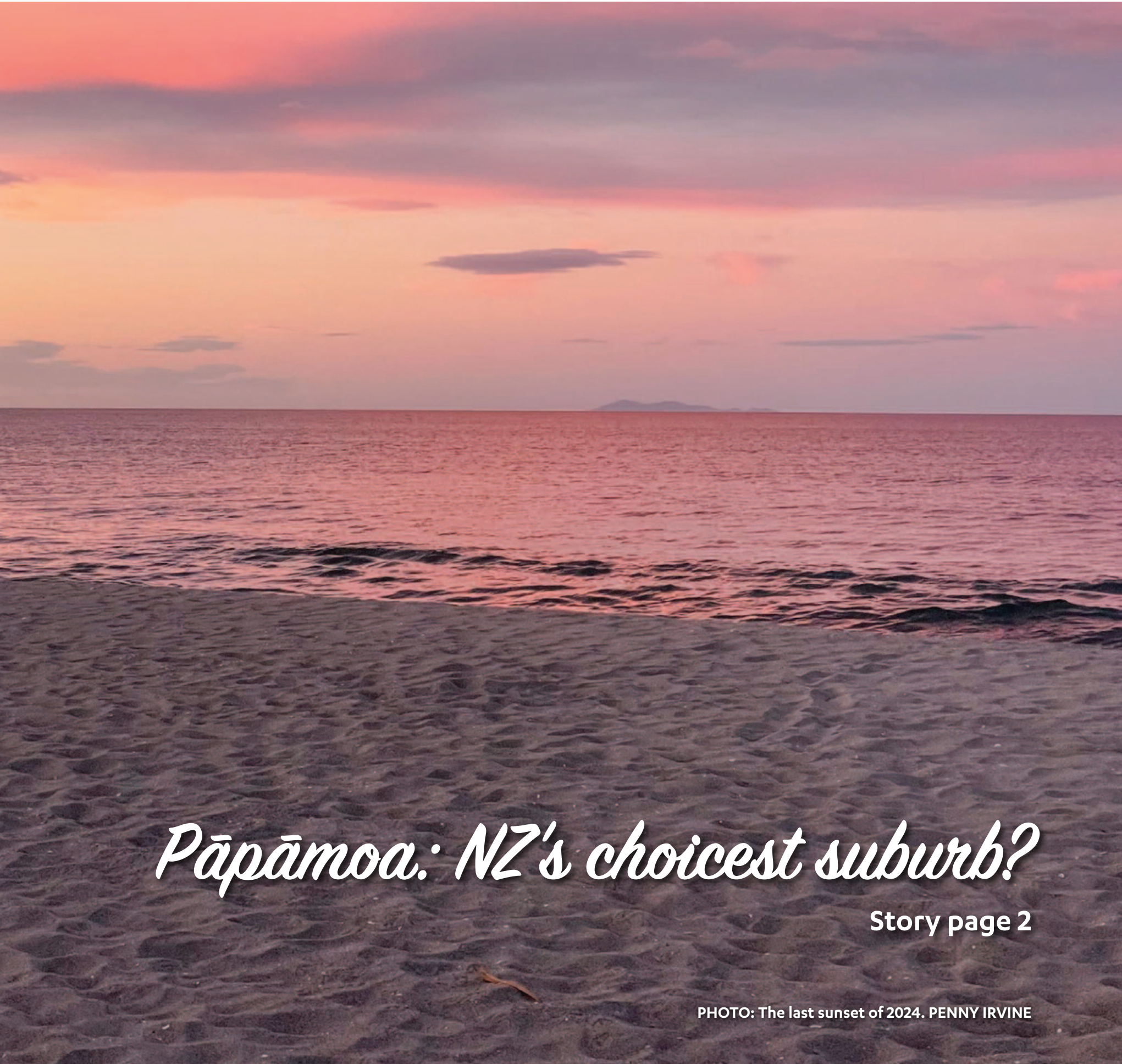


Pāpāmoa Post

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Pāpāmoa: NZ's choicest suburb?

Story page 2

PHOTO: The last sunset of 2024. PENNY IRVINE

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Pāpāmoa: NZ's "choicest" suburb?

Pāpāmoa's "small-scale urban vibe, vibrant coffee culture, abundant amenities, and natural beauty" have seen our beachside haven nominated as one of three finalists for New Zealand's "choicest suburb".

Pāpāmoa is New Zealand's answer to the Gold Coast, according to Trade Me Property People's Choicest Awards.

Our piece of beachside bliss has made the top three in the awards – a chance to celebrate everyday life in New Zealand.

Votes are now open to see if Pāpāmoa can beat the other finalists, Morrinsville and Christchurch's Southshore, to the title. The finalists were selected by the number of public nominations received. At the time of print, Pāpāmoa was in the lead with 41 per cent of the vote.

Pāpāmoa locals don't need an award to know this is a great place to live, and the poll gives a nod to our 16km of sandy beach, and "wealthy and sorted community" of 37,800 people.

It also cites our shopping centres – Pāpāmoa Plaza, Coast Pāpāmoa, and The Sands, and says the average house costs around \$968,800.

Pāpāmoa was noted for its schools and community activities that bring people together, something which locals will no doubt agree with. But those who battle the daily traffic may raise their eyebrows at the cited "easy 20-to-30-minute commute to Tauranga central for work".

Trade Me Property customer director Gavin Lloyd says Pāpāmoa and the other finalists share a strong sense of community and close proximity to nature.

"With a small-scale urban vibe, vibrant coffee culture, abundant amenities, and natural beauty, Pāpāmoa truly offers the best of both worlds," says Gavin.

When it comes to natural features, Pāpāmoa's "stunning beach" is described as a haven for dog-walkers.

Pāpāmoa Hills Regional Park is also noted as a highlight, thanks to its panoramic views, walking tracks, and historic Māori pā site at the summit.

"The summers are warm, the winters mild and the area provides great surf – mellow waves for beginners as well as bigger swells for experienced surfers."

Voting runs until 14 February. Votes can be made on the Trade Me website at www.trademe.co.nz/c/promo/peoples-choicest-voting ■

From the editor's desk

It comes as no surprise to those of us who live here, that Pāpāmoa is a top three finalist for New Zealand's "choicest" suburb.

Pāpāmoa is full of people who have made a conscious decision to come and live here. It is rare that you meet an "original", who grew up here. (Lucky them!) The rest of us were drawn here by the beach lifestyle and growing amenities.

The admittedly unscientific TradeMe poll says Pāpāmoa provides the best of both worlds, which resonates. I love that we have the beach and the sense of laidback living, but we are also big enough to have plenty of great amenities for our children, lots of shopping, and access to other parts of Tauranga City.

In Pāpāmoa Post we aim to celebrate the

best of living here, and to inform our residents about what's happening in our local community.

We enjoy featuring locals such as Cherie Metcalfe and Stefano Raimondi, who are running their businesses out of Pāpāmoa (page 9 and 11).

Congratulations to the Pāpāmoa College head students who will take on leadership roles this year (page 6). We also enjoyed learning about the students from Tahatai Coast School who have created their own book (page 5).

And sports lovers are stoked with the new pavilion at Gordon Spratt Reserve – a much-needed overdue facility (page 9).

Enjoy your read!

■ Ellen Irvine



Happy life in Pāpāmoa: the resident flying this flag on Golden Sands Drive seems to think so.

Alcohol fuels family harm incidents

By Sergeant Jason Perry,
OIC at Pāpāmoa Police

Pāpāmoa Police received more than 300 calls for service in the three weeks over Christmas and New Year. These calls were for everything from serious assaults down to reports of lost, stolen, and found property.

Family harm

Christmas Day saw our Police attending mostly family harm incidents. Tension builds, and family dynamics and financial pressure seemed the theme of the day. And a word of advice: not surprisingly, alcohol was also a factor. A message for next year – if you have shared childcare to sort out, make sure you make your arrangements early and everybody understands and agrees on what’s happening with their kids. Using children as a tool to spite or control other people is not on. One family harm callout saw two people, who just happened to be staying at the address, arrested on warrants and spending a couple of days in the cells until the next court date. Bad luck for them.

