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MBP193
MARCH 2026

Matarangi's Healthcare Milestone: New Medical Clinic Opens March 16

Matarangi is set to reach a significant milestone in its journey from a seasonal holiday destination to a thriving permanent township. On March 16, the Mercury Bay Medical Centre (MBMC) will officially open the doors to its new satellite clinic at the Matarangi Shopping Centre, bringing dedicated, professional healthcare to the heart of the village just in time for the Easter holiday influx.

The facility represents the second transformational upgrade to the shopping precinct by owner Graham Harford, following the extensive parking area renovation completed just before Christmas. Harford's commitment to the village's infrastructure provided the perfect opportunity for MBMC to establish a more permanent presence in Mercury Bay North. Graham has been instrumental in the process, understanding the specialised requirements needed to operate a high quality GP clinic in a rural setting.

A considerable investment has gone into converting the former real estate office into a purpose-built health services space fit for the 21st century. This new satellite clinic is essentially a scaled-down version of what you would expect to find in a much larger town, ensuring that rural living no longer means a compromise on the quality of medical facilities.

"As the community has grown, we have recognised the need for a more permanent clinic," says the MBMC team. The new site replaces the consulting room that has operated out of The Hub in Kuaotunu for the last five years. While that space served as a vital bridge, the rapid growth of the region demanded a sophisticated upgrade. The MBMC team extended their heartfelt thanks to The Hub for providing the initial opportunity to seed this essential satellite service during its early years.

The build itself was a masterclass in local collaboration, ensuring the investment stayed within the Mercury Bay. Executed to exacting standards by Colin and the team at Tilley Construction, the project also featured Grant at Land and Volt Electrical, Good as Gold Painters, and Flooring Xtra Whitianga. The result is an amazing modern clinical space featuring two consultation rooms and high-quality finishes throughout.

Familiar faces will anchor the service, including well-known GP Dr Dan Asquith. The clinic is specifically designed to support Matarangi's two largest demographic cohorts: retirees and young families. With the permanent population trebling over the last decade, these groups require consistent access to medical services—from chronic disease

management to paediatric care—without the mandatory commute to Whitianga for every routine check-up.

Having the satellite clinic in the village gives Matarangi residents greater peace of mind over their healthcare. The community is already well served with well-trained local first responders and a world-class medical and rescue helicopter service on hand; the addition of a medical clinic in town completes this vital safety net.

The clinic will operate Monday through Friday for routine booked appointments, providing access to a full multidisciplinary team, including Doctors, Nurse Practitioners, Practice Nurses, and a Social Worker. In a significant boost to local wellness, physiotherapy services will also be available on-site, with MBMC actively looking to talk to other health providers interested in bringing their services to the Matarangi community. High-quality care is now right on your doorstep.

Featured: Directors of the Mercury Bay Medical Centre Lorraine Macallister, Mel Asquith, Dr. Dan Asquith with building contractor Colin Tilley of Tilley Construction.

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CONTACTS & DEADLINES

This is your community paper. We welcome all your stories, photos, messages and contributions.

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CONTRIBUTORS:

The Matarangi Beach Paper thanks the following contributors: Kuaotunu Garden Group, Summer Abrahamson, Mark Hall, Te Rerenga School; Alastair Brickell; Matarangi Boat & Fishing Club; Dave Fitzgerald, and Grant Short, because without these contributions and stories, your local paper wouldn't be quite the same. Thank you!

123456789

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- RESCUE HELICOPTER 866-5147 (Emergency 111)
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- JUSTICE OF THE PEACE Simone Parr 027 6572980
- JUSTICE OF THE PEACE Ernest Raina 021 716 852
- MATARANGI BEACH PAPER (Liam) 027 8689568
- LANDSAR KUAOTUNU (Emergency 111)
- MAREE TAYLOR (Celebrant) 021 0429127
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Kuaotunu Packs Out Hall to Discuss Coastal Resilience and SH25 Safety

The Kuaotunu Hall was standing-room only on the evening of February 18th as residents gathered for a critical briefing on the future of their coastline. Representatives from NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi (NZTA), Waikato Regional Council (WRC), and Thames-Coromandel District Council (TCDC) faced a community eager for solutions following recent storm events that have left the local infrastructure vulnerable.

A focal point of the evening was NZTA's proposal to address the failed gabion wall on the SH25 coastal section west of the layby. To combat ongoing erosion, engineers are proposing a 40-metre-long rock slope designed to absorb wave energy.

While the structure is essential for protecting the highway, it presents a challenge for beach access, extending roughly 9 metres seaward. In response, the Kuaotunu Residents and Ratepayers Association (KRRRA) has formally requested that the design include:

A 4-metre wide horizontal section at the top of the rock slope to serve as the foundation for a future walkway connecting the boat ramp to the layby and a sidling track integrated into the rock slope to allow pedestrians to transition safely between the beach and the road level.

The meeting served as a timely update on the new permanent speed limits that

came into effect this February. Following a finalised review, SH25 through Kuaotunu now features 50km/h zones in the village core, supported by 70km/h transitional zones. These changes aim to protect the high volume of walkers and cyclists who share the narrow corridor, especially given the current lack of continuous footpaths.

