



LIVE

Summer
The Best of Taranaki

The Best of Taranaki

Every local will have a reason for why they live here.
For many it will involve the mountain or the surf.
Often both.

New Plymouth photographer Brody Dolan captured this issue's cover shot of delicate pink and green hues in the surf at Back Beach one evening, as well as this stunning sunset of Taranaki Maunga.

*Welcome to our Summer 2026 edition.
Simply the best.*

EDITOR:

Irena Brooks

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS:

Nick Walker, Hannah Mumby,
Andy Bassett, Richard Hobo

PHOTOGRAPHERS:

Roger Richardson, Andy Jackson

COVER SHOT:

Back Beach wave
by Brody Dolan

FINANCIAL CONTROLLER:

Tony Brooks

DESIGN: favourthebrave.nz

EDITORIAL & ADVERTISING:

Irena Brooks - 021 555 144,
irena@livemagazine.co.nz

VISIT US ONLINE:

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Autumn 2026 Issue

The Autumn 2026 issue of LIVE
is due out FRI 3rd April

The deadline for booking advertising
is 5pm Friday 6th March





PUKEKURA THE PARADE

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TE ATAWA
TARANAKI

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A smart alternative to traditional suburban living, these are stylish, lock-and-leave homes right in the middle of all the action.

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All dwellings include easy access, each with onsite parking (accessed from Pendarves St) and storage units.



All homes have open plan living, and either sunny outdoor terraces or decks.



For the enjoyment of all residents, adjacent to Group A is a beautifully landscaped decking area under established trees - with a walkway to the original Lemon St entrance.

ARCHITECTURE

solari ARCHITECTS

LANDSCAPE DESIGN

blac.

CONSTRUCTION PARTNER

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ED EGRAZONT
DIXON

Project update.

Sixteen homes within the development have now sold and further sales are in the pipeline. With framing complete and cladding progressing across the site, prospective buyers can now better visualise the quality of the finished homes and envisage life within this thoughtfully designed community.

As interest rates ease and sales activity in this price bracket continues to strengthen, now is an ideal time to secure one of the remaining townhouses at today's pricing. Demand is growing as construction advances, further highlighting the rare opportunity that Pukekura - The Parade presents.

Contact Neale or Rachel for further details, or to attend one of the information evenings at Bayleys.



Example main bedroom with ensuite (plans vary across the development). Townhouses in Groups A, B, C, H & D provide a serene tree canopy-level outlook.



Group H features seat-level balustrading and an extensively planted bank, underneath mature Pohutukawa trees - which are undergoing a staged professional thinning programme. Townhouse #33 enjoys direct pedestrian access down to Lemon Street.

Construction update.

Build partner Livingstone Building is making excellent progress onsite, with all 36 townhouses programmed for staged completion between April and mid-October 2026.

Cladding is in various stages of installation, footpaths, driveways and roads are being formed, kitchens are starting to be installed, and specialist thinning of the mature Pohutukawa trees onsite is enabling beautifully dappled light as well as retaining privacy and outlook.

Complementing the architectural design of these townhouses by Solari is a significant landscaping design by Blac Projects.



SALES



LICENSED UNDER THE REA ACT 2008

Neale Parkinson
027 446 1550

Rachel Williams
027 218 8683

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WWW.PUKEKURATHEPARADE.CO.NZ



All images artistic representation.
Please refer to the architectural specification
for included fixtures & fittings.



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Elephant Rock / Peter Florence



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What we have coming up ...



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Harvenwood Bowls
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Art at Home Book
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LED Ribbed Pillar Candles
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Small \$35



Ortigia Sicilia Bergamotto
Diffuser
\$85

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INTERIORS

The Best of TARANAKI

Taranaki is currently on track to win the sunniest region of New Zealand for the third time in five years. With sunny skies, world-class surf beaches and an accessible, almost perfect cone-like mountain, visitors are increasingly discovering why locals live here.

We gathered together our team's top tips to make the most of each day... no matter what the weather has in store.

WORDS Irena Brooks

PHOTO Brody Dolan – Back Beach (between the islands)

On fine, calm days, heading to the beach is a must. You can usually catch a wave in the region somewhere along Surf Highway 45 which runs roughly parallel to the Taranaki coastline from New Plymouth to Hāwera. A myriad of adjacent roads lead intriguingly to the many surf breaks that give the highway its name.

Mornings are usually the best time to hit the beach.

By the afternoon the wind tends to turn onshore, sometimes to a sand-blasting intensity, but mostly, just a bit annoying. Unless you're a kite-surfer — then the howling westerlies are nirvana.

In New Plymouth, Fitzroy and East End beaches are both excellent options when the breeze is south or south-easterly, while Oakura and Back Beach are great with an easterly or nor'easter.

Westerlies are a great time to drag out your kite-surfing and wind-surfing apparatus, or head to a river to cool off.

The Waiwhakaiho offers great cliff jumping at Meeting of the Waters, Merrilands and at the end of Rimu Street at a place the locals have dubbed 'Telecoms' — a scarily high leap into the water below.

There is also a lovely long clear stretch of river here that makes for a great place to swim some long 'lengths' but without a painted line at the bottom.

Corbett Park out at Oakura offers some shallow water for the kids and Stony River at Okato has the coldest river water in the region. The water is so clear it fizzes as it funnels down through the rocks that make the Stony River a perfect example of an atronym. You can find your own little pool that's just the right size for your group.





Pukekura Park waterfall (Charlotte Curd)



Back Beach sand dune
(Laura Warren)



Aquatic Centre

Family Options

Ngāmotu Beach by the port is ideal for families and people who don't want surf. Sheltered by the breakwater this is New Plymouth's only calm beach. There's also a playground, shady trees and grass with picnic tables, space to throw a ball or play some low-key cricket, free barbecues you can use and the ice-cream truck is there most days.

Destination Kāwaroa by the Aquatic Centre is another free attraction. It's the most amazing playground right by the sea, with sensory, water and educational aspects throughout, exercise areas, walking and biking tracks, plus a great little cafe.

Next door, the Aquatic Centre boasts one of New Zealand's few remaining 50m long outdoor pools, along with a toddlers' pool, learners' pool and diving pool. There's inside swimming too, a wave machine, spa pools and water slides, plus a cafe.

Take the tribe for a walk or bike ride along the Coastal Walkway. Pack a picnic, water bottles and togs and enjoy a day out with the family — cycling, swimming and discovering the playgrounds, swimming spots and cafes along its 13km length.

East End Skate Park is right by East End Beach with a relaxing outdoor cafe across the road. The skating rink is next door making this is a great place to take your kids and their wheeled Christmas presents.

Pukekura Park offers an amazing playground, duck-feeding, cafes and ice-creams, The Fernery, rowboats on the lake, a fountain and a waterfall. Walk right through the park to the Bowl of Brooklands and once the kids have tired of rolling down the hill, visit the Brooklands Zoo (at the top of said hill). Along with all the critters there is another fab playground.

Festival of Lights is a must-do at least one night — see story page 20.



Destination Kāwaroa



Cape Egmont Lighthouse (Peter Florence)

Taranaki Road Trips

Do a complete circuit of the mountain (170kms) — you can pack a lot into the roughly 16 hours of daylight (5am — 9pm) we get here in the summer. Head to the coast first and start down Surf Highway 45, before the wind gets up too much, and return via SH3 through Hāwera, Eltham, Stratford and Inglewood.

With funky cafes, access to the Egmont National Park (and Pukeiti gardens), various walkways, the Cape Egmont Lighthouse, Parihaka Pa and Yarrows' famous bakery at Manaia, the coast offers plenty to see and do.

Pick up a Surf Highway 45 brochure from PukeAriki i-SITE, and info on the four towns — King Edward Park in Hāwera is a great spot to take the kids with its Wendy Statue (that's 'Wendy' from Peter Pan) and Sound Mirrors.

Eltham is a hotspot for some cool antiques and second-hand shops, while Inglewood has the Fun Ho! Toy Museum.

Stratford has a multitude of attractions (see pages 22 & 23) and is a logical place to stop at on your way to the Forgotten World Highway or Mt Taranaki.

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Mount Taranaki

The new Manganui Gorge Suspension Bridge across to the ski field on Mt Taranaki is a landmark worth going to see — day or night. If you go during the day you can tie it in with activities in Stratford.

The trip up Mt Taranaki to The Tarns is a decent hike (allow a good half day there and back) and the ever-expanding parking area at the top of Mangorei Road indicates its popularity. You'll meet a lot of people heading up or back and you usually have to queue to get the obligatory shot of the mountain peak reflected in the water. But it's all good natured and the views make it worthwhile. Plus you also get to see the newly opened and expanded Pouakai Hut.

Wilkie's Pools with its natural rock slide and very refreshing water (yes, we mean REALLY cold) is popular with hardy kids and teens.

Iconic Taranaki Activities

Christmas at the Bowl is a terrific family experience that culminates in a magnificent fireworks extravaganza. It's on Sunday 21st December 2025 and gates open at 5pm with pre-show entertainment from 6.30pm and Taranaki's largest variety show from 8.00pm. Picnics are welcome and there are food vendors on site. It's a fun family night to celebrate the festive season and entry is with a gold coin donation.

Climbing to the top of Paritutu is something every able-bodied resident and visitor should do at least once.

There are great views (see photo P46 & 47) and it's a little bit of adventure that takes less than an hour. You might even see some seals in the Marine Reserve below.

Check out entertainment options at this year's Festival of Lights (see pages 20 and 21) and schedule a trip to see a concert at The Bowl of Brooklands (see pages 18 & 19).

Walk along the sand from Back Beach to Oakura (only ever do on a low outgoing tide). It's a distance of about 8kms and takes around 3 hours, and of course, you'll need to sort a ride back into town.

The Coastal Walkway is a beacon for all ages and there is plenty to see and do along here: the Wind Wand, Te Rewa Rewa Bridge, the Bike Park and BMX track at Bell Block. The wetlands and lagoon just beyond them are worth a look too.



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Mt Taranaki (Peter Florence)

Wet Day Options

(or just escape from the sun)

PukeAriki is a fabulous free option to learn about the region's history and see current exhibitions.

Stock up on some summer reading at the library.

Try out Laser Tag, mini putt or ten pin bowling at Bowlarama, or do one of the escape rooms in town — we've done them all and they're a blast.

Govett Brewster Art Gallery and the Len Lye Centre are always worth a look, while the local Farmers Market operates every Sunday morning along Currie Street in the CBD.

Check out this issue's feature on the Taranaki Food and Drink Awards (starts P29) to get a heads up on the best cafes, bars and restaurants to head to this summer. There are some wonderful options to while away a wet afternoon or evening with friends.



Len Lye Centre
(Roger Richardson)



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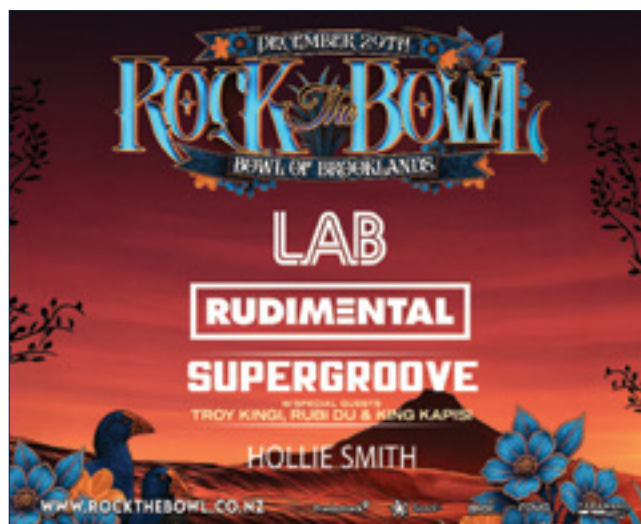


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What's happening...

* Information correct at date of printing. Please refer to our website for the latest information.



Summer at Puke Ariki!



Whether you need a beach read, activities to keep your tamariki reading while school's out, or new ways to see the city – Puke Ariki is the place to be for occupying your whānau this summer.

Summer Reading Challenge

Our much-loved summer reading challenge is back. Read three books with a common theme, like New Zealand authors, adventure, or animal stories. Pick up and complete the activity sheet from your local library and go in the draw to win a prize! Suitable for children aged 6-12 years, the competition runs 1 December to 31 January. If you're out of town for the holidays, no problem, just download the sheets from pukeariki.com

Beach Reads

Dive into our top beach reads! Reserve your favourites and borrow them for free with your library card from any of our libraries.



Local Recommendations

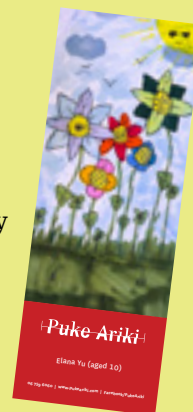
The New Plymouth isite Visitor Information Centre is located in Puke Ariki. Visit our friendly team for local must-dos this summer, as well as booking services for accommodation, activities, attractions and travel in New Plymouth, Taranaki, and New Zealand.

Historic Walking Tours

Uncover the stories behind New Plymouth's European settlement, on a captivating two-hour walking tour led by our knowledgeable Puke Ariki guides. Hear tales of the land wars that started in Taranaki and discover how these events shaped both Māori and European communities and other historical events. \$20 per person or free for under-16s. Book on our website pukeariki.com or phone the isite on 06 759 6146.

Bookmark Competition

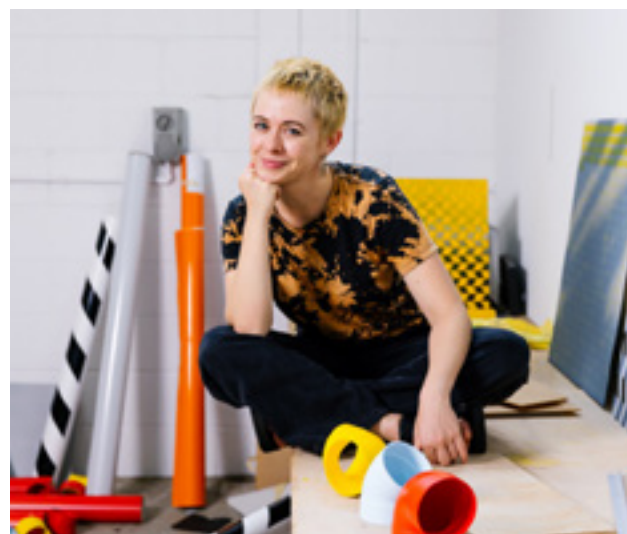
If your kids have a love of books and making art, encourage them to enter our bookmark competition. Winning entries are turned into free bookmarks for library visitors to enjoy throughout the year. The competition runs from 1 December to 31 January. Entry forms can be picked up from our libraries or downloaded from our website pukeariki.com



Summer Studio

When you've finished exploring Puke Ariki, walk over to Govett-Brewster Art Gallery | Len Lye Centre and explore *Soft Stomp, Dizzy Roll!*, a project by Gadigal-based (Sydney, Australia) artist Nadia Odlum. Explore the playful intersections of language, text, and movement: transform the space into a living workshop, library, and stage.

Sat 20 Dec – Wed 28 Jan | 10am – 5pm | Free | Drop in | more details at govettbrewster.com



Nadia Odlum. Photo by Jacquie Manning.



CHRISTMAS AT THE BOWL / 21 DEC

ROCK THE BOWL / 29 DEC

KINGSTON CALLING / 14 FEB



TURN UP THE HEAT: EPIC SUMMER EVENTS AT THE BOWL!

Summer in Taranaki is about slowing down, soaking up the sun, and enjoying the music that moves you. This season, the Bowl of Brooklands is hosting unforgettable events that bring world-class acts to our backyard.

Rock the Bowl is back for its third and biggest edition yet.

Leading the charge is **L.A.B.**, Aotearoa's chart-topping sensation known for their soulful blend of funk, reggae, and rock; perfect for a summer night under the stars.

Joining them are UK hitmakers **Rudimental**, bringing their infectious energy and global anthems that will have you dancing from the first beat.

Adding a dose of nostalgia, **Supergroove** returns with their iconic grooves, teaming up with **Troy Kingi**, **Rubi Du**, and **King Kapisi** for a rare collaboration that promises to be unforgettable.

And to top it all off, the incomparable **Hollie Smith** will deliver her powerful, soulful vocals that have become a soundtrack to Kiwi summers.

Valentine's Day at the Bowl? Yes, please. *Kingston Calling* is your chance to experience the smooth, sun-soaked sounds of reggae in one of New Zealand's most iconic venues.

At the heart of the lineup is the unmistakable voice of **UB40** featuring Ali Campbell, bringing timeless hits like *Red Red Wine* and *Kingston Town*; songs that have soundtracked summers for decades. It's the kind of music that makes you slow down, smile, and sing along.

But the magic doesn't stop there. Joining **UB40** are Kiwi favourites **Katchafire**, **The Black Seeds**, and **Corrella**, each bringing their own flavour of roots, reggae, and good vibes.

Don't miss your chance to be part of Taranaki's biggest summer celebrations. Secure your spot today and make this summer unforgettable. Grab your tickets now at npeventvenues.nz



NPDC

INSIDER TIPS BEHIND NEW PLYMOUTH'S RADIANT SUMMER



WORDS Corinne Borrie and Hannah Doherty

Set in the heart of New Plymouth, Pukekura Park will once again host Aotearoa's longest-running light festival. From December 20, 2025, to January 24, 2026, the TSB Festival of Lights offers a vibrant summer experience that radiates the spirit of Taranaki.

Behind every glowing moment is a true collaboration. While four creative minds shape the magic of the TSB Festival of Lights, they're backed by a passionate collective of support staff and volunteers who help bring the event to life.

We asked the team to share their top picks and insider tips for this year's spectacular celebration.

Meet the team:

Lisa Ekdahl (LE), Fraser Ross (FR),
Sharina Parsottam (SP), Briana Dolan (BD)

What are the must do's at this year's TSB Festival of Lights?

(BD) Live Music Bingo and the Sing-along cinema: Mamma Mia – because who doesn't love a bit of ABBA?

(FR) Definitely the Glow Boats, getting to see the park from a different perspective is an experience.

(LE) Putt in the Dark will be super popular. It's mini-golf at its finest but lit up to tie in seamlessly with the festival.

(SP) Having a cheeky beverage at the pop-up bar. What better way to soak up the summer vibes than enjoying some Taranaki brews with some free music.

What's the one moment at the festival that always gives you goosebumps?

(SP) The countdown to midnight on New Year's Eve is electric.

(FR) When the lights go on for opening night – it's both anxious and thrilling.

Which acts are you most excited about this year and why?

(LE) Flamingo Pier's New Years Eve set, pure high-energy magic to welcome in 2026.

(SP) Argh no, there's too many to list! I'd say Racing, Tahini Bikini, Mazbou Q, Chris Keene, and Aussie artists – Caravāna Sun and 19-Twenty.



Sharina Parsottam, Lisa Ekdahl, Briana Dolan, Fraser Ross.

Any surprises or new installations this year that people should look out for?

(FR) This year's light installations are next-level – immersive, interactive, and magical. Visitors will feel like they've stepped into another world.

What's one thing visitors always say after experiencing the festival?

(LE) How is this festival free? We couldn't hold such a great event without people's donations and the fantastic support from our partners and sponsors.

(BD) I can't wait for next year's event.

Any last comments on why people should visit this summer?

(BD) It's the pinnacle place to be in summer – good vibes; great lights; an eclectic mix of music and entertainment. Best of all, it's free and accessible to everyone.

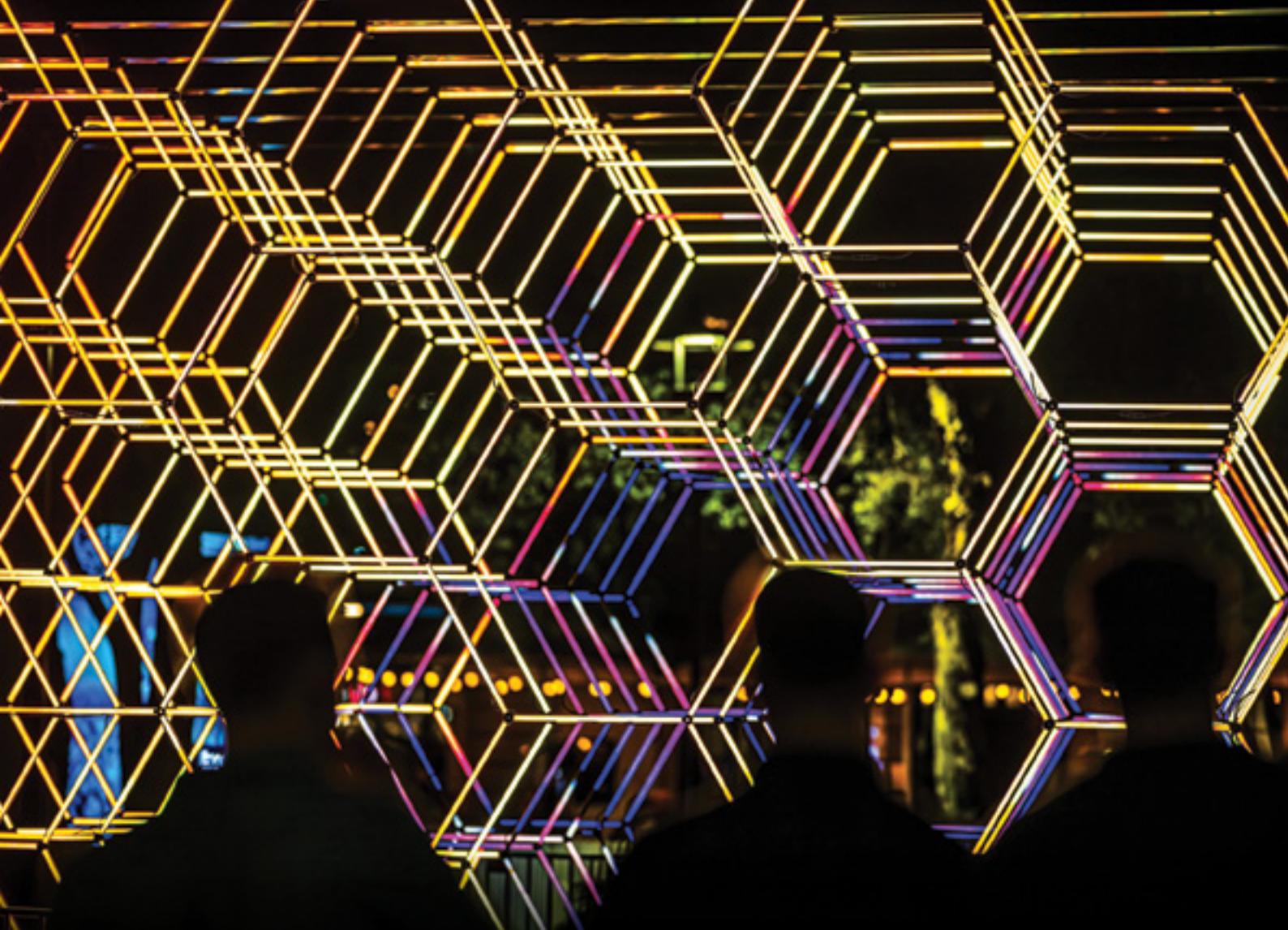
(SP) There's something for the whole whānau – a Festival Kids programme; a New Year's Eve celebration, and heaps of music and pop-up events to dive into.