Indecency

And of course, we get our usual reports of indecency, with one man arrested for committing an indecent act. These people regularly pop up like meerkats. When a person is deliberately committing an act that is offensive, please make sure you report it to the Police. We regularly get reports of offensive behaviour on the beach. There is no designated public nudist beach in Pāpāmoa. That being said, the behaviour must be accompanied by an act of indecency. Police will take

into account all of the circumstances before taking any enforcement action.

Speed

New Year’s Day saw four speeders on the Bayfair to Sandhurst expressway driving at more than 140kmh. They all had their licence suspended for a month. The highest speed recorded by the mobile traffic camera was 112kmh in a 50km speed zone. Seven drivers have been prosecuted for driving with alcohol related offences.

Bike thefts

Bikes are still on the hot list for property being stolen. Some of these bikes are worth more than a family’s second runabout car. Especially e-bikes. One offender has been prosecuted for one of these bike thefts, and we are following up on CCTV on a couple of the others. Make sure you use a good quality security chain, and even use an air tag or similar to keep track of your bike. If your bike is worth 10k, it’s a comparatively small cost.

Break-ins

One person can create a lot of damage in a very short period of time, stealing bikes or breaking into cars. We had seven property crime offences committed in one night in early January, all of which were connected and involving several vehicles being broken into. Mostly wallets and money were taken. The inconvenience far outweighs the actual gain by the criminal. The message is, don’t leave valuables in your vehicles and make sure they are locked.

All that being said, Pāpāmoa is a great place to live and work, and we are a very safe community. ■



Sergeant Jason Perry

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Pukapuka leads journey of discovery

Children at Tahatai Coast School have created their own children's book as part of a year-long journey of learning and self-discovery.

The book, *Tūpuna*, (ancestors), is a reflection of their understanding of whakapapa and the strength of their ancestors. Each page tells stories of those who came before them and celebrates the strength and wisdom passed down through generations.

The project was part of a programme called Whakamana Māori, aimed at empowerment through cultural connection.

Cheyjuana Doyle, who runs the programme with husband Mōwai Smiler, says the process has allowed the children to see that their voices, stories, and heritage are worthy of celebration and have the power to inspire others.

"We watched them grow in confidence over the year, proudly stepping into their roles as leaders, creators, and innovators, and they've learned they are not only capable of achieving great things but that their cultural identity is a source of their strength."

Cheyjuana says a core component of the programme is a pakihi (business) project, which encourages children to develop entrepreneurial skills while also developing their confidence and self-belief.

"Our tamariki have put so much work and love into this taonga," says Cheyjuana, who worked with two groups of children aged year 1-6, who contributed equally to the book.

"At its core, this book is a celebration of connection and



Students at Tahatai Coast School learned many lessons while creating their very own children's book.

PHOTOS: CHEYJUANA DOYLE



a reminder to young readers of who they are and who they are capable of being."

The process started with the children exploring how they descend from innovators, scientists, leaders, and peace-makers, as well as from their *Tūpuna* Maunga (ancestor mountains), awa (rivers), and moana (ocean).

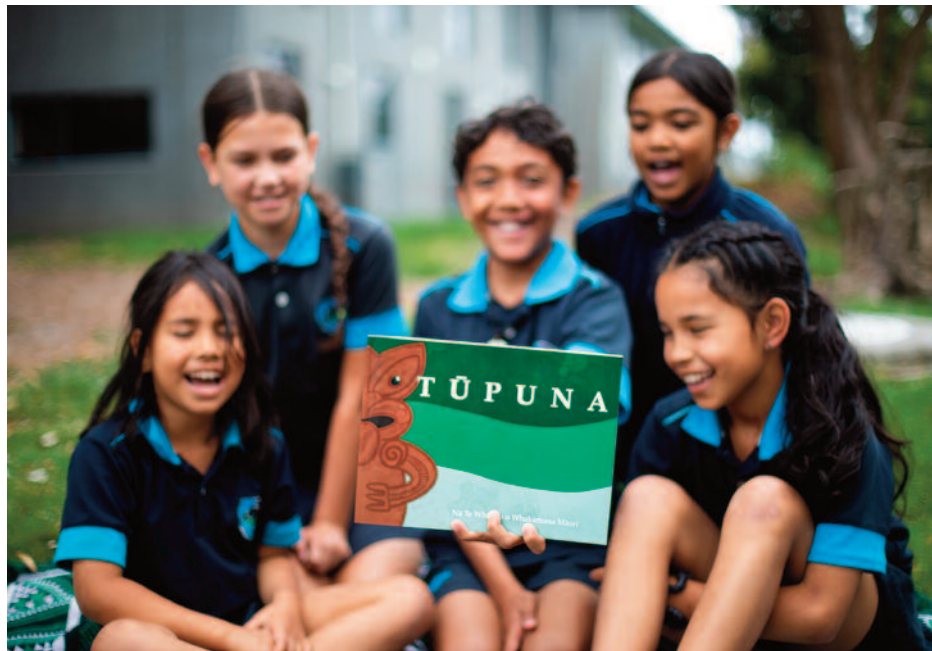
"We delved further into this understanding by brainstorming the traits of our ancestors and the lessons we can learn from them," says Cheyjuana.

The children then turned these ideas into rhyming verse, before creating beautiful artwork to bring their words to life. Their art was digitally recreated for the book, so each image you see within the pages reflects their voices and vision.

Cheyjuana says the children have learned invaluable skills along the way, like teamwork, communication, and decision-making, all while staying grounded in their Māoritanga.

"They worked collaboratively on every aspect, from storytelling and illustrating to exploring the values at the heart of te ao Māori (the Māori world).

"The result is a taonga (treasure) that speaks not only to the beauty of their heritage but also to the strength and resilience they hope to pass on to their peers and future generations. They have poured their hearts into this book and have created an empowering work that helps readers see their own potential and the strengths they hold within them." ■

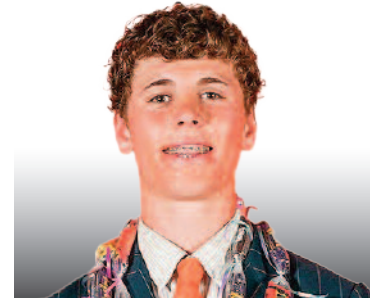


Pāpāmoa College leaders 2025

Pāpāmoa College's head students for 2025 are Head Boy - Cove Keenan, Head Girl - Ava Buchanan, Deputy Head Boy - Jayden Holdaway, and Deputy Head Girl - Renee Thomas.



Jayden Holdaway, Ava Buchanan, Cove Keenan and Renee Thomas.



Cove Keenan says he is "absolutely stoked" to be **head boy**, and his goal for 2025 is simple: "Make it the most enjoyable school year yet – for every student and for me too," he says.

"I'm looking to strengthen the culture and community at Pāpāmoa College. I want every student to feel proud to be part of this school – whether it's on the field, on stage, or in the classroom.

"I'll also be working to create more opportunities for everyone, like new extracurricular activities or events that cater to all interests – even the ones you didn't know you had yet."

Cove has made the most of opportunities at Pāpāmoa College since joining in year 7 after attending Golden Sands School.

"Over the years, I've been

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involved in all sorts of activities. I'm currently proud to represent the school as part of the 1st XV rugby team. I've dabbled in golf, touch rugby, basketball, and probably a few other sports I've conveniently forgotten. My leadership journey began back in Year 8 when I joined the Lower Middle School Leaders team, which gave me the skills I'll carry into 2025."

After Year 13 Cove plans to study sports nutrition at university, and hopes to one day travel the world, embracing opportunities as they come.

"But for now, my focus is on helping every student make the most of 2025.

"So, if you see me wandering around the school or out and about, feel free to come say g'day - I promise I'm much less scary than I look on the rugby field."



Ava Buchanan is honoured and excited to take on the role of **head girl**.

"It's a role that comes with a lot of responsibility but I'm eager to

take on this role and represent my peers, helping to create a positive and inclusive environment at Pāpāmoa College," she says.

"I'm so excited and motivated to step into this new role and can't wait to make the most of this incredible opportunity."

Ava has many goals for the year ahead, her main one being to foster a sense of inclusivity and belonging within the school.

"I want to help every student feel heard, valued and supported, and I aim to embrace diversity, building meaningful relationships across all groups within the school, as I believe everyone should feel a sense of belonging.

