

Combined Kaipara/Mahu team wins rugby champs

A combined team of Kaipara College and Mahurangi College players has won the Y17 Girls North Harbour rugby championship.

They took the title in a hard-fought battle against defending champions Westlake Girls with a 24-17 scoreline at the competition final at Takapuna Rugby Club on Monday, August 4.

The win is even more impressive considering both schools were at the bottom of the competition last year, and both were struggling to attract enough players for this season.

"Kaipara College has a rich history of successful girls rugby teams, however this year at the time of registrations they were struggling for numbers to field a team in the North Harbour Premier Girls grade or Youth 17 Grade," says team manager Sue Narbey.

"Last season Kaipara College and Mahurangi

were filling the bottom places in the North Harbour competition, so it's really an amazing turn around for both schools."

With a lack of available players, Kaipara coach Scott Narbey contacted Nicky Berger at Mahurangi College to gauge how their player numbers were. After a few conversations a combined team was proposed, and the girls met for their first training in March, with the squad made up of nine players from Kaipara and 12 from Mahurangi.

There were many logistical challenges with the collaboration, including:

- A huge amount of travelling for training, which alternated weekly between Helensville and Mahurangi with the girls transported by coaches;
- Only half the number of home games for each team;
- Communication involving two groups of girls from different schools.
- Uniforms, with the girls having to alternate weekly between wearing Kaipara and Mahurangi jerseys.

It resulted in a true sense of teamwork with the management team working to make it all happen and the girls moving from being opponents last year to becoming teammates and developing lasting friendships this season.

"I think the backgrounds and values of each school are very similar, rural schools who have great heart, and the Mahurangi management team are three really committed and passionate community people - so everyone just got on and gelled together so well," says Sue.

The season saw the team go from strength to strength, developing a style of rugby based around a strong forward pack and a tactical structured pattern, with an exciting backline producing some special team tries.

The coaching team was made up of Scott Narbey and Jamie Paraone from Kaipara College and Jamie McLagan and Georgia Brierly from Mahurangi College, with managers Sue Narbey from Kaipara



• Co-captains Tessa Berger (left, Mahurangi) and Jess Sinton (Kaipara) hold their trophy aloft

- Photo: Max Sharp, North Harbour Rugby

and Nicky Berger from Mahurangi.

The team received a great amount of local support and thanks their sponsors Withers and Co Accountants from Warkworth for their warm-up tees, designed by Jamie Paraone to reflect both schools' colours and logos.

The players have been rewarded for their hard work over the season with several being selected for North Harbour women's teams - Lottie Collis (Mahu) for the North Harbour FPC team, and Bella Brott (Kaipara) and Tessa Berger (Mahu) for the North Harbour Women's Development team.

North Harbour U18 trials are underway currently for six other players from the winning team.

Kaipara College also introduced a blazer programme for the Premier Girls rugby players this year - similar to that of the 1st XV. Sponsored by Physio Flex Helensville, the girls earn a blazer and pin after eight caps for the Premier Girls Youth 17 team - this year six girls achieved that honour.



• Bella Narbey (Kaipara) carries the ball during the final
- Photo: Max Sharp, North Harbour Rugby



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editorial

Our promised special council election feature is a bit of a fizzer, because hardly anyone chose to stand!

Rodney Councillor Greg Sayers will be re-elected unopposed, and you can read his latest column - a very timely one about the fairly horrendous rates increases faced by many property owners locally - on page 14.

For the Southern Kaipara Subdivision of Rodney Local Board, only three people have put their hats in the ring - sitting members Mark Dennis and Geoff Upson, and Geoff's brother Rob Upson. A couple of other potential candidates pulled out at the last minute. You can read about the three candidates on page 9.

It is important to remember that two of the three candidates must get elected. That means who you choose to vote for could be defined as much by which candidate you don't want to see get in, as who you do want elected. Even if you only like one candidate and intend to only vote for that candidate, remember that one of the other two will get elected regardless - so you can opt to vote strategically and give your second vote to the candidate you perceive as the 'lesser of the two evils' to try to prevent your least-favoured candidate getting elected.

I am not sure why the Rodney Ward subdivisions - and our local one in particular - received such low numbers of candidates. Almost all the other wards across Auckland have given their voters plenty of choice; it's a shame we don't have a wider selection to choose from.

As I mentioned, councillor Greg Sayers is unopposed in Rodney Ward - one of only two councillors across the city's 14 wards in that position (the other being Deputy Mayor Desley Simpson in Ōrākei Ward). Presumably any potential competition decided they were in unassailable positions - I guess an indication people believe they are doing a good job.

In other news, next month is shaping up to be a boomer for the town with two major events coming up - the new Heritage Festival (see page 3) and the return of Arts in the Ville (page 5). So - no need to leave our lovely little town for some entertainment, as it's coming right to our doors!

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

Library site to cast election special votes

September is a quiet month for Helensville Library - however, it will be the venue where locals can drop off their voting papers, or cast a special voted in the local body elections if they need to.

Locals can cast a special vote at the library if they:

- Haven't received their voting pack in the mail by September 22;
- Have lost or damaged their voting pack;
- Did not enrol by the time the electoral roll closed on August 1, but do enrol before election day;
- Will be traveling during the voting period;
- Are eligible to vote but their name doesn't appear on the final electoral roll;
- Turn 18 after the electoral roll closed but before election day.

Voting in the election opens on September 9 and closes at midday on election day, Saturday, October 11.

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Heritage Festival: something for everyone

Helensville will come alive with the sights, sounds, and flavours of the past during the two days of the Te Awaroa Helensville Heritage Festival.