(FR) You can visit the mountain and sea by day, then catch up with friends at the festival at night – there's no place like it.

(LE) Whether it's your first visit or your tenth, the lights will leave you breathless. It's a visual feast that celebrates imagination and innovation.

TSB Festival of Lights runs from Dec 20 – Jan 24, rain or shine.

For full programme details visit www.festivaloflights.nz or follow us on Facebook or Instagram @tsbfestivaloflights.



20 Dec 2025 - 24 Jan 2026

36 NIGHTS OF FREE LIGHTS AND ENTERTAINMENT!

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New Plymouth

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TARANAKI

like no other

PHOTO The Hive by Beamhacker

 **TSB**
**Festival
of Lights**



NPDC

A DAY IN Stratford

Your summer schedule in the
heart of Taranaki



With access to two national parks, stunning parks and walkways, a spectacular heritage trail, and countless opportunities to explore arts and culture, Stratford offers a lot to see and do for all ages.

Literary lovers will enjoy the Shakespearean links throughout town, like Stratford's **Glockenspiel Clock Tower**. Romeo and Juliet emerge for the balcony scene four times a day at 10am, 1pm, 3pm and 7pm. It's just one of the stops on the Stratford Discovery Trail (download the brochure from stratford.govt.nz/discover).

The Manganui Suspension Bridge on Taranaki Maunga, is a short walk from the Stratford Plateau Carpark at the end of Pembroke Road.

Explore the Magic of Te Rere o Kapuni, Dawson Falls plus fantastic tramping trails on and around the mountain.

Make a splash in **Wai o Rua - Stratford Aquatic Centre**. With group fitness classes, lane swimming, a kid's splash pad and much more at Stratford's newest recreational facility.

Be inspired at the **Percy Thomson Gallery** and **Percy's Place**, where you can pick up something special from our local Taranaki creators.

Grab the bikes, scooters and skateboards for a wheelie good time at **Victoria Park**. Home to the Skate Park, Children's Playground and Stratford Bike Park featuring educational cycle track, pump track, BBQ pavilion and half basketball court.



The Forgotten World Highway winds its way to the Republic of Whangamomona and through the scenic Tangarakau Gorge to Taumarunui. Discover the unique history of this important route by following New Zealand's oldest Heritage Trail.

Go back in time with a visit to **Taranaki Pioneer Village** and experience the magic of cinematic history at the iconic TET King's Theatre - the first theatre to play the 'talkies' in the southern hemisphere!

Summer Nights, Stratford's free annual celebration of summer is back on for 2026. Dust off your dancin' boots and join us on Saturday 31 January for an unforgettable evening of live country music in the picturesque King Edward Park.

Australian Idol finalist and emerging country music star Jake Whittaker will be joined by Rowdy's Rose, an award-winning husband and wife duo from the Waikato.



TE KAUNIHERA Ā ROHE C
WHAKAAHURANGI
STRATFORD
DISTRICT COUNCIL

For everything you need to know about eating, playing, and staying in Stratford, contact the wonderful team at the Stratford Library and Visitor Information Centre.

Info@stratford.govt.nz 06 765 5403

AMERICARNA

25 – 28 February 2026

More than just a car event, Americarna is a full-throttle celebration of the American automotive spirit.

Featuring everything from vintage classics to contemporary muscle cars and custom builds, thousands of people will descend on Taranaki to admire the cars, meet their owners, and soak up the vibrant atmosphere.

With the continued backing of Supercheap Auto as naming rights sponsor, the event promises to be bigger, better, and louder than ever before.

The backbone of Americarna remains its scenic cruises throughout Taranaki, with participating vehicles visiting towns such as Waitara, Inglewood, Ōpunake, Stratford, Hāwera, and New Plymouth. Local communities turn out in force to line the streets, enjoy entertainment, and welcome the Americarna convoy.

Everything culminates in the glorious AmeriCARNIVAL on Saturday the 28th of February, with all the entries lined up along Devon Street and the CBD of New Plymouth.

2025 saw trucks, and 2026 will see American Tractors and Farm Machinery. Expect a fantastic line-up including both new and vintage John Deere machines, working contractors' machinery, and other iconic brands such as Case, International, Oliver, Ford, Caterpillar, and more.

There will be a timber sports demo and chainsaw wood-chopping competition with Shane Jordan and his brother Jack Jordan, who has just won a world championship. Featuring four different athletes and shows on Egmont St, with times released closer to the event — keep an eye on the AmeriCARna Facebook page.

Flying over at 12pm, will be the Airforce Display — the best view will be from the Wind Wand and Puke Ariki Landing.

The Taranaki Radio Control Car Club will set up their thrilling remote-control car course — always a crowd favourite and guaranteed to deliver plenty of action!

This year, there's an exciting new twist. Kids who have their own remote-control cars, but aren't part of the club, will get the chance to join in the fun and race their cars on the course. Sessions will run at 11am, 12pm and 1pm, so bring along your car and get ready to hit the track!

As always, the event remains free to attend for the public, providing an accessible and exciting experience for all ages. Americarna continues to offer significant benefits to the local economy, boosting hospitality, retail, and accommodation providers across the region. In 2025 it brought \$11m to Taranaki.

New in 2026, Americarna will introduce a quiz night at the welcome function, additional family-friendly activities, and expanded community engagement across its stopover towns.

A visit to the spectacular Pukeiti Gardens on Wednesday 25 February has also been added to the programme.



Key Event Dates – Americarna 2026:

Tuesday, February 24, 2026

Registration Day

Wednesday, February 25, 2026

Pukeiti and Ōpunake Beach

Thursday, February 26, 2026

Waitara and Inglewood

Friday, February 27, 2026

Stratford, Hāwera, and New Plymouth's Main Street Cruise

Saturday, February 28, 2026

Americarnival in New Plymouth CBD

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Summer fun in the gardens



Taiao Exhibition

Pukeiti
Friday 16 Jan
- Sunday 1 Feb

Summer Grooves

Hollard Gardens
Sunday 1 Feb
11am to 2pm

The Summer Seaside Market

Hollard Gardens
Sunday 22 March
10am to 2pm

Dress-Up Pirate Party

Hollard Gardens
Thursday 22 Jan
10am to 11.30am

Tūpare Summer Jam

Tūpare River Flat
Saturday 22 Feb
11am to 2pm

Nature Hunt

Tūpare
Tuesday 13 April
10am to 11.30am

Pukeiti
Wednesday 8 April
10am to 11.30am

Hollard Gardens
Wednesday 15 April
10am to 11.30am

Magic Show with Josh from Magic Works

Tūpare River Flat
Sunday 25 Jan
10am to 12pm

Celebrate Children's Day

Pukeiti
Sunday 1 March
10am to 11.30am

Free Garden Events

Tūpare - Pukeiti - Hollard Gardens



A new pool for summer...

PHOTO: A RECENT PROJECT:



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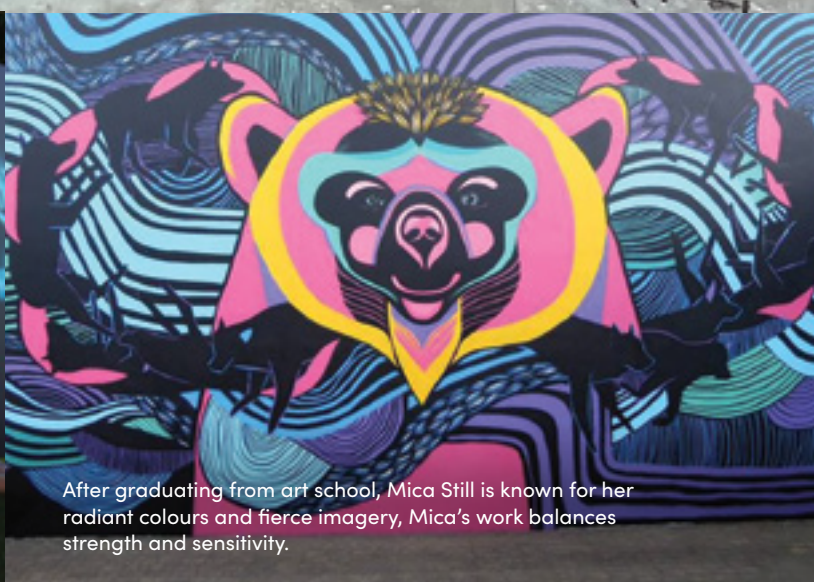
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Combining impressive technical ability and an undeniable work ethic, Dcypher is one of Aotearoa's most respected urban artists. He has worked with global brands, including Converse, Heineken, Chevrolet and the Los Angeles Dodgers and painted for festivals and projects around the world.



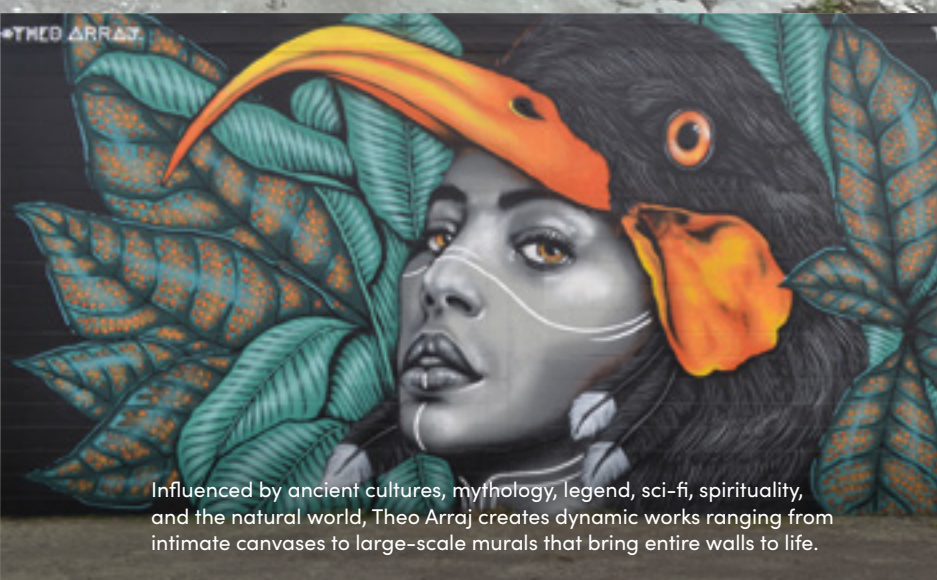
Founder and director of Get Up Fest, Cameron "Odjobs" Shennan at the recent Graffiti Jam held at the NZ Tattoo & Art Festival.



After graduating from art school, Mica Still is known for her radiant colours and fierce imagery, Mica's work balances strength and sensitivity.



2-9 March 2026
New Plymouth CBD



Influenced by ancient cultures, mythology, legend, sci-fi, spirituality, and the natural world, Theo Arraj creates dynamic works ranging from intimate canvases to large-scale murals that bring entire walls to life.

The first week of March is set to transform New Plymouth's CBD when 25 street artists are let loose with their imaginations, creativity and weapons of mass production.

New Plymouth can expect to see a range of styles from realism to contemporary, typography and graffiti.

The upcoming festival will feature an exciting lineup of renowned artists including Dcypher (NZ), Jack Douglas (AUS), Em Wafer (NZ), Dside (NZ), Elliot Francis Stewart (NZ), Mica Still (NZ) and Theo Arraj (NZ).

Local and emerging artists will also be on show with educational sessions and workshops providing a space for learning and growth.

"Worn and weathered spaces will be revived, and new energy will pulse through the city," says founder and director of Get Up Fest, Bristol-born local, Cameron "Odjobs" Shennan.

"We want to encourage the freedom to express and explore through art and creativity and for our community to feel a sense of pride and admiration for what we have to offer."

"GET UP FEST will build on Taranaki's growing reputation as a tourist art destination," adds Alexia Gyde, the event coordinator. "We understand our smaller communities are calling out to be involved and we plan to carry out this event around our maunga on an annual basis."

You can see the artists at work throughout the Central Business District of New Plymouth from the Len Lye Centre through to Gover Street. The main areas will be in the Huatoki Plaza area and walls within a few minutes walk of that. Make a point of checking out the new murals and street art during Taranaki Anniversary Weekend (7 - 9 March 2026) as the works near completion.

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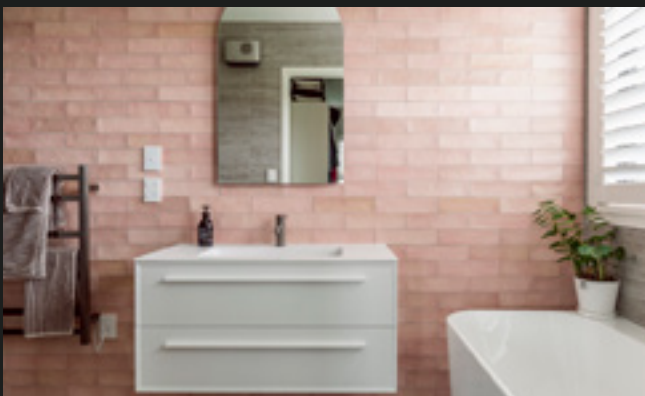
GET UP FEST? Contact:

getupfestivalnewplymouth@gmail.com

Get Up Fest Team

Cameron Shennan, Alexia Gyde, John Shewry, Sammy Allen, Haoro Hond
Volunteers are needed to assist with wall prepping and supporting the artists throughout the event.

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Taranaki Food and Drink Awards

This summer you'll want to take visiting friends and relatives to Taranaki's top eateries and bars ... but how do you know which ones are the best?



Entries for the Taranaki Food and Drink Awards were announced in November at a Monday night function held for hospitality businesses and their staff. Businesses were nominated by the public, with finalists and winners then voted on by the local hospitality industry themselves.

"It's pretty cool for local hospitality businesses to be recognised by their peers like this," say the organisers, Rachel Church, Chris Robinson and Zak Wilkinson.

The only category chosen by public vote was 'People's Choice'.

Winners for the 14 categories came from right round the region so no matter where you are these holidays you're never far away from excellent food and drink.

Image: Butler's Reef Burger

Wild Pear Kitchen

Winner — Best Cafe
+ People's Choice

“You guys are in a league of your own. No one competes.”

This comment from a customer on Facebook says it all for Taranaki's Best Cafe and People's Choice winner, Wild Pear Kitchen.

This plant-based organic wholefoods cafe offers food so tasty and good for you that customers have no guilt in returning regularly.

Offering fresh, flavoursome superfoods cookery that caters to healthy eaters, vegetarians, vegans or simply those with dietary restrictions.

Make sure you leave space for one of their legendary WPK smoothies or milkshakes (plenty of alternative milks available).



Wild Pear Kitchen owners, Bill and Chere Bailey and Chesney Hiroa (right).

TARANAKI FOOD & DRINKS AWARDS
Winner
2022 – 2025
Best Cafe
TARANAKI
Peoples Choice
AWARD
2025

Wild PEAR KITCHEN
PLANT BASED VEGETARIAN

@wildpearkitchen
www.wildpearkitchen.co.nz
178 Devon St East NP 4310



Butler's Reef

Winner — Best Regional Establishment

Butlers Reef is all about keeping it local. Great food, good drinks, and even better people.

“Our team’s passionate about creating a place where everyone feels at home, whether you’re here for a meal, a gig, or a catch-up on the back lawn,” says manager Will Rowlands.

“We’re proud to champion Taranaki’s best produce and suppliers, and we reckon that our genuine community spirit and family-friendly atmosphere is what make Butlers Reef truly special.”



1133 Main South Road, Ōakura • butlersreef.co.nz • [@butlersreef](https://www.instagram.com/butlersreef)

Sushi Ninja

Winner – Best Ethnic Dining Experience

“It is great to see a lot of people are going to Japan now and realising Japanese food is not just sushi and trying things like ramen,” say owners Sophie and Ken, who opened Sushi Ninja eighteen years ago.

“We have had ramen on the menu since opening but it is so popular now we have a whole page on the menu dedicated to ramen.”

‘Izakaya’, or sake bar dining, is Sushi Ninja’s main concept. It involves ordering a variety of dishes to share while enjoying your favourite beverage.

“It is a fun way to dine-out with friends and family trying many dishes,” explains Sophie.

Sushi is still on the menu but don’t expect the kind of sushi you can buy in plastic trays.

“The image of sushi in New Zealand is that it’s casual, cheap and takeaway,” says chef Ken. “However, in Japan it is a more special thing to go out and eat freshly chef-made sushi so we’re bringing it back to its authenticity.”



忍 者
SUSHI-NINJA

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Authentic Japanese sake bar dining - Great for groups to share a variety of Japanese dishes and Taranaki's only Sushi Train! Fun for the family.

★WINNER★
Taranaki Food & Drink Awards
BEST ETHNIC DINING EXPERIENCE



SUSHININJA.CO.NZ



Elixir

Finalist — Best Viiiibe!

Like the friend you've had for years, Elixir Cafe is the BFF of cafes. Welcoming, uncomplicated, reliable, and you can go months without seeing each other but when you do, you just pick up where you left off.

The menu has stayed pretty much unchanged for the 20 years since Elixir opened in February 2006. Eggs Benedict with home-made Hollandaise, waffles, Smashed Avocado on Toast, Mince on Toast and the ever-popular Chicken Bacon Sandwich (*pictured*).

"It's pretty much our best seller every single week," says owner Sue Katene. "We sell hundreds!"



A finalist in the Best Viiiibe category, Elixir Cafe offers a great mix of seating options with booths, tables and chairs plus sheltered outdoor benches. Right on the main street this is the classic bustling cafe full of colour, banter and smiles with great food, coffee and music.



20 YEARS

117 Devon St East, NP.

elixir
cafe • west • catering

2006–2026

Phone.(06) 769 9020

Incafe

Finalist — Outstanding Producer + Best Supplier

Joop and Carmen Verbeek are on a mission to make some of the world's finest certified organic coffee available — and they do it all from their premises in Bell Block, Taranaki.

Their coffee beans are directly sourced from sustainable crops with farming practices that sequester carbon, avoid chemicals, and maintain biodiversity for future generations.

InCafe coffee is traditionally drum-roasted here in Taranaki and offers exceptional flavour, fair prices and climate-positive practices from crop to cup.



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RICE Bar and Eatery

**Finalist — Best Ethnic
Dining Experience**

They have only been open a year, yet RICE Bar & Food has already made an impact, making the finals for Best Ethnic Dining Experience.

“Despite New Zealand’s tough economy, we’re humbled to have served over 25,000 guests this year,” says Thomas Begemann, who owns RICE with Titan Khamphonsri.

“Our menu brings modern Thai-inspired cuisine to life with shareable, modest-sized dishes that capture the communal spirit of Thai and Asian traditions.”

Gather with friends or family, pass around plates bursting with bold flavours, textures, and aromas, and let every bite spark connections and stories. Add to the fun with creative cocktails crafted by talented mixologists.



The Art of Sharing

Thai-inspired cuisine paired
with creative drinks and
cocktails.

Let the flavours unite your table!

Rice 
BAR & FOOD
by TiThom

54 Gill Street, New Plymouth Central, 4312
06 759 0902 ricenewplymouth.nz

The Hour Glass

**Finalist — Best Bar, Best Restaurant
+ Best Viiiibe**

New Plymouth's cool little wine bar has had a big year. Not only a finalist in three categories at the 2025 Taranaki Food and Drink Awards, owner Jenna Sisson was chosen in the Top 20 of New Zealand's Sommeliers and The Hour Glass was listed in the Top 200 in Cuisine Magazine's 2025 Good Food Guide.

With the biggest collection of champagne in town and a wine collection of over 600 varieties, The Hour Glass also has a mixologist to create their classic range of cocktails.

The new light and flavourful summer menu is rich in locally sourced fresh produce, mostly tapas style. The "back room" has sliding glass doors along with fans that create a welcome breeze and haven from the heat.

Intimate and bougie, The Hour Glass embodies that classic wine bar/speakeasy feeling.

With Jenna's enthusiasm and experience permeating through her team, The Hour Glass is a vibrant welcoming space to chill out.



