rules and a plan to eliminate barriers to the use of overseas building products to help reduce the cost of construction.

The cartoon was in two panels. The first showed Chris, cutting a red ribbon with the text: "You'll be happy to know we're finally cutting the red tape on building materials". The second, larger panel showed him standing below a falling iron girder with a broken red 'tape' and the words: "The next leaky homes disaster" written on it, while Chris is asking: "I'm going to need a hard hat, aren't I?"

Asked his opinion of the cartoon, Chris said: "I thought the use of red tape/red ribbon in a construction setting quite clever. I did find the cartoon amusing, if somewhat one-dimensional in its treatment of a complex real world situation!"

He also thought his caricature was "quite a flattering likeness - no complaints there!"

And asked if he thought becoming the subject of a Herald cartoon meant he had 'made it' as a politician, he quipped: "a wise man once observed that the only bad publicity is an obituary, so I'll take it!"

## Museum seeks volunteers

Helensville's Te Awaroa Museum is looking for volunteers to help with the museum's collections - doing everything from carpentry to digitizing photographs. There are even jobs people can do from home.

The museum has been run by volunteers ever since it first opened in 1967 at its original site behind Helensville War Memorial Hall, and houses the history of the South Kaipara community.

Collections include photographs, negatives, slides, maps, oral histories, written family histories, artwork, film, and of course numerous physical historical artifacts. The museum is the custodian of the first purpose-built Native Land Courthouse in New Zealand - a heritage listed building whose upkeep and preservation is vital.

"This museum is about you. It is part of your history," says the museum's administrative officer, Fiona Wilton. "We need your help. We have lists of things that need to be completed, and the only way we can do that is with your support. If you can give us some of your time, we can make use of it."

Anyone keen to help should phone on 09 420 7881 (leave a message if your call isn't answered) or email: [info@museum.teawaroa.nz](mailto:info@museum.teawaroa.nz).

## Walkway reopens soon

Helensville's River Walkway should reopen any day after the latest bout of remedial work on the popular track.

A section of track between Mill Road and Creek Lane has been closed for the installation of a timber retaining wall to retain the edge of the gravel path that keeps breaking away because of the underlying soft ground base in the area. The wall will be about 30m long and up to 1.1m high, and the work was due to be completed by Friday, May 10.

This work is the latest in a recent string of improvements to the walkway, which has included signage upgrades at the Mill Road, Creek Lane and Commercial Road entrances; widening the concrete path between commercial buildings; repairing fencing, gravel paths and a safety barrier; and painting the boardwalk and footbridge.

On Thursday, May 16 Rodney Local Board will hold a planting day at the River Walkway. It will start at 9am, and locals wanting to help should meet at 106 Commercial Road. For up-to-date information on the planting day visit: [facebook.com/aucklandparks](https://facebook.com/aucklandparks).



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## councillor comment

Auckland Council has been working to clear debris out of the Kumeū River that could block water flowing during any potential future flood event.

Council used drones to assess the Kumeū River catchment following the severe weather events in early 2023. This was then followed up by work to clear streams to an acceptable level to reduce future flood risk.

Many properties in Helensville, Parakai and Kumeū are on flood plains. These affected properties will flood again. Council cannot stop the flooding. Landowners with the risk of flooding must be prepared for such an event to happen again.

The January 27, 2023 storm that hit Auckland broke all previous rainfall records and caused widespread damage, mostly from flooding and landslides. While climate change may help to explain the intensity of the rainfall, the way land has been used and built on in is a major factor in what occurred.

Properties once able to be consented in the past will not be able to be consented under new Council zoning planning rules.

Council's flood maps were 100 percent accurate in determining how the area was going to flood. Unfortunately for many families, the floods acted exactly as was foreshadowed. These flood maps are available to view on the Auckland Council web site - see 'Check for flood risks before you buy or build'.

Council received a lot of feedback from locals who believed the river was partially responsible for the flooding because the previous Rodney District Council used to keep it clear of debris.