To be held over the weekend of Saturday, October 4 and Sunday 5, events and attractions will run from 10am to 4pm each day, and the festival will have a packed programme celebrating the town's rich history and community spirit.

The event will be an official part of the Auckland Heritage Festival which starts on September 20 and finishes on the same weekend as the Helensville event.

While the Auckland-wide festival has a theme of 'Auckland at Play' - as will some of our town's displays and activities - the timing also coincides with the 150th anniversary of the arrival of the railway to Helensville in 1875.

As such, the Helensville Railway Museum will be a hub of activity, with everything from a miniature world model of the town's rail past through to full-size railway equipment, updated displays, and newly added railway signalling and train control displays.

For the kids, there will be rides available on Sammy the Little Steam Train.

Across the road the Grand Hotel plans to open for tea and scones, giving locals a rare chance to see inside one of our town's iconic buildings. The Ginger Crunch Café in the railway station will also be open.

Just up the road, train memorabilia from the late John Perry's collection will be displayed in the Regent Theatre's windows.

Vintage car enthusiasts will be able to admire gleaming vehicles at the Helensville Mechanical vintage car show in Mill Road, while history buffs will be able to look inside historic houses, explore the South Kaipara RSA's military memorabilia, and take part in a twilight cemetery tour.

Helensville War Memorial Hall will host a vintage market.

Te Awaroa Museum will be hosting a range of special displays angled around the 'play' theme, highlighting important local historic topics. These will include: rugby; equestrian sports (including the former Helensville District Racing Club); our cinemas and amateur dramatics; a peek into the past of Kaipatiki (Parakai) with its gardens, baths, bowling green and tennis courts; and Scouts, Guides, and Brownies. A highlight for many will be a large Barbie exhibition from the nationally-known collection of Helensville's Patsy Carlyle.

There will also be traditional games like three-legged races, egg and spoon races, sack races, and toss the horseshoe.

Shuttles will be available to help visitors make the most of the many activities spread across town.

Attractions will be a mix of free and paid, and festival organisers say the event is designed for all ages.

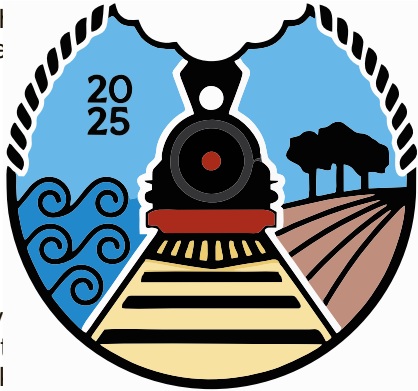
Ticket prices have been kept as low as possible at \$15 for adults, \$10 for seniors and children, or \$25 for a family pass (plus fees). Tickets give entry to both museums, rides on Sammy the Steam Train, and the shuttle buses.

Free attractions include the Grand Hotel, markets, the car show, and heritage home visits. The cemetery tour will also be free, but will require tickets due to limited numbers. Art fans will be able to witness the official unveiling of Helensville's brand-new heritage mural (see the August issue of *Helensville News*).

Food lovers will be spoilt for choice with food trucks located at The original Kaipara Tavern and at the age car show in Mill Road, and it is hoped local eateries will be open for the weekend to support the event.

At the time of writing it was unknown how many of Helensville's historic homes would be available for viewing. Rania Todd from Barfoot and Thompson in Helensville is coordinating that part of the festival and is keen for owners who would like to open all or part of their homes to contact her. She will guide them on how to have an open home. Rania can be contacted on 0274 303 499 or email: r.todd@barfoot.co.nz.

The event's organising committee say the festival



• A close-up of Helensville Railway Museum's model railway

is "all about celebrating what makes Helensville unique."

"It's a chance to bring the community together, welcome visitors, and enjoy our heritage in a way that's interactive, educational, and fun."

Tickets are available now - visit the festival website, scan the QR code on posters around town, or visit: <https://tinyurl.com/helensvillefest>.

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Help sought for new driver teaching car

Sapphire Wynyard of South Head has become the 200th young local person to pass their practical driving licence test thanks to help from Outwest Youth's free driver tutoring programme.

Sapphire gained her restricted licence with Outwest Youth in 2021 while still at school, and progressed to her full licence this July. She is now in her third year of an electrician apprenticeship and uses her full licence every day.

"Having the support of Outwest to get my licence made all the difference," she says.

"After getting my restricted, I lost confidence a bit, and didn't drive much. But having lessons again with Outwest changed that."

Sapphire says she was able to rebuild her confidence by learning skills in an unpressured and structured way.

"My instructor, Silas, never judged my driving, but was always positive and kind. He even drove to my house in South Head to pick me up for my lessons!"

"Now that I have my full licence, I can help others like the new apprentice at work, who has just got his restricted with Outwest as well, by driving him to site each day."

"I am really grateful to Outwest for their support. My advice to others is to ask for help if you need it. Outwest won't judge you, but will definitely be able to help you gain the confidence you need to get your licence."

The Outwest Youth Community Trust, based in Helensville, delivers a wide range of programmes for local youth.

Driver licencing is one of those services, and over the last five years has provided licence support to 200 youth - including more than 2500 free, professional driving lessons.

"Demand is only increasing," says Outwest Youth manager Naomi Bartley. "Holding a drivers licence is crucial in our rural context, and young people especially can face significant barriers to achieving this goal."

The bad news is the Mazda Demio the trust uses for its driving lessons is coming to the end of its useful life.

"To increase capacity, and to prepare to replace the Mazda, we need to purchase a new vehicle," says Naomi. "We've been offered a dual control Aqua for

\$13,500, and are looking for community support to purchase it.