**Best Bar, Best Restaurant
and Best Viiiibe!**

FINALIST

**the
Hour
GLASS**

OPEN Tues - Sat 2pm - 11pm Sunday 2pm - 9.30pm 49 Liardet St, NP (06) 758 2299 info@hourglass.co.nz



Little Fed

Finalist — Best Cafe

It's something you don't expect to find in a suburban shopping centre. The Little Fed cafe is a lot bigger than it looks from the outside with cafe seating, an outdoor courtyard and a funky time-travelling lounge straight out of the 70s.

A vast array of tantalising food, great coffee and smiling easy-to-chat-with staff create a cosy welcoming atmosphere.

They have a great offering of gluten free baked goods, including filled buns, and daily specials on cooked meals — follow them on Facebook and you'll soon discover why they were chosen as a finalist in the Best Cafe section.



Sunny

Winner — Best Barista

If you're on the hunt for that perfect coffee these holidays, make a point of calling into Sunny Coffee Caravan at 99 Molesworth Street (on the Eliot St corner, in the Freedom Furniture car park). Owner Rachel Colson has just been crowned Taranaki's best barista.

She's been operating Sunny Coffee Caravan for almost three years now, after deciding to take a break from her healthcare profession. She bought the family caravan, fitted it out and now has a permanent spot in the Freedom Furniture car park.

Open most weekday mornings from 6.30am to midday Rachel urges people to follow her on social media as on awful rainy days she doesn't open —Sunny by name and sunny by nature.



Sunny
sunshine in a cup

Coffee made by Taranaki's best barista*
Open weekdays 6:30am–midday (weather dependent)

Follow us on socials for daily updates:
@sunny_coffee_caravan

99 Molesworth Street, New Plymouth

*As judged at the 2025 Taranaki Food & Drink Awards

TARANAKI PRIME

The Region's Best Meat

“We believe in the importance of knowing where your meat comes from and how it's raised,” say Shane and Kylie McDonald, who in 2023 founded Taranaki Prime — a quality mark for local meat.

Taranaki people can now buy meat that's not only delicious, but traceable, with reduced stress for the animals, and incredibly low food miles.

The couple started raising Simmental cattle in 2016.

“We love them, they're just a nice big animal, good growth rate and I love looking at them in the paddock,” says Shane McDonald, who ironically played rugby for the Taranaki Bulls for 118 games in his younger days.

But the couple was frustrated that they were breeding top quality stock and yet there were limited opportunities to take their product directly to the consumer.

“We strongly believe in the quality of our land, of our cattle and of the meat that we produce. We wanted to give others the opportunity to enjoy the top quality meat that we're so passionate about and have a better connection with our customers.”

The couple met other like-minded farmers who wanted to supply their premium meat directly to local customers too.

“We're lucky in this province because we have world-class farmers on world-class country.”

This development led to the birth of ‘Taranaki Prime’.

“This is our own ‘quality mark’ — our way of showcasing local farmers, and the ethically raised, high quality meat

they lovingly produce,” says Shane. “When you see this logo, you know you're getting some of the most excellent quality meat that our beautiful region has to offer.”

It's not just beef — the collective raises rose veal, lamb, goat and venison too.

Each week, under the Taranaki Prime label, meat is taken straight from the paddocks onto the shelves at Pak'nSave.

“We're trying to do that at a competitive price point so that everyone can enjoy it.”

“Shane and I got talking — this was over a year ago now — and it just sounded like the perfect partnership,” reflects Luke Stock, New Plymouth Pak'nSave owner. He was impressed with Shane's commitment to animal welfare and his ties to local farm owners.

“He's cut from good cloth and seems like the type of guy, and a product, that I'd like to support. The customers absolutely love it.”

Shane's desire to feed local meat to local people means traditional skills are being retained locally too. Six years ago, former policeman Craig O'Doherty returned to his butchery trade. He's now passing on the craft to his apprentices and teaching them how to break down whole carcasses.

“There's a real art to it and I like the idea I can pass on the knowledge to young up-and-coming guys.”

If you're looking for quality meat for the barbecue this summer, you'll find TARANAKI PRIME in the beef section of the meat fridges at Pak'nSave New Plymouth.



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PRIME**

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Local Farmers*

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THE GODDESS and the Geeks

Can gin, like great wine, be an expression of terroir—that the very soil, climate, and geography of Aotearoa is part of its character?

WORDS Tash McGill

The quest to prove this theory is led by an unassuming pair of distillers: husband-and-wife team, Jo and Dave James, owners of Juno Gin, New Plymouth. Their careers were forged in science and sustainability — Jo has a background in genetics and microbiology, with a Master of Public Health in Epidemiology, while Dave studied food technology, engineering, and climate change.

Yes, they're smart. Very smart, in fact. Around the dinner table, there's no direction or curious avenue of conversation too complex or unapproachable. These are maker's makers—philosophers, artisans, pragmatic and casually ambitious. Progressive explorers, appreciators of culture and collectors of knowledge, they are, by their own admission, “sustainability geeks.”

Intellectual curiosity and scientific rigour informs their core value: “Make it Right.”

This means running a distillery that uses less than five litres of water per litre of spirit (the global average is over 26) and pioneering botanical supply chains. It's this dedication to traceable, sustainable, and scientifically understood flavour that ultimately separates them and lifts JUNO GIN amongst the nation's finest.

Jo's philosophy begins with the base. A great base spirit is the silence before the music starts, that moment of perfect, neutral calm that allows the volatile oils of the botanicals—all those juniper sharps and citrus swirls—to dance their intricate little ballet right there on your palate.

This rigour extends to the supporting botanicals. Take angelica root, an ingredient often a quiet anchor, which for Jo, proved the non-intuitive nature of terroir. She found that a high-altitude version of the root, initially “bitter and intense and not all that likeable” when distilled alone, was actually the one they needed. Its intensity was essential to creating an



“incredible balance” when working alongside the other botanicals—a perfect illustration that the worst solo artist often makes for the best bandmate.

“We’ve put all this focus into building relationships with horticulturalists to grow plant ingredients here in New Zealand to then understand terroir effects for each of those ingredients. And they do have terroir effects.”

Similarly, the Orris root, the key “flavour fixer” and aroma binder in quality gin, is central to the Juno method.

Their Orris, grown in the Hawke's Bay region, is the product of long-term planning to ensure a continuous, high-quality supply.

“So before we even had a still, before we even had office furniture ... we were meeting with a grower and sitting on the carpet in an empty warehouse saying, hey, we're going to make gin. Do you want to be part of that journey? So we signed an MOU with them, and in that MOU, we bought the plants, and we agreed to fund the research work with Massey University, and we agreed to share the research results with our grower so they could then supply to other distilleries, both nationally and internationally.”

The price of wild-harvested juniper, the essential heart of gin, has soared from \$6,000 to over \$25,000 a tonne since 2016. Compounded by geopolitical risk and a widespread fungus, this is both a massive economic burden and a sustainability flaw.

“Juniper is a northern hemisphere plant — it doesn't naturally occur in the southern hemisphere. It is always wild-harvested. There are no plantations of juniper. So you know, when we think about the fact that our distillery will be using up to a tonne of juniper a year, and there's more than 100 distilleries in New Zealand making gin...”

Juno's response was to launch ‘The Great New Zealand Juniper Hunt’ with Massey University. The goal: to find the sparsely planted *Juniperus communis* trees scattered across the country, identify male and female plants (critical for producing the berry-like cones), and establish New Zealand's first commercial plantations.



During 2025 Juno Gin won two coveted national awards—the ‘Best in Show’ titles at both the Super Liquor Super Spirits Awards in July and then the NZ Spirits Awards in August.

In their latest medal haul, they took home eight medals across the Juno and Vesta range. Their flagship Juno Extra Fine Gin and Vesta Vodka each secured Gold Medals.

All four of their 2025 seasonal gins—Autumn, Winter, Spring, and Maia—were individually recognised with Silver or Bronze Medals.

The Ozone Hole and the Flavour Advantage

Comparing the native cones with Macedonian and Chinese supplies, they found a distinct difference in the terpenes—the volatile oils that carry flavour and aroma.

New Zealand juniper is “surprisingly floral” and significantly higher in volatile oils and terpenes than imported stock. The scientists attribute this directly to the ozone hole. Plant species in New Zealand have evolved to produce more volatile oils—a protective activity—in response to the heightened UV and irradiation effects.

This principle applies beyond juniper: “New Zealand coriander seed is really high in limonene,” Jo notes. For a distiller, this means the locally grown raw material is not only more secure and traceable but also possesses a unique, concentrated, and high-impact flavour profile that is fundamentally different and, arguably, better suited for the craft of spirit-making.

All this work with Massey University and Venture Taranaki to understand the terroir, growth opportunity and feasibility of New Zealand-grown botanicals doesn’t just benefit Juno Distillery. The true economic benefit and impact is far reaching, opening up channels for farmers, cultivators and procuring greater stability in future for exporters, not to mention benefits for other New Zealand distillers.

This cohesive working relationship between local business, academia and regional development is a testimony to the depth of skill and experience the James’ carry.

The results prove that understanding terroir as a science and demanding excellence from the base up—is not a stroke of luck. It is a philosophy that has made Juno an enduring force in New Zealand spirits and validates the aspirations of a couple of unashamed Taranaki geeks.

Visit your local distillery

14-16 Sunley Street, New Plymouth 020 434 7845

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junogin.com

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SETTING THE STAGE FOR CHRISTMAS

If you spot a man with the calm focus of a theatre director and the energy of a circus performer weaving through Centre City this summer, chances are it's Ryan Jacobs, the centre's new marketing lead and performing arts veteran.

WORDS Nick Walker PHOTO Brendan Lister

Before joining the world of retail, Ryan spent nearly 15 years as a professional performer, doing everything from directing stage shows to being an acrobat across Northern America.

"I grew up in theatre and ended up in the circus almost by accident," he laughs. "That world is addictive. You're always learning and challenging yourself to try new things."

That sense of creativity never left him, even as he transitioned into the corporate world.

"The arts is storytelling in motion," he says. "You're constantly finding ways to engage an audience to make them feel something. I'm a storyteller first and everything else later...the form might change but it's about creating an experience people remember."

Ryan moved to New Zealand eight years ago, and came to New Plymouth with his wife four years later. As Centre City's marketing lead, he's channelling his creative spirit into making the mall a place where people come to connect, not just to shop.

Summer

Centre City is gearing up for one of its biggest summer seasons ever. From festive Santa photos with brand new decorations to a free evening bus for the Festival of Lights, there's plenty to bring people in.

"Summer's when a lot of people come for their annual shop," Ryan says. "We want that 'wow' factor, so when someone returns for the first time in a while, they really notice what's changed."

The focus is firmly on experience. Whether it's catching live music, attending community events or taking in the refreshed atmosphere, Centre City is positioning itself as a hub of activity.

"All these things give people a reason to come here, and to experience something together," Ryan says.

Revitalisation

There's been a flurry of construction around the centre for well over a year, as part of a major refurbishment and seismic strengthening project.

An exterior facelift around the entire building is transforming the look and feel. Seismic work protects the longevity of the mall, while 24/7 cashless parking helps to make the shopping experience a breeze.

"It's all about future-proofing," Ryan explains. "We're not just a big box by the sea - we want the centre to feel modern, vibrant and welcoming."

Much, if not all, of that work is being done by local contractors, something Ryan says is deliberate.

"People might see big national brands in here, but behind the scenes, a lot of the work is done locally. That keeps money in the region and supports local jobs. It's all connected."

Store changes

Adding to the excitement, Chemist Warehouse has joined Centre City as a major new tenant. Its tenancy has combined five smaller units on Level One into a single, large-format store, making it one of the biggest stores in the centre.

"It's a huge addition," says Ryan. "Chemist Warehouse has been really successful at The Valley and wanted to expand into the CBD. Their presence will bring a new wave of customers through the doors, including people who might not have visited Centre City before."

It's not just about shopping convenience either.

"Chemist Warehouse is a destination. People go there because they need to, not because it's discretionary spending or to browse," Ryan says. "That consistent foot traffic benefits every other retailer here."

Several other stores have moved to fresh spaces, including Acquisitions, Merric and Happy Nails, and the centre is enjoying its lowest vacancy rate in years.

All that is happening in the context of online shopping becoming mainstream, demonstrating how in-person retail can create unbeatable experiences.



Community

As Centre City evolves, the vision is clear: to be a thriving hub where the community interacts, retail excels, and each visit has the opportunity to create a lasting positive memory.

"We're working with local artists, community groups and event organisers to make sure there's always something happening to connect people to each other," Ryan says.

It's a philosophy rooted in Ryan's creative past and his passion for storytelling.

"Whether it's a performance or a shopping centre, it's still about creating moments people remember," he says. "That's what builds connection, and that's what we're building."

Centre City Summer Snapshot

Dec 11

Santa Arrival Event

Facepainting, balloon animals, candyfloss and live music, plus the arrival of the big guy himself.

Dec 12-24

Santa's Workshop is Open

Santa in Centre for photos and visits

Dec 12-13

Pawtraits with Santa

Get your Christmas photo with your four-legged housemates and let them have a chance to tell Santa what they want for Christmas.

Booking essential via
centre-city.co.nz

Dec 15-16

After Hours Santa Sensory Sessions

Music will be turned off in the Centre. Sensory sessions are set up to have minimal noise and provide an experience for children who prefer less sensory stimulation.

No booking required.

Dec 20 - Jan 24

Festival of Lights free bus

Two hours free parking at Centre City with a free bus every half hour to and from the Festival of Lights from 7.30-11pm.

Pick up / drop off from Ariki Street and Fillis Street.



CENTRE CITY

centre-city.co.nz

UNLIMIT

Where Ambition Finds It's Partner

When two high-performing advisory firms, **Velocite** and **Tandem Group**, decided to merge, they weren't just combining offices, systems, and people. They were building something much bigger: a space for limitless potential.

On 1 November 2025, the firms united under a new name - Unlimit - a brand that captures the essence of what both have always stood for: helping ambitious businesses grow, evolve, and build lasting legacies.



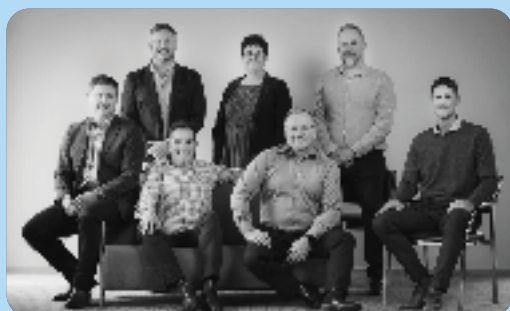
TWO PATHS, ONE SHARED VISION

Velocite and Tandem Group have each built reputations supporting small and medium-sized businesses across regional New Zealand. Both built their reputations on partnership, trust, and deep local insight.

At the heart of this merger is a strong cultural fit. As Paul Petrowski former Director of Velocite notes: "We're combining two firms that already share a deep commitment to excellence and business success. Together, we're stronger, and better positioned to support our clients and our staff in a rapidly evolving business environment."

Dion Herlihy former Director of Tandem Group echoes that sentiment: while proud of what both firms have built independently, this merger offers an opportunity to "honour that legacy while creating something even more impactful together."

The newly merged firm operates from three shared locations in New Plymouth, Waitara, and Hawera, and combine the resources, talent, and client-centric culture of both organisations, with the aim to deliver even greater value to business owners.



A NAME THAT SPEAKS TO WHAT'S POSSIBLE

The spirit behind the Unlimit brand is a nod to business owners who see opportunity where others see limits, who break boxes instead of ticking them, and who recognise it's not about working harder; it's about working smarter. Unlimit steps in to help businesses translate vision into momentum.

Paul Petrowski explains "Their advisors work alongside clients, not just behind spreadsheets, to challenge thinking and unlock potential."

The promise is simple yet ambitious: To enable the success of SMEs across regional New Zealand.

IT'S EXPENSIVE TO BE BORING



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ONE *and Done*

New mayor, Max Brough, is a man with a plan.
His belief is that the New Plymouth District Council
needs to be rebuilt from the ground up.
And he wants to do that in
just three years.

WORDS Irena Brooks PHOTO Andy Jackson

Max has made no secret of his desire to be a “one and done” mayor. He wants to be the new broom that sweeps clean, bring costs back to an affordable level and have the dog wagging the tail rather than the other way round. “When I leave here we’re going to have a really good platform for the people of New Plymouth and whoever comes in on the next council.”

Balancing the books is Max Brough’s number one goal and he’s not looking to bring any more new ambitions to the table.

“But the projects we will be doing will be done really well. We need to slow down a bit and consolidate. That’s why it’s only a three year job.”

Transparency and communication are also key — fitting for a man who embodies the maxim “What you see is what you get.”

They are two things council has been lacking, he says and he is determined to change that.

It’s one of the reasons he wanted to have three Deputy Mayors, serving concurrently however legality prevented that and now they are on a rotational basis, changing every six months.

“There’s too much to do for one person ... and it’s giving a wider pool of people direct access to the mayoralty. Each of the Deputy Mayors has different contacts and circles of people they can access,” he says of Gordon Brown, Moira George and Murray Chong (who is first up in the role).

“Everybody wants a piece of you as the mayor and you don’t have enough pieces.

“No matter how quickly you try and get back to people, it’s never quick enough. People expect an instant response. Having three deputies was about dealing with things quickly and spreading the load. Basically I’m a lazy person — I’m trying to cut down from 16 hours a day to 12,” he asides, with his acknowledged irreverent sense of humour.

Married for over 30 years the Broughs have three adult kids— “two daughters and a transitioning son” (male to female), a process that started early this year.

“There’s been some adapting of thought processes within our family,” he wryly **grins**.

He’s been in the roofing business all his life and makes a roofing product that is used by roofing manufacturers all around New Zealand.



NEW STANDING COMMITTEES

The three rotating Deputy Mayors will each chair a standing committee too.

Te Huinga Taumatua is the iwi liaison committee, that provides strategic guidance and advice on matters important to Māori and helps improve Māori participation in decision-making. Gordon Brown will co-chair with an iwi representative yet to be determined.

Pubic Engagement will be a portal for people that want to have some input or want something looked at, this will be the starting point. So if that committee believes someone has raised a great idea, this committee will ask staff to write a report in time for the next committee meeting, which can then be elevated to a full council meeting for a decision.

“So rather than coming from council to the community, we’ll bring ideas and concerns from the community into the council. We’re going to flip that perception people have that council dictates to the community — of the tail wagging the dog.” Murray Chong will chair this committee.

Going for Growth will be chaired by Moira George and will focus on aspects of economic development, infrastructure, and land supply to accommodate the district’s growth. The first focus of this committee will be job growth and employment — critical for the district.

“The **Finance, Audit and Risk** chair I’ve always felt should be a professional person so we’ve gone through a process to find one of those people ... and have a couple that have been short-listed and hopefully we’ll have an appointment impending.”

“Our product goes into the ridging of every house in New Zealand — it pushes down into all the corrugations to seal them off.”

He hired a manager to run his business in anticipation of either his new job, or retirement, depending on the election outcome.

It turned out retirement was never an option.

He romped into the mayoralty with almost 14,000 votes and 46% of the vote, with the second placegetter at just over 6,000.

After one term as a councillor he wanted to be the one who set the direction for the district.

“I felt the trajectory we were on, whilst admirable, was financially unsustainable.”

Rates levels are set for the current financial year (ends 30 June 2026) and in the new year the focus will be on slashing budget items to bring down the projected 9.9% increase for the 2026/27 year.

The NPDC is already in a deficit position for next year’s budget after it was realised an error was made in the average rateable property value. Consequently rates were set lower than they should have been.

As things stand, the \$3.1m error (which equates to just over 2% of rates) has been credited to properties already, means this council has to find that amount of savings before it even starts on decreasing the projected rate increase for next year.

“The new target I have asked the staff to achieve is CPI +1%. The next part of the process will be the ‘how’. We won’t get to the level of detail around those decisions until early next year at Annual Plan process time.”

He’s not looking to necessarily cancel projects, just maybe apply the brakes a little.

“There’s a difference between pause and stop.”

THE NEW COUNCIL

There’s one more council meeting before Christmas (Dec 18th) and the agenda will include formalising the new committees, the pay structures, and a paper with options for a certain variety of biscuits,” Max chuckles, in reference to Tim Tam Alley (the cycle lanes and road changes along Devon St West).

“I’ve put in a request for a report on what we can do and that will be coming through at the Dec 18th Meeting. The concept was good but the execution was poor ... I’ve said that all the way along.”

He’s also asked for the proposed new precinct on Queen Street, in front of the Govett Brewster Art Gallery, to be looked at.

Voted for by the last council at their final meeting, the \$3 million plus price-tag caused outrage.

“It will still go ahead in some form but my express desire is that it’s not in a three and a half million dollar form.”

The council is still bonding but Max is confident it will happen.

The new committee structure (see side-bar) is expected to halve the time it takes to get through the council process, from around 50 days to somewhere in the 20s.



CONSULTATION

In his first few weeks Max worked with councillors to help determine who would be best suited to the various committees NPDC has.

He has also been active on social media with weekly video updates from the “mayor’s office” to keep the community informed. The platform also provides a direct conduit for people to ask questions. Max doesn’t always man the live feeds personally, but if it’s not him it will be one of the deputy mayors or councillors.

Next year he is looking to develop a more independent overview style NPDC social media channel that is less formal and more organic.

“I think people want to see a social media channel that reports on council with some objectivity.”

The idea would be to talk to council about what they are working on and trying to achieve, but also get comment from people who maybe think something’s not such a great idea and why not.

“We’re looking at how we can establish that — and it’s not behind a paywall. That’s actually problematic for a lot of people.”