The Council has now removed large trees, many willow trees and other debris, and has weed-sprayed a large extent of the riverbanks between Riverhead Road and Oraha Road.

It has also removed dead trees and vegetation from the area behind the old sand works.

Council staff continue to proactively visit the river, conducting walk-overs accompanied by contractors, to see if there is anything else that needs to be done.

To help water escape into the Kaipara Harbour large areas have been weed-sprayed by helicopter north of Helensville, removing riverside weeds that were building up across the river and acting like a bung. Their removal stops water pressure building further upstream at Huapai and Kumeū, helping protect properties by allowing the river water to flow freely.

Local groups are busy setting up automatic alert systems to warn of rapid increases in the water levels of the river and its contributory streams, so we have additional warning of when localised floods will occur.

Many families have still not fully recovered from the devastation of the 2023 floods.

Insurance companies are beginning to refuse to insure some buildings. Banks are not lending money as readily on many affected houses. The stress and ongoing suffering is still very difficult for many families in our community.

Auckland Council's Recovery Office will continue to work positively with people around the risk assessment and categorisation of private properties.

If you or your family needs help, Auckland Council is available to support you. Email: navigators@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz or phone toll free on 09 301 0101.

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



## from our MP

In a time when our nation feels a little fragile, cooperation and community are more important than ever.

Around the electorate I've been hearing stories of households, NGOs, and businesses doing it tough. It's positive that we are collectively starting to slay the dragon of inflation but, at the same time, rebuilding the economy will be a medium term project at least. And of course we need to do exactly that to afford the great health and education services that Kiwis rightly expect.

Recently in Helensville I attended the opening of a new business hub, a brainchild of the Northwest Business Association. It's located on Mill Road so hopefully readers of *Helensville News* will find it convenient to use this resource. The Association itself can advise about its availability but, from my perspective as local MP, it's heartening to hear stories of businesses and the community sharing spaces in a way that will benefit everyone.

At the official opening there was a strong contribution from the local artistic community. As well as attendees representing various creative endeavours around Helensville, the walls were adorned with some fine pieces.

In a similar spirit of local cooperation it was great to be briefed recently on the work of the Forest Bridge Trust. This group works with rural landowners to support activities such as pest control, native tree regeneration, and re-introducing iconic species such as kiwi.

As well as the ecological benefits of this work, the leadership of the Trust made it clear that part of their mission is to bring together another species dwelling in the area: human beings(!). The community spirit that is engendered by people coming together to trap and plant (for example) is more than an incidental benefit.

I am keen that government support for this type of work continues, and I will carry this message to Wellington.

Speaking of great work being done locally, I was also pleased to have an opportunity to meet recently with key players of the Helensville Birthing Centre. These dedicated workers provide an incredible service to the women, babies, and families of our area. I have only ever heard good things about their work. If you get a chance to thank them, please do acknowledge what they deliver (quite literally!) for northwest Auckland and further afield.

I hope you feel as positive about these examples of community and cooperation as I do. When times are tough it's vital that we stick together.

Helensville is showing the way so let's keep that going.

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






# local board matters

**Safer Speed Limits:**  
We hear from some 'road safety campaigners' that we need to keep the speed limits high in order to prioritise journey times and network capacity over safety of all road users. This is nonsense.  
New Zealand has not kept up with changes to speed limits in the rest of the world based on clear evidence of safe and appropriate speed.  
Speeding - exceeding the legal speed limit - contributes to about 60 percent of fatal crashes in New Zealand, while 71 percent of injury crashes occur at speeds higher than the Waka Kotahi assessment of the safe and appropriate speed for that road. This is not surprising given that 90 percent of the country's speed limits are too high.  
This science behind this seems to be ignored by many, and in fact political support for speed limit reductions is absent at many levels of Government, both local and central. For some reason New Zealand accepts unsafe speed limits despite this being the leading and yet most preventable cause of death and life-changing injury for all New Zealanders.  
I believe the root of this blindness is in the deeply rooted belief that we are far better than average drivers, and it is drink, drugs, and poor road maintenance that is causing these horrible statistics. Sadly, the other driver can involve you in an accident that you cannot avoid and the consequences of this accident are largely determined by speed.  
Statistically deaths are twice as likely at 100km/h as they are at 80km/h.  
Further, all speed limits are maximum permitted speeds and in fact the responsibility to drive to the conditions rest with the driver. A safe speed is determined by the conditions and factors such as road