"I am also looking forward to working with the rest of the head student team- Cove, Renee and Jayden - as well as the rest of the student leadership team. Each of us brings something different to the table and I think we'll work well together to create a school culture that's inclusive and supports everyone."

Ava has enjoyed many aspects of school life at Pāpāmoa College since moving from Auckland in 2022.

"One of the most significant experiences for me has been joining the Kapa Haka Ropu. As a proud Māori student, being part of this group has provided me with a powerful and meaningful way to connect with my cultural heritage and build strong relationships with other students at school, deepening

my sense of belonging within the Pāpāmoa College community."

She has also played senior netball, was a part of the 2024 ball committee, contributed to the 2024 cultural council, and was selected by Pāpāmoa College as one of two students to represent the school on a 21-day Outward Bound course.

After completing her school years Ava plans to study psychology at Auckland University and continue her journey of learning Te Reo Māori.



Jayden Holdaway is ecstatic to take on the role of **deputy head boy**, and says he can't wait to see what challenges and opportunities come his way.

"My goal as a head student is to inspire and empower, I want to be a role model for the younger students and show them that through hard work, resilience and aspiration they can achieve anything."

Jayden, who previously attended

Te Akau ki Pāpāmoa School, has been involved with many productions at college including Bugsy Malone, High School Musical, Alice in Wonderland, Fame, and The Addams Family, as well as helping with High School Musical 2. He is part of the school's first XV rugby team, has been a student leader for the last three years, and is treasurer of the Pāpāmoa College Leos Club.

"I am currently wanting to go to university to study engineering or paramedicine, to continue making a positive impact on people's lives," says Jayden.



Deputy head girl Renee Thomas says she is extremely grateful to be deputy head girl and aims to use her leadership skills to the best of her ability.

"I am motivated to try everything I can, and I am excited to grow my skills and personal character through this role.

"I have a few goals in mind which range from school culture and sports, but one that I want to

take action on the most is growing and exposing the Kai Aroha community."

Being involved with Kai Aroha, which organises free community meals for hungry whānau, is Renee's favourite school experience.

"I have ideas to create more groups, fundraising and promotion so that the [Kai Aroha] community can grow and help more people in need. I also want to act on this to support Whaea Tania [Lewis-Rickard] because Kai Aroha is a reflection of her pure self and she deserves more love and support.

"I volunteer every Thursday night alongside other students from school to provide a free meal to those experiencing hardship."

Renee, who attended Te Akau Ki Pāpāmoa School, has been involved in a variety of different school activities, with a focus on sport: hockey (captain of girls' 1st XI), touch rugby, rippa rugby, volleyball, beach volleyball, ultimate frisbee, rugby sevens, and adventure racing.

"In 2022, I also went on the Spirit of Adventure which is a great opportunity to explore and grow your leadership skills and personal self. Over the last year I have also been given opportunities like the school's open nights and being a student voice for the Government agency ERO."

Renee's future plans involve studying health sciences at university. ■

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New shade shelter at Gordon Spratt

Children playing at Gordon Spratt Reserve playground now have a safe shaded area thanks to a true community collaboration.

In March 2022 Pāpāmoa Post reported concerns from local parents about the lack of playground shade. The cause resonated with Christa George of the Rotary Club of Pāpāmoa, who took the idea to the club to see what they could do to help.

Almost three years later, the club, in partnership with Tauranga City Council and a group of local Pāpāmoa parents, has provided an accessible shelter at Gordon Spratt Reserve alongside the playground.

"This is the fruition of 2.5 years of work that began in July 2022 with concept and fundraising efforts and has now culminated in the construction of the shelter," says Christa.

When the project began, only two playgrounds in Pāpāmoa had sunshades, leaving 19 playgrounds without.

"Since then, and maybe largely due to Rotary's lobbying, a number of playgrounds now have sunshades or shelters, and it is part of the planning when a playground is being updated or a new playground is proposed,

instead of an after-thought," says Christa.

Without shade, play equipment is often unusable in the summer as slides and swings are too hot to touch, with no protection from the harsh sun.

Skin cancer is New Zealand's most common cancer – more than 90 per cent of skin cancers are caused by over-exposure to the ultra-violet radiation (UVR) which is primarily from the sun. Dr Bronwen McNoe from Cancer Society Research Collaboration at Otago University says a well-designed shade can reduce the UV exposure of people using playgrounds by more than three-quarters.

It was agreed with Tauranga City Council that a seating shelter would protect families from both sun and rain, be wheelchair-accessible, and add a functional gathering place for playground users.

The project was managed by the Rotary Club, which raised around \$20,000 in cash, goods and in-kind donations of time and expertise. Tauranga City Council provided building services support including the provision of seating, and erected the shelter.

It is hoped that this model of community partnership, with local community project ini-

tiation and fundraising input, can be duplicated in other areas of Tauranga, says Christa.

At a special opening ceremony, Barry Scott was presented with the Rotary Club of Pāpāmoa Community Champion Award for his services to this project. Although not a Rotarian, Barry supported the project and worked with the club on all aspects of the shelter for more than two years. He was a great help in liaising with various parties to get tasks over the line, says Christa. Barry was given the honour of cutting the ribbon and declaring the shelter "open for all to enjoy".

Rotary also thanked Tauranga City Council, the Rotary Foundation, various businesses

who provided discounts on materials, and Regan Ashton, who drew up the plans and waived his fee. ■



Acknowledgements on the plaque.



Deb Wootton President, Christa George, Angela Alexander and Geoff Mathis from the project team, and club member Jude Lindfield.



Barry Scott cutting the ribbon alongside Christa George.



Pāpāmoa Rotary Club President Deb Wootton presenting the Rotary Club of Pāpāmoa Community Champion Award to Barry Scott.



The completed shelter.



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Condiments queen Cherie

This year will mark a string of notable ninth anniversary celebrations for Pāpāmoa-based businesswoman Cherie Metcalfe.

Chief among them is daughter Pepper's ninth birthday. However, the arrival of her first child also sparked the birth of Cherie's Pepper & Me condiments company and the Metcalfe family's move to the coast, from Rotorua, in 2016.

"Pepper is the age of the business and we moved to Pāpāmoa the year she was born," the former chef says.

"We used to holiday here and I've just always loved, loved, loved Pāpāmoa. The beach was the instant appeal but we've found a pretty awesome community here that I've never encountered anywhere else. Everyone is very friendly and willing to help, we walk to friends' houses and the kids have friends all over the neighbourhood.

"And my favourite thing to do is to cook and entertain at home here."

Plenty of those guests are willing guinea pigs for the latest Pepper & Me creation, which might include a new spice mix or pasta sauce, a barbecue paste, flavoured pepper or relish. The business that began with an at-home mum and three cooking pastes now employs 33 staff and produces 83 products from a factory at Tauriko. The culinary treats are shipped directly to customers around New Zealand and Australia courtesy of website sales, with wholesaling to about 300 retailers nationally.

But the beachside connection remains strong. Cherie and partner Matt recently launched a food stall at the Little Big Markets, alongside Pāpāmoa Domain. Pepper and her younger brother Kit like to help out at the stall.

"We've been selling bacon butties and foccacia to keep a presence on the ground here. It's great to get out and get cooking again, to be meeting people and product testing. We use our own hot honey, relish and aioli and sell other products there."

Pāpāmoa residents will have an extra opportunity to meet Cherie at the upcoming Flavours of Plenty Festival in March, with the programme announced on 14 February

(www.flavoursofplentyfestival.com).

Brother Lorne looks after operations while Cherie focuses on marketing and developing new products, such as the recently-released dill pickle seasoning and a satay sauce. She also claims most of the naming rights.

"Names are the fun part. Sometimes we have a name before the product."

The Man Rub spice mix for barbecue cuts remains one of



Cherie Metcalfe loves running her business Pepper & Me from Pāpāmoa.



the most popular products in her range, alongside Man Grind salt blend. Can't Catch Me gingerbread syrup and Sugar Daddy caramel were released last Christmas.

The entrepreneur has ventured into other corners of the culinary trade, too. Her Kitco business – named after son Kit and specialising in cast iron cookware – was sold to another company. She retains the Cain and Abel knifeware business that sells carbon steel knives made from old Vietnamese war trucks.

So what's next?