He’d also like to change the current way of doing “consultations”.

“Sometimes in previous council surveys and ‘consultations’ it feels like the questions are loaded towards the council’s desired outcome,” he says.

“NZTA run a similar model with the ‘surveys’ they send out to stakeholders,” he says of the planned road closures to the north of the district in January.

“The way questions are framed, there is no opportunity for the industry groups or survey respondents to say ‘actually, we don’t want a road closure’.

There’s no room for debate or dissent or out-of-the-box thinking that may actually lead to a better outcome.”

Pre-election Max warned community groups that demands for funding from council were often seen as a right and his plan was to put a stop to some of that type of mindset. It’s something he is still intent on doing.

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"I don't want to cripple community groups but the current system of groups applying to a range of funders is possibly not the most efficient way of doing things. I've been toying with the idea of having a single point of community funding.

"I'm going to have a chat with staff and maybe the TOI Foundation about how we can maybe pool the money and have a single distribution point.

"Another thing I've noticed is that we have various community groups turn up and they're all trying to do the similar things. Maybe there is a way of getting them all talking to each other so that there's no duplication of efforts and resources."

WATER UNDER THE BRIDGE

"It's been noted that I wasn't comfortable with how that came about," Max said of Neil Holdom's appointment as CEO of the new Water Services Council Controlled Organisation (WSCCO) that will be responsible for the future delivery of the district's water services.

Before Holdom left his job as Mayor, a board was appointed for the new WSCCO — the day before the election. Holdom was confirmed as the CEO by the new board.

"I looked at that from a legal perspective, personally, and though it was something I would not have done, it wasn't illegal.

"I've now had a bit of time to think about it and the reality is, someone had to do the job.

If I take away the process of how Neil was appointed and am objective about it, Neil can do the job.



"I never got to see the list of candidates so I have no opinion if he was the best person for the job but I know he is qualified to do the job and I'm going to let him get on with doing it. He has a working knowledge of council and at the end of the day, I have the final say. We have ten months to set it up ... let's get on with it."

Similarly, Max is looking forward to working with NPDC Chief Executive Gareth Green, though at the time of this interview (a month post-election) Green was still on holiday.

"I suspect when that annual leave was booked the expectation was that post-election it would be 'business as usual'. My guess would be that my election was somewhat unexpected," Max grins.

"I didn't want to get in the way of his holiday — it's been a tough year for everyone — and we came to a mutual understanding that we would get on with things in the meantime. We've been in touch via email ... I feel for him a little bit when he's trying to relax.

"But next year it's all go ... we're just getting all the deck chairs lined up."

An unfortunate simile in that it conjures up images of the Titanic.

But for the man wanting to rebuild how things are done at New Plymouth District Council and reduce rate increases to affordable levels, his mission is indeed, titanic.

"I'm going to deliver what I stood for, or die trying."

Above: Fiscally conservative by nature, Max openly admits he personally spent \$23,000 on his election campaign. He's since learnt that as his campaign was successful, the 23K becomes a tax deductible item.



PROPERTY DONE PROPERLY

After three decades in construction, including twelve years as a Senior Project Manager, James Wallace knows how stressful managing a property or building project can be.

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Whether it's keeping your rental maintained and compliant, planning and executing a renovation or managing an entire build, MAINTAIN gives property owners confidence that everything is being handled by a qualified professional who's seen it all.

"I've spent more than 30 years in the building and construction industry, from high-end residential builds to complex commercial projects valued up to \$20 million," says James.

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A trusted hand

As a Qualified Carpenter, Licensed Building Practitioner, and property investor, James brings a level of understanding, oversight and professionalism that can be hard to find in the general maintenance space.

His extensive background means clients get someone who can coordinate every moving part, manage contractors efficiently and make sure the finished result meets the highest standards.

"I've seen what happens when regular maintenance is not implemented, or where unqualified people try to do the work or manage it themselves," he says.

"It ends up causing them more stress, devalues a property, invalidates warranties, and costs more to remedy; it's a false economy. With MAINTAIN, you know it's done properly from the start."

One contact, every solution

MAINTAIN offers a full suite of property services, from building and development, maintenance, compliance, project management and consultancy. Landlords, homeowners and commercial tenants can rely on one trusted contact to coordinate the lot.

"It's about giving people peace of mind," says James. "Anything you need, you can call me and I'll take care of it."

That level of service is backed by a deep network of local Taranaki trades and suppliers that James has worked with for decades. It means faster turnarounds, quality workmanship and no nasty surprises.

Built on relationships

For James, business is as much about people as it is about property.

"Building trust and a long-term relationship is everything. When someone hands me the keys, I take that responsibility seriously."

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Keeping the Spark

In 2015, Adam Leathem set out to build his own engineering business. A decade on, he has grown it into a thriving business with 17 staff and the infrastructure to support a busy and growing workload. What hasn't changed is his passion for the industry – one that continues to challenge and drive both him and his team every day.

WORDS Nick Walker **PHOTOS** Roger Richardson

Adam Leathem's passion for metalwork began straight out of school. Over 11 years, he became highly skilled in all kinds of metal fabrication, including a six year stint working specifically in oil and gas.

That passion led him to start Spark Metal Fabrication as a one-man operation in 2015, working on a variety of projects across different industries from a single bay shed on Borrell Avenue.

Now, Spark Metal is celebrating 10 years in business as well as a significant upgrade to a new 2,000sqm workshop at 15 Auster Place in Bell Block.

For Adam, it's more than a new address. It's the culmination of a decade of hard work and the start of an exciting new chapter built on Spark Metal's core values: precision, strength and integrity.

"When we took over the new site, it had definitely seen better days," Adam says. "But we saw the potential. We are renovating the main workshop, upgrading the offices and staff facilities, and are really turning it into something we're proud of."

A new home built for performance

The move to Auster Place isn't just about space - it's about what that space allows.

"Owning our own facility has been a goal since day one," Adam says. "It gives us independence and lets us keep investing in new machinery and technology.

"For our clients, that means more capability, faster project turnaround and consistent quality in everything we produce."

Growth and versatility

Over 10 years, Spark Metal Fabrication has earned a reputation for precision craftsmanship, reliability and versatility.

It's one of the few local engineering companies with both a complete sheet metal division and a structural/general fabrication division.

That setup allows the team to handle everything from fine stainless and aluminium work to large-scale industrial projects, giving clients the benefits of a full-service metal fabrication partner.

"We don't put all our eggs in one basket," Adam says. "We work across multiple industries, on jobs big and small. The variety helps to keep us stable and constantly challenged, and always on our toes.

"We might be creating architectural, one-off staircases one day, bespoke furniture the next, and heavy industrial structures the day after that. For clients, it means we can take on pretty much any job they need, and do it with the precision and skill it requires."

Experience that counts

Adam's background in the oil and gas sector underpins Spark Metal's commitment to quality and professionalism.

"We understand the industry and its processes. It makes a real difference for our energy sector clients because we can get straight into the job without the back and forth. We're on the same page from the very start, and that sets the tone for keeping the project moving smoothly."

Spark Metal also collaborates closely with builders, architects and engineers on complex design-to-build projects.

“Working alongside builders, designers and engineers means we can be involved from concept to completion,” Adam says. “It’s rewarding to take something from an idea to a finished quality product.”

Team and culture

Behind every successful business is a strong team, and Spark Metal is no exception.

“I’ve got an amazing crew who’ve stuck by me as the business has grown,” Adam says. “They’ve trusted the process and shared the vision. That loyalty means a lot.”

The company’s positive, growth-focused culture extends to training apprentices - something Adam is passionate about.

“Helping the next generation grow into skilled tradespeople is a big part of what we do,” he says. “We throw them in the deep end, teach them properly and give them opportunities to learn.

“It’s good for them and it’s good for the industry.”

Long term relationships, long term results

Spark Metal’s success isn’t just based on their technical skill - it’s built on relationships. Many clients have been with the company since the early days, a testament to mutual trust and consistent delivery.

“We’ve been lucky to work with awesome clients who’ve stuck with us since day one,” Adam says.

“Those relationships go beyond just individual jobs; they’re about trust and communication. That’s what makes it all worthwhile.”



Mentorship has also been a key part of Adam’s journey.

“I’ve had one or two experienced business mentors who’ve guided me through tough calls,” he says. “Their advice helped me make big decisions and keep the business moving forward.”

The next chapter

Looking ahead, Spark Metal is investing in new machinery and continuing to expand its capabilities.

“It’s an exciting time,” Adam says. “The new workshop gives us the space and systems we need to keep improving. We’re taking on new projects, meeting new clients and constantly pushing ourselves to raise the bar.”

As Spark Metal Fabrication steps into its second decade, its core foundation remains unchanged - a focus on craftsmanship, people and doing the job right.

“We’ve always believed in building things that last,” Adam says. “Whether it’s our work, our relationships, or our business, it’s all about strength, precision and integrity.”



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A New Era for Agtrans

Agtrans co-Founder Phil D'Ath retires, marking a new chapter for the team.

Agtrans, a leading name in Taranaki's craneage and commercial transport industry, officially announce the retirement of co-founder Phil D'Ath, marking the end of an era for the company.

Founded in 2012 by CJ Mahony and Phil D'Ath, Agtrans began as a two-truck, two-tractor business serving the region's agricultural sector. Over the past 13 years, the operation has grown into a trusted transport partner for key industries across Taranaki, unique in their approach to heavy haulage, craneage, and truck-mounted crane work.

"Phil's departure opens the door for an exciting new chapter for Agtrans.

"While we'll miss his presence around the depot, we're excited for him as he embarks on his next adventure — and we're equally excited about the opportunities ahead for our team and customers," says CJ Mahony, Managing Director.

Drawing on his background in farming, building, and precast concrete, Phil brought practical knowledge, and deep industry insight to Agtrans from the outset. Known for his strong people skills and commitment to client relationships, he played a pivotal role in shaping the company's culture, reputation, and success.

"In the early years, it was all hands-on deck. Phil's ability to connect with people, and his commitment to our client relationships have been central to who we are today," says CJ Mahony.

As he steps down from his role, Phil and his wife Helen are preparing for their next big adventure — a long-anticipated two year motorbike trip from Nordkap (North Cape), the northernmost point of the European continent, to Cape Town, the southernmost point on the African continent.

"If you think you can, or think you can't, you're probably right. Both CJ & I thought we could, and here we are - quite a way on from two trucks, two tractors, and the two of us.

"Thanks to CJ for being a supportive business partner, if we

hadn't aimed for the sky and challenged ourselves and our team to adopt new skills and technology, Agtrans would not look the way it does today," says Phil D'Ath.

CJ Mahony confirms Agtrans remains privately owned, and that it is business-as-usual for customers and suppliers. The leadership transition has been in motion for several months, with internal succession seeing Phil Harrison and Logan Willemen, rise in rank to Projects Manager and Operations Manager respectively.

"Our team is committed to a seamless transition. We look forward to continuing to serve our customers with the same values, commitment to excellence, and strong partnerships that have defined us since day one," says CJ Mahony.

Phil's parting message is one of gratitude:

"It takes a lot of people to create a company the scale of Agtrans - to become as successful as it's become. I'm appreciative of all the customers, the staff and suppliers we've had over the years — thank you to everyone."



PHOTO TOP: The Agtrans team - centre, no hi-vis, CJ Mahony, Co-Founder & Director

PHOTO 2: The Agtrans Leadership team; (from left) Phil Harrison; Contract Manager, Contract Co-ordinator, CJ Mahony; Co-Founder, Director, Financial Director, Logan Willemen; Director, Operations Manager.

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Whitaker Civil Engineering

When Whitaker Civil Engineering won the Supreme Award at the TSB Taranaki Chamber of Commerce Business Excellence Awards, it marked a defining moment for a company that has spent 45 years doing the hard work out of the spotlight.

They also won the Manufacturing, Engineering or Trade category, the Employer of Choice Award and were Highly Commended for Health and Safety. For the three directors, those wins reflect years of careful work to build a company people are proud to work for.

“We got the biggest kick out of the Employer of Choice award,” Graeme Dravitzki says. “It means the most.”

Why? Because at Whitakers, culture isn't a slogan. It's the backbone of the business. It shapes how people show up, how they are treated and why many stay long term. That award felt like validation for the thing they value most.

Opportunity

Whitaker Civil Engineering began in 1980 when Chris Whitaker started a small civil construction firm to support Taranaki's energy projects. Over time the company expanded into complex civil delivery across New Zealand.

They now have around 90 people across a broad range of trades, from carpenters to drainlayers to machine operators and more.

“It means variety for staff,” Frances Boyce says. “You might start as a drainlayer and pick up carpentry or civil skills. For clients, we can self-deliver work and can offer consistency and quality.”

This versatility sits beside a strong people focus.

Directors are visible on site, staff are consulted on decisions and long service is common. More than half the workforce has been with the company at least five years, and a quarter have stayed more than a decade.

Resilience

The path to success hasn't been straightforward. After Graeme and Frances took ownership in 2014, the early years were testing. Those hard times taught resilience and how to lead through uncertainty.

"We've been in the darkest of the dark," Graeme says. "This year has brought challenges too, but we're secure and we know what it takes to keep things moving."

A diverse client mix and specialist work has helped. A multi-year project at Marsden Point came about due to their expert services. Locally, they've delivered significant projects like the airport lookout and the first stage of the Coastal Walkway extension in the last year.

"The airport lookout was special," director Chris Lane says. "We worked closely with Puketapu Hapū and other stakeholders, starting at Christmas and finishing in time for Te Matatini in February. Normally it would have taken much longer, but everyone pulled together and that was powerful."

Custom tech

One big change has been how Whitakers manages systems and compliance. What was a paper-based system is now a purpose-built tech solution that works in the field.

"We built the system, trialled it with crews, took feedback and refined it," Frances says. "Now we have an integrated tool that people use everyday. It's practical innovation and it's made life easier on site."

Judges noted that enthusiasm for developing technology, as well as the collaborative approach to building it, in awarding Whitakers the Manufacturing, Engineering or Trade award.

Training

Whitakers invests heavily in apprenticeships, mentoring and gateway programmes with local high schools. Several students were offered jobs this year after coming through gateway.

Alongside their experienced crews, 16 employees are under 25.

"The skills shortage in our industry is no secret, and we're all beneficiaries of a strong new generation coming through," Graeme says.

They also look after older workers. When Chris Whitaker retired, he started a retirees club for former staff to catch up monthly. 10 years later, 18 ex-staff still meet regularly and come back to the office once a year for morning tea.

Health and safety

Health and safety has been part of Whitakers' DNA since day one. It's a practical, common-sense approach.

"Our team understands risk and wants to improve the culture," Frances says.

"If a rule doesn't provide benefit, we'll change it. Rules for the sake of rules creates resistance, but when people understand and respect them, they achieve what they're designed to."



ABOVE: Graeme Dravitski, Frances Boyce and Chris Lane

Community

Community involvement is woven into the business. Whitaker supports cricket, BMX, touch rugby, Lions, the Taranaki Building Wellness Trust and many more local organisations, sportspeople and others.

Pataka Kai - Waitara Food Bank is another example.

"Toilet paper is a staple but rarely donated," Frances says. "Our commitment to them is to make sure they never run out. It's small, but it matters."

Looking ahead

With billions of national and regional infrastructure spend needed across the country, the directors are optimistic about the coming years.

"We're caretakers of this business,"

Graeme says. "It's been here 45 years and we want it to last another 45 and more. We'll keep building people, capability and Taranaki."

For a company that has quietly delivered for decades, the awards feel like validation.

"It tells us we're on the right track," Frances says. "And there's plenty still to come."

LEAD PHOTO: Frances Boyce, Pip May, Chris Lane, Graeme Dravitzki, Leif Haseltine, Latasha Hedley

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TARANAKI MAYORAL AWARD

Graham Wells

When Graham Wells' name was called for the Mayoral Award at the Taranaki Business Awards, he almost wasn't there to hear it.

“I was in Auckland with Cathrine looking after two grandchildren,” he says. “The plan was to stay for the weekend, but I got a call saying they wanted me to come back and attend. I didn't know what was coming.”

The award recognises Graham's leadership of the self-titled electrical instrumentation business he initially started with his brother 41 years ago, and how Wells has created growth and opportunities across the region.

Graham's name might be on the trophy, but he's quick to deflect praise.



“It's a credit to our people and what we've built together. Cath and I have been there from the beginning, but it's the wider team that's made it what it is.”

Building together

From humble beginnings, Wells has grown into a national operation that's created hundreds of jobs and contributed significantly to Taranaki's economy.

“We thought we'd stay a small, owner-operated business,” Graham says. “But opportunities kept presenting themselves, and we had the right people to take them on, although there have been some sizeable challenges along the way.”

“We've worked on some big projects, but the work is never the highlight. It's about the culture and the people who've grown with us.”

Some staff have been with Wells for more than 30 years, moving from entry-level roles into leadership positions. Graham credits his wife, Cath, and the team that both shaped and bought into that culture of opportunity.

Wells' success is closely tied to the Taranaki energy sector. The oil and gas industry has long been a regional economic pillar, and Wells has both supported and learned from it.

“Being based here gave us exposure to high standards around quality and health and safety,” Graham explains. “Those lessons positioned us to compete nationally with much larger companies.

“Many of our current projects build on the capabilities we developed through oil and gas. The work's changing, but the adaptability and attitudes of our people means we're well placed for the future.”

Looking ahead

Wells is also evolving internally. Graham has stepped back from the day-to-day running of the business, though he remains the major shareholder representative and a director on the board, which also includes chair Brian Ropitini, long-time advisor Steve Waite and Phil Veal.

Justin Peterson has been CEO since 2022, relocating to Taranaki and quickly adopting the Wells' commitment to community – he now sits on four community organisation boards.

“We've tried to choose people, both at board and leadership levels whose moral compass points in what we believe is the right direction,” Graham says. “The goal is to stay well regarded and respected, rather than being exclusively focused on financial outcomes.”

As for Graham, he sees plenty of opportunities still to come. “Our forefathers did incredible things that shaped this region - TSB Bank and Toi Foundation are examples - and it's up to us all to carry on that tradition. Hopefully Wells has been a small part of that story, and we are keen to keep contributing however we can.”

wells

www.wells.co.nz



Recognising business excellence across Taranaki

The Business Excellence Awards were a wonderful occasion to acknowledge the people and organisations making a real difference in our region. It was an evening filled with connection, celebration, and a shared appreciation for the hard mahi and creativity that drive Taranaki forward.

Ka mau te wehi! Congratulations to all the winners - your efforts highlight the strength and potential of our local business community.

We're proud to be part of the event and to support the ongoing success of businesses across Taranaki.

Ready to take your business further? Our local specialists are here to help you achieve your ambitions. Visit tsb.co.nz/business and start the conversation today.



LARGE BUSINESS AWARD
+ SERVICE EXCELLENCE

Govett Quilliam

Govett Quilliam's (GQ's) double win at last month's Taranaki Business Excellence Awards represents a milestone achievement shaped by almost 150 years of dedication.

GQ is the largest law firm in Taranaki, powered by a highly capable team that provides legal services to clients throughout the Taranaki region and across New Zealand. It offers specialist legal expertise in corporate and commercial law, family law, rural law, property and conveyancing, resource management, environmental and local government law, employment, civil litigation and dispute resolution, and much more.

The awards were a recognition of the firm's commitment to excellence and culture of continual improvement. The judges recognised that over the past couple of years, GQ has worked hard to grow sustainably, deepen its specialist expertise and modernise and enhance the way it delivers legal services, all while staying true to its Taranaki roots.

"Govett Quilliam is celebrated for its client-centred approach, strong systems and genuine commitment to delivering the best possible experience for people, even at some of the hardest moments in their lives," the feedback noted.

For CEO André Nobbs, the recognition validates the firm's approach.

"We know we have to continually evolve to keep pace with our clients' needs," he says. "The legal profession is built on trust, and trust today is earned through transparency, accessibility and genuine service. Every improvement we've made has been about meeting those expectations."

Partner Lauren Wallace agrees.

"Meeting with a lawyer can feel stressful or daunting for some people," she says. "So we make it a priority to help clients feel at ease, through clear communication, a welcoming environment, transparent processes and providing tailored, pragmatic advice."

The firm's commitment to developing its people also impressed the judges.

This year, three of GQ's rising lawyers - Annie Prosser, Bayley Sprott and Pryiaanka Khatri - were named NZ Lawyer's Future Legal Leaders, highlighting the young talent in the firm.

Partner Alice Tocher earned national recognition as one of NZ Lawyer's Elite Women in Law and Lauren Wallace was appointed as the president of the Resource Management Law Association, which has over 1,000 members nationwide.

The firm also recently hosted the Lawset conference, bringing together law firms from around the motu.

"That sort of national recognition reflects the strength of our whole organisation," André says. "People thrive when they're supported, and our clients feel the benefit."

The broader community also benefits, with many of GQ's lawyers volunteering their skills and time as members of local charities, community organisations and boards.

But while the awards are a major moment, no one at GQ sees this as the finish line.

"This is momentum," Lauren says. "It's a challenge to keep improving and to keep showing up for our clients, team and community in meaningful ways."

Our overriding purpose is to empower better, whether that's better client outcomes, better lawyers, better communities or better legal services, and we've thought long and hard about how we deliver that.

These awards are testament to all the mahi our entire team has put in, together with the trust and confidence our clients have placed in us. Our people live and work here, we help local families and businesses, and we're genuinely invested in helping our region thrive."

Govett Quilliam

THE LAWYERS

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Ready to Make 2026 Your Best Year Yet?

The holiday season isn't just for relaxing – it's the perfect time to pause, reflect, and set your business up for success in the year ahead.