condition, traffic, weather, and congestion all play a part in this decision making.  
Some 'road safety campaigners' suggest that failure to drive at the speed limit is an indication that these drivers lack skill and should perhaps "take the bus". I would argue that they are making the better assessment of an appropriate speed, rather than assuming the posted limit is safe.  
Throughout the western world that condition and capacity of infrastructure is being run down. Decades of under-investment has been evident almost everywhere. Increased taxes and rates are politically unpopular and consequently nobody is facing up to this situation.  
As an elected representative I hear the dull roar of complaints about lack of value for money achieved with our rates and taxes while all the while the scope of central and local government responsibility grows.  
New Zealand is broke. Government spending priorities need to change. While our infrastructure and productivity deficits remain, speed reductions are an appropriate mitigation of risk.  
We cannot keep killing and maiming ourselves in the mistaken belief we need to 'Keep New Zealand Moving'. Productivity and global competitiveness requires an investment in infrastructure so we can have the economy that makes New Zealand an attractive place to live.  



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

## Waitoki discus thrower off to Olympics

Waitoki discus thrower Connor Bell has been named in the 15-strong New Zealand athletics squad for the Paris Olympics, which starts on July 26.  
The 22-year-old is a four-time national champion in the discus throw and represented New Zealand at the 2022 Commonwealth Games in Birmingham.  
He is a former Commonwealth Youth Games and Olympic Youth Games discus champion.  
In mid-April he broke his own national discus record with a 68.10m throw at an athletics event in Oklahoma in the United States. However, his achievement was overshadowed by Lithuanian Mykolos Alekna who broke the 38-year-old world record with a 74.35m throw at the same event - more than 6m further than Bell.  
Raised on his family's lifestyle block, Connor describes himself as "a country bumpkin". He has spoken about being a "fat kid" who spent all day playing games on his Play Station and who was bullied both mentally and physically at intermediate school.  
However it was at that school that he discovered the discus - something he describes as a huge turning point and the silver lining to his story. He joined the North Harbour Bays Athletics Club, and within a year was the New Zealand Secondary Schools champion.  
In 2021 Connor sustained a broken ankle but recovered to win selection for the Birmingham Commonwealth Games, where he placed eighth in the final.  
He is now under the coaching guidance of Kirsten Hellier, a former Commonwealth and Olympic Games javelin thrower and the former personal coach of Dame Valerie Adams.



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## HELENSVILLE NEWS - PUBLICATION INFORMATION

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- **Editorial:** Ph 021 178 5568.
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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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 www.helensvillenews.co.nz



# Library reopening date still up in air

Despite previously being given the date of April 26 for Helensville Library and Service Centre to be able to reopen its doors to the public, it was still operating a cut-down service from the front door at the time of going to press with this issue.

"We do not have a date for our reopening, nor that of other parts of the building complex," says Anne Coppell, Senior Librarian - Children & Youth.

She adds that as the project nears completion, the library may need to close at short notice and recommends locals keep an eye on the library Facebook page for any updates.

"We want to thank the community for their support and care during the building work, especially during this final phase while we were unable to open to the public. We are looking forward to having you in the space again," says Anne.

While operating in a restricted manner, the following services are available:

- Collection of requested items;
- Take 5 bags;
- Printing - if emailed to the library;

- Photocopying;
- Bespoke library item selection;
- Some Council services;
- WiFi;
- Outside seating;
- Kids Time: Wednesdays, 10am (weather dependent);
- Crafternoon - Adults: Thursdays, 3pm (weather dependent);
- Crafternoon - Children: Thursdays, 3.30pm (weather dependent).

Services that are unavailable are: public access into the building; public toilets; public computers; payments - either Council or Library.