"We'll do a rebrand this year, and a refresh. We'll be keeping the name but bringing in colour. We'll have an everyday supermarket range but also do tins for a special gifting range. And I'm always dreaming up new products."

Local stockists include Pāpāmoa's Four Square, Bin Inn and Freshchoice. ■

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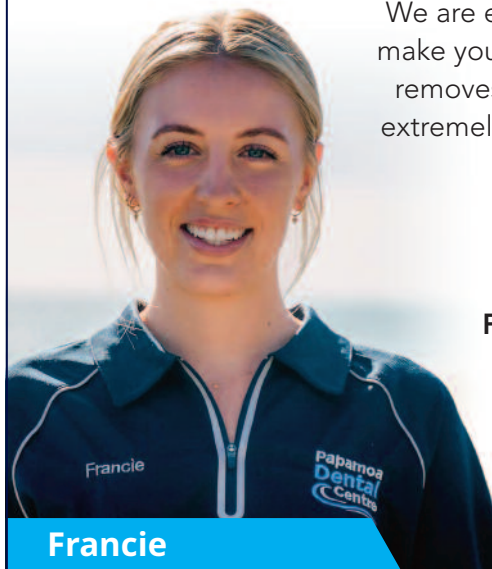
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Francie



Sarah

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Papamoa Dental Centre



Boardwalk enjoyed over summer



What a view! The boardwalk and viewing platform connecting the “missing link” along the Pāpāmoa shared pathway opened in time to be enjoyed over summer.

The path over the sand dunes is located near Alexander Place and connects the gap in the pathway, which runs between Domain Road and Parton Road.

Originally this section of the pathway was planned to be adjacent to the road. But community feedback raised concerns about the loss of the road shoulder, and the ability to pull off the road before turning to enter driveways. So council revised the design to incorporate a boardwalk over the dunes, says Tauranga City Council general manager: community services, Barbara Dempsey.

“The dunes are ecologically protected, and we required a new resource consent and Wildlife Act permissions to ensure we protect

the area and fauna that live there,” says Barbara.

A lizard management plan was reviewed by the Department of Conservation, which consulted with iwi, and a wildlife permit was granted in August. ■



Sam’s big-splashing manu



Pāpāmoa Olympic runner Sam Tanner showed off his manu at the Z Manu World Champs Tauranga Moana qualifier. While he didn’t qualify for the grand final in Auckland in March, organisers say Sam’s manu skills were evident as an avid beach-lover and surfer. ■

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All About Food – bringing Italy to Pāpāmoa

Italian chef Stefano Raimondi is bringing a taste of his homeland to Pāpāmoa, through food truck and cook school ventures.

He's moved on from restaurant kitchens and market stalls to teaching small groups of locals how to make their own gnocchi and tiramisu, at his Autentico cooking classes inside Pāpāmoa Sports and Recreation Centre. This has sparked larger team-building cooking sessions and catered festive events at the same venue.

Meanwhile, the coffee cart he opened with a business partner has evolved into the summertime Fritto food truck parked poolside at Tasman Holiday Park on Pāpāmoa Beach. There are occasional pop-up Italian nights in eateries around the city, too.

"I have a lot of side gigs," Stefano says. "And everything is about food."

However, the culinary career was accidental. Growing up in the small north Italian village of Lazzate, Stefano imagined he would follow in the footsteps of his architect father.

"My dad always knew that was not the way I was going to go but I thought even if I was bad, my dad would always give me a job. In the end, after two months at school, I realised that architecture was not what I wanted."

Enrolling in chef school was the only other available option at the time. The teenager was immediately hooked and his mother, who dislikes cooking, was thrilled to have a son take over the kitchen at home.

"My mum doesn't like to cook but both my grandmothers are very good at-home cooks. My grandmother lives in my village and she



does gnocchi when the family meets once a month. She's 91. It's amazing and of course you can never change her recipe."

Stefano now teaches cook school students his own version of the famous Italian dish, half a world away. But he always serves the accompanying sauce the way his grandma taught him; swirled on top, not tossed through the dish.

His path to Pāpāmoa involved some zigzagging between kitchens in Italy and Spain, then on to Australia before working in Wānaka and Mt Maunganui. Along the way,

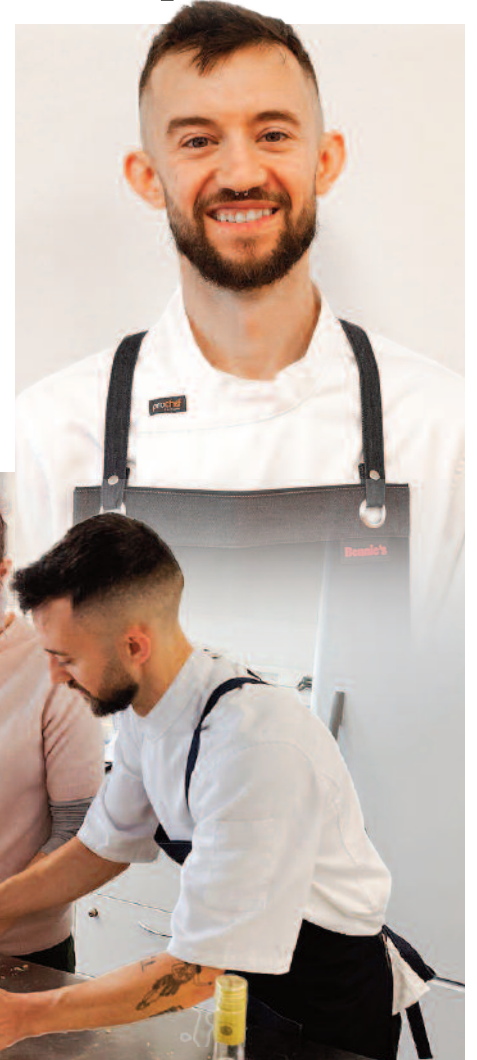
he met American-born Ellie, and the couple's two-year-old daughter Penelope is the primary reason Stefano has stepped away from restaurant kitchens. He wants more flexible hours for parenting.

And Pāpāmoa's ongoing growth appeals to the culinary entrepreneur.

"Pāpāmoa is exploding, it's an amazing area and I think it's a good market for hospitality."

It's also the ideal spot for an after-work swim in the sea.

Look out for Stefano in the upcoming Flavours of Plenty Festival www.flavoursofplentyfestival.com/ ■



Stefano Raimondi loves bringing a taste of Italy to Pāpāmoa.

ERO notes improvements at Pāpāmoa College

Pāpāmoa College's latest Education Review Office (ERO) report is "a strong endorsement" of Principal Iva Ropati and the school leadership team, says a school board member.

In a letter to school whānau, Pāpāmoa College Board presiding member Dr Clarke Raymond says the report is very positive.

"We are very proud of these outcomes. This result reflects the passion and hard work of all our amazing staff," says Clarke.

"We hope you, our community, are also proud and we look forward to continuing to work with you in achieving our aspiration to be the 'school of choice' in our region."

The report notes significant improvement in areas identified from the last report, says Clarke, and identifies the following current strengths:

- Most students are making progress and achieve well.

- Collaborative leadership works well and strategically, to make evidence-informed decisions to improve student outcomes.

- Students have opportunities to learn across the breadth of the curriculum and are well supported by effective teaching practice.

- Organisational conditions are increasingly aligned and drive strategic improvement.

ERO Director of Schools Shelley Booyen says since the previous ERO report of September 2022, ERO and the school have worked together to evaluate the effectiveness of strategies used to accelerate the progress of Year 7 to 10 learners in literacy, with a specific focus on learners who are not yet achieving at expected curriculum levels.

"The greatest shift that has occurred in response to the school's action has been the strategic development and embedding of robust systems and processes to align the

approaches to literacy learning for improved student outcomes," says Shelley.

The report also identifies two priorities for improvement before the next review in three years:

- Continue to build a culture that engages learners and results in improved attendance.

- Continue to work towards equitable outcomes for all, in particular Māori and Pacific learners.

Clarke says the board has included these as strategic priorities in its 2025 annual plan, and will be working on some new initiatives to drive improvement. ■

"Outstanding" NCEA results

Pāpāmoa College's latest NCEA results were "outstanding" and improved in nearly all areas, says principal Iva Ropati.