BDO New Zealand's latest Business Performance Index (October 2025) surveyed over 530 business leaders and revealed that "although business conditions are tough right now, many of the challenges people are facing are not new, and there are people and practical steps to help".

As you look to 2026, the latest BDO Business Performance Index has tips that can help you navigate the ups and downs of running a business. For the full report, insights and tips, head to the BDO website using the QR code below.

One practical thing you can do is to look at your Business Plan – whether you need to put one in place, or if it's time to revisit an existing plan. As you take stock over the holidays, put your Business Plan at the top of the list for the new year.

Anytime is a good time to develop a Business Plan

- This time of year is a great chance to pause, reflect and think about where you are and where you want to go.
- A Business Plan is there to help give you a plan for your business goals, set direction, and make decisions on things like finances, people and strategy.
- It doesn't need to be complicated, and our BDO advisers can help. From a simple 12-month one page to a five-year in-depth strategic plan, we will help tailor the plan to your needs, set out your goals and what you need to do to achieve them.

Your Business Plan needs regular review

- If you already have a Business Plan, now is a good time to revisit and refine it – making sure it can handle today's challenges, and it is aligned to your future goals.
- Test your Business Plan against different situations, like rising prices, changes in customer behaviour, shifts in your industry, new technology, or environmental issues.
- Our BDO advisers can help you to review your current plans, check in regularly on your progress to keep you on track with your plans, and adjust for changes along the way.

Let's Talk

Start the new year strong. Sit back, reflect, and then book your free one-hour consult with our team to focus on your business goals. You will walk away with 2-3 key actions that you can implement now.

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BRAND AND MARKETING + INNOVATION

The Kiwi Butcher Shop

When you walk into The Kiwi Butcher Shop, it's immediately clear that it's not just a regular meat shop.

When you look around, you get a sense that there's a broader range of products, from premium quality to value packs, and a tonne of value-add options like rubs and sauces and pretty much anything you'd need to take your meat game to whatever level you wanted. There's something for absolutely everyone.

It's all the result of a carefully considered revamp that started when Stephen Morrison and Amber McIntyre took over full ownership of the business from Stephen's dad in 2019.

In the last six years, they've grown a wholesale business and an online store on top of revitalising the Leach Street shop.

They've fitted out a whole new production room where they can make premium quality pies and ready-to-cook meals. They've gone deep into flavour development and setting a culture of supreme customer service. They offer tools for the super-popular smash burgers, custom meat cutting, cooking advice and entire animals for big occasions.

They've set a new standard for what a modern butchery is, and it's seriously impressive.

"Our vision is for The Kiwi Butcher Shop to become a household name," says Amber. "We do that with the quality of our products, but also the variety of what we can offer. We've had a big marketing push, we can deliver all over the North and South Island, and we're constantly looking for new products and trends to grow even more, on top of servicing over 150 wholesale customers on a weekly basis."

The numbers speak volumes. They've won 17 awards for their sausages since 2002, developing mouth-watering flavours like Lamb, Truffle and Parmesan; Brisket, Jalapeno and Cheddar; and Pork, Smoky Honey and Chorizo.

They've almost doubled their staff from 12 to 21 (it's still not enough) and they've just taken out awards for Brand and Marketing and Innovation Excellence at the Taranaki Business Excellence Awards.



They've won at least 15 awards for their flavoured bacon, including 11 the last two years.

Stephen was one of the first butchers in the country to start making flavoured bacon, using a 10-day dry cure instead of injecting wet cure so when you cook the bacon, it doesn't leak liquid and shrink.

"People say all the time they can't go back to bulk processed bacon after trying ours," he says. "We have customers come from Hawke's Bay and Hamilton to buy it - they can get it online, but they prefer coming in in person, and they get hundreds of dollars at a time."

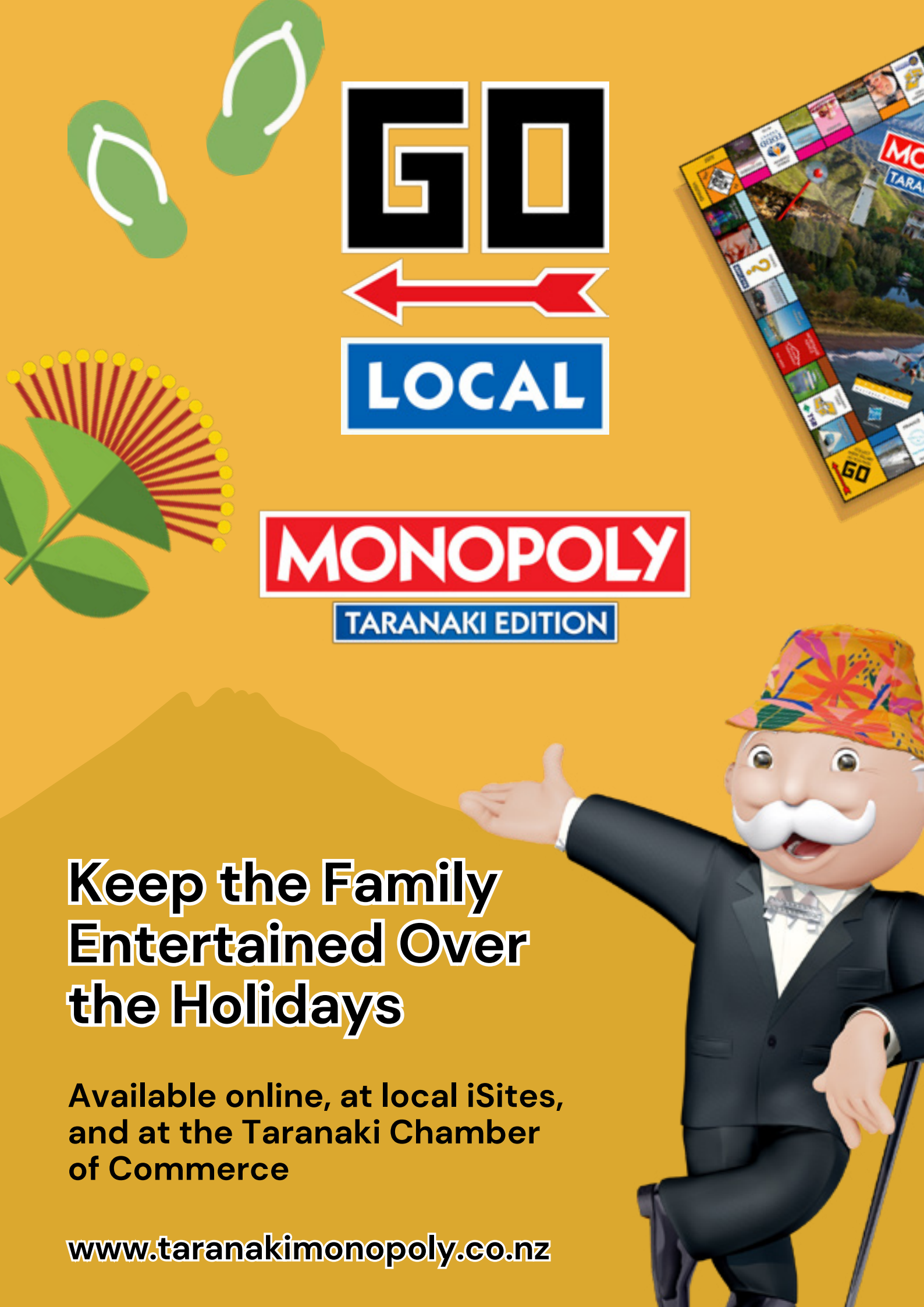
"The thing I'm most proud of is how well regarded we are by people in the industry," General Manager Mandy Edie says. "We were at the National Butchery Awards in August and a well known butcher was telling everyone at the table they had to come to New Plymouth and see what we're doing - it was awesome to get that kind of feedback from someone who's really well respected."

The Kiwi Butcher Shop has shown how a local family butchery can achieve national success, and meat-eaters around Taranaki (and beyond) are the beneficiaries.

Definitely worth a visit to see why they are Taranaki's Award Winning Butcher!

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thekiwibutchershop.co.nz





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NEW AND EMERGING BUSINESS + HOSPITALITY EXCELLENCE

The Silo / Crop & Brew

Charlotte Brockway, a talented chef, is the driving force behind The Silo food truck and Crop & Brew Cafe. After taking a break to focus on her family, Charlotte launched her catering business The Silo in late 2023. The distinctive silver bullet food truck quickly gained popularity among customers who soon urged her to establish a permanent location.

In December 2024, she opened Crop & Brew, which has enjoyed consistent success since its debut, never operating at a loss. The cafe features standout dishes like the “8 Hour Cowboy Brisket Reuben” and “Fried Nashville Chicken Sandwich,” with all offerings made in-house to cater to diverse dietary preferences. The cafe also has a massive display of in-house baked goods.

Opening in the pit of a hard economic state, Charlotte knew if she could make it work now, it would be great in years to come.

The Silo continues to thrive by providing catering for various events, allowing Charlotte to be part of memorable occasions. She believes in the power of food to uplift spirits and finds joy in watching people savour each bite.

Crop & Brew 73 Gill Street, NP thesilo.co.nz



MEDIUM BUSINESS AWARD

Central Taranaki Automotive

If you took your vehicle into Central Taranaki Automotive for a lightbulb replacement, chances are you'd get more value back than what you'd spend. How?

Owners Kevan and Wendy Old say you'd not only get your car washed, but you'd also get a gift of the month.

That's their commitment to going above and beyond, which is the central theme behind their eighth time winning at the Taranaki Business Excellence Awards. Central Taranaki Automotive took out the Medium Sized Business Award, graduating from two Best Small Business wins in 2015 and 2019.

The business has more than tripled their customer base and has a 4.98-star rating from over 1,200 Customer Radar reviews, to go with a 5-star Google rating from more than 450 reviews.

They won two Top Shop awards this year and took out the Auto Super Shoppe's top award for customer service excellence ahead of 129 other automotive workshops nationwide.

Success is a byproduct of service, and with customers from as far afield as Whanganui and Awakino and Taumarunui, that service is nothing less than exceptional.

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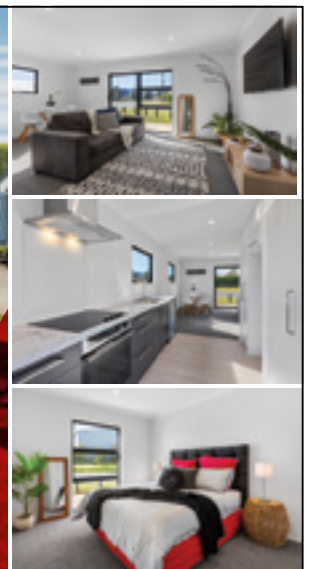
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THE DAVISON *Drive*

WORDS Hannah Mumby PHOTO Supplied

Some families seem to have a bit of sporting magic in their DNA.

The Davisons of Taranaki are one of them, with son Carlin the first Taranaki basketball player to make the Tall Blacks in 20 years, and daughter Tiana a Kiwi Fern and National Rugby League champion.

“**T**hey’ve always had that natural ability,” says Mum, Brenda. “But over time they’ve learned that being good at something isn’t enough. If you want to get anywhere, you have to put in the work, and that’s what has really started to open doors for them.”

From their rural base near Stratford, Taranaki, the Davison kids have already taken their gifts to remarkable places. Tiana is a double NRLW Champion and Kiwi international, Carlin, a Tall Black, Breaker and one of New Zealand basketball’s most exciting prospects. Youngest sibling, Maddison, is a promising rugby player and natural leader, too.

They’re on three different paths, but each of them is showing a mix of talent, grit, and a growing sense of maturity that is refining their characters on and off their chosen surface.

At just 22, Carlin has already carved a reputation as one of the most dynamic and hard-working players in the National Basketball League. He’s as comfortable producing highlight-reel moments as he is doing the “glue work” that holds a team together.

Arguably the Taranaki Airs’ most recognisable face in recent years, it wasn’t always professional basketball on the top of his dream occupation list.

“Carlin played everything and was pretty good at most things,” says Brenda. “He initially went to New Plymouth Boys’ High and was accepted into the rugby academy, so rugby was going to be his thing.”

But basketball kept tugging, and shortly after starting high school, he put rugby aside and became consumed by the round ball.

“He didn’t look back,” says Brenda. “He was the youngest player to make the school’s 1st V, in Year 10, and started training with the Airs at 14. He then became the youngest player to play in the NBL, at 16.”

He spent his time bouncing from training with the 1st V, to the school Junior A, to age group representative teams and the Mountain Airs. He started boarding at NPBHS to make the commitments easier, which was also the foundation of his character development, says Mum.

“Carlin was a bit of a ratbag, but boarding was the best thing for him. It gave him structure, help with his schoolwork, and a routine he thrived on.”

He also developed a side hustle as the boarding school barber, which earned him plenty of pocket money. It’s a skill he still exercises, often cutting the hair of his Airs’ and Breakers’ teammates.

Since then, Carlin has built a career that’s every bit as solid as it is spectacular. A mainstay for the Taranaki Airs, he’s become known for his defensive intensity, rebounding power, and show-stopping dunks. Despite still being young, his leadership has had to evolve quickly within the Airs’ environment, which Dad, Justin, says has done him wonders.



“He’s learning that the game isn’t always about stats and points, but what you can contribute elsewhere. Without assists, rebounds, steals, your teammates can’t score. So he is learning to bring that energy more and more.”

Last season, his performances earned him a haul of honours including Airs' MVP, a spot in the NZNBL All-Star Five (the only Kiwi player to do so), and the prestigious Stan Hill Trophy for best New Zealand forward/centre. He was recently named Taranaki Men's Player of the Year, and Basketballer of the Year. He's also moved into a rostered Breakers position, and become a consistent Tall Blacks' member. He was recently named again in the national squad for the 2027 FIBA World Cup Qualifiers.

When the call came through confirming his initial Tall Blacks' selection, he wasn't in a gym or at training, but at a local livestock auction, laughs Justin.

"He put his number up then his phone rang, so he disappeared to take the call. When he came back he said he'd bought the cow, and also made the Tall Blacks. So we all got pretty excited and everyone was looking at us thinking far out, they're pretty excited about that cow."

His growth hasn't happened in isolation. Both Brenda and Justin say he's had strong influences at every stage, from local mentors like Bryn Rees - the Merrilands Primary teacher who introduced him to basketball, John Carr, Shay Haira, and David Bublitz, to professional figures Dylan Boucher and Aaron Bailey-Nowell. He's even had encouragement from Steven Adams, who gave him tickets and time when he visited the USA.

"All of those individuals have been so great for him at every stage," says Brenda.

"Sometimes Carlin can be a tough one to figure out, but each of them have seen something in him and put their time into his development which we really appreciate."

For Carlin, he never dreamed of reaching the heights he has when making the decision to switch from rugby to basketball in Year 9.

"There have been so many highlights: making the Tall Blacks at 18, playing for the Breakers too. They're New Zealand's two teams, which is special for me.

"With the Breakers, I used to watch some of those guys religiously when I was younger, so to have played and be playing alongside some of them buzzes me out."

Being in the same team as Tom Abercrombie, Reuben Te Rangi and Shea Ili has brought plenty of pinch-me-moments, he says.



The middle brother isn't the only Davison lighting up the sporting scene. His older sister, Tiana, has gone from standout rugby player to NRLW champion.

After winning gold with the New Zealand Sevens team at the 2018 Youth Olympics in Argentina, she seemed destined for a long rugby career. It was an injury confusion incident that derailed her Super Rugby opportunity and saw her pivot to rugby league after being scouted by Andre Ponga.

She took the code switch in her stride.

"It's been awesome. There's so many great opportunities with women's rugby league and I've just been able to experience so much more," says Tiana.

It's a game she continues to learn more about each season, as she's exposed to more resources and coaching.

"Switching codes isn't as easy as most people make it look," she says. "But I was surrounded by support and given every tool to make it work."

Initially signed by the Newcastle Knights, she went on to win back-to-back NRLW Grand Finals, first with the Knights in 2023 and then the Roosters in 2024. She's since re-signed with the Knights through to 2027 and has become a core member of the Kiwi Ferns squad.

"She's cracked it in league and I'm so proud of her for that," says Carlin.

"I look back at the way we grew up and it wasn't always easy. So to be able to see how far we've both come is cool."

For the Davison siblings, sport has become more than something they're good at. Carlin's latest Tall Blacks selection confirms his place among New Zealand's best basketballers, and is no doubt a team he'll continue to thrive in as his confidence grows under a reputable coaching staff.

The question on every Taranaki basketball enthusiast's mind is whether he will bring up 100 games for the province in 2026 - currently sitting on 91.



A Smiling Issue

Tammie is an attractive, happy fifteen year old who came to us with a smiling problem.

Tammie did not like her teeth and was self-conscious about the shape and colour of them. Without knowing it, her smile had become a real issue for her. According to her family she is doing nothing but smiling since Kerry has given her a new smile. She is now bright, bubbly and confident. Kerry increased the crown length of her four front teeth with a soft tissue laser. Once the gum area healed Tammie did a home whitening

programme for three weeks followed by another rest period of two weeks.

Finally Kerry matched the new tooth shade and created four new upper centrals. The original shape of these teeth were altered and artificially shaped into a more pleasing position. This process eliminated the need for braces and Tammie now has a lovely smile she is happy with.



Before



After

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With his Breakers contract coming to an end and uncertainty currently surrounding the Taranaki Airs, his next few moves are still unknown. At the time of writing, he had not confirmed his team for the upcoming Sal's NBL season.

“I’ve only really ever wanted to play for my home team, for the community that’s supported me.

So I would love to play at home as long as I can and reach that milestone, but there needs to be a professional set-up there who are treating people right and looking after the community.

“I’m not sure what’s happening there at the moment.”

There will no doubt be plenty of options on the table from teams near and far.

Tiana, meanwhile, is settled, thriving and confident heading into another big season with the Knights, while Maddison is recovering from an injury in order to get back on the rugby field.

The siblings’ achievements tell an exciting story that has put their family name on the map and proven to many how you can turn potential into proof. ••



Maddison, Tiana, Brenda, Justin and Carlin Davison

Quick Fire Questions

Carlin

What’s the one thing you always pack when going on the road?

I always pack my neck pillow

Favourite homemade snack?

Peanut butter and jam sandwich

When you’re in Taranaki you always go to eat or drink at...?

The Reef in Fitzroy

Favourite quote or saying?

“Hard work beats talent when talent fails to work hard”

Who has been your most influential teacher, coach or boss?

I have had so many good people that have impacted my basketball career but one stand out is Trent Adam, who was my coach for a few years.

Career highlight (so far)?

Being named in the Tall Blacks again after a couple of years away from the international game.

Tiana

Favourite homemade snack?

Cheese board

When you’re in Taranaki you always go to eat or drink at...?

Fish and chips from Yummy’s in Waitara

Favourite quote or saying?

Tūwhitia te hopo, mairangaatia te angitū – Feel the fear and do it anyway.

Who has been your most influential teacher, coach or boss?

I’ve had a few coaches in my time but my dad was a big part of my journey early on as my rugby coach. Later on, Andre Ponga has definitely been one of the most influential people in my career.

Career highlight (so far)?

I have two. The first is winning back-to-back NRLW grand finals. The second would be making my Kiwi Ferns debut in Auckland against Tonga and having all my family in the crowd.

Greg Brien Physiotherapy

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Do you suffer from headaches or migraines?
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Weight

BY DR NINA

TARANAKI
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Future proofing the bodies of Taranaki

Back and shoulder pain, weak muscles, bladder leakage, even erectile dysfunction. For many people in Taranaki, these issues are simply put down to “getting older” or “part of life”. But one local clinic is changing that story.

Flow Rehab, a home-based rehabilitation clinic in New Plymouth, has brought cutting-edge Functional Magnetic Stimulation (FMS) technology to the region. Using the TESLAFormer and TESLAChair devices popular in Europe and the U.S. Flow Rehab offers pain-free, non-invasive treatments that strengthen muscles, rebuild stability, and restore confidence.

Owner-operator Brodie Woodward says the technology is making a real difference to locals

“Our clients are amazed at how much relief and strength they gain in such a short time. They don’t need to undress or go through invasive procedures. They just sit back, relax and let the technology do the hard work.”

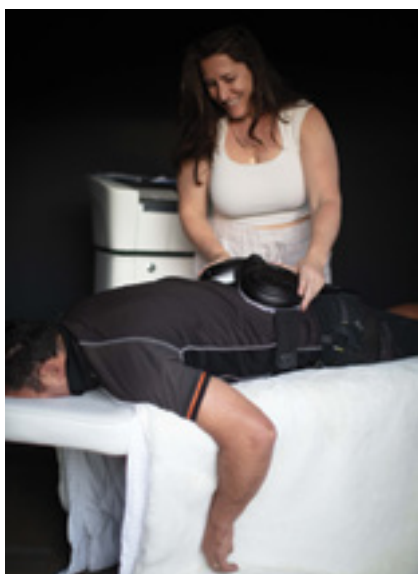
So how does it work?

Magnetic pulses pass through clothing to stimulate nerves and activate muscles far deeper than traditional exercise or massage can reach. Creating thousands of powerful contractions in a single session safely and comfortably to strengthen targeted muscles while simultaneously boosting circulation and lymphatic flow.

From sore backs to tight shoulders, weak abs or stiff hamstrings, the TESLAFormer helps release tension, improve posture, and re-activate weakened muscles for lasting strength.

Taranaki Bull’s player Perry Lawrence says “I’d been struggling with shoulder tension for months, after two sessions I was able to get my hands behind my head, and my arms behind my shoulders, and it’s stayed that way. I’d highly recommend it.”