"While we receive some government funding towards lessons and licence fees, we rely on fundraising for expenses such as a vehicle."

Naomi is now hoping locals - and in particular local businesses - will help towards the cost of the new



• Sapphire with Outwest Youth's old Mazda driver training car

vehicle. Donations are eligible for tax rebates, and the trust is happy to promote any businesses that donate through its website and other networks - potentially even putting a business logo on the car for substantial contributions.

Donations can be made through the trust's website at: www.outwestyouth.org.nz, and there is also a Give A little page set up to accept donations at: <https://tinyurl.com/outwestyouth>.

Christmas parade

Save the date - Santa is coming back to Helensville.

This year's Helensville Santa Parade is combining with the Lions Club's Christmas Book Fair at the Helensville Showgrounds. The fair will be held over the weekend of Saturday, November 29 and Sunday 30, with the Christmas parade being held at midday on the Saturday.

As with last year's popular event, the parade will drive around the Showgrounds racetrack. Full details will be revealed closer to the time, but local businesses and organisations are being asked to start thinking about creating and entering floats.

Anyone interested in sponsoring Santa's Grotto should email Danielle Hancock, manager of the North West Country business association: manager@northwestcountry.co.nz

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New features for Arts in the Ville

Now in its tenth year, October's Arts in the Ville is being organised for the first time by the Helensville Art Centre - and manager Yvonne Abercrombie has some new features lined up.

"We want to press the refresh button, with some new artists and a fresh feel," she says.

The annual arts festival will be held as usual over the three days of Labour Weekend, this year October 25, 26, and 27.

While Arts in the Ville 2025 will mostly follow the routine set in previous years, with artists opening their studios or exhibiting in pop-up galleries, there will be a number of changes.

As well as a number of new artists, along with many popular returning ones, one of the biggest changes will be to the Makers' Market. For the first time this will be split between two venues, with stalls for more craft-oriented items in the Helensville Primary School

hall, while the Helensville War Memorial Hall will be reserved for smaller-scale artists to sell their works.

The yarn bombing which has been a feature of the festival in recent years won't return this year, but there will be a bigger emphasis on signage, colour, and visual promotion to make the event more user-friendly.

That user-friendliness extends to the introduction of food trucks and coffee carts at strategic locations, plus interactive 'play' stations around town to help keep children from getting bored with the 'adult' stuff. Yvonne says she also hopes to have shuttles to make it easier for less-mobile people to get around all the venues.

A youth art competition was introduced last year at the last minute, attracting a limited number of entries. That's been split into two age groups for this year, and

promoted well in advance to drum up plenty of entries.

Sculptor Jeff Thomson's popular visual treasure hunt will return with one of his works as the prize, as will the paper boat race he inaugurated last year - he'll be holding a couple of workshops to show how to make those closer to the event.

Perhaps the biggest change this year will be the introduction of a closing celebration for Arts in the Ville. In previous years the event has mostly just tailed off on the Monday afternoon, but this year there will be a celebration starting at 5pm at the Art Centre, with drinks and nibbles for the artists and anyone else who wants to attend - along with food trucks - plus a proper prize giving for both the paper boat race and children's art contest, along with a presentation to the winner of the treasure hunt.

Trade site bookings open for Helensville Show

Bookings for trade sites at next year's Helensville Show are now open.

The Show is Helensville's biggest annual event and regularly attracts around 6500 visitors. Next year the Show will be held on Saturday, February 28.

"It is the perfect opportunity to showcase a business to people from across Rodney and Auckland," says Show manager Shona Addison.

"With competitors coming from as far afield as the Far North and the Waikato, and visitors, entertainers, and stewards coming from all over greater Auckland, it's a chance to promote businesses to a wide audience, touch base with existing clients, get new customers - and sell products too."

Trade sites are 6m wide by 5m deep; these are bare sites so businesses need to provide their own gazebo or marquee and tables. Each site booking comes with two adult entry tickets and a car pass.

Earlybird pricing until September 30 is just \$100 per site - from October 1 until sold out the full price of \$125 applies. Shona says the sites get booked up fast, and this year's Show was fully booked well before Show day, with several latecomers missing out.

Commercial food sites cost \$200 but are already mostly booked. Contact Shona in the Show office to enquire about availability of food sites.

There are also a limited number of free community sites available.

"These are specifically for not-for-profit local organisations to promote themselves, recruit



• Trade stands drew big crowds at this year's Show

members, and educate from."

Preference is given to locally-based community groups, and the free sites are 3m by 3m bare sites and again come with two adult entry tickets and a car pass.

"These get booked very quickly, so if you wish to apply, please don't delay."

For the full details, terms and conditions, and a booking form, visit the Show website <https://helensvilleshow.co.nz/helensville-show-information/trade-space-information> - or email: info@helensvilleshow.co.nz.

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Junior rugby players take plenty of wins on Canterbury tour



• Helensville Rugby Club's South Island tour team

Helensville Rugby Club's Year 7 and 8 players are brimming with pride and lifelong memories after a highly successful Junior Tour to the South Island.

The 38-strong squad of players aged 11 to 13 represented the club with distinction both on and off the field, earning glowing feedback from hosts, referees, and opposition clubs alike.

The bi-annual tour took place in Canterbury, where the tackle and rip squads faced off against Hurunui Rugby Club, Saracens Rugby Club, and Shirley Rugby Club.

The tackle squad walked away with two wins from their three games, while the rip squad was unbeaten. But coaches and supporters say the biggest victory was the sportsmanship shown - both within their own teams and towards opponents.

While rip rugby is still finding its footing in the South Island, the enthusiasm from both sides suggests the next tour in two years could see even stronger competition.