The provisional results were better than national averages in all levels of NCEA across New Zealand, and better than national decile (similar type schools) in all levels of NCEA across New Zealand.

Iva says he expects further improve-

ment once confirmed results have been released in March.

The school pass rate was Level 1 - 80.6 per cent (2.7 per cent increase from 2023); Level 2 - 87.4 per cent (9.6 per cent increase from 2023); Level 3 - 72.9 per cent (1.3 per cent decrease from 2023)

"It is pleasing that as a school we now have comparable if not better NCEA results than local secondary schools," says Iva. ■



Iva Ropati, Pāpāmoa College Principal.

FAQ #39: I'm over 50 and sick of wearing glasses. Can I get contact lenses?

By Blur Eyecare

As we age, our eyes undergo natural changes that can affect our vision. One of the most common is presbyopia, a condition where the lens inside the eye becomes less flexible, making it harder to focus on objects up close. While contact lenses are a popular option for correcting vision issues, presbyopia presents some unique challenges that require special care and attention when considering contact lenses.

Here are a few factors to keep in mind:

1. Complexity of visual needs

Presbyopia requires correction for both near and far vision. Multifocal contact lenses are designed with different zones to address this, but finding the right balance can be tricky. Adapting to multifocal lenses often takes time, as your Optometrist may need to adjust your prescription or lens design through multiple visits to ensure they suit your everyday activities. Tasks like reading, working on a computer, and driving may require different adjustments to find the optimal balance.

2. Reduced visual acuity

Even after adapting to multifocal lenses, some patients notice that their vision isn't as sharp as it is with glasses. The division of the lens into multiple zones for distance and near vision can affect clarity, especially in low light or when working with fine detail.



While multifocal lenses can be great for social activities, such as dining out or enjoying time outdoors, many people still prefer their glasses for more detail-oriented tasks, like working at a computer for extended periods.

3. Dry eyes

Age-related changes to your tear film can lead to dry eye syndrome, which may worsen when wearing contact lenses. This can cause discomfort and reduce the effectiveness of the lenses. Speak to your Optometrist about managing dry eyes to make contact lens wear more comfortable.

Multifocal contact lenses can be a convenient solution for presbyopia, but understanding their limitations and benefits will help you get the best experience. Call or visit the team at Blur Eyecare to find out if they are the right option for you! You can reach us at any of our four locations on 07 578 1513 or check out our website: www.blureyecare.co.nz. ■

Top 10 tips for first-time sellers

By Rachel Cole of Harcourts

Navigating the world of real estate as a seller for the first time can be daunting. Here are the 10 most important things you should consider to start this process with confidence and success.

1. Understand the market

Conducting thorough research and consulting with local real estate professionals can provide you with valuable insights including pricing and the best time to sell.

2. Understand the importance of price in creating interest and competition

Setting a competitive and realistic price for your property requires a delicate balance between attracting buyers and achieving the maximum sale price. A property appraisal from a trusted real estate agent can give you an accurate understanding of your home's worth in the current market.

3. Prepare your home for sale

Consider making necessary repairs, decluttering, and staging your home to showcase its full potential.

4. Choose the right real estate agent

An experienced agent with extensive knowledge of your local market can offer invaluable advice, negotiate on your behalf, and streamline the selling process.

5. Marketing your property effectively

Effective marketing is key to attracting potential buyers. A comprehensive marketing plan should include professional photography, detailed property descriptions, and a multi-channel approach.

6. Stay informed about legal requirements

Ensure a smooth and lawful transaction by understanding the various legal requirements,



Rachel Cole.

including contracts, disclosures, and compliance with local regulations.

7. Be prepared for inspections

Ensure your home is clean, tidy, and well-presented at all times. Try to be flexible with inspection times for maximum exposure.

8. The art of offer negotiation

Consider all aspects of the offer, including price, conditions, and settlement dates, and be prepared to negotiate to achieve the best possible outcome.

9. Understand the settlement process

Once you've accepted an offer, the settlement process begins. This involves the legal transfer of property ownership from you to the buyer.

10. Plan your next steps

Whether you're downsizing, relocating or pursuing another dream, consider your long-term goals and how the sale of your property fits into your broader life plan.

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2025 starts with a bang for local sports

Cricket and football in Pāpāmoa are well placed for growth in 2025 as the long-awaited new pavilion at Gordon Spratt Reserve provides a home for both sports.

In a significant milestone in the history of the Pāpāmoa Cricket and Football Clubs, the 265-square-metre facility was opened just before Christmas in a community celebration.

The pavilion features accessible toilets, changing rooms, storage, umpire facilities, a reception, and fully equipped kitchen. While primarily serving the football and cricket clubs, Tauranga City Council says it is also a valuable community asset, fostering social connections, promoting healthy lifestyles, and providing a welcoming space.

Alice Johnson Oval began as a parcel of land gifted to the community by the Johnson family more than 40 years ago, evolving into a cricket oval fulfilling the wishes of the family.

Pāpāmoa Cricket Club President Mark

Divehall says it's been a dream since the club's inception to have facilities like this.

"It's our true home now, and as we settle in, and as we continue to grow into it, we're excited to personalise the space and make it even more welcoming.

"This pavilion will be a cornerstone in the growth of cricket in our area. It's a huge milestone, and we look forward to seeing many happy faces here."

Pāpāmoa Ward Councillor Steve Morris says the pavilion is a vital asset for the rapidly growing community.

"The opening is another milestone in the development of this reserve, and it provides a long-awaited home for cricket and football and another much-needed community space.

"Having a facility like this, where clubs can put their memorabilia, and have a place and presence on the land, is really important."

The pavilion is part of a wider programme of planned upgrades and additions at Gordon Spratt Reserve. Other enhancements since the beginning of 2023 include field



Celebrations when the pavilion was officially opened.

upgrades (including expansions), a revamped skatepark, and formalising an overflow carpark.

Work will continue in the coming years, including new facilities and sport fields upgrades. ■



The exterior and interior of the pavilion.

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The village's main community facility, The Pavilion, is currently under construction. Positioned on the lakes edge, this impressive building will house an eatery, lounge bar, library, art studio, beauty salon, wellness suite and extensive recreational facilities. Experience our community first-hand - show home available by appointment.



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New Year's Honour for Ian

A Pāpāmoa local known as a pioneer in firefighter welfare was recognised in the New Year's Honours.

Ian Pickard was made a Member of the New Zealand Order of Merit (MNZM) for more than 50 years' service with Fire and Emergency NZ.

Ian began his service in 1971 in Timaru, where he became station officer eight years later.

Firefighters' welfare has been a big focus for Ian – he was the inaugural chair of the New Zealand Firefighters Welfare Society, an organisation focused on the wellbeing of fire officers and their families, and he was also a board member and trustee.

In those roles he was instrumental in the purchase of the first of the society's holiday homes and establishing a healthcare plan for firefighters and their families.

In his role as chief fire officer of the Dunedin Fire District from 1995, Ian led community safety initiatives focused on fire prevention and risk reduction - a shift from emergency response.

He led 71 volunteer brigades and two career fire districts from 1997 to 2004, in his role as assistant fire region commander of operations of the Southern Fire Region.

Ian also led the rollout of a new software system allowing for tracking and planning of work across all fire stations.

His service also took him further afield; Ian has volunteered and led teams with the United Nations disaster assessment and coordination team overseas, including during the 2016 tropical cyclone in Fiji.

Fire and Emergency New Zealand Board Chair Rebecca Keoghan congratulates Ian, who was one of five firefighters awarded.



Ian Pickard

"These honours are a worthy recognition of the many years of dedicated service these five recipients have made to Fire and Emergency and their communities," says Rebecca.

Local MP Tom Rutherford also congratulates Ian and other local recipients.

"These outstanding individuals represent the very best of our community, each making remarkable contributions in their respective fields. Their recognition is a testament to the exceptional talent and dedication we have here in the Bay of Plenty.

"Each recipient has made our community and country better through their service and achievements. On behalf of all Bay of Plenty residents, I extend my heartfelt congratulations and gratitude for their outstanding contributions to our community." ■



Beach access for everyone



Wheelchair users in Pāpāmoa enjoyed the beach alongside their whānau this summer thanks to a new beach access mat.