Beyond engineering, the evening provided a platform for Emergency Response speakers to detail the "havoc" wrought by recent weather systems. The community received a deep dive into the coordination efforts required to manage road closures and utility repairs, reinforcing the need for the Mayoral Disaster Relief Fund and local resilience planning.





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Matarangi Long Board Surfing Champs

Under a blazing blue sky on Saturday, February 20, the Bluff Road end of Matarangi beach played host to one of the community's most anticipated — and good-naturedly contested — events: the third annual Matarangi Longboard Surfing Championships.

A dozen local lads paddled out in glassy conditions, cheered on by friends, families and a loyal gallery perched on the sand. The brief for competitors was simple: grace, glide and — most importantly — stay upright.

This year's trophy went to Richard "Blackie" Black, who demonstrated that in surfing, as in life, timing is everything. On the water, Wilkie led the charge with 47 points, followed closely by Shannon on 44. Blackie placed third in the actual surfing stakes with 41 points.

But here's where Matarangi's famously arcane competition rules come into play.

Under long-standing (and highly convenient) prizegiving attendance requirements, Blackie was the only podium finisher present at the official ceremony — held, purely coincidentally, on the back deck of his own house. With admirable humility, he accepted the 2026 championship honours to warm applause and mild protest.

A huge thank you goes to judges Weedo, Lloyd and Gavin for keeping the scoring honest (or at least consistent), and to the many spectators who turned up to support the field. Special thanks also to Doc from Matarangi Lawns for sponsoring the prizes and helping keep the tradition alive.

Photo Credit: Fiona Clark

**CONGRATULATIONS
CORNER**



Congratulations to Gary and Pip Perry on reaching their incredible Ruby Wedding Anniversary!

Forty years of marriage is a magnificent milestone, marking four decades of love, laughter, and partnership since that special late summer day back in 1986.

Also congratulations to Steve Clay who turned a magnificent 70 years young on February 28th. Well done Steve, we all wish you plenty more where that came from!



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MARY PRESENTS SABBATICAL REPORT TO SCHOOL BOARD

Te Rerenga School Principal Mary Kedzlie has presented her recent sabbatical report to the school's Board of Trustees and will now share it with the wider education community. Mary was one of just over 100 primary principals nationwide awarded a sabbatical in 2025, taking leave in Term 4 for reflection, rejuvenation and professional learning.

Her report explores what supports a principal's wellbeing (hauora) when leading through traumatic events in a rurally isolated New Zealand school. Using a narrative inquiry approach, Mary reflected on her own leadership journey through significant challenges, including community loss, the pandemic and Cyclone Gabrielle. She examined the strategies that sustained her wellbeing and the systems put in place to support staff and students. Mary says resilience and self-care are key to navigating such events. "The wellbeing of principals, staff and children is deeply connected. When staff feel well supported, they are better equipped to support students — and vice versa." Her practice was influenced by the work of resilience expert Dr Lucy Hone and Sir Mason Durie's Te Whare Tapa Whā model of wellbeing, which highlights the importance of balancing all aspects of hauora.

Reflecting on the past five years, Mary says it was "a cathartic experience" to revisit the school's journey. During this time, Te Rerenga School has embedded wellbeing initiatives such as Mindfulness, Nature School, a dedicated Hauora Room, a mindful sensory garden, Anna's Orchard, a therapy dog and a pump track — all designed to strengthen resilience, connection and belonging.

As a member of the National Executive of the New Zealand Rural Schools Leadership Association, Mary hopes her reflections and practical initiatives will support other rural principals who may face similar challenges in the future.



THE FISHING REPORT

Matarangi Boat & Fishing Club



At the time of writing this report we have 4 teams fishing in the NZSFC Nationals 2026. Competition ends on the 28th of February. We will report next month on the results.

Doris Day Ladies Day Out is our next major event on the fishing calendar. Happening Saturday, 14th March. Registrations and entry details are now open online.

Ladies get a team together for a fun day on and off the water. <https://www.mbfc.co.nz/newsarticle/149030?newsfeedId=2035672>

Jet ski Fishing Challenge: We extend a huge thank you to Chris Best from T & M Auto Electrical for generously sponsoring the 2025/2026 Jet Ski Fishing Challenge! Details in the upcoming events on the front page of our website.

NZSFC Youth Nationals 3rd April - 18th April 2026

Looking for an exciting activity these school holidays? The NZSFC Youth Nationals 2026 are the way to go. This nationwide tournament, designed for junior anglers, which coincides with the April school holidays.

You do not have to be a current financial member to fish in this tournament so please spread the word to all of our juniors out there.

Go to the latest news section on lower part of our website for further details. www.mbfc.co.nz

You can keep up to date with news on our website www.mbfc.co.nz, Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/matarangiboatandfishingclub> and Instagram <https://www.instagram.com/matarangi.boat.fishing.club/>

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The WHITIANGA COASTGUARD can be contacted on CHANNEL 63 and the NOW WEATHER REPORT is on CHANNEL 20.