Gibbs Farm visit

The Helensville A&P Association is holding another visit to the Gibbs Farm sculpture park at Makarau as a fundraiser for the 2026 Helensville Show. These visits are always hugely popular and book up well in advance. This year's is on Friday, October 17 from 10am to 2pm, with entry to Gibbs Farm at 64 Barr Road, Makarau (off SH16).

Tickets cost \$70 per person plus booking fees, and can be booked online through Humanitix at: <https://tinyurl.com/gibbs2025tickets>.

Off the field, the players packed their days with unforgettable activities, from jet boating and soaking at Hanmer Springs pools, to tackling the Christchurch Adrenaline Forest and riding the city's gondola. A standout highlight was a visit to Canterbury Rugby, hosted by Finlay Brewis - a former Helensville junior who now plays professionally for Canterbury. Finlay's warmth, insight, and humour left a lasting impression on the touring players.

Accommodation for the 38 players and their 14 adult minders - affectionately dubbed 'the aunties' - was at St Andrews College, where the group stayed in dorms and enjoyed exceptional catering. Adding to the sense of tradition, Go Bus driver Warren, who has driven for the club's last two tours, took the wheel once again - though he hinted it may have been his final Helensville Rugby Tour before retirement.

The tour was made possible through the hard work of the Junior Tour Committee - Mike Gilbert, Nicola Reynolds, Chontelle Asiata-Jones, Craig Clarke, Jaylene Samson, and Leigh Harland - with support from Helensville Rugby Club's senior leadership.

The committee has praised the players for their conduct and camaraderie, confident they will carry away friendships and life lessons that extend far beyond rugby.

Generous sponsorship from local businesses, including GSM Engineering, Boyes Build, and Total RV, provided each player with a full set of tour apparel - jacket, pants, hoodie, t-shirt, beanie, backpack, and tour bag. The rest of the costs were offset through creative and community-driven fundraising efforts, from a Halloween scare tunnel and discos, to car washes, quiz nights, and custom sponsor t-shirts.

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Two under-fives? No problem!

Buying and running a full-time business when you have two children under five years old would be anyone's idea of a challenge - but for Sam Harrison it was a perfect fit.

That's because the business she bought is one of Helensville's early learning centres, so her sons Brooklyn (2) and Bailey (4) can spend all day with her at work.

Sam took over ownership of Little Firefly Early Learning Centre in Commercial Road (previously called Precious Papis) late last year, and there are now seven teachers catering to an almost full roll of 33 children - a teacher ratio she says is much higher than that required by the Ministry of Education.

Housed in a beautifully restored old villa, Sam hasn't made many changes since taking over.

"I wanted to learn about the community first. Building relationships is my first priority."

Sam has been teaching for 15 years, her entire previous experience working at Natural Steps, first in Ellerslie and later in a leadership position at their Albany branch. She has a Bachelor of Education specialising in early childhood education, and a post-graduate diploma in educational leadership.

Between them, Sam and her qualified staff have 65 years of teaching experience. All the teachers are from the Helensville, Parakai, and South Head areas.

She says it was a leap to move into owning and managing her own early learning centre.

"I have to wear all the hats," she says, but adding: "It keeps me grounded being a mum."

In what is locally a competitive field in a small

community, Sam says each business has to have a unique approach - and she says Little Firefly strives to be homely, warm, and inviting with a family feeling. Being a qualified and experienced owner who is on-site all the time brings a lot of value and a point of difference, and she says there is a particular focus on preparing children for going to school.



• Sam Harrison at Little Firefly

The centre has separate spaces for under-tuos and older children to allow for age-specific learning, with a shared outdoor space, but Sam says the younger children are welcome to go in with the older ones, as the different ages learn from one another.

"I'm lucky to be here. It's a beautiful environment, a great team, and a great community of families."

Sam lives at Huapai with her children and mechanic husband Michael.

Lack of applicants for scholarship

Not enough of the right type of Kaipara College students are applying for the annual Neil Notley Scholarship.

The \$2000 award, administered by the Duke of Albany Masonic Lodge, is given to a student looking to move into a trade, rather than being based on academic achievement.

Neil Notley taught woodwork, metalwork and technical drawing at Kaipara College up until his death in 2013. He took a particular interest in the young men in his practical classes - those who wouldn't necessarily be high academic achievers but that would go on to apprenticeships and become builders, electricians, plumbers, and mechanics.

"There are a number tradesmen in the community who owe their start in their chosen trade to either Neil's encouragement and gentle guidance or his direct and sometimes unseen interventions and connections on their behalf," says Tony Silvester-Clark, secretary of the Duke of Albany Lodge.

On his death Neil left a bequest to continue his support for those college students.

The bequest is administered by the Lodge and awarded each year to the student it is felt will best benefit and who represents the sort of young person Neil himself would have supported. It is not awarded based on academic results but rather an interview to determine suitability and a clear pathway to an apprenticeship.

Tony, a member of the interview panel for the scholarship, says there has been a drop-off in applicants, and those that are applying tend to be high academic achievers rather than the intended type of recipients - those pursuing a trade and who wouldn't normally qualify for an award or scholarship.

He wants parents with children leaving school to pursue a trade apprenticeship to be aware of the scholarship and to encourage them to apply.

Applications close on Friday, September 19 and can be made to Brigitta Bravery at the college.