Tauranga was the first place in the country to provide council-owned beach access mats, and this summer Pāpāmoa received its first mat. Families with strollers, beach wagons, mobility scooters and walkers made good use of the portable rollout mat, which the council says creates a "sturdy and visible access".

The first mat was trialled at Mount Maunganui Main Beach in December 2016 and was a success, with four

mats now operational including at Pāpāmoa Domain.

There are two beach wheelchairs available for public use, located at the Pāpāmoa Surf Life Saving Club. To use the chairs, ask one of the lifeguards, or phone the office on 07 542 2122 if it's outside of patrol hours. The main beach wheelchair - a "mobi-chair" - was donated by Pāpāmoa Rotary Club in 2019. The chair is for people who are immobile, whether that's an elderly person who can't physically get to the beach, or someone who is currently in a wheelchair that can't get to the beach.

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Making waves: national surf event



Some of the NZ Festival of Longboarding's line up from last year. PHOTO: COASTAL SURF IMAGES

Some of the country's best surfers will head to Pāpāmoa Domain this February at the New Zealand Festival of Longboarding.

The event on February 15-16 attracts the country's top talent, from national champions to local legends, according to Ben Kennings of Surfing New Zealand.

"With divisions [from under 18 through to] over 50s and 60s, the event provides the perfect platform for surfers of all ages to come together, share stories from times past, and enjoy the camaraderie of participating out on the water."

Tauranga Moana has a strong surfing community, with many leading surfers at a national level as well as New Zealand representatives, says Ben.

"Running these events...allows local surfers the ability to surf in home waters and inspire the next generation of talent to be active, enjoy the surrounding natural environment, and perhaps one day excel at a national level."

The Pāpāmoa event received funding through the Tauranga Western Bay Community Event Fund, a collaboration between Tauranga City Council, Western Bay of Plenty District Council, Acorn Foundation, BayTrust, and TECT. This fund provides financial support to community-led events that deliver positive social outcomes and enrich our communities.

Tauranga City Venues and Events Manager, Nelita Byrne, says the council is proud to support events that truly define our city – "our ocean and beaches are part of our DNA".

"These events inspire the next generation of surfers and highlight the beauty of our coastal city. We can't wait to welcome surfers and spectators to our stunning beaches this summer." ■

PRRA meets in February

Pāpāmoa Residents and Ratepayers' Association (PRRA) is kicking off 2025 with a meeting on Monday 10 February, featuring ACT MP and Pāpāmoa resident Cameron Luxton.

PRRA chair Philip Brown says Cameron will talk about his discus-

sions with Tauranga City Council about its land deals, the Treaty Principles Bill going through Parliament, and the local Government bill changes.

The meeting will be held at the Legacy Chapel on Te Okuroa Drive at 7pm. ■

Taylor Swift tribute show

Pāpāmoa College Taylor Swift tribute band Sunkissed returns to Totara Street for an all-ages show this February almost a year after its first show.

Since launching in March the band has also played shows in Hamilton and Thames, bringing joy to Swifties by playing all the hits they love – from all of the Eras.

The band consists of Pāpāmoa College teacher Kurt Somervell and students Cybele Chapman, Stella Riley, Videl Harrison, James Ferns, and Taylah Medeiros.

Sunkissed – Taylor Swift Tribute Show is at Totara Street, Mount Maunganui, on Sunday 23 February at 3.30pm. Tickets from Totara Street. ■



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Tauranga City Councillor for Pāpāmoa Ward *Steve Morris* Big decisions ahead for our city

In 2025, Tauranga faces major decisions, including the future of three-waters. The Government has required councils to consider changes to how we manage drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater. Options include keeping things as they are or spinning off water services into a Council-Controlled Organisation (CCO) - a separate entity owned by Council or potentially in partnership with WBOP District Council.

The advantages of a CCO include that it can be run with a commercial focus, potentially improving efficiency and

increasing Council's borrowing capacity. However, separating water services from Council reduces direct accountability, and higher borrowing will affect ratepayers and water bill-payers in the pocket. This is an important issue, and I encourage you to stay informed.

We also need to address the financial challenges left by the outgoing Commission. In addition to running Council at a deficit, they locked in major city centre projects with high sunk costs. With many households struggling in a cost-of-living crisis, my priority is keeping rate increases down while

still investing in essential infrastructure. That means finding savings within Council to strike the right balance.

Council will soon consult on its 2025 budget, giving you the chance to have your say on spending priorities. Join me for a coffee catch-up on Saturday, 15 February, from 10am-11am at Pablo Restaurant and Café (255 The Boulevard, The Sands Town Centre, Pāpāmoa). It's a great chance to discuss Council and Pāpāmoa issues, meet fellow residents, and support a local business. Contact me any time steve.morris@tauranga.govt.nz or 021 0900 1817. ■

Pāpāmoa Food Hub update

By Bruce Banks of Pāpāmoa Food Hub



tive season financial hangover is due to set in.

We are experiencing an increase in requests for help from hard-working families, who for whatever reason find themselves

struggling to put food on the table. It may be a reduction in self-employed income, a reduction in work hours, sickness, recovering from an accident, rent or mortgage increases, unexpected medical bill, or a raft of other reasons bringing these working people to us for food support.

We do find that people in paid work are very reluctant to reach out to us, but hey, everyone can go through a tough patch at some time in their life, and Pāpāmoa Food Hub is here to help you too.

To apply for help just fill in the application form on our website (papfoodhub.org.nz) and we will get in touch. Please make sure you provide all the information needed so that your

application can be processed without delay.

Pāpāmoa Food Hub delivers our food parcels on Thursdays between 10am and 2pm, and the applicant must be present with photo ID to accept the delivery.

Our standard food parcel is for a family of four for three days. It consists of breakfast, lunch, dinner, and even dessert. We provide our own recipe cards for all the main meals, along with fresh or frozen meat and vegetables. A generous amount of pantry staples is also included, plus a few treats.

Pāpāmoa Food Hub would not be possible without the fantastic support we get from our community. Special mention to our platinum partner Pāpāmoa Pak'nSave, Loretta and Brian at Pāpāmoa Mitre 10, and the team at Tremains Real Estate in Pāpāmoa. Your support has made a big difference.

Pāpāmoa Food Hub not only offers help, but also needs help too.

We need a treasurer to join our team. Not a big job, but an important one to keep track of our finances and complete monthly and annual reports using Xero.

We also need more men to join our delivery team. Every few Thursdays from 10am to 2pm.

For more about either role call 021 155 0633 and leave us a message.

You can keep up with all the latest news from the Food Hub by following and sharing our Facebook page 'Pāpāmoa Food Hub'.

We also have a donation bin at the front of Pak'nSave for items purchased in-store. Other donations can be dropped off at Property Brokers at the Plaza, or MP Tom Rutherford's office on Domain Road.

This month we need toothbrushes, toothpaste, deodorants, and shampoo.

Cash donations are always welcome. Every dollar helps. Please text your email address to 021 155 0633 so we can send you a donation receipt at the end of the financial year. Being a registered charity, donations over \$5 are eligible for a 33 per cent tax credit.

Our bank account is Pāpāmoa Food Hub Charitable Trust - 01 0475 0270717 00.

Thanks to all the Pāpāmoa people who made cash donations in 2024. It truly does help us keep supporting the Pāpāmoa community. ■

We can hardly believe it. Pāpāmoa Food Hub has just completed its first full year

of service to the Pāpāmoa community, being driven almost entirely by volunteers. We could not have done it without their time and enthusiasm. Thank you all.

Our first year saw us grow rather quickly, and we soon needed bigger premises. I am pleased to say that the move is now complete.

The Emergency Services Food Drive in November was a massive success and we set another record: almost 70 trailer loads of donations, and \$1300 in cash. Thanks to the community and the 225 volunteers who took part.

It looks like 2025 is going to be a big year, with demand for food support increasing even more. Schools are back this month, and the fes-



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MP for Bay of Plenty Tom Rutherford

Youth Parliament 2025 - Bay of Plenty representative sought

Youth Parliament 2025 is an opportunity for young people across New Zealand to engage in the parliamentary process, represent their communities, and develop leadership skills. Your involvement is important in making this programme successful and accessible to youth.

Young people in the Bay of Plenty are being invited to put their hands up for an exciting opportunity to represent their region at Youth Parliament 2025.