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The Matarangi Fire Report

February was steady with 6 medical events and one motor vehicle accident.

We also began our cadetship training with an induction followed by Stand Pipe and Hose familiarisation. The cadets adapted well, and once water was flowing the enthusiasm followed.

Easter Saturday, 4th April is our annual fishing competition fund raiser, where you can win \$1000 courtesy of Beaches Matarangi, for the average weight Snapper and \$1000 for the heaviest Snapper courtesy of the Fire Brigade. We have a total prize pool of \$4000 from our very generous sponsors plus some fantastic spot prizes.

Tickets will be available at the Fire Station on a Friday Night and more details will follow via our face book social media presence.

Once the fish has been weighed there will be a Public Fish Auction held at the rear of the fire station. This is always very popular and entertaining and everyone is welcome. If you would like to assist with a spot prize, please get in touch with one of our crew.

Stay Safe,

Mark Hall

Chief Fire Officer

Matarangi Volunteer Fire Brigade



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SCHOOL BELL



It has been a busy start to the year which is 120 years since the first school opened in 1906 in Te Rerenga. Prior to the school opening there were two other schools in the area firstly at Schoolhouse Bay in Whangapoua and then at Opitonui. In 1905 the numbers at Opitonui Public School were falling and a decision was made to relocate the school to Te Rerenga, where there was a sizable community. It opened in 1906 with Mr Archibald Laing, the first teacher. He travelled to Te Rerenga from Auckland on the 'manure barge' and boarded at the Harbour House, near the wharf. Miss M Ross took over as teacher. Two of her pupils were named Alex and Herbert Hawkeswood, whose surname was to become a very familiar name in the area. We will now need to start planning for a celebration of 125 years of schooling in 2031!

Recently we held a parents' evening where we heard Rob Cope's presentation 'Our Kids Online'. As one of New

Zealand's leading parent educators in online safety, Rob is dedicated to keeping our tamariki and rangatahi safer in the digital world, and he certainly delivered an evening that was both confronting and thought-provoking. With his unique blend of humour and hard-hitting insights, he challenged us as teachers, parents and caregivers to reflect deeply on the realities our children face online. While some of the content was difficult to hear, it undeniably raised awareness about the very real risks that exist in the digital world. As adults, we are not naïve — we understand that our children can be exposed to disturbing and inappropriate content.

Finally a highlight of the term is always our Te Rerenga School Swimming sports held over the hill at the Coromandel Community Pool. It was a lovely day and there were some great races. Selected children will now go on this month to the Country Schools and Peninsula North Swimming Sports Days and then the Thames Valley Swimming Sports. As always they will represent the school with pride.

Ma te huruhuru ka rere te manu
Adorn the bird with feathers to enable it to fly.

Mary Kedzlie Principal

Out & About: At the Matarangi Long Board Surfing Champs



Down on the beach during the recent long board surfing competition was spectator Eden who was distracted by Mark Hall's vintage 1937 Chevrolet Coupe adorned with classic 1960's era surfboards. It certainly gave the event that timeless vibe of nostalgia.



An elated Richard Black after the presentation of his trophy following the Matarangi long board surfing competition held recently. Here he is with judge Lloyd Clark and trophy presenter Mike Smith.

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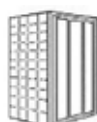
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The Editor's Desk



At the Thames-Coromandel District Council (TCDC) meeting on February 24th, the focus was ostensibly one of “belt-tightening.” As we approach the 2026/27 TCDC financial year, the district finds itself at a crossroads between a Mayor and new Council attempting to fulfill campaign promises and a bureaucratic machine that has grown nearly 50% in size in just one decade.

Before diving into the systemic issues, credit must be given where it is due. Mayor Peter Revell and the current Councillors have hit a significant milestone by targeting an average rates increase of no more than 3.8%, which is only slightly more than the rate of inflation. In the recent history of local politics, I dubbed this “The Revell-ution.” In a way, I think it is the start of a revolt led by Mr. Revell and his team of merry Councillors on our behalf.

When one considers that the “Business as Usual” projection was galloping toward 13.4%, and that initial internal staff recommendations suggested a “compromise” rate rise of 9%, the 3.8% target is a victory for common sense—especially after rates have risen by 50% since 2020. In a district where the median age is 55, a vast number of residents live on fixed incomes, the district median income is just \$41,000 p.a., and 30% of us live in one- or two-person households, the council staff’s 9% proposed hike was not a “recommendation”—it was a shakedown. By pushing back against the 13.4% forecast in the Long Term Plan, the Mayor has shown he is listening to the public’s lack of appetite for steep increases.

The centerpiece of the Council’s efficiency drive is a proposal to reduce personnel costs by \$1 million. On the surface, this sounds commendable. However, when placed in the context of the \$31 million total “Employee Benefit Expense” to employ and retain council staff, this represents a reduction of only 3.2%. To understand why this is a “light touch” rather than a “structural fix,” we must look at the historical growth of council employees.