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MARK DENNIS



Authorised by Mark Dennis - markdennis543@gmail.com

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New community roles coming to Rodney

The Rodney Community Team is a new Auckland Council initiative funded by the Rodney Local Board. The team's purpose will be to deliver the community priorities that local people have said will make Rodney a better place to live. These include:

- New play, leisure, and recreation programmes and activities for all sectors of the community;
- More resourcing and support for arts, culture, and events;
- Interesting and fun place-making activations in towns and villages;
- Improved community spaces in the main centres so our towns have a heart;
- More support for local learning programmes, skills development, and training;
- Increased support for social enterprise and local economic development;
- Increased support for community leaders and champions.

At the core of the team will be five Community Facilitator roles, each based in a different community across Rodney. The position of facilitator for the South Kaipara area is expected to be advertised next month.

The Community Facilitators will work alongside local people and community groups to facilitate and deliver community-led initiatives, events, programmes and activities. They will have a budget to support that work, and they will work in ways that empower local communities and enhance local leadership.

As well as locally in the South Kaipara, Auckland Council will be looking to appoint Community Facilitators in Kumeū, Warkworth/Snells Beach, Wellsford, and Milldale.

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Issue 291, September 2025

election

Helensville News asked the candidates standing in the Auckland Council election to write a few words about themselves. Rodney Councillor Greg Sayers is unopposed in our ward - you can read his column on page 14.

For Rodney Local Board's Southern Kaipara Subdivision there are only three candidates running for the two available seats - Mark Dennis, and brothers Geoff and Rob Upson. Here's what they have to say:

■ MARK DENNIS

As a proud local, I am seeking re-election to the Rodney Local Board to continue building on the strong foundation we've set over the past three years. During this time, I have worked hard to ensure that our rates are invested heavily back into our communities. The results speak for themselves - we have seen more investment and focus on our local facilities, services, and infrastructure than ever before.

But there is still more to do. We need a strong local voice on Council — someone who understands our towns and rural areas, and who knows the priorities that matter most to local families. Whether it's fighting for fairer rates, securing more footpaths so our children can walk safely to school, pushing for better public transport, or investing in our community halls, sports fields, and playgrounds, I am committed to keeping our towns at the forefront.

I am also determined to keep pushing for better drainage and water infrastructure, so our communities are resilient and prepared for growth. Above all, I will continue to listen, engage, and advocate for what our people need. With your support, I will keep fighting to ensure our voice is strong, respected, and never overlooked.

■ GEOFF UPSON

My name is Geoff Upson and I am hopeful the community elects nine good honest people across the five subdivisions of the Rodney Local Board.

I have done one term in opposition to a political party on the Rodney Local Board, I have watched your rates get wasted on overpriced consultants and council administrative costs for projects which will never go ahead, and I have seen money get

• To page 10



VOTE

Mark DENNIS



“A Vote for me is a vote to keep your local voice on Council”



Authorised by Mark Dennis - markdennis543@gmail.com



Two Ticks

UPSON

For Rodney Local Board

Southern Kaipara subdivision
(Rural South)



Authorised by Geoff Upson 02102410569

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Election cont...

• From page 9

taken away from critical maintenance of council assets in favour of budget lines which provide almost no benefits to the community.

I have learnt the hard way that I can't fix council on my own and my brother has offered to help me fix council on your behalf. My brother Rob Upson is also standing for this area (the Southern Kaipara subdivision of the Rodney Local Board) so you have an easy and clear choice who gets your two votes.

My goal, if elected, is to be the chairperson and spend the next three years of my life ensuring that every deficit in the Rodney Local Board area gets identified and loaded into the Long Term Plan with funding prioritised for essential core services and critical infrastructure.

Voting - what to know

The 2025 Auckland Council elections are being held by postal vote. Enrolled voters should receive their voting papers between Tuesday, September 9 and Monday, September 22. Voting opens on September 9 and closes at 12 noon on Saturday, October 11. Voting papers can also be dropped into the ballot box at Helensville Library, which will also be able to accept special votes.



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med centre notes

Xeroderma

Xeroderma - a Greek word - directly translates to dry skin: xero (dry), derma (skin).

At this time of year, I find that many of my patients mention they struggle with itchy skin. They often do not seem to have noticed how dry their skin has become over the years. As with many other parts of our body, our skin does tend to struggle more as we get older, with the stratum corneum (outermost layer of the skin) breaking down leading to a loss of moisture and allowing more irritants through.

It can be likened to a wall with bricks and mortar. As we age the mortar starts to wash away and we have fewer bricks leading to holes in the wall.

Particularly during the winter months, the skin can be damaged by direct heat from fires, heat pumps, and fan heaters. Other exacerbating factors can include contact with soap and laundry agents, excessive washing, and friction from rough clothing. This damage to the skin barrier leads to further dryness and irritation, causing an itch, which then damages the skin, leading to an itch-scratch cycle.

So how do we help our skin?

First, switch to a fragrance free, non-foaming soap or cleanser. Yes, we like it when people smell nice, but your skin does not like the irritant fragrance. Next, reduce frequency of bathing and choose lukewarm water rather than hot water. Nothing dries the skin more than a hot shower with lots of soap. After bathing, pat your skin dry (rather than rub), and apply a fragrance-free body moisturiser. When dressing, consider the fabrics against your skin - always avoid rough fabrics in direct contact with the skin. Alongside these things, also consider running a cool-mist humidifier with your heat pump or in your bedroom overnight.

If you are looking for tips on what products to use, I highly recommend the website <https://medicalsecrets.com>. This website was created by a dermatologist and provides advice for the management of all kinds of skin conditions using the most effective over-the-counter treatments. I note that many of the moisturisers available these days over the counter are better than prescription products.