The TESLAChair, is a breakthrough for people dealing with pelvic health issues such as bladder leakage or



erectile dysfunction, it’s a non-invasive, drug and pain free option with clinically backed results.

One of only six of these devices available nationwide, Flow Rehab is proud to be the first to bring this tech to Taranaki and Brodie looks forward to helping many more locals move pain free with strength and confidence.



“We consider it a stepping stone to strength. We rebuild the foundation so you can continue to build on it with better form and posture.”



Brodie Woodward



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THE NEW 'REAL LIFE' SKINCARE COLLECTION

With 20 years in the beauty industry, Oākura dermal therapist Renee Hohaia has seen trends for skincare come and go.

She's also witnessed exciting revolutions she would love to see incorporated into everyday products.

If only there was a skincare range that had all the good stuff that supported skin health in an easy-to-use routine, she thought.

So she went looking for one.

Astonishingly, with all the skincare options on the market she couldn't find what she was looking for. So Renee decided to formulate the range herself.

It's taken two years but at last on the 28th Nov this year, Renee was able to launch the ultimate skin care range she has dreamed into existence.

arké was unveiled at the Len Lye Centre on 28th Nov during a gorgeous gala event attended by stockists, media, other skincare founders and companies, and consumers.

Designed to simplify routines and support real skin through every season of life, arké is a new clinical-grade skincare collection. Combining science, expertise and care in a streamlined four-step ritual it features The Cleanser, The Serum, The Moisturiser, and The Bed Balm.

The arké philosophy is simple: good skin is just the beginning, says Renee. Each formula is created with proven actives in thoughtful concentrations, designed to strengthen, hydrate and restore the skin barrier, without unnecessary complexity or trend-driven noise.



“After 20 years working hands-on with clients, I knew women didn't need more products - they needed the right ones. arké is about real results, clinical expertise and skin that feels supported, not stripped.”

Suitable for all skin types including dry, mature, sensitive and changing skin, arké offers real skin, real results through skin-first simplicity.

Renee's career has spanned clinics, spas and leadership roles in New Zealand, Sydney and the UK. She holds multiple international diplomas and is a qualified dermal therapist and skin therapist. Since 2017, Renee has owned and led R & Co Skin and Beauty, a multi-award-winning clinic in Oākura, New Plymouth, recognised for excellence in acne treatment, brand engagement and client results.

The arké Collection

The Cleanser (200ml)

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The Serum (30ml) -

Firming, brightening, hydrating treatment with 12% Niacinamide, Vitamin A and Hyaluronic Acid.

RRP: \$120

The Moisturiser

(50ml) - Hydrating, strengthening, protective cream powered by Kakadu Plum, Hyaluronic Acid and barrier-supportive oils.

RRP: \$110

The Bed Balm

(50ml) - Nourishing overnight treatment with Peptides, Vitamin A and antioxidant-rich botanicals to restore skin while you sleep.

RRP: \$115

arké is available from R & Co Skin and Beauty, Main Road, Oākura and online from arkeskin.com
@ @arke.skin

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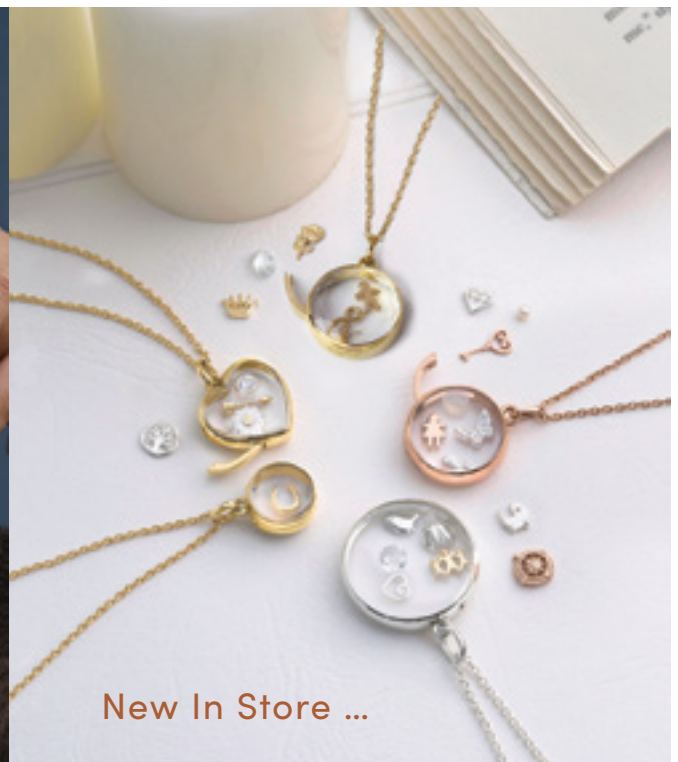
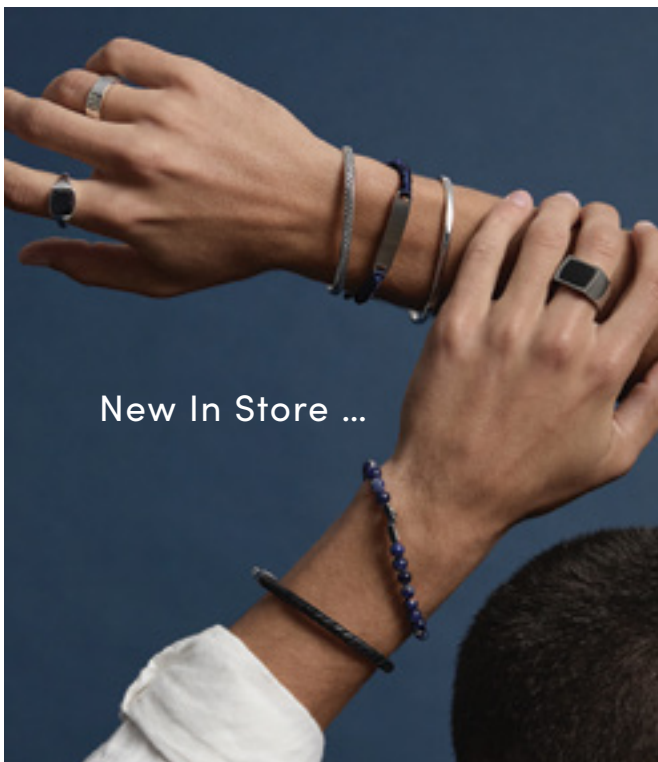
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Myopia Control at Vivian Optometrists

Believe it or not, myopia (short sightedness, or blurry **distance** vision) is the biggest epidemic currently facing the modern world. It is predicted that within the next 25 years, over half the world's population will be myopic.

So what is the problem with being myopic? Surely you can just use spectacles, contact lenses or have laser surgery to deal with the issue?

The problem is not having to wear spectacles etc, it's that myopia increases your risk of developing sight threatening eye conditions.

The more myopic you are, the higher your risk of developing glaucoma, early cataracts, retinal detachments or myopic macular degeneration as you grow older.

As optometrists we used to watch our younger patients becoming more myopic with each passing year, unable to slow the seemingly inevitable progression.

But now this has changed with huge advances in the field of Myopia Control.

Myopia Control is the use of specialised lenses or treatments to dramatically slow myopia progression in patients. As myopia is related to the overall size of the eyeball, it has been found that **those most at risk of swift, large changes are children & teens**. As your children grow, so does the size of their eyeballs and this increases the risk of them developing myopia and the myopia worsening.

We now have many options to help slow down myopia progression in our younger patients. These involve lifestyle changes, changing device use habits, specialised spectacle lenses (such as the STELLEST lens), multi-focal soft contact lenses, hard Ortho-K contact lenses that you sleep in, or Atropine eye drops. These treatments, such as the STELLEST spectacle lens, have been found to slow myopic progression by up to 67%, which is really impressive!

We have a new specialist instrument to measure the size of the eyeball extremely accurately. This Axial Length machine allows us to identify those patients more at risk of myopic changes and also to monitor how effective our treatments are.

At Vivian Optometrists all appointments with the optometrist are between 45 to 60 minutes long. This gives us ample time to fully diagnose your condition, discuss it with you and work out a management plan tailored specifically to your needs to achieve the best long term outcome for you.

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Thank You TARANAKI

As 2025 comes to a close, we want to extend our heartfelt thanks to the Taranaki community for your continued support of Central Audiology Taranaki. Your trust in our clinic means the world to us. We're also incredibly proud of our dedicated team, whose hard work and compassion have made a real difference in the lives of so many.

As we look ahead to 2026, we're excited to introduce new services that will further enhance hearing health across the region.
Here's to another great year together!

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TARANAKI

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THE QUIET ENGINE OF TARANAKI MEDICINE

In 1966, a visionary group of Taranaki doctors came together with a shared desire to invest in medical education and research that would shape healthier futures for generations to come.

With an inaugural grant of \$100,000 from the Taranaki Savings Bank, the Taranaki Medical Foundation (TMF) was born, and six decades later, it continues to drive the region's medical excellence.

WORDS Hannah Mumby PHOTO Sandra Henderson

As the foundation approaches its 60th anniversary in 2026, Executive Secretary Dr Nadja Gottfert has been closely investigating decades of meeting minutes and stories of innovation. She says the milestone is not only a celebration of the organisation, but a tribute to the people who've built and sustained it.

"The foundation has been the quiet engine behind Taranaki medicine for 60 years."

At its heart, TMF fosters medical research and education for the benefit of the community through meetings and workshops, research grants, and scholarships. These initiatives have helped generations of doctors expand their skills while maintaining strong ties to the region. TMF's monthly Continuing Medical Education meetings provide a vital bridge between hospital and community doctors, strengthening collegial relationships and

Photo – Left to right: TMF Executive Committee 2025–2026. Mr Ritwik Kejriwal, Orthopaedic Surgeon; Dr Duncan Brown, Anaesthetist; Treasurer Dr Emily Davenport, General Surgeon; President Dr Matt Dalman, GP; Dr Thomas Cartier, GP; Dr Nina Lupton, GP; Dr Emma Thompson, Urgent Care Clinician; Executive Secretary Dr Nadja Gottfert

improving patient care. As the health sector has expanded over the years and become more complex, these meetings have remained a cornerstone for collaboration, learning, and connection, as well as a meaningful way to attract new doctors to this beautiful region.

“TMF is one of the few regional medical foundations in New Zealand that is doctor-led for doctors, and community-supported, ensuring that education and innovation stay rooted in Taranaki,” says Nadja.

Today, the foundation has 83 active members and continues to attract doctors and medical students who want to invest their expertise back into Taranaki. Its summer scholarship programme invites at least three students from the region, back home for the summer to work on a research project each year, giving them hands-on experience and a taste of what makes Taranaki’s medical community so special.

Former summer student, Dr Emily Davenport, is a respected local surgeon who leads many specialist workshops and now acts as the foundation’s treasurer. It’s a full-circle story that really embodies TMF’s purpose, says Nadja.

Over the past six decades, TMF has supported dozens of groundbreaking projects. Among one of its most impactful contributions was the initial funding of Whānau Pakari, led by Professor Yvonne Anderson and team.

This world-class programme supports children and teens struggling with weight-related health issues, taking a holistic approach that includes their whānau and community.

“That local backing allowed it to grow into something really extraordinary,” says Nadja.

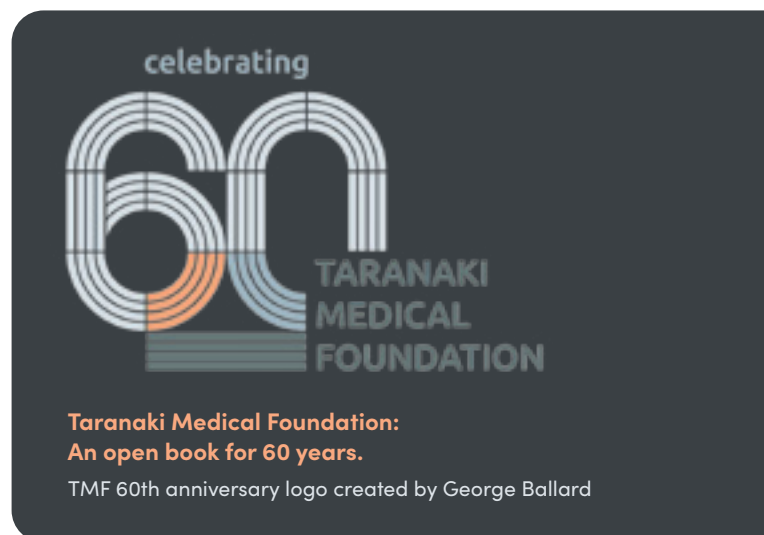
Another example of home-grown innovation comes from Dr Yariv Doron, whose development of a smart screening tool for ADHD has improved how clinicians identify and support children across New Zealand.

Orthopaedic research has long been a focus, too, with TMF contributing to major knee replacement studies and surgical innovation that has improved patient outcomes across the region.

TMF’s support for such projects underscores its vision to support a thriving Taranaki, where healthcare is strengthened through ongoing medical education, research and collaboration.

Part of the foundation’s 60th-year celebrations will honour the remarkable individuals who helped shape its history. The early committee featured well-known names such as Miss Jean Sandal, the country’s first female surgeon, Dr Peter Allen, a former Deputy Mayor of New Plymouth who introduced New Zealand’s first mobile chest X-ray unit to Taranaki, equitable healthcare advocate, Dr John Valentine, and Dr Kenneth Fox, an anaesthetist and entomology enthusiast who also discovered a new moth species on Mt Taranaki.

The celebrations will include a range of community and professional events highlighting the foundation’s achievements and its ongoing commitment to the future of local healthcare.



A Diamond Anniversary ambrose golf day in March 2026 dubbed “60 Years in the Sun – Playing for Skins” will raise awareness and funds to help promote skin cancer prevention and early detection education - a must for Taranaki given its high melanoma rates.

A major event that explores rural and cultural health, Hauora Taranaki Wānanga, will also be held in the region. As keynote speaker, local doctor Moerangi Tamati will share her internationally recognised research on Muka Titiki (flax fibre ties for umbilical cords), supported by TMF Regional lectures and a doctors’ mountain summit will round out the busy events calendar.

While the 60th anniversary is a moment to reflect, Nadja says it’s also about looking ahead. TMF has launched a 60th Anniversary Impact Fund, dedicated to supporting education and skill development for resident doctors. “Every donation, large or small, helps us grow the knowledge, skills and professional networks that underpin quality healthcare in our community,” she says.

The foundation also welcomes bequests and donations, ensuring that today’s legacies will continue to nurture medical excellence.

“There’s something special about this region and the people who choose to serve here,” Nadja reflects. “The Taranaki Medical Foundation exists because of that spirit and belief that by supporting those who care for our community, we strengthen the whole community.”

After 60 years of impact, Nadja proudly declares the foundation is “just getting started”.



To learn more, contribute to the 60th Anniversary Impact Fund, or join the anniversary events, visit taranakimedicalfoundation.org.nz or contact Dr Nadja Gottfert via email at info@taranakimedicalfoundation.co.nz.

PRESCRIPTIONS



Still Going Strong

David and Christine Fabish are just the fourth owners since Vogeltown Pharmacy opened in the 1950s and this year they are celebrating ten years of ownership.

WORDS Irena Brooks PHOTO Sandra Henderson

While seven Taranaki pharmacies have closed in New Plymouth since 2020, Vogeltown Pharmacy has earned its place in locals' hearts. It still operates from the same site and the building has changed little during that time.

"When the opportunity came up to buy the pharmacy, it was an easy decision," David remembers of that pivotal moment at the end of 2015.

He grew up locally and went to New Plymouth Boys' High School and then Otago University. He and Christine travelled and lived abroad, but after fifteen years in Sydney, they were ready to come back.

"There's seriously no place like home," says David.

"Ten years on we feel we've grown the business, honouring its' original strengths, and developing its community-focused reputation.

"I really like taking care of my customers and looking after them like extended family. We have a very dedicated team of staff who follow suit – I believe it's the hallmark of our success."

As well as a lot of really nice verbal confirmation about what they offer, the shop was recognised officially in 2022 when Vogeltown Pharmacy entered Top Shop Taranaki and won the Health and Beauty section.

"Our Vision Statement is 'We will help people live longer, improve their quality of life and support our local community.'"

Community-focus is reflected in every aspect of their business – from David's choice of trade suppliers to the sponsorship and help the business gives to local schools, sports clubs and various charitable organisations.

"Giving back is our happy place," says David.

A free medicine delivery service caters to those who can't commute so easily, with deliveries Monday to Friday in New Plymouth.

Free parking outside the shop makes 'popping in to pick up a prescription' an easy task. Including NZ Post into their business has also been a positive addition to supporting the pharmacy as a one-stop shop for their customers.

The team from left: Julia Mount, Hayley O'Neil, Haylie Davis, David Fabish, Christine Fabish, Ellie Hall, Jess Tait, Brian Raisin and Tyla Hare. Hayley O'Neil and Brian Raisin have been with David and Christine throughout their 10 years of ownership.



1999



1960s



1950s

Alongside their community focus, Vogeltown Pharmacy has a great reputation for giftware. The shop offers everything from hats, sunglasses, jewellery, wallets and bags to children's toys, gourmet food items, and original quirky character gifts for men and women.

"We've got people that drive from all over New Plymouth for our unique gifts, especially in December!" says David.

"I enjoy my job, and that's part of my drive. You've got a responsibility as a business owner – we'll just continue to look after our community and the people in it."

272 Carrington Street, New Plymouth (06) 753 5716
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A NEW ERA FOR CANCER TREATMENT

Open just in time for Christmas, the new Taranaki Cancer Centre is set to revolutionise cancer care in the region. Located at Taranaki Base Hospital, Live Magazine presents some of the stories behind the development of the \$56.1 million purpose-built facility.

WORDS Bruce Gatward-Cook PHOTO Sandi Henderson



The opening of the new Taranaki Cancer Centre | Te Hōpua Whakahauora marks a new era in cancer care for Taranaki, says Wendy Langlands, Health New Zealand's Group Director of Operations in Taranaki.

"Cancer is something that touches us all - whether it's a loved one, a friend, a colleague, or our own personal journey, few of us are untouched by its impact," says Wendy.

"This centre is more than bricks and mortar - it's a symbol of hope, of progress, and of our collective commitment to the people of Taranaki."

Funding for the Taranaki Cancer Centre (TCC) was approved to meet rising cancer rates in Taranaki. In 2021, when the TCC was approved, there were 830 people living with cancer in the region. By 2024, that figure had risen to 943, an increase of approximately 14% over three years. Around 300 Taranaki residents requiring radiation therapy, and their whānau, would have to drive to Palmerston North

for treatment — often several times a week. Now 80% of radiation treatments can be delivered locally.

Equipped with the region's first LINAC (Linear Accelerator) the TCC has 10 chemotherapy chairs and two single isolation rooms. Eight outpatient consult rooms allow for video conferencing to enable clinicians to meet virtually where appropriate for faster and more convenient care.

Designed by architects Chow Hill, site works were led by Leighs Construction and started in May 2023 with the demolition of the redundant laundry building.

Prior to construction commencing, the site was blessed by Health New Zealand's te tiriti partner in Taranaki, Taumaruroa - Ngāti Te Whiti and representatives of the eight iwi of Taranaki.

The construction period took just over two years and was completed in October 2025. Health New Zealand Taranaki then fitted out the facility with furniture and equipment,



ensuring everything operated as expected prior to receiving patients from late November 2025.

In line with Health New Zealand's commitment to sustainability, the TCC has achieved a Greenstar 5 design rating from the New Zealand Green Building Council.

To achieve this rating a building needs to have strong sustainability principles ingrained into the design and construction. This includes reduced energy and water consumption, improved indoor environments (natural light, thermal comfort, and air quality), the use of sustainable materials and reduced impact on the surrounding environment.

Not only will this mean that the building will help reduce Health New Zealand's carbon and energy footprint in Taranaki, but it is also expected to have a significant benefit to staff, patients and whānau wellbeing.

The opening the Centre celebrates more than a new facility.

“We celebrate what it represents - a future where cancer care in Taranaki is more accessible, more advanced, and more compassionate,” says Wendy.

Wendy also acknowledges the outstanding work of the Project Maunga team behind the redevelopment of Taranaki Base Hospital.

“From planning to design to construction, their dedication and perseverance have brought this complex project to life. They have helped create a space that reflects the values of our community - compassion, excellence, and care.

“We have also received incredible support from the community to bring this Centre to a reality. To everyone who played a part in making this Centre possible - thank you. This is your achievement, and your legacy.”

\$2m fund raised

The Taranaki Health Foundation has fundraised \$2 million for enhancements that fall outside the government's budget envelope for the project, and which will add to the comfort of patients and whānau using the facility.

This generous support has come from individuals as well as Taranaki organisations and corporates - all recognised on the 'million-dollar wall' within the facility – a legacy that will live on for generations to come, says Taranaki Health Foundation Chairperson, Antony Rhodes.

"We have been blessed with significant donations such as \$1.5 million from Toi Foundation, \$250,000 from Energy Works and \$100,000 from iTaranaki," he adds.

"There have been numerous donations from individuals, community groups and local fund-raising initiatives such as Primo Fund-Razor who shaved their beards and raised \$23,000!"

Ruby Whitham (11,) from Waitara courageously shaved her head and raised \$5000 for the Centre in December 2024. Her hair was donated to create wigs for children that were going through cancer treatment.

"I wanted to help children my age who have lost their hair because of cancer," says Ruby. "My Poppa died in 2020 and I miss him very much so I did this for him too."



Above:
Million-dollar wall



Left:
Ruby Whitham

Below:
Chemo treatment room



Te Hōpua Whakahauora

The name Te Hōpua Whakahauora has been gifted to the Taranaki Cancer Centre and Health New Zealand by Taumaruroa, the Tiriti partner for Project Maunga.