In 2016, there were 184 Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs) employed by the Council. In 2026, there are now 277 FTEs on the books—a 50% rise in staffing levels over a decade. The total remuneration expenditure has ballooned from \$18 million to \$31 million annually according to the most recent Long Term Plan.

With an adult population of roughly 28,080, we now have one Council staff member for every 100 adults. To give you some idea of the growth since 2016: Infrastructure & Engineering staff have risen 44% to 115; Regulatory & Planning staff by 40% to 70; and Corporate & Executive staff by 75% to 42. The cost to keep this Ponzi scheme going is \$1,505 per year from every single ratepayer’s pocket just for salaries—an average of \$108,000 per staff member. The 75% growth in the Executive wing is particularly galling. Are the emails 75% harder to type than they were ten years ago?

If the Council wants to truly “tighten the belt,” it should consider the following “Revell-utionary” idea: the 9% Challenge. This involves a reduction in FTE staff numbers by 9% each year for the next five years. This would return staffing levels closer to 2016 levels. By Year 5, there would be 180 FTEs, not the current 277. The annual salary bill (using constant 2026 dollars as a baseline) would be reduced to \$19.35 million, saving a cumulative \$37.5 million in gross personnel costs over that period. That is money that could scale back user-pays charges, fund infrastructure, or pay down debt. It might even lower rates a bit.

Now, before you say “Yeah-nah,” consider that the local government sector in Japan is embracing an advanced technology drive to make councils more efficient. For them, it is not just about cutting costs; it is about demographics. They are running out of working-age people as their population ages and shrinks. The country has lost a population equivalent to the size of New Zealand in the last 20 years, as the replacement birthrate has dropped to just 1.7. They simply have to embrace technology. Under a new system called Gennai, they want their increasingly scarce human resources focused on interaction-heavy roles like teaching, social work, and emergency services, rather than sitting behind a desk in a council office with a lanyard hung around their neck.

Japanese councils are introducing technologies such as RAG (Retrieval-Augmented Generation), robotics, and other AI-based tools to get the job done

more efficiently with fewer people. We may as well embrace this in TCDC-land sooner rather than later, because it is coming down the pipeline whether the 40-odd people in the Corporate-Executive wing like it or not.

There is a silver lining, too. Under the 9% Challenge, no one needs to lose a job—or at least, not a “real” one. They can shift roles to where they are desperately needed. As a nation, we are short of police, prison officers, air traffic controllers, and teachers. They will still get to tell people what to do, but they won’t be such a drain on the community and ratepayers’ pockets.

Nevertheless, as we wait for the “Revell-ution” to offset the lower general rate increase, the Council has endorsed a 13% average increase in user fees and charges to find that second missing million to balance the books. This shift to “user-pays” is effectively a stealth tax on the daily lives of residents. Those of the “lanyard classes” at Council earning (as opposed to working) \$108,000 p.a. are possibly unaware that the huddled masses of the proletariat outside their office window have been undergoing a cost-of-living crisis for the last five years. Maybe I am a little uncharitable; they could actually have been too busy writing a report to notice - about a meeting they had to arrange regarding a further round of meetings.

What you will soon notice are the fees with which you will be smacked. Professional rates for a building officer are hitting \$200–\$250 per hour—it’s nice to know Council will charge them out at \$100 an hour more than the average rural General Practitioner earns. A day on the water to get some snapper for dinner now starts with a \$34 “convenience” fee for boat ramp access. It will also cost \$95 to register Fluffy the dog, with a punitive jump to \$142.50 if you are a day late. Lastly, in a final coup de grâce, a cemetery plot and interment now cost nearly \$3,000. The Council has effectively made it too expensive to cark it.

The most egregious example of fiscal mismanagement remains their “magic numbers” approach to water pricing, which was only canvassed obliquely at the end of the February meeting. The Draft Financial Statements for 2026/27 show no change to a system that creates massive inequality between metered and non-metered sites. The Council strikes its budget based on “expected volume,” but these projections bear no relationship to reality. For example, in Whitianga, the Council projected a volume of 289,000m³, but the reality was over 1,100,000m³.

Because the Council “misses” this volume in its math, it is forced to hike the Line Fee (the fixed cost) to fill the budget hole. Last year, the Line Fee jumped 32% (from \$437 to \$577), while the volumetric fee increased by only 9 cents. The result for Matarangi? Because Matarangi is non-metered, it pays a “2:1” weighted Line Fee. At \$1.71 per m³, the \$577 Line Fee is equivalent to paying for 337m³ of water. However, as data has revealed, the Water Treatment Plant (WTP) data shows Matarangi uses an average of just 146m³ per connection.

Thus, the average Matarangi ratepayer is paying over \$370 more than a metered site for the exact same volume of water. The Council claims this \$370 discrepancy is “not material.” To a retiree on a fixed income, \$370 is a month’s worth of groceries. It is a fundamental failure of data and fairness.

Mayor Revell and his elected team have done the hard work of stopping the bleeding by keeping rates near the level of inflation. I commend them for that.

As the public consultation opens in late March, it is time for the community to demand more than just a 3.2% cut to a \$31 million wage bill. We need a return to 2016 efficiency, a fair water pricing model based on WTP records rather than “projections,” and a Council that looks at its own headcount before it looks at our bank accounts.