The programme, now in its 11th iteration, gives young New Zealanders the chance to learn about our democracy firsthand, engage

with important issues affecting their communities, and have their voices heard at the highest level.

As someone who was fortunate to be a Youth MP myself back in 2013, I know firsthand what an incredible opportunity this is for young people interested in making a difference in their community.

One Youth MP will be selected to represent the Bay of Plenty electorate. The successful candidate will be involved in both local community engagement and parliamentary activities, including a two-day event at Parliament in Wellington.

Youth Parliament runs from Monday 28 April 2025 to Friday 29 August 2025, including a two-day event at Parliament on Tuesday 1 July and Wednesday 2 July 2025.

Selected Youth MPs will gather feedback from their peers and communities, present those perspectives to Parliament, and report back on their experience.

This unique opportunity is open to young people aged 16-18yrs.

Anyone interested in applying is encouraged to email bopmp@parliament.govt.nz, with a video telling me why you would like to be our local Bay of Plenty Youth MP and what are



Tom Rutherford

some of the biggest challenges facing our local community.

Youth Parliament provides a one-of-a-kind experience for young people passionate about their community and democracy to gain real-world experience in national politics. ■

Don't be a victim at the beach

By Bruce Banks
Pāpāmoa Neighbourhood Support
Co-ordinator

With the glorious summer weather, we remind you to take extra care when visiting our beaches.

Criminals hang about looking for opportunities, so please remember:

- Swim between the flags and obey instructions from the lifeguards.
- **Do not leave valuables unattended.** Stashing your wallet and phone under your towel may not be the wisest thing to do.
- Keep your car keys safe. Popping them in the wheel arch on top of the tyre is a no-no. You have no way of knowing if you have been observed "hiding" your keys.
- Most car keys contain automatic openers and if found, or stolen, all a dishonest person needs to do is wander around the carpark and push the 'unlock' button. When they spot lights flashing from the right vehicle, it's easy pickings from there.
- It's not uncommon for someone to wait and observe beachgoers. The victim arrives at the beach, chucks a towel down, stashes their gear in a bag and pops it under the towel before heading into the surf. The beach is a busy place at times and all it needs is for someone to nonchalantly wander up, sit on your towel, and make sure they are not being observed. And in just a few seconds pick up your towel and bag and wander off as if it was their own.

Over recent months I have been fielding some calls and emails from Pāpāmoa residents asking about, and commenting on, the rise in car break-ins and stolen cars in our community.

We cannot deny that this type of vehicle offending is continuing, but, it is not just a Pāpāmoa problem. The offending is

widespread, not just Bay of Plenty-wide, but at a national level. Yes, this type of vehicle offending is happening right across New Zealand.

There are two distinctly different types of offending. Car break-ins and car thefts.

Car break-ins are usually opportunistic. Valuable items left inside a vehicle and in clear sight, are just like a hot chip to a seagull... irresistible. The offenders, some of them youth in their teens or younger, are out and about looking for an easy target, so try not to make your car too attractive to the thieves.

1. Lock your car (too many unlocked cars are being targeted)
2. If you cannot garage your car, park it in a well-lit spot.
3. Fit an after-market car alarm if one is not standard at manufacture.

Car thefts are also occurring regularly. Cars are being stolen for a number of reasons including to joyride in, or to commit other offences such as petrol thefts, burglaries and ram raids.

Thieves tend to be selective on the type of vehicle they steal. It is common knowledge among thieves that the easiest cars to break into and steal are the smaller sedan/hatch type vehicles (1990s) or thereabouts.



This is because generally they do not have factory fitted alarms or immobilisers, can be accessed easily by popping a quarter-light window, and are relatively easy to hotwire.

The best theft protection is to go out and spend around \$100 on a steering wheel lock. Even cheaper than your insurance excess. Thieves are lazy and will find an easier target and leave your car alone if they look in and see a steering wheel lock fitted.

Some residents who contact me when they have a car break-in or have a car stolen are pretty angry, to say the least, and even resort to criticising Police saying they "are doing nothing" and "letting the crooks get away with it". Some also vent the same thoughts on social media without thinking.

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Tom Rutherford
MP for Bay of Plenty

I'm a local, just like you

Bay of Plenty Electorate Office
3/9 Domain Road, Papāmoa
07 542 0505
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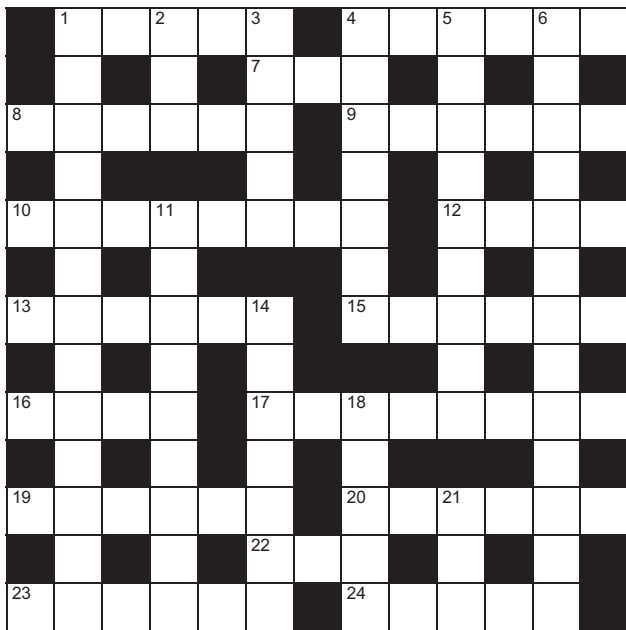
SUMMER QUIZ

- Which ice cream flavour was the first ever created?
- What is the name of the 2007 animated film about a rat who dreams of becoming a chef in Paris?
- In Greek mythology, who is the god of the sun?
- What kind of fruit is traditionally used to make guacamole?
- Which U.S. state is nicknamed the "Sunshine State"?
- What is the name of the long, hot drink popular at beach bonfires and made with coffee, chocolate, or alcohol?
- What type of footwear is commonly associated with summer beaches?
- Who sings the hit song "Hot in Herre"?
- In which country did surfing originate?
- What is the main ingredient in a piña colada?
- What is the name of the shark in the movie "Jaws"?
- In "Grease," where do Danny and Sandy meet during the summer?
- Which animated Pixar movie features a family of superheroes?
- Who plays the main character in the movie "Forgetting Sarah Marshall"?
- What island does Moana live on in the Disney movie?
- What is the name of the summer camp in the movie "The Parent Trap"?
- What beach sport is central to the movie "Blue Crush"?
- What is the name of SpongeBob SquarePants' favourite jellyfishing net?
- In which state is the show "Outer Banks" set?
- In "Finding Nemo," what is the name of the sea turtle who helps Marlin?
- What is the largest ocean on Earth?
- What natural phenomenon causes summer in one hemisphere?
- What type of tree produces coconuts?
- What is the term for a group of butterflies?
- What is the hottest planet in our solar system?
- What animal is often seen basking in the sun on a rock and is sometimes called a "sunbather"?
- What chemical process do plants use to make energy from sunlight?
- What is the name of the layer of Earth's atmosphere that protects us from the sun's UV rays?
- What type of whale migrates thousands of kilometres to warmer waters in the summer to breed?
- Which summer fruit can float because it is 92 per cent water?
- What year was the first modern Summer Olympics held?
- What is the hottest desert in the world?
- What famous beach in Rio de Janeiro is known for its lively summer parties?
- What country is home to the Great Barrier Reef?
- What European country is famous for its beaches on the Costa del Sol?
- Which U.S. National Park is known for its geysers and hot springs?
- In which U.S. city can you visit South Beach?
- What country is the origin of the luau?
- Which Caribbean island is famous for its steel drum music?
- What Italian city is the birthplace of gelato?