If you do struggle with dry skin, please don't feel alone. Almost everyone will experience some dry skin by the time we reach the age of 60. Of course, if the above advice is not helping your dry skin, come in for a chat and we will check if anything else is going on and what we can do about it. My patients tell me getting older is no fun, but I am withholding judgement until I have a more lived experience.

- Dr Tomos Longworth, GP



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Helensville Birthing Centre

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Get your bark on

The recently formed Kaipara Agriculture Association will hold its first community event on Saturday, October 4 - a 'Bark Up'.

And it's not just dogs who will be barking - owners will be competing for prizes too.

Starting at 3pm, the Bark Up will be held inside the bar at The Original Kaipara Tavern in Commercial Road. Open strictly to working dogs, there will be prizes for best dog, best bitch, and best human. There's a \$20 entry fee (\$5 each extra dog), and registrations can be made through the Kaipara Agriculture Association Facebook page.

The event is planned to "bring together farmers, families, and dog lovers from across the district for an afternoon of fun, friendly competition, and community spirit," says organiser Sophie Holst.

Sophie founded the association a few weeks ago with a clear purpose - to support young farmers in the Kaipara region and to promote positive mental health in local rural communities. She had previously attended some rural events in the district and was disappointed at how few young rural people were there.

Between her role as the newly-elected president of the Helensville A&P Association and her work at the local PGG Wrightson branch, Sophie knows many of the young farmers and other rural workers in the area, so has already attracted good numbers to the group.

"Our goal is to create events that celebrate rural life, support our farming community, and bring people together," she says.

"Farming can be challenging, and rural isolation is real. Events like the Bark Up create a space for people to connect, have a laugh, and feel part of something bigger."



the business

■ Vote for Your Favourite Businesses in the 2025 Business Awards

September and October are the months where the finalists in the awards are ridding to take out the People's Choice Awards - and you can help with that. Everyone has one chance to vote for their favourite businesses with the hope they will be North West Country's favourite.

Last season over 12,000 people cast votes for their local heroes with Hapunan Filipino Cuisine taking out the People's Choice award. Let's make this season even bigger and get your family and friends to join in.

Head to our website for voting forms and check out our social media feeds for more information.

Voting opens on Monday, September 1 and closes on Friday, October 31. An awards gala dinner will be held on Tuesday, November 18 at Markovina Vineyard Estate.

Everybody is welcome at the awards night so get together with your friends and come and support local!

■ Emergency Business Hub Complete

The Emergency Business Hub in Mill Road, Helensville, is now complete and is a stand-alone facility for business use. Now boasting Starlink broadband and a generator, the hub can be used in any emergency situation to support our businesses to operate.

The hub is still available to book for hot desks and meetings at hugely discounted rates. If you need a private location for a short meeting, our boardroom can be booked by the hour. Simply head to our website and click on 'Venue Hire' to book: www.northwestcountry.co.nz.

■ Supporting Kumeū Businesses Through Change

North West Country and Future-Kumeū Incorporated are collaborating to support Kumeū, Huapai and Waimauku businesses to deal with the effects of flooding and future land use changes.

North West Country has provided a small grant to Future-Kumeū to assist with their legal costs, and will become more involved in discussions between businesses and NZTA, Auckland Transport, and Auckland Council.

Future-Kumeū will work closely with North West Country to develop mutual ways of working through the challenges that landowners and businesses face, and support proactive engagement with authorities.

- Danielle Hancock

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

Big Little Local event returning

Big Little Local, the celebration of local businesses and organisations which has become increasingly popular over the past three years, will return to Rautawhiri Park on Saturday, November 22.

"After the incredible support from our community last year, we're excited to bring this vibrant celebration back to Helensville," says Nicky Horsbrough, owner of Harcourts The Difference, which organises the free event.

She says locals can expect a day full of market stalls, food, local business showcases, raffles, silent auctions, and entertainment - all while raising funds for the Harcourts Foundation to support causes close to home. Last year's event raised close to \$3000.

More details of the event will be released once plans are finalised, but in the meantime any local business or organisation keen to be involved -

whether to hold a site, donate prizes, or offer support - can phone: 09 420 7663, or email: helensville@harcourts.co.nz.

Rates webinar

About 300 people took part in an Auckland Council-led webinar to discuss the much higher than average rates increases experienced by many rural and lifestyle property owners, especially in Rodney.

Rodney Councillor Greg Sayers and several senior Council staff spoke about various aspects of how rates work and are set, then answered questions.

Ross Tucker, Auckland Council's Group Chief Financial Officer, said only three percent of ratepayers had a rates increase of more than 20 percent, while 15 percent had a rates decrease.



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Helensville Birthing Centre

TE PUNA WHĀNAU KI TE AWAROA

Birthing Centre Updates

we're excited to share some lovely updates from the team at Helensville Birthing Centre!

Our milk bank is thriving, and we feel incredibly proud to be able to offer this vital service to pēpi and whānau who need it. A huge thank you to our generous donors and the community who support this kaupapa — it's making a real difference.

We continue to be consistently busy with both postnatal stays and birthing, and it's a privilege to support so many families during such a special time in their lives.

We're also thrilled to announce a new collaboration with Parent Aid, which will see our Drop-In Clinic reopening one day per week. This clinic has always been a well-loved and much-used service, and we're actively seeking ongoing funding to ensure we can continue to provide it for our community long-term.

A heartfelt thank you to our amazing board for their continued support, guidance, and dedication to the wellbeing of our māmā, pēpi, and whānau.

Ngā mihi nui,

Renee Blair, Manager, Helensville Birthing Centre



'Cups' of all sorts for exhibition

Helensville Art Centre's members' exhibition for September is 'Cups'. It's a hugely diverse show with everything from ceramics to crochet, painting to collage and mixed media. It's open for public viewing until Saturday, September 20.