Featured: Mayor Peter Revell caps TCDC 2026 rate rises at 3.8%.

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RBWG Progress Report

Great to see the warm settled weather over the last few weeks, after an often miserable and wet early January.

The Matarangi reserve fared quite well luckily, in the Jan. 21st. deluge, with the slip at the Matarangi entrance the only serious damage incurred. Many thanks to DOC for carrying out the remedial work and for some pampas control work subsequently. There were of course some other minor problems caused by windfall and waterflow throughout the reserve, but these were cleared relatively easily and quickly.

Towards the end of last year, RBWG completed two new trapping lines and installed traps along those routes. A further line is partially completed and that when finished, along with the two completed lines, will provide access to areas previously difficult to navigate. These three new lines are designed to give better coverage for predator control as well as give access to enable on-going wilding pine and other weed removal.

This work, and much of our operations generally is made possible with funds provided by WRC grants, by generous private donations, and from a large donation from Kauri 2000.

RBWG would also like to acknowledge the Predator Free Hauraki Coromandel Community Trust's field support team, who carried out much of the track cutting and pine removal work over the last months and who will be returning later this year to continue their fine work!

Predator numbers caught, especially rats have been increasing in the last couple of weeks as is usual around this time and will likely continue to rise heading into autumn. I have been encouraged by the bird life this spring and summer and managed to get a couple of pics of Mātātā - Fernbird, which visited me whilst having smoko one morning

in January! Also seen Matuku-hūrepo – Bittern, on two occasions in the southern-side estuarine wetlands.

Good numbers of the usual suspects - Koromako, Tui, Riroriro, Piwakawaka, Pīpīwharaua- Shining cuckoo, and Kākā are around in good numbers from time to time. Caught a number of images of Kiwi on trail cameras in recent months also.

The Kiwi call surveys are coming up again in May/June, both the regional one (PFHCCT) and the local Project Kiwi Trust, facilitated one. These surveys take place over three consecutive nights, at two sites within the reserve. One site is high up on the central ridge in the main part of the reserve and the other on the southern side looking east and south in that space. The Kiwi calls heard are recorded over a two-hour period 6 till 8pm, noting direction of the call, sex of the bird and conditions on the night. This provides great data enabling us to monitor the numbers of birds and their locations with-in the reserve. Many thanks to PKT and PFHCCT for facilitating these surveys.

Mā te wā
Dave FitzGerald - RBWG
021 1740 721



Business Focus: Summer Abrahamson of Ultimate Journeys Local Travel Expert Brings Global Experience Back to Whitianga and the Coromandel



Summer Abrahamson, a 31-year-old Whitianga local, is bringing a decade of travel industry experience back to her hometown after joining the Ultimate Journeys travel brokerage.

Having grown up in Whitianga, Summer recently returned to the area to be closer to family with her three-year-old son, while also reigniting her passion for travel. With 10 years in the travel industry, she has worked across multiple companies specialising in both leisure and corporate travel.

Summer's journey into the travel industry was sparked by a three-month adventure through the UK and Europe, an experience that shaped her career path. Since then, she has travelled to 35 countries and built a wealth of first-hand knowledge from a wide range of travel styles.

Some of her most memorable experiences include gaining her diving certificate in the Philippines, a school trip to Vietnam and Cambodia, an unforgettable safari through Kenya and Tanzania - complete with a hot air balloon ride over the Serengeti, an RV road trip around the United States, and most recently, trekking to Everest Base Camp in Nepal with a local Whitianga group.

Now operating remotely through Ultimate Journeys, Summer offers a highly personalised and flexible service. She is available to meet clients at a café or venue of their choice, creating a relaxed and tailored travel planning experience.

"I truly value every client's travel journey," Summer says. "From the initial planning and exploring options, through to delivering the final experience, I go above and beyond to make sure each trip is seamless and unforgettable."

Summer's services include flights, accommodation, transport, tours, cruises, rail journeys, group bookings and travel insurance. She also provides expert advice, access to exclusive deals, personalised itineraries, and full support if travel disruptions arise, including 24/7 assistance when needed.

Clients also benefit from help with travel insurance and visa requirements, along with the peace of mind that comes from having a professional handle every detail - freeing them to relax and enjoy their holiday.

Summer can be contacted via email at summer@ultimatejourneys.net or by phone on 027 376 0695.

"I'm excited to grow my business, meet new clients, and share my passion for travel," she says. "I take pride in making every journey stress-free, seamless, and memorable."

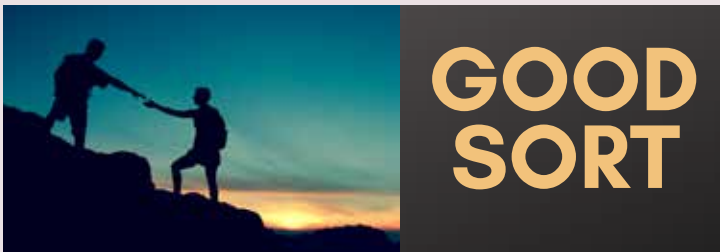
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Good Sort of the Month: Liz Travina-Brown

If you have been driving along Matarangi Drive around 8am lately, you may have noticed a “mystery lady” out for her daily morning walk, but she isn’t just getting her daily exercise in. Liz Travina-Brown has become a familiar sight to many locals as she meticulously picks up litter along the roadside, ensuring our beautiful village stays spick and span.