Taumaruroa is a group of mana whenua Ngāti Te Whiti, and representatives from each of the eight Taranaki iwi, established to support cultural and strategic direction of Project Maunga, the redevelopment of Taranaki Base Hospital.

"Te Hōpua Whakahauora is a name that carries deep significance," says Tamati Neho, Interim Chief Māori Health and Equity Officer – Health New Zealand Taranaki.

"It was important that the chosen name not only reflected the Centre's purpose, its values, and its vision, but also the Hospital's overarching cultural narrative, Te Puna Wai Taheke Iho I Te Ora, which places wai (water) at the heart of all life, wellbeing and health."

"The word hōpua refers to a natural pool where water gathers and settles, while whakahauora means to revive, and refresh. In the context of the Centre, hōpua represents a place where the patient and whānau gather to be invigorated by the 'life giving waters' expressed by the word whakahauora."

Adding to this cultural richness is the striking mangopare (Hammer-Head Shark) artwork adorning the side of the building, created by artist Rangi Kipa and Tihei Ltd.

Like the gifted name, the artwork embodies the spirit of Te Hōpua Whakahauora, connecting the facility once again to that same cultural narrative, Te Puna Wai Taheke Iho I Te Ora, where water symbolizes life, healing, and continuity.

The mangopare, known for its endurance and awareness, reflects the whakatauki (a proverb or saying) "Kaua e mate wheke, me mate ururoa", a call to face this journey with courage and strength.

It signals a place where dignity, resilience, and collective support guide every step toward wellbeing.



THANK YOU, TARANAKI

For five years, we've had the privilege of working alongside this region, its communities, and its landscapes as Taranaki Base Hospital has taken shape. As the project wraps up, we're proud to have delivered facilities that will support people across the region for years to come.

**Thank you to everyone who has
shared this journey with us.**

Te Huhi Raupō Renal Unit | Energy Centre | Taranaki Cancer Centre | New East Wing Building

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Wendy Langlands

Quiet champions of Te Hōpua Whakahauora

Behind the doors of Te Hōpua Whakahauora – the Taranaki Cancer Centre, you'll find a team of highly skilled and compassionate nurses and specialists quietly delivering world-class cancer care to patients.

Dena Moss, Oncology Clinical Nurse Manager, is proud of her team.

"Our oncology nursing staff are remarkable," says Dena. "They epitomise what it means to be a nurse and a teammate - dedicated, focused, efficient, and calm, no matter what the day brings."

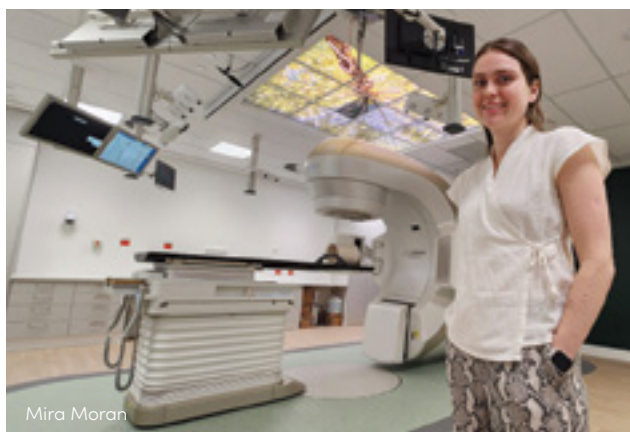
"They have supported countless patients and whānau throughout Taranaki - sometimes caring for multiple generations of the same family and their impact is deeply felt."

The opening of Te Hōpua Whakahauora has also attracted top-tier talent, including Dr Suzanne Bleker, Medical Oncologist, and Mira Moran, Medical Physicist and Radiation Safety Officer.

Originally from Rotterdam and trained in Amsterdam and across the Netherlands, Dr Bleker (*pictured below*) has relocated to New Zealand with her husband and their two young children.



Above: The Oncology team at Taranaki Cancer Centre (from left): Hailey Wells Clinical Nurse Specialist Haematology, Michelle Ruakere Mosaiaq Administrator (seated black sandals) Helen Leppard Clinical Nurse Specialist Lung and Brain (seated white sandals) Kirstin Johnson Front of House/ Reception (standing behind Michelle), Rachel Best Registered Nurse (standing behind Helen) Pauline Transon Registered Nurse Donna Shotton Registered Nurse, Dena Moss Clinical Nurse Manager Oncology Services Monique Shaw Clinical Nurse Specialist Cancer



Mira Moran

She says being the first Medical Oncologist based on-site in Taranaki, and having the opportunity to help shape something meaningful while remaining connected to the wider MidCentral Oncology Team - was a major drawcard.

"This centre compares very favourably to other leading cancer centres worldwide. It is purpose built to deliver high quality care, and it's got all the modern facilities. It's very exciting to see this level of investment in cancer care in Taranaki," says Bleker.

"I hope it will attract medical specialists from other countries in the world - not only medical specialists, but also nurses, allied health, and supporting staff, because having this amazing facility in which you can deliver top quality care is attractive to any medical professional."

Mira Moran, who oversees the Centre's pride and joy - the LINAC machine, is thrilled to return to clinical work after maternity leave. With experience in the National Health Service in England and the Waikato Regional Cancer Centre, she brings deep technical expertise and a passion for safe, effective treatment.

"This is the first linear accelerator installed in Taranaki," says Mira. "It uses high energy x-rays, or photons, to precisely target cancerous tissues. Each treatment takes just minutes, and a full appointment typically lasts 10 to 15 minutes."

"The LINAC is operated by our team of four highly trained radiation therapists. They'll rotate with colleagues from MidCentral in Palmerston North, alongside permanent staff here in Taranaki. Supporting them are two medical physicists – myself included – who test and calibrate the machine daily to ensure accuracy and safety." ••



**Proud to be serving
the community as a
key contractor for
the construction
of Taranaki's new
Cancer Centre.**

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David MacLeod

MP for New Plymouth

david.macleodmp@parliament.govt.nz

37 Gill Street, New Plymouth Ph: 06 759 2580

Season's Greetings!

On behalf of my family and office, I wish you all a
safe and happy holiday season.

Our office is closed from:

Mon 22 Dec 2025

Reopening on:

Mon 12 Jan 2026



Authorised by David MacLeod, Parliament Buildings, Wellington



**PROUD TO BE THE
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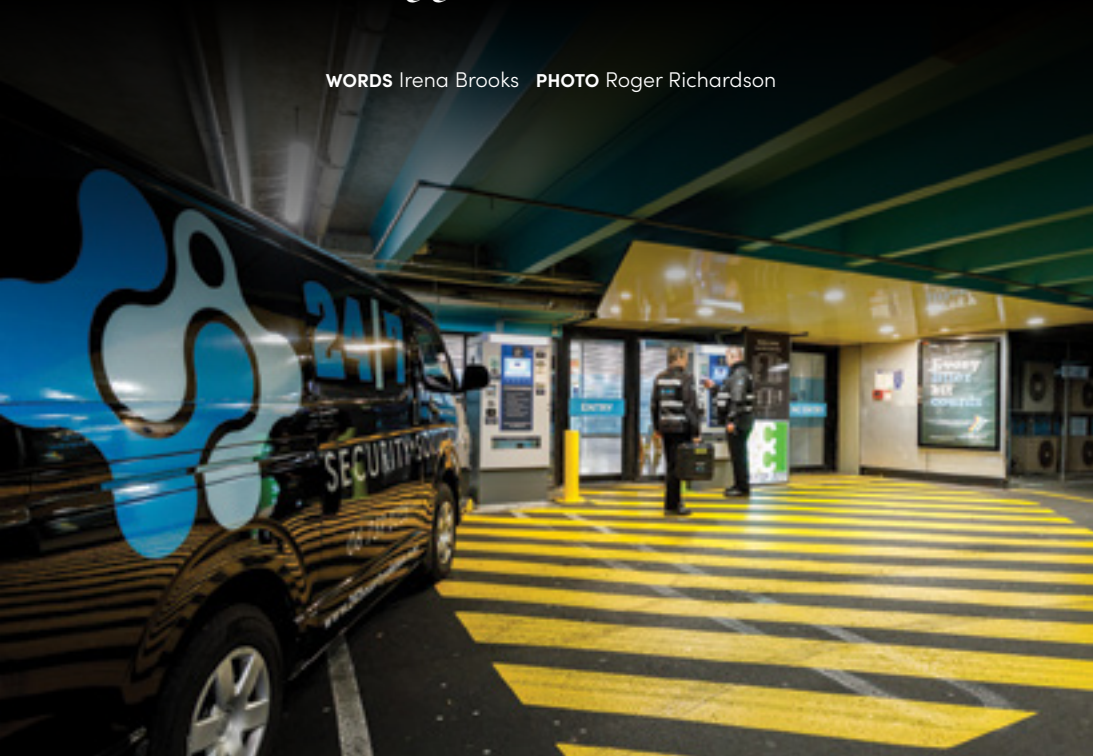
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24/7 SECURITY

The Local Crew Behind Taranaki's *Biggest Moments*

WORDS Irena Brooks PHOTO Roger Richardson



When you're at a Taranaki event this summer – Festival of Lights, speedway, a concert at the Bowl, or the rumble of AmeriCarna – chances are you will be protected by the 24/7 Security team.

Because 24/7 Security doesn't just turn up; they turn up in force. Each summer, their workforce swells to more than 140 trained and licensed staff, working around the clock to keep Taranaki safe, comfortable, and able to enjoy the moments that matter.

And while the business is owned by locals Phil and Raewyn Jackson, they're the first to tell you: "It's our team who make us who we are."

A Team Built on Local Experience

Step into 24/7 Security's new headquarters, and you'll immediately feel the energy of a team with decades of combined experience. Their expertise spans events, corporate & site security, mobile patrols, alarms, and much more — all backed by excellent customer service.

Phil is well known for his signature response, "No problem," which, translates into a very varied workload for the team.

From last-minute event requests to emergency site checks, "No problem" has become a motto that keeps things interesting!

"Our team has been everywhere, concerts, sporting fixtures, industrial sites, high-pressure situations, you name it," says Phil. "That sort of depth can't be bought. It's built over years."

While most people see the team at high-profile events, that's just the tip of the iceberg. On-site Security Guards, Mobile Patrols, bed-down checks, alarm monitoring & response and regular site inspections are all crucial parts of their work, protecting businesses, work sites, oil & gas sites, hospitals, schools, warehouses, and community facilities around the clock.



“Our people know the local venues, they know the risks, and they know the community they’re protecting,” adds Raewyn. “It’s that combination of local knowledge, experience, and dedication that really sets our team apart.”

From WOMAD to COVID — When the Team Stepped Up

When WOMAD 2020 wrapped up, just days before the country went into lock down, the team barely caught their breath before being deployed across Taranaki as COVID regulations came into force.

As the community stayed home, the 24/7 Security team was out in public, keeping people safe and providing reassurance when it was needed most. While many businesses struggled to stay afloat during COVID, 24/7 Security experienced an almost vertical trajectory, adapting quickly to meet the sudden surge in demand for protection and compliance support.

“We had staff at every hospital entrance, at most local supermarkets, managing queues, supporting compliance, it was all hands on deck,” says Phil. We even had staff that needed to “live in” on sites to ensure Covid compliance during this time.

But it wasn’t just about enforcing rules, it was about being friendly faces in a tough time. Staff greeted worried patients and tired shoppers with calm reassurance, helped people navigate new restrictions, and reminded the community that someone was looking out for them.

“It was intense, but seeing our team make people feel safer and supported made all the difference,” says Raewyn. “Even in uncertainty, they brought professionalism, warmth, and a sense of calm to every situation.”



Photo left:
Security team in action during an event at Stadium Taranaki.

Two Companies, One Big Team

What many don't realise is that alongside 24/7 Security is a sister company, Corporate Cleaning Solutions, built with the same values, the same commitment to community and the same 'people first' mentality.

“Security and cleaning work go hand-in-hand more often than people realise. Our staff know the sites, know the clients, and take pride in every job — big or small.”

Founded in 2007, Corporate Cleaning now services more than 150 sites across the region, with around 40 staff who bring their own expertise to the table: industrial cleaning, office cleaning, window cleaning and their standout steam sanitising service that outperforms traditional methods.

“Some of our team even work in both the cleaning and security business, especially during the busy event seasons, we are lucky to have a team with such varied skills and knowledge,” says Phil.

Background checks and police vetting are standard across both teams, ensuring the right people are trusted on site. Clients regularly comment on the professionalism, friendliness and consistency of staff, a reflection of years of training and development.

Purpose Built Headquarters — the next chapter

After nearly 30 years of operating out of cramped, converted garages on Rimu Street, the growing team needed a home that matched their size and skill.

“When we started looking for new premises, it was clear our admin team couldn't be split between two locations,” says Raewyn. “They'd been working so closely together for years that splitting them felt like sharing custody!”



We had to find a place that could accommodate the needs of both 24/7 Security and Corporate Cleaning, somewhere that worked for our teams, our operations, and our future growth.” After more than a four-year search, they found it: 54 Hurlstone Drive.

Amy Purdie from Straight Up Design translated Phil's vision into a functional, modern workplace, and Street & Cook turned the plans into reality.

Today the building is a bustling hub:

- Light-filled offices buzzing with staff
- Secure indoor vehicle access so patrol and cleaning teams can load up safely
- A training room where new recruits hone their skills for the best customer outcomes.
- A fully equipped laundry, warehouse and equipment for cleaning crews
- Showers and changing rooms for guards coming off night shifts
- A large staffroom where both teams get to catch up and share stories



**Proud to have completed the
changes at 24/7 Security's
new premises**



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2026 'Walkie Talkies'

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— as used by 24/7 Security



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“It feels like all the years of hard work have worked towards this – a purpose-built base to watch our business continue to grow.”

Locals Supporting Locals

Beyond the day-to-day work, the 24/7 Security and Corporate Cleaning teams are part of the local community.

They support Taranaki Rugby, Festival of Lights, Destination Kawarua and contribute to the Taranaki Health Foundation, including sponsoring a Whānau Room in the new ED wing and funding artwork in the Cancer Centre’s chemotherapy ward.

“Giving back to our local community has always been a big part of who we are,” says Raewyn. “Many of our staff are born here, raised here, and are raising their own families here.

“We look after our community because it looks after us too.”

With their new headquarters humming and their leadership team in place, the businesses are expanding again.

24/7 Security has extended its mobile patrols into Inglewood, Stratford, and South Taranaki, bringing the same reliable, high-quality service to support clients through to the southern part of the region.

“It’s common for local businesses to have both a New Plymouth and a South Taranaki branch, so we’re here to help keep things consistent, ensuring the same high level of security and service across all locations,” says Phil. This expansion ensures that businesses across Taranaki, no matter their location, can access the trusted protection that 24/7 Security is known for.

Corporate Cleaning is also gearing up for growth. This began by supplying basic washroom essentials, toilet tissue, hand towels, and other items, to keep businesses running smoothly. What started as hand-delivered basics quickly gained momentum, and now, with their large new warehouse and online store, that service has kicked up a notch. Clients can order everything they need for kitchens, staff areas, and hygiene requirements, ensuring they’re never caught out running low on essentials.

When asked what was in stock, the team laughed, recalling their last order: 600 chocolate fish! To which Phil, of course, said, “No problem!” Their range is always growing to make business supplies simple and hassle-free.

Keep an eye out for the team around town, in patrol vehicles, cleaning vans, on sites and at venues, working hard behind the scenes to keep Taranaki safe, clean and running smoothly.



*Wishing you a
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54 Hurlstone Drive, New Plymouth

Relax, it's all Downhill from Here

For Peter (65) and Julia Dolan (62) they knew their 5000km bike-packing tour across Europe would involve some serious climbs.

WORDS Julia Dolan PHOTOS Pete and Julia Dolan



Through the whole preparation there was one gnawing doubt...
"Are we physically able to do what we are planning to do?"

When you're looking at a map of Europe and plotting a cycling route from north to south, you can't help but get the impression it's all going to be downhill.

Over the years we've explored a lot of Europe on our bikes – not on e-bikes, just regular bicycles and carrying a tent and all our gear.

This year's trip would be our seventh and also our longest since 1989. In planning the route we wanted to see some countries we'd never been to before, but also revisit favourites.

It had been thirty years since we last visited Switzerland so that was top of the list. I had never visited any of the Balkan countries and it had still been Yugoslavia when Pete last visited forty years ago, so we wanted to tie that in as well. I had also never been to Greece so we tentatively planned our trip with these things in mind.

Another thing to consider was building up muscle strength before we hit the mountains of Switzerland. From past cycle trips we have learned to restrain ourselves to 50km days for the first week and nothing too strenuous. We have always enjoyed cycling in France so decided to fly into Paris and head south from there. In preparation, we made weekly forays out to Lepperton and back (about 40km), with smaller rides during the week to keep the muscles toned and the backside ready to withstand days on end in the saddle.

We budgeted \$100NZ a day but it turned out to be closer to \$180 – and that was camping most nights and shopping at supermarkets.

We took our bikes over in two bike boxes, each weighing under 23kg, and packed our gear in with them. This included the tent, and everything we would need over the next five months. Carry-on also had to be below 7 kilos.



JUNE France 28 days, 1430 km

Top: Chateau de Roche on the River Loire Below: A traffic free bike path and stunning views made our climb to Andermatt almost enjoyable Bottom: Chambord Chateau.

We had booked an inexpensive hotel near Charles de Gaulle airport where we spent our first night. This gave us an opportunity to assemble the bikes in comfort and get over the flight. Spirits were high as we set off into a pretty soggy, cool morning with the aim of cycling through Paris to Versailles.

It was easy, clear progress into the city on cycle tracks and small roads. Cycling through the city itself you find yourself being swept along with the crowds of city cycle commuters and quickly reacquainting yourself with the European respect for cyclists. It always takes us a little while to get used to the fact that we have right of way at roundabouts. Having said that, we made sure to make eye contact with drivers before boldly sailing out in front of them like the Parisians do.

We made it safely to the only campground near Versailles to get a reality check on our cost estimations. \$92 NZ for one night was a bit of a shock and although it did get better away from the major tourist destinations, this amount was not uncommon all the way through to Croatia.

Our original plan was to head south to Bordeaux and then to follow the canal that goes all the way through to the Med. However, one week in and the weather started to get very hot, and not just for a day or two. Consistent temperatures of 35 had us thinking perhaps we should head to the mountains earlier in a desperate attempt to escape the overwhelming heat.

So we headed to Valence where we had picked out a trail with a gradual ascent up to Grenoble. It was a nice gentle introduction to the Alps, scenic and mostly on bike trails completely separate from the traffic. However it was still very hot so we fell into a routine of rising with the sun and hitting the road by 6am. We would generally cycle until just after lunchtime where we would hopefully find a shady campground with a lake or a pool to swim in.



JULY Switzerland 17 days, 791km

Thankfully in Switzerland we got a bit of a reprieve from the heat and even a little rain, which reminded us that no matter how hot it is, it's still better than cycling and camping in the rain.

We did a bit of a zigzag course through the Alps trying to visit many different spots and take the less travelled roads. It is always worthwhile to detour to a quiet road as the cycling is much more pleasant when you're not having to deal with traffic. Some places though, we had no choice as we progressed through the mountains.

The bonus was the amazing scenery that went with every climb, some over 2000 metres! (For some context, Mt Taranaki is 2518m high).

AUGUST Northern Italy 10 days, 522kms and Slovenia 6 days, 368kms

Cycling nirvana with dedicated cycle paths and mostly sealed surfaces, following rivers so that your climbs and descents are not too steep.

Stunning scenery and we hit the classic tourist spots such as Tolmin, Lake Bohinj, Lake Bled and Ljubljana.

We had now been cycling for two months and were both amazed at how well our bodies were handling the trip so far. Some nights we would go to bed absolutely spent, our muscles aching, yet we would wake the next morning, all repaired and ready to go again.





Local lake in Croatia – swimming allowed! The water was so clear this photo looks like Pete was diving straight on to rocks.

Croatia 14 days, 542 km

Plitvice Lakes – beautiful, but no swimming allowed.

Being a Kiwi in Europe nowadays means you only have 90 days in 180 to be in mainland Europe without a visa. We now had to be careful about the time we spent in the Schengen countries. Fortunately Bosnia, Montenegro and Albania were non-Schengen and we could spend unlimited time in these countries. For this reason we dipped in and out of Croatia, but did spend some time

cycling down the coast and jumping into the crystal clear water for regular cool offs. This part of the trip felt more like a holiday for this reason.

We also decided to part with \$90NZ each to go and visit the famed Plitvice Lakes which were indeed as stunning as we had been told.

We then made a beeline for Bosnia so we could save up our Schengen days for Greece.



Camping in Croatia was spectacular at times

Bosnia 7 days, 295 km

We spent four days in Bosnia initially but found the north to be worryingly deserted as far as re-supply options went. We had been told to drink only bottled water there so having 100 km between shops was a bit scary in the middle of another heatwave. We also had the added danger of wildfires springing up all over the country and having to check the wildfire map every morning before deciding our route. We were also encountering more packs of wild dogs.

So for all these reasons we headed

back to Croatia and the coast.

Because of the aggressive Balkan drivers, we had to be alert to dangerous overtaking manoeuvres and high speeds.

Couple this consideration with the intense heat, we were back to early morning riding, generally finishing about midday if we could find a suitable place to camp.

One of the highlights was the Ciro trail from Mostar to Dubrovnik, an old rail trail now fully sealed and a delight to cycle.