From Wednesday, September 24 until Saturday, October 18, there will be two concurrent exhibitions, one in the main gallery by Pacific artist Lo Leni, and one in the media room by Because. A public opening night for both shows will be held on Friday, September 26, from 5pm to 7pm.

"Both artists' styles compliment each other and we're excited to have new artists to the gallery," says Art Centre manager Yvonne Abercrombie.

The Art Centre's regular workshops, classes, and groups continue.

The 'Street Maori' te reo group is held every Tuesday during school term from 6pm to 7:30pm, with a koha donation. 'Gas Bag' is a free art and craft group which meets each Wednesday from 11am to 1pm. Tea and coffee provided, but take your own art and crafts.

Mike Rowland's six week Painting and Drawing class continues from September 5 to October 10, while weaving with Katriona Main is on Fridays from 11am to 1pm. This is an eight week course during school term, and enrolments for term 4 are open now.

Enrolments are also open for term 4 after-school kids and teen classes, held on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 3:30pm to 5pm for ages 6-11, and Wednesday for ages 12-15.

For more information about these courses and classes or to enrol, visit: artcentrehelensville.org.nz.



councillor comment

Many Rodney residents have opened their latest Auckland Council rates bill to find increases of 20 percent, 30 percent or more - far beyond the 5.8 percent rise the public was told to expect during consultation earlier this year.

Both elected members and ratepayers have been blindsided. Franklin ward, at Auckland's southern rural edge, faces the same problem. These rural areas, furthest from the CBD, are carrying a disproportionate share of the rates burden without any increase in Council services. This is unfair and unreasonable.

The cause lies in Auckland Council's capital value (CV) revaluation. Across Auckland, values fell by an average of 9.1 percent. But in Rodney and Franklin, particularly in rural and lifestyle areas, CVs remained steady or even rose.

Rates are based on relative property values. If an area's CVs drop less than the Auckland average, that area ends up paying more of the city's rates increase. Even properties whose CVs fell slightly still saw increases because Rodney's overall values stayed high. The total amount collected by Council has not changed from what the average 5.8 percent rate increase was intended to raise across Auckland.

Inner city suburbs saw minimal increases - Mt Roskill 1.9 percent, Royal Oak 1.5 percent, Māngere 1 percent, Point Chevalier 0.6 percent. In contrast, Rodney households face double-digit rises with no service improvements from the Council. We are paying more while other parts of the city benefit.

Two key failings have caused this outcome:

1. The timing of CV release - the revaluation results were not made public until June, yet the public consultation about a 5.8 percent rate increase took place back in February. Therefore, elected members had no forewarning about the large drop in CV values or how they would affect Rodney - no warning to them, and equally no warning for the public.

2. No cap on annual increases - without a maximum on the percentage amount rates can increase by, extreme jumps are possible, as we have now seen.

I have written to the Mayor and Chief Executive calling for a cap on annual rates increases to prevent one area from being disproportionately hit. I am hoping this cap can be applied retrospectively to this year's bills for immediate relief.

The CV revaluation process must also be aligned with the rates-setting timetable so results inform public consultation. Without this, we will repeat the same mistake every three years when CV's are recalculated.

If you believe your CV is inaccurate, you can request a review from Auckland Council, providing evidence such as recent sales data. While it may not reverse the increase entirely, it could reduce your rates bill if your CV is adjusted.

I have already had an emergency meeting with Rodney Local Board members, and we agreed a cap, earlier CV release, and a fairer distribution of rates are essential. Rodney's communities must not be treated as the city's ATM cash machine.

This is about more than just this year's rates bills - it's about fairness, transparency, and trust in how Auckland's rates are set.

- Greg Sayers, Rodney Ward Councillor
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Lodge donation pays for new SKGF ramp

South Kaipara Good Food's Mill Road premises have just got a bit safer to use, thanks to a \$2375 donation from Helensville's Duke of Albany Lodge.

A large rebate in the concrete entry to the food hub was a hazard for people collecting food parcels, and made it difficult for trucks delivering and picking up supplies.

Gemma Donaldson, chief executive of SKGF approached 'The Duke' for funding of a stainless-steel ramp to deal with the health and safety issue. Lodge members committed to supporting the project and from donations, income from raffles, and a matching contribution from the North Island Masonic District Charitable Trust were able to fully fund the project.

Gemma managed to get the support of the ramp supplier to make the grant go further and provide an electrical connection to the organisation's wellness hub, which is used for budgeting and counselling.

The Duke of Albany Lodge was established in Helensville in 1884 and throughout its 141 year existence has undertaken the Masonic tradition of charitable works by supporting a variety of community activities and organisations.



• Noel O'Callaghan of Parakai-based business NOC Stainless Ltd during installation of the new ramp at South Kaipara Good Food's premises

from our MP

Over recent weeks I've heard from many residents across Helensville and the wider northwest (along with those further north, also within the Kaipara ki Mahurangi electorate that I represent) about rates rises set by Auckland Council.

For households already grappling with the cost of living, the latest increases have added another layer of financial pressure.

Traditionally local government has been left to its own devices to set rates, as they are technically free to do so. More recently, though, in central government we've been responding to calls across New Zealand for councils to be made to tighten their belts.

Some are pretty loose but some others are actually very commendable in ensuring rates rises are reasonable. We are legislating a narrower scope for local government (focusing on basics being delivered well, rather than the pursuit of pet projects) and moving towards a rates cap.

In the meantime, I'd observe that overall - across the whole region - Auckland Council has managed to make the numbers add up well. Credit where it's due to the Mayor and councillors for that.