As a recent arrival to Matarangi, Liz didn’t wait for an invitation to help out—she simply saw a need and stepped up. For a while, residents noted her hard work from their cars but didn’t quite know who she was. One thing they did know was that she was definitely worthy of a bit of thanks and kudos as the MBP’s Good Sort of the Month. After a bit of friendly asking around, the mystery was solved!

Liz, your dedication to keeping Matarangi beautiful is hugely appreciated by the whole community. It’s exactly this kind of “quiet local hero” energy that makes our town such a great place to live. And because of that just pop along to Lesley’s Coffee Cart down by The Dunes sometime over the next couple of weeks for a complimentary coffee! Well done, Liz—the good folk of Matarangi salute you!

Kuaotunu Garden Group: A Fresh Start to the Year

We kicked off 2026 in the best possible way — with a relaxed picnic at the Village Green.

With gardens still in full summer colour, we gathered to share a yummy lunch, plenty of laughter and a proper catch-up after the Christmas break. It was the perfect way to ease back into our year and a reminder of the strength and warmth of our gardening community.

In March we’re delighted to welcome guest speaker Des Hunt. A respected New Zealand author with a passion for geology, conservation and the natural world, Des is known for his engaging style and fascinating insights. We’re looking forward to an inspiring and entertaining morning.

And if you haven’t yet secured a copy of our much-loved book, Nurture • Nourish • Note, now is the time. This 154-page publication is packed with seasonal recipes, practical gardening advice, stories and beautiful photography from our own members. It captures the knowledge, creativity and generosity that make our group so special.

The feedback has been outstanding, and copies are continuing to find homes across the Coromandel and beyond. At \$30 per copy, it’s a beautiful keepsake or gift.

To purchase, email kuaotunugardenclub@gmail.com — but be quick. Here’s to another year of nurturing, nourishing and growing together.



Where in the WORLD is the Matarangi Beach Paper?



The MBP made it to Norway! Christine Dean of Takapuna read her copy of the December edition whilst on a 7 hour train trip from Bergen to Oslo. Christine said the journey was one of Europe’s most beautiful train rides as it wound its way through the snowy mountainous landscape. Keep sending in your Where in the World pics. Folks say they are always curious where the MBP will end up next!

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The Risky Business of TCDC Project Referrals

The Thames-Coromandel District Council (TCDC) recently reported a “favourable” variance in wastewater spending. On paper, that sounds like prudent management. In Matarangi, it looks — and smells — rather different.

To balance the books, the Council deferred essential desludging of the wastewater ponds to the 2025/26 financial year for “cash flow reasons.” The June CEO report recorded the underspend as “favourable.”

Then came January’s weather bomb. With no desludging done we ended up with the Whanapoua harbour being polluted as a result.

The Ōpitonui Stream rose three metres, peaking at 380m³ per second. At the same time, Matarangi’s ponds were operating with roughly 20 per cent reduced effective capacity due to accumulated sludge — precisely the scenario warned about in the 2023 Lutra capacity analysis. With stormwater inflow into the network and a discharge cap of 650m³ per day under the current extended consent, overflow was not unforeseeable. It was a function of arithmetic.

Desludging does not eliminate risk during extreme rainfall. But it materially increases available storage buffer and preserves hydraulic retention time (HRT), which is critical to maintaining biological treatment performance. Once ponds are overwhelmed, restoring equilibrium takes time. Running a system with no headroom means the first serious storm dictates the outcome.

It is important, however, to draw a fair distinction.

The decisions that left Matarangi operating with such narrow margins were largely inherited. A previous council may well have had its eye off the operational ball while focusing on growth, capital projects and balance-sheet optics. Development contributions in Matarangi have risen from \$13,588 in 2015 to \$28,682 per unit — a 111 per cent increase — yet core resilience in the wastewater system was allowed to erode.

The current council group, by contrast, appears more engaged and more willing to wrestle with the uncomfortable detail. Wastewater engineering is technical, heavy with modelling assumptions, hydraulic calculations and consent constraints. It is not easy reading. But elected members are now asking harder questions and engaging directly with community analysis rather than relying solely on high-level summaries.

That shift matters.

A significant part of the community’s improved understanding is due to the sterling work of Grant

Short, whose analytical and razor-focused mind has translated dense engineering reports and raw data into language residents can grasp. The mathematics behind pond capacity, sludge accumulation, inflow infiltration, and revenue modelling is not intuitive. Grant’s ability to strip issues back to first principles — storage volumes, discharge caps, pressure limits, revenue equations — has empowered ratepayers to participate in the debate on equal footing.

When citizens understand the numbers, governance improves.