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Montenegro 7 days, 188 km

The first thing we noticed was a decline in the roadside rubbish and people actually being employed to pick it up. This made such a difference to our first impressions of this country. We found out later that this is only happening in the touristy coastal parts.

The highlight of this section was cycling round Kotor Bay, sometimes on the promenade, stopping to swim in the crystal clear water we rode by.

Here we found a campground at \$40NZ per night and great wifi. With a thunderstorm approaching we booked in for three nights. We swam every day and enjoyed the ice making machine next to our shaded tent spot.

We did a bit of research on Albania and decided Ksamil looked like a nice place to stop and wait out our time until we could leave the non-Schengen area and catch the ferry to Corfu (Schengen area).

At this point, in case you're wondering, we did this whole trip just using free wifi. Occasionally it was frustrating and Pete's Facebook did get hacked once, but all in all, we wouldn't hesitate to do it again.



SEPT Albania 15 days (7 rest days), 467 km

We found the Albanian people to be the friendliest of all the Balkan countries. The town of Durres was a disappointment, its wide, long beach covered in sun loungers and umbrellas with barely any sand visible. It went totally against our Kiwi sensibilities to pay for a lounge and as for laying on it all day in this heat, forget it!

The pristine cleanliness of the water we saw online seemed to have disappeared. Maybe it was the sheer number of people in the water, stirring up all the sand as early each morning it would look clearer.

The ride down to Vlore along the coast was less crowded and more enjoyable, but still the rubbish problem persisted. From Vlore we ventured inland and really enjoyed this section.

At Ksamil we spent a week relaxing in the sunshine, waiting to catch the ferry to Corfu on September 17th.



Perast, Montenegro on the bay of Kotor



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Greece - Corfu 7 days, 168 km

Paleokastritsa Beach, Corfu

We thought Corfu would be a nice little doddle round a mediterranean island, stopping off at beautiful beaches whenever we felt like it. Instead we got lots of hills, some steep climbs, crowded beaches and closed campgrounds. We discovered that in the whole of Corfu there are only two campgrounds left open now. So we finished our trip on the continent with a

pedal round the northern half of the island followed by three nights at the wonderful Paleokastritsa beach. The temperature was between 25C and 30C the whole time we were on Corfu.

Reflecting on the past four months and all the places we had been, the sights we'd seen and the challenges we had overcome, we'd be happy to go back and do it all again. ••



Want more details?

See Julia and Pete's daily blog of their trip at:
<https://relaxitsalldownhillfromhere.blogspot.com>





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DISCOVERING SICILY

WORDS Nicola McLaren

When I travelled through Sicily with Back-Roads Touring in July 2024, I fell completely under the island's spell — the ancient towns, the rugged countryside, the passion of the people, and that glorious food.

I remember sitting over a long lunch with my Sicilian guide, Davide, talking about how special this place felt, and how we could tailor a version of the tour specifically for New Zealanders — travellers who love a good laugh, great food, and authentic experiences that go beyond the tourist trail. A year later, that idea became a reality.

In September — the absolute best time to visit Sicily, when the sun is warm but the summer crowds have faded — sixteen of us set off on a journey to discover “the true heart of Sicily.” Most of the group were from Taranaki. Some already knew each other; others met for the first time at a pre-trip get-together I hosted back home. By the time we landed in Palermo, it already felt like a reunion of old friends.

Our first challenge was the classic traveller's test — delayed flights and one rogue suitcase left behind in Rome. But true to the Sicilian way, everything worked itself out before we left Palermo, and the missing luggage was reunited with its very relieved owner. From then on, it was smooth sailing — or more accurately, winding roads, olive groves, and laughter echoing from the back of our minibus.

What makes this trip so special is that it takes you off the beaten path. Our guide, Davide, is everything you could want in a local host — energetic, passionate, and overflowing with stories that make the island's layered history come alive. Sicily is a patchwork of cultures — Greek, Roman, Arab, Norman — and Davide seemed to know the hidden corners of them all.

Over ten days, we explored from Palermo's grand piazzas to the honey-coloured lanes of Syracuse, wandered among the Valley of the Temples, and strolled through Ragusa, that storybook hill town of cobbled alleys and church domes. We tasted wine grown in volcanic soil near Mount Etna, learned the art of olive oil from a family who have tended their grove for generations, and ate pasta so fresh it almost melted in the mouth.

Our accommodation was as characterful as the places we visited. One night we slept among olive trees that have stood for over a thousand years, the air scented with rosemary and the sound of cicadas in the distance. Another night we stayed in a beautifully converted monastery in Ragusa, with views that seemed straight out of a movie. Everywhere we stayed felt personal — warm hosts, homemade breakfasts, and a sense of place that big hotels just can't replicate.

Of course, no Sicilian adventure would be complete without food — glorious, unpretentious, from-the-heart food. One of my favourite memories is sitting under the trees at the olive farm, tasting oil so green it glowed, paired with crusty bread, sun-warmed olives, or visiting a Buffalo farm and tasting the freshest Mozzarella and Burrata cheese. As Leisha and Grant Scott later said, “One of our favourite moments was arriving at our boutique accommodation in a private olive grove, learning about the trees — some that are 2,000 years old — while tasting the oil and the olives ... cold beer and Aperol Spritz in hand.”



Left to Right – Grant Scott, Mark Dickson, Kristine Dickson, Lisa Brady, Leisha Scott, Lisa O'Neill

Sicily has a way of surprising you at every turn. There were ancient ruins older than imagination, bustling markets where locals called out greetings, and beaches so clear they looked Photoshopped. But what struck everyone most was how genuine it all felt — no chain restaurants, no fast-food logos, just local Sicilian life unfolding around us.

Bev Jones summed it up perfectly: “If you’ve been to Italy and haven’t visited Sicily, you haven’t seen Italy.” Lisa Brady added, “It’s really hard to pick a favourite experience — there were so many. The amazing food and wine, the history, the hidden corners we wouldn’t have found on our own — Sicily should be on everyone’s must-see list.”

As for me, I loved watching how quickly the group bonded. By day three, it felt as if we’d been travelling together for years — sharing meals, stories, and plenty of laughter. There’s something about Sicily that brings people together; maybe it’s the warmth of the people, or maybe it’s the second glass of Nero d’Avola.

If there was one thing that nudged people slightly out of their comfort zones, it was letting go of expectations — slowing down to the island’s rhythm, eating dinner at 9 pm because that’s when the locals do, or trusting that the twisting backroads would eventually lead somewhere magical. But that’s exactly what travel is about — discovering that the best moments are often unplanned.

By the time we reached our final stop in Taormina, watching the sun set over the Ionian Sea, everyone agreed this trip had been something truly special.

Or as Lisa O’Neill put it,
“Sicily is a memory I will
treasure forever.”



Lisa O'Neill and Lesley Peckham



Nicola McLaren and Lorraine McLaren
in front of an erupting My Etna

Next year, I’ll be taking another small group back to explore it all again — with a few little tweaks based on what we’ve learned. But the heart of the journey will stay the same: connecting with locals, uncovering hidden corners, and experiencing the magic of Sicily the way it’s meant to be — slowly, warmly, and with good company.

If you would like to join me in Sicily in
2026, contact nicolamclaren@wnp.co.nz



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Hayden Brooks

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10 Tips learned over 10 years



1. When buying prioritise things you can't change easily. (Location, floor & land area, bedrooms etc)



2. Attend open homes on rainy days. If you like the property on rainy day, you'll love it when it's sunny. Also open home attendance is down when the weather is bad, meaning potentially less competition.



3. The best time to sell isn't always summer. While your house likely looks it's best the number of new listings is huge at the start of the year, saturating the market.



4. Talk to an agent early in the stages of when you're thinking of selling. They will provide expert advice and come with a lot of experience in presenting homes for market.



5. Declutter as much as possible, remove personal items. You want your home to feel welcoming to someone who has never been there before and allow them to imagine themselves living there.



6. Be flexible for short notice viewings if possible. There are always people from out of town who want to view short notice.



7. Take care of any issues that pertain to the property, be it consenting issues, door handles, paint, carpet and give it a deep clean!



8. As hard as it is, buy with your head, not your heart. Especially if it's your first home.



9. Get pre-approved finance before offering and communicate this to the agent.



10. Do your due diligence, rely on experts for advice.



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Adored classics like Black Beauty and Little Women bring back memories of childhoods past and are a beautiful gift for grandchildren. There's books for men too, like 'Best New Zealand Pubs' and 'Boys and Their Bikes' (motorbikes).

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WORDS Nick Walker PHOTO Roger Richardson

What the heck is a Legal Exec?

If you've ever bought a house, sorted a will or helped manage a family estate, chances are you've dealt with a Legal Executive - even if you didn't realise it.

Legal Executives are the quiet achievers of the legal world. They're experts at guiding clients through the bread and butter legal processes of any firm.

But their work is also commonly misunderstood.

We spoke to GQ's four Senior Legal Executives to find out why they're such a valuable part of the team.

Q: What exactly does a Legal Executive do?

Sandy Ellice: We handle a wide range of legal work - conveyancing, estates, wills and trusts - basically anything that doesn't involve going to court or family law.

We're qualified in our own right and can take declarations, prepare legal documents and help clients through situations from start to finish.

Q: Why might someone deal with a Legal Executive instead of a Lawyer?

Fleur Coombe: We're the best first point of contact for most people, especially if you're buying a home, updating a will or managing a trust. Often people will call us to ask questions, and we can explain what they need to do.

We are sometimes more accessible than a lawyer, and the work can be more cost-effective.

Q: What kind of experience does the GQ Legal Executive team have?

Karen Wood: Our legal executives are among the most experienced in Taranaki; we know how to get things done. We have many loyal clients who've been with us our entire careers, which speaks to the quality of the support we've given them over a long period of time.

Q: What do you enjoy most about the job?

Leanne Young: Often we're helping people through big life moments - buying their first home, managing a loved one's estate or sorting enduring powers of attorney.

Those times can be emotional or stressful, but guiding clients through and seeing their relief at the end makes it incredibly rewarding.

Govett Quilliam's legal professionals - both legal executives and lawyers - bring together extensive experience across a broad range of legal areas. When you reach out for support, you'll be connected with the person best suited to your needs, so you can trust you're in good hands.

Govett Quilliam
THE LAWYERS

BACK ROW: (left to right) Leanne Young, Karen Wood, Beth Seaver, Greer Anderson, Suzanne Duke

FRONT ROW: (left to right) Carolyn Voce, Trina Jury, Fleur Coombe, Linda Welch, Sandy Ellice

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Thinking Out Loud

with
Hannah
Mumby

Too matcha for me

I want to like matcha. I do. It always arrives looking serene and purposeful. It's pale green and photogenic and usually delivered by someone who wears linen and loves pilates.

It's a vibe I'm here for.
And yet, I'm not.
I can only ever taste the unmistakable flavour profile of optimistic soil.

Earthy, they say. Grounding, they say. Antioxidant-rich and spiritually aligned, they say.

I say it reminds me of a well-intentioned garden centre.

After many failed attempts to enjoy it, this realisation got me thinking about trends and how complicated our relationship with them can be.

I enjoy a good trend. Especially in summer. I like the fun of it. The way that suddenly there's some seasonal direction curated for you. I'm happy to wear the dress, sip the Aperol spritz, lean into the vibe - but only if it feels like a natural extension of me, rather than a forced rebrand.

To pursue matcha further would now be self-betrayal. But I'm still deeply intrigued as to why everyone else seems to love it. I have tried. I've ordered it iced. I've ordered it hot. I've given it the wildly unfair advantage of adding additional flavours. I've swirled it perseveringly while wondering if my tastebuds are emotionally unavailable.

Still, nothing. Just me and my dirt latte, staring at each other in mutual disappointment.

In theory, I should love it. It aligns with my vision of self: calm, down-to-earth, mindful. I'm the kind of gal who exercises for lymphatic flow rather than exhaustion, owns a foam roller and has definitely Googled "how to lower cortisol naturally".

In reality, matcha and I simply have no chemistry. And that's actually fine.

Somewhere along the way, I've stopped believing that trends are a personality test I need to pass. That liking the right drink, wearing the right shoe or adopting the right micro-habit is proof that I'm current, relevant or algorithm-approved.

I'm now a cherry-picker. I believe in selective immersion and choosing things that will enhance my life while declining what doesn't - even if the online world insists it will be good for me.

So while many continue to froth poetically over chlorophyll in a cup, perhaps the real power move is giving ourselves permission to pass. To enjoy the things that feel good, and politely decline the ones that taste like compost.

Because the point shouldn't be about keeping up, but becoming more in-tune with ourselves.

And if self-awareness isn't cool, then I'll simply brace myself for the next earthy wellness drink that is bound to hit the market soon.

**This is said with love for our local cafés and everyone who genuinely adores matcha. If you remain convinced there's a version out there that can win me over, I'm willing to be humbled. My DMs are open.*

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PATTERSONS



Being Dad

By
Richard
Hobo

Dad TAX



Tax, nobody likes it. Ask any adult about it and at best you'll get a derisive grunt and at worst you'll get an extended fiscal lecture.

So, nobody likes it, but everyone has to pay it, including children. I decided to educate our daughters in the less appealing aspects of modern financial life and what it's like to have something that is rightfully yours taken away, sometimes seemingly for no good reason. As young children, the girls had no real concept of money, but they definitely knew all about food.

“Pass a slice of this cake to each of the girls,” Lorna would say, offering up a plate of cake. “Ooh goody,” the girls would say, their eyes wide, their teeth bright and ready to dig into the sweetness. “Hang on,” I would say and take a bite out of each slice, “Dad Tax.” Sometimes I think these stolen morsels have been the only things keeping me going through The Dad Years. Cakes, biscuits, drinks, sandwiches, all were taxed. I can't remember if the girls have ever eaten Brussels Sprouts, but there are some things that slide under the Dad Tax radar and make it to the girls' plates tax-free. Like Monaco, only a lot more disgusting.

Like all taxes though, Dad Tax goes both ways which is, as most parents would agree, a bit of a bugger. For instance, buying lunch on a family day out, if you like the look of a twenty-dollar burger, you have to multiply that figure by your partner and the number of children you have. Milkshake? Forget it. “Would you like fries with that?” asks the helpful server. “Are you insane?” I say in my head. Lorna used to make noises about wanting a third child, but all I could think was, “That last visit to Burger Fuel cost me eighty bucks. I can't afford to feed any more people.”

The cats don't escape the Dad Tax regime either. No, I don't fight our furry friends for their bowls of cat food, they pay in another way, in Cuddle Tax. Early morning demands for food never go untaxed and I insist on cuddling both of them before serving up their breakfast. They seem to have learned to accept it.

I was explaining The Dad Tax System to a friend once after he witnessed me take a bite out of each of the girl's sausages at a barbecue. “Dad tax,” I said, my mouth half full of very hot sausage.

“Do you tax all of your kids' food?” he asked, a look of slight bemusement on his face.

“As much as I can,” I replied, “otherwise I'd probably starve to death.”

“Well,” he said, “the way they're growing, I reckon they might be running a tax avoidance system.”

He then asked the girls what they thought of Dad Tax and Morgan laughed and replied, “Oh, we've got that sorted already, because when Dad's old and senile and dribbling in the corner of a room in an old folk's home, that's when Daughter Tax comes in, only it will be at a much higher rate than what Dad Tax has ever been.”

“Haha, yeah,” chimed in Madeline, “and all the nurses will congratulate you on eating all your food, even though all we fed you was three peas and some mashed potato, no sausages for you.”

“You might want to eat up while you can,” said my friend, grinning while handing me a sausage wrapped in bread, having high-fived the girls as congratulations for their devious plan.

I think I've taught the girls a little too well.

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The Secret of Happiness



OFF THE WALL

with
Andy
Bassett

Summer traditionally evokes images of sunshine, laughter, long, lazy days reading a book under a sun umbrella, evening beach walks, spectacular sunsets, strawberries, cold drinks, generally chilling out and having a good time.

Unfortunately, here in the southern hemisphere it kicks off with the angst-ridden pressure of meeting arbitrary end-of-year deadlines whilst simultaneously preparing for Christmas, after which you really need six weeks on a beach to decompress. In order to make it through to the New Year and the reward of relaxation, some coping mechanisms are required.

To this end, I would like to impart to you the biggest, most important, yet simplest pearl of wisdom and enlightenment I have gained to date in my sixty-six years on this planet. Like all of life's great lessons, I have learnt it the hard way. By which I mean I've made lots of mistakes and will, no doubt, continue to do so. The path to serenity is full of potholes. I don't really know what that last sentence means but I'm currently sitting in the lotus position, which may be compromising the flow of blood to my brain, so bear with me. I am about to reveal the secret of happiness itself. And it is this:

*Mind your own
business.*

It really is that simple. If something doesn't affect you directly, let it go. For example, before arguing with a flat-Earther on Facebook, recognise that this is some random stranger who doesn't even understand time zones, or why ships disappear over the horizon. As Socrates would say: "Not my circus, not my monkeys." Keep scrolling and I guarantee you will forget it within ten seconds, as something else will have pissed you off.

And therein lies one of the root causes of today's polarised society. The term "social media" is an oxymoron. For the most part it could be more accurately described as antisocial media. Over the years, it has come to be exploited by the kind of people who like to foment division and anger. If everything is either black or white, you get more hits as the arguments escalate. And most of the things we argue about have nothing to do with us. I mean, who cares what colour a dress in some other part of the world is?

Another easy target for controversy is any form of change in societal attitudes. The past decade or two have seen plenty of those, particularly in the areas of gender and sexuality, which the far right are doing their best to reverse while the political pendulum is swinging in their favour. The surest way to achieve this is by making people angry about things that are none of their concern. Hence, they've fostered an unhealthy public interest in what's going on inside other people's lives, homes and pants. If you've been caught up in this, I have further sage insights to offer from my lofty spiritual plateau above the cloudline, which I shall lob down at you like little grenades of tranquility.

Let's start with same-sex marriage. If you find it distasteful, there is a really easy way to address this. Exercise your inalienable right to choose not to marry someone of the same sex.

Do other people's personal pronouns upset you? Let me reassure you, they're not remotely bothered about yours.

Eliminate your outrage at gender-neutral bathrooms by bragging that you had one in your own home long before they were cool.

I can sense the calm growing within you from here, so I'll leave you with one final philosophical morsel:

Minding your own business works all year round, not just in summer.

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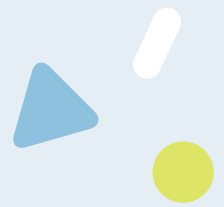
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The Summer Sprint



Why the final quarter isn't for slowing down — it's for setting up a smoother 2026.

It's been a tough year for many business owners. Rising costs, slower sales, and tighter cashflow have tested even the most resilient teams. But while the calendar year might be winding down, the financial year still has one quarter left — January to March. And that final stretch can make all the difference.

At Mondo Advisory, we call it the summer sprint — using the longer days, lighter mood, and renewed energy to tidy up, refocus, and reset before 31 March.

"Sometimes clarity starts with a conversation — even better if it's over a sunrise coffee at Fitzroy Beach."

1 Check the numbers, not the noise

Before switching off, take a clear look at how the business is tracking. Review revenue, expenses, margins, profit, and cashflow. Are there invoices still outstanding? Is your tax money set aside? A quick review now prevents pressure later.

2 Simplify and streamline

After a hard year, clutter builds — in systems, spending, and priorities. Use the quieter weeks to tidy up. Simplify processes, cancel what's no longer needed, and make space for what matters most.

3 Protect cash and plan ahead

Cash creates breathing room. Forecast the next 90 days, review payment terms, and set aside a buffer for tax and any seasonal slowdowns. Planning now means peace later.

4 Give yourself permission to regain perspective

Summer's longer evenings bring clarity. Step back, reflect on what's working, and define what success should look like by March. The goal isn't perfection — it's progress with purpose.

Permission granted — to pause, tidy up, and finish the year feeling in control.

Sometimes clarity starts with a conversation. If you'd like a free, no-obligation chat about your goals for 2026, the Mondo Advisory team would love to connect — we could even do it over a twilight round of golf or a sunrise coffee at Fitzroy Beach.

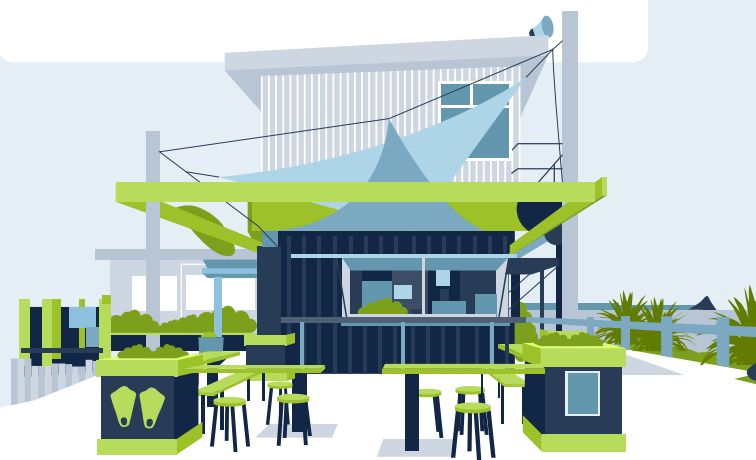
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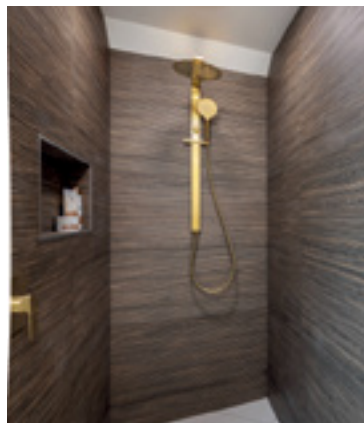
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