Unfortunately, however, the trouble is that - as readers of *Helensville News* will be well aware - this 'overall' picture obscures the fact that in the rural parts of the Auckland region (including Rodney) there have been large percentage increases.

While every ratepayer expects to contribute a fair

share toward essential services and local infrastructure, it's only right to ask why the rates bills in this area are rising disproportionately.

For this reason I've been seeking clarity from council officials and others involved in the rating process to understand exactly what's driving these higher charges in the northwest. Whether it's related to rapid growth, infrastructure demands, or rating formulas that unfairly load costs onto certain communities, we need transparency and accountability.

I'll keep engaging with both council and residents in the hope that we can address this issue properly, to avoid a repeat in 12 months from now, if not an outright reversal now.

I will keep you posted.

At the same time, I would respectfully suggest that with the local government election campaign season upon us it'll also be good to ensure that candidates for local boards and other Council roles commit to working constructively on this local government issue.

- Chris Penk
MP for Kaipara ki Mahurangi
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■ **OCTOBER 2025 deadline: Thursday, 25th September, 2025**
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■ **Editorial Enquiries, Letters to the Editor, and Advertising:**
Dave Addison
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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town talk

COLLEGE AG DAY

Kaipara College will hold its third annual Ag Day at the school on Friday, September 12. As well as the usual 'pet' farm animals, there will be indoor competitions covering a range of classes from baking and horticulture through to art and photography..

LOCAL BOARD MEETING

Rodney Local Board's next regular business meeting will be at 10am on Wednesday, September 17 in the Rodney Local Board Office, 3 Elizabeth Street, Warkworth.

HELENSVILLE MARKET

Live music from Kenny will be a feature of the next Helensville Market, to be held at the Helensville Showgrounds on Sunday, September 21 from 8.30am to 1pm. Stalls will feature local crafts and art, pet health care, jewellery, candles, preserves, gifts, cards, crochet, hand knits and spinning, plus indoor

and outdoor plants, locally grown fruit and vegetables, flower bouquets, fresh eggs, coffee and food.

No dogs except for assistance dogs. Gold coin donation for parking with proceeds going to the Helensville/Kaukapakapa Scouts and St John Youth.

For more information email Sarah at: sarah@riversidecrafts.co.nz.

RURAL WOMEN CENTENNIAL

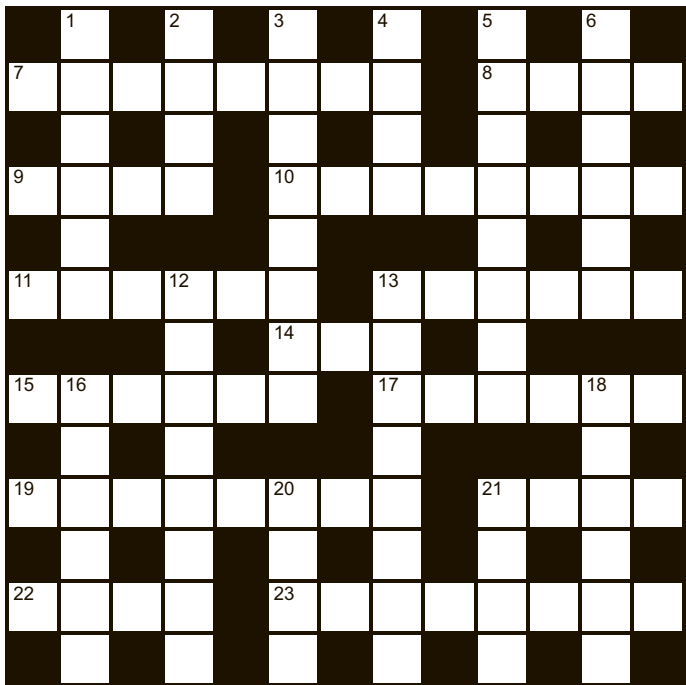
Rural Women NZ, known as the Women's Division of Federated Farmers prior to 2000, will celebrate its centennial with events up until July 2026.

Locally, the Makarau branch will hold a reunion garden party on Saturday, February 21 next year.

All former members are invited to attend, and family members including daughters, husbands and sons may represent deceased former members at the reunion, which will be free to attend.

For further information email Dianne Gray at: talentedgal11@gmail.com or phone Christine Pikett on 09 420 4042.

crossword



Across

- 7. Progressive (8)
- 8. Money (4)
- 9. Inner surface of the hand (4)
- 10. Gambling game (4,4)
- 11. Dated (3,3)
- 13. Walked lamely (6)
- 14. Bind (3)
- 15. Bother (6)
- 17. Large, strong woman (6)
- 19. Investigate (8)
- 21. Push with the head (4)
- 22. The wise men (4)
- 23. Newcomer (8)

Down

- 1. Particular (6)
- 2. Composition in verse (4)
- 3. Beaten egg dish (8)
- 4. Extent of space (4)
- 5. The world of schools and universities (8)
- 6. Mind (6)
- 12. Emotional outburst (8)
- 13. Tough and pliable (8)
- 16. Rock guitarist (6)
- 18. Stableman (6)
- 20. Hazard (4)
- 21. Financial institution (4)

August's Answers

Across: 1. Gained 4. Ocean 9. Alabama 10. Rouge 11. Nips 12. Et cetera 14. Foul-mouthed 7. Surveyor 18. Star 20. Leave 21. England 22. Messy 23. Weaker.

Down: 1. Granny 2. Inappropriate 3. Edam 5. Corrects 6. Amusement park 7. Bartholomew 8. Began 13. Sleepers 15. Psalm 16. Trader 19. Ogre.

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