Consider the new water treatment plant due to come online with a nominal capacity of 3,000m³ per day. That is a substantial asset. Yet we are told the 7km harbour pipeline is constrained to around 400kPa because of its lower-grade specification. If the pipe cannot safely handle higher pressures, what is the timeline and funding pathway for its upgrade? Otherwise, we risk paying for treatment capacity that cannot be fully utilised.

Similarly, if sludge reduces effective pond capacity by approximately 20 per cent — nearly 5,000m³ on a 24,800m³ system — then deferring desludging is not a minor accounting tweak. At roughly 10m³ per truck movement, restoring capacity involves hundreds of truckloads. It is operationally inconvenient, yes. But it is foundational maintenance, not discretionary spending.

The financial side deserves equal scrutiny. Revenue requirements drive pricing structures. If \$20 million is required and volumetric charges at \$2 per cubic metre generate \$4 million from 2 million cubic metres of use, the remaining \$16 million must be recovered through fixed charges — around \$800 per connection across 20,000 connections. Shift the volumetric rate to \$3 and the fixed charge drops to roughly \$600. These are not abstract scenarios; they are policy choices with real distributional effects.

Rates and targeted charges in Matarangi have increased 44 per cent since the 2022 local body elections. All implemented without broad consultation understandably erode trust. Transparency in modelling — especially around averaging metered sites in ways that may distort differentials — is essential if the community is to have confidence in pricing reform.

The good news is that scrutiny is increasing. Questions about depreciation methodology, asset lifecycles, and long-term liability exposure are now being aired in public forums. The Infrastructure & finance discussions, while imperfect, suggest councillors are trying to get their heads around issues that are both highly technical and fundamentally important.

Matarangi’s wastewater challenges are not unsolvable. They involve sludge management, stormwater infiltration control, consent constraints, pipeline integrity, and realistic revenue modelling. None of these are mysteries. But they require engineering logic to take precedence over short-term accounting optics.

The previous governance culture may have drifted toward balance-sheet presentation. The present council has an opportunity — and appears to be making a genuine attempt — to restore focus to physical resilience.

For residents, the path forward is not cynicism but vigilance and engagement. With strong analytical voices in the community and councillors prepared to listen, Matarangi has a chance to turn a near-crisis into a reset.

The weather will always test coastal infrastructure. Whether it becomes a disaster depends less on rainfall and more on whether we choose spreadsheets over storage, optics over capacity, and short-term “favourable” variances over long-term resilience.

Stargazer Sights March 2026

This month we have the special treat of a total eclipse of the Moon on the night of Tuesday, March 3. This will be our last total lunar eclipse until December 2028, so not to be missed. While the eclipse actually starts at 9:44pm there will not be a significant change in the Moon’s brightness until after 10:50pm when the Moon enters the darkest part of the Earth’s shadow and this phase will last until 12:04am. This is a great chance to actually see the Moon moving in its never ending 28 day orbit around the Earth.

Jupiter is the only planet easily visible early this month shining brightly after dusk in the northwestern sky but later on in the month bright Venus can be seen at dusk in the west along with faint Saturn with Mars and Mercury making a predawn appearance low on the eastern horizon.

There will be several Chinese Tiangong several International Space Station (ISS) passes to enjoy this month but, as usual, timings may change especially towards the end of the month if they have to be moved to avoid space junk. Always best to check the website heavens-above.com for updated timings.

March 7 – There will be a bright Tiangong pass in the NW from 8:48pm.

March 8 – Those with a clear western horizon might just catch a glimpse of bright Venus on the horizon just above much fainter Saturn at dusk.

March 9 – We have a good Tiangong pass from the west at 8:26pm.

March 11 – There will be a good Tiangong pass from 8:04pm starting in the NW just beside Venus.

March 13 – From 9:19pm we have a Tiangong pass from the west before it disappears into the Earth’s shadow.

March 15 – From 6:06am there will be a very low ISS pass in the north.

March 16 – We have a Tiangong pass from 7:58pm in the west travelling just above the Southern Cross.

March 17 – Viewers with a clear view of the eastern horizon may see the Moon in the predawn sky with faint Mars and Mercury next to each other well below both just on the horizon and from 6:09am there will be a bright ISS pass from the north.

March 18 – A clear view of the eastern horizon reveals the Moon in the predawn sky with faint Mars to its right and Mercury just above the Moon and on its left.

March 19 – There will be a bright ISS pass starting overhead in the west as it pops out of the Earth’s shadow from 6:13am.

March 20 – A minute crescent Moon sits just to the right of Venus on the western dusk horizon.

March 23 – The crescent moon is now directly below the red giant star Aldebaran in Taurus at dusk with bright Venus below and to the left.

March 24 – The Moon as dusk sits halfway between bright Jupiter and Venus.

March 26 – The Moon sits right next to Jupiter at dusk.

March 27 – Jupiter lies just below and to the left of the Moon with Venus on the horizon at dusk.

March 28 – The Moon lies well to the right of bright Jupiter.

March 29 – The Moon almost covers up the bright star Regulus in Leo.

March 31 – There will be a low ISS pass in the south from 6:26am.