While Council rates payments can't currently be accepted, locals who have a rates invoice with a barcode on it can pay at NZ Post inside Helensville Paper Plus Select in Commercial Road.

The Library and Service Centre is open: Monday to Friday: 9.30am to 5pm, and Saturday: 9.30am to 4pm. Selected council services are available during these hours.

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## Last chance for free listings

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:

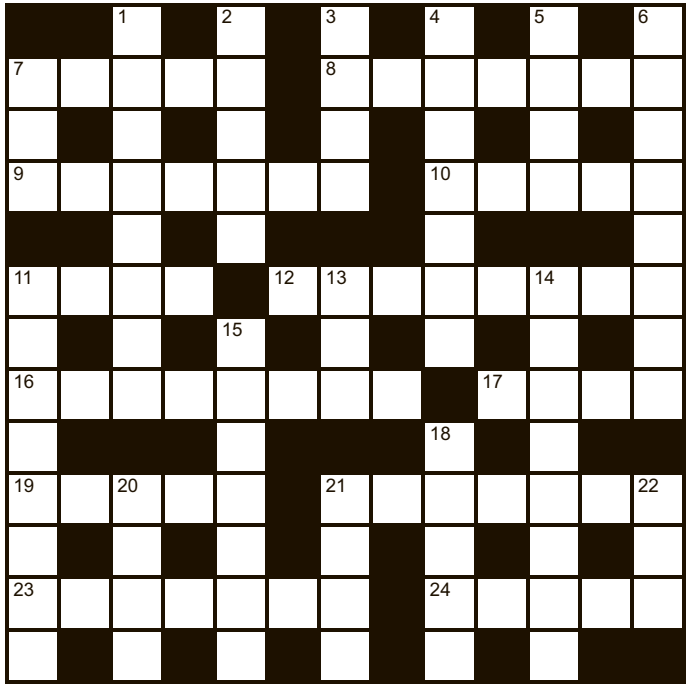
- Community & Service Groups
- Clubs & General Interest Groups
- Sports & Fitness Clubs/Groups.

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/helensvillenews/groups](http://www.helensville.co.nz/helensvillenews/groups). There's a link to a PDF of that issue at the top of the page for you to check if you already have a listing. We will also try to contact directly all previously listed groups just to make sure. If you do want a new listing or already have one but it needs updating, either complete the online form on that page, email: [dave@helensvillenews.co.nz](mailto:dave@helensvillenews.co.nz) for a paper version of the form, or simply email us 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.

## crossword



- ### Across

  - 7. Inexpensive (5)
  - 8. Adage (7)
  - 9. Make more enticing (7)
  - 10. Give consent (5)
  - 11. Female servant (4)
  - 12. Block (8)
  - 16. Reduce (8)
  - 17. Woodwind instrument (4)
  - 19. Such as floribundas (5)
  - 21. Cheering person (7)
  - 23. Frog larva (7)
  - 24. Disgusting dirt (5)
- ### Down

  - 1. Vegetable with a knobby root (8)
  - 2. Malice (5)
  - 3. Competition for all comers (4)
  - 4. Faithfulness (7)
  - 5. Successor (4)
  - 6. No-show (8)
  - 7. Long-leaved lettuce (3)
  - 11. Chair (8)
  - 13. Common electrical conductor (3)
  - 14. Portable weather protection (8)
  - 15. Retirement income (7)
  - 18. Smell (5)
  - 20. Team (4)
  - 21. Storage shelter (4)
  - 22. Dashboard measure (1,1,1)

### Last Month's Answers

**Across:** 7. Gorilla 8. Edict 9. Annoy 10. Alcohol 11. Ditto 13. Emerges 15. Oil well 16. Split 18. Earshot 21. Paced 22. Adieu 23. Bedsits.

**Down:** 1. Prenatal 2. Slay 3. Papa 4. Teachers 5. Wish 6. Styles 7. Grand 12. Overhaul 13. Eel 14. Galactic 15. Operas 17. Tides 19. Raid 20. Tube 21. Pods.