ANSWERS

- Vanilla
- Ratatouille
- Apollo
- Avocado
- Florida
- Hot toddy
- Jandals
- Nelly
- Hawaii
- Pineapple
- Bruce
- At the beach
- The Incredibles
- Jason Segel
- Motunui
- Camp Walden
- Surfing
- Old Reliable
- North Carolina
- Crush
- Pacific Ocean
- The tilt of Earth's axis
- Palm tree
- A kaleidoscope
- Venus
- Lizard
- Photosynthesis
- Ozone layer
- Humpback whale
- Watermelon
- 1896
- Sahara
- Copacabana
- Australia
- Spain
- Yellowstone National Park
- Miami
- Hawaii
38. Hawaii
39. Trinidad
40. Florence

Quick crossword



Across

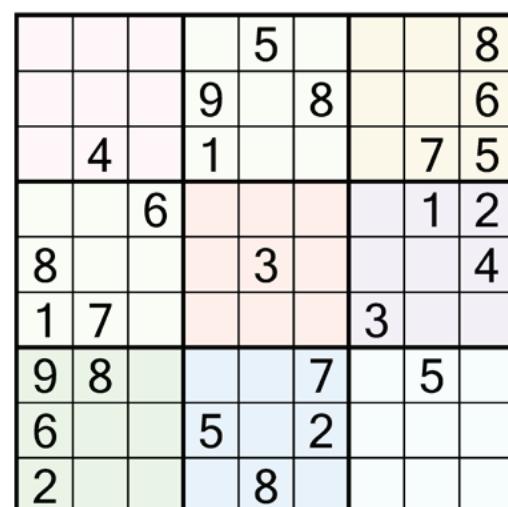
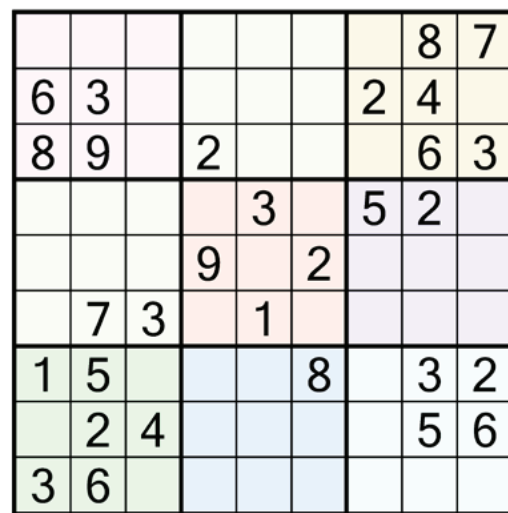
- Steam room (5)
- Argue about (6)
- Owing (3)
- In a direct line (6)
- Underhand (6)
- Praiseworthy (8)
- Flying toy (4)
- Magazine boss (6)
- Merchant (6)
- Blessing (4)
- Unpredictable (8)
- Underling (6)
- Mean (6)
- Large vase (3)
- Alter (6)
- Birds that fly in a skein (5)

Down

- Cleanliness, the military way (4,3,6)
- Work with (3)
- Speak off the cuff (2-3)
- Pudding (7)
- Daily meal (9)
- Dive in (4,3,6)
- School punishment (9)
- Business income (7)
- Fabricating (5)
- Digit (3)

Sudoku

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.



Kids' corner

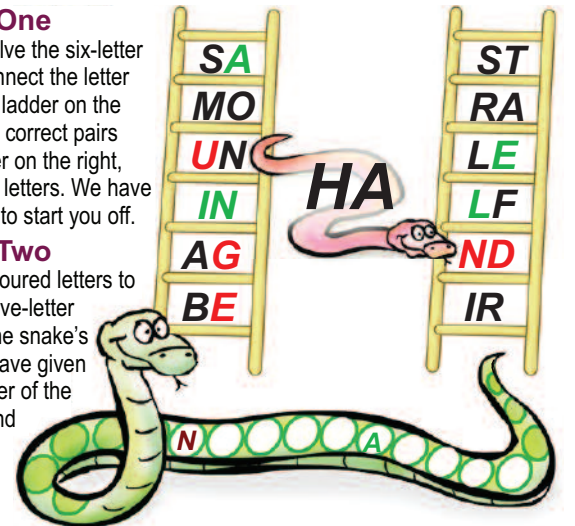
Snakes and Ladders

Puzzle One

Can you solve the six-letter words? Connect the letter pairs in the ladder on the left with the correct pairs in the ladder on the right, with middle letters. We have solved one to start you off.

Puzzle Two

Use the coloured letters to make two five-letter words on the snake's back. We have given the first letter of the red word and the green word.



Solutions

Crossword

Across: 1. Sauna, 4. Debate, 7. Due, 8. Lineal, 9. Sneaky, 10. Laudable, 12. Kite, 13. Editor, 15. Trader, 16. Boon, 17. Volatile, 19. Minion, 20. Intend, 22. Um, 23. Change, 24. Geese. **Down:** 1. Spit and polish, 2. Use, 3. Ad-lib, 4. Revenue, 18. Lying, 21. Toe.

Snakes and Ladders

Puzzle 1
SAHARA, MOHAI, UNHAND, INHALE, AGHAST, BEHALF, NUDGE, ALIEN.

Sudoku

7	6	9	4	5	3	1	2	8
4	1	2	6	5	3	9	8	7
5	2	1	9	7	8	4	3	6
3	4	8	1	2	6	7	5	9
8	9	5	7	1	2	4	1	6
4	3	6	8	9	5	7	1	2
9	4	1	7	3	6	5	2	8
8	9	2	7	4	1	6	3	5
3	4	6	8	9	5	7	1	2
1	7	5	2	6	4	3	8	9
9	8	1	7	5	2	6	4	3
6	1	3	5	4	2	8	7	9
2	5	3	8	9	7	1	6	4
8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	9
3	6	8	5	2	7	4	1	9
1	3	5	4	2	8	9	7	6
9	8	1	7	5	2	6	4	3
6	1	3	5	4	2	8	7	9
2	5	3	8	9	7	1	6	4
8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	9
3	6	8	5	2	7	4	1	9
1	3	5	4	2	8	9	7	6

Trees damaged at Mōtiti Reserve

Pōhutukawa are beloved as New Zealand's Christmas tree, but these taonga are among several trees deliberately damaged at Mōtiti Reserve by being cut down or poisoned.

Tauranga City Council Team Leader: Urban Foresters, Mark Armistead says intentional tree damage has been going on at the reserve for about two years but has recently escalated.

"We had planted some really nice new pōhutukawa, and some people have gone and snapped them in half."

And a Norfolk Island hibiscus tree, which provides shade to children and families near the reserve's playground, has been hit with a machete or axe. The damage is malicious and intentional, says Mark.

"Looking at the damage, we have to assume someone has put detrimental chemicals in it. We are starting to notice some decline in the tree."

The council has put up signs about tree vandal-

ism, and Mark urges the public to take action by calling the police and council contact centre if they see it taking place.

"The trees are a public asset owned by the community. When people do this, it costs the community money for us to remedy the problem and sometimes remove the tree and replant the tree," says Mark.

"That's the physical cost, but the other cost is the benefits of the tree are lost."

Trees provide vital shade, and in contrast to man-made shade structures which wear out, they appreciate in value.

"It's pretty hard on the community to lose a tree."

The reasons people damage trees are primarily selfish, says Mark, including protecting their views or because they dislike debris from the trees.

Tauranga City Council has a target of 30 per cent tree canopy cover across the city – Pāpāmoa currently has just 5 per cent. ■



Trees at Mōtiti Reserve have been the target of vandalism.

Pressure on early opening for interchange



Artist's impression of the Pāpāmoa East Interchange. SUPPLIED: TAURANGA CITY COUNCIL

The opening of the Pāpāmoa East Interchange could be fast-tracked—providing relief for local businesses and residents.

The interchange is currently planned to open in mid-2026. Bay of Plenty MP Tom Rutherford publicly shared his correspondence with NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi about early access consideration of the interchange onto the Tauranga Eastern Link. The interchange will be a game-changer for residents and businesses in Pāpāmoa East.

Responding to the MP, NZTA says the organisation is exploring options with Tau-

ranga City Council to potentially open entry/exit ramps earlier than planned.

"We agree it would be positive for everyone if a pragmatic way forward could be found, and fully appreciate the pressures on the local network," NZTA wrote to the MP.

The organisation says it is working through signage and tolling requirements to ensure the decision made is "efficient, safe and fair for everyone using the TEL".

The Sands Town Centre, which opened in November last year, showed its support of Tom's request for a fast-track opening date, asking followers on its social media pages to engage with posts. ■

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