April 2 – There will be a low ISS pass from 6:28am in the south.

April 4 – There will be a bright ISS pass from 6:31 in the SW.

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TEN YEARS ON IN THE MBP

As we flip back through the archives of the Matarangi Beach Paper, March 2016 stands out as a month of champions—both on the farm and on the green—alongside some remarkable milestones for our local environment and budding entrepreneurs.

The talk of the town was local legend Phil Nielson, who returned to Kuaotunu with a trailer full of ribbons from the Pukekohe A&P Show. Competing in the Perendale section, Phil dominated the field; his ewe lambs and ram lambs both secured first and second place. The judges were unanimous in awarding his winning ram lamb the title of 'Best Ram Lamb' against all other wool breeds. Phil's haul didn't stop there, as he also took home the trophy for 'Best Fleeced Wool Breed Sheep' and a blue ribbon for runner-up 'Champion Lamb.'

On our own shores, conservation efforts paid off with one of the most successful NZ Dotterel breeding seasons on record. An impressive sixteen chicks survived to become fledglings. Meanwhile, the Variable Oystercatchers were also holding

their own, with most chicks surviving the summer heat. The Rings Beach Track proved to be more popular than ever. After a DOC people counter was re-installed following track upgrades, the data revealed an astonishing statistic: 7,000 walkers had traversed the section between Matarangi and the Vodafone tower in just six weeks over the Christmas period.

Local surfer Steph Wood made waves by launching New Zealand's first 'all natural organic zinc.' After months of research into non-toxic ingredients, the surfing community quickly labeled the product "magic." By the time the MBP caught up with her in March, surfers were already knocking on her door to get their hands on the skin-friendly formula.

At the Ratepayers Association AGM, 58 members gathered at the Rural Fire Force Hall. Chairman Alastair MacCormick highlighted the association's work advocating for better walking and cycling routes in the District Plan review, strongly supporting the proposal to zone the golf course as permanent Open Space.

Speaking of the golf course, Rhys Mathias celebrated a career milestone on February 20th. Witnessed by three "good men and true," Rhys aced the Par 3 5th hole with an exquisite five iron. While it was his maiden hole-in-one, it sadly occurred on a non-competition day, meaning the \$200 sponsorship cheque remained safely in Chris Palmer's pocket!

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G.J. Gardiner hosts Local Business Owners Catchup

Featured Right: Glenn Sonntag of G.J. Gardner Homes Whitianga and local architect Renee Woods catch up at the new Matarangi Breeze showhome on Matarangi Drive.

Glenn, who has traded Whangamata for full-time life in Matarangi, hosted the local business community for a relaxed evening of networking.

The North Mercury Bay Business Association was established in late 2025 with a primary focus on revitalising the local economy and fostering community spirit. Its cornerstone responsibility is the coordination and delivery of the popular Matarangi Summer Festival, ensuring this vital regional event remains a success for both residents and visitors.

Beyond event management, the association serves as a vital networking hub, offering local business owners the chance to connect in informal, relaxed settings to build professional relationships and peer support without the pressure of a formal boardroom environment.

A big thanks to Glenn and his team for the hospitality and the guided tours of their impressive new coastal build.



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Ladies' Pilates

Matarangi Fire Station
9-10 am Christiane 0273 122 584

Kuaotunu Craft & Social Club

Kuaotunu Hall
1-4 pm Lia 07 866 2054

Books & Banter (Book club)

7-9 pm 1st Mon each month Pauline
dickinsonpauline@gmail.com

Contract Bridge

St John's Room, 355 Tiki Rd, Coromandel
Tadek 027 235 6335 or Tadekgawor@gmail.com

Tuesday

Croquet

Coromandel Croquet Assoc, Woolams Ave
9.15 am-12 pm 07 866 8066

Bridge for Beginners

The Dunes 3-5 pm
Bronwyn 021 0231 1130

Menz Shed

Matarangi Drive 8 am-12 pm
(open at all times to members)
Phil 021 0272 5230

Wednesday

Men on Mats (Men's Pilates)

Matarangi fire station 9-10 am
Christiane 0273 122 584

Pickleball – social play

Matai Place Courts - 9 am start during summer
Kay 020 41200975
Jenni 021 1700869

Kuaotunu Steiner Playgroup

9am-12pm Phone: 07 866 0094

Mah Jong

The Dunes 12.30-3 pm
Lesley, 021 280 0780.

Contract bridge

Mercury Bay Bowling Club, Whitianga 1 pm
Tadek 027 235 6335 or Tadekgawor@gamil.com

Kuaotunu Garden Group

2nd Weds of the month
Kuaotunugardenclub@gmail.com

Ladies Coffee morning

The Dunes, 10 am first Weds of the month

Kuaotunu Dune Care Group

3rd Weds of the month
Jenny 021 566 6035

Thursday

Pickleball – competitive play

Matai Place Courts 3.30-5.30 pm
Grant 022 383 6351

Walking Group

Meet at the Dunes 9.00 am
Briar 021 361 944

Craft Group

The Dunes, 12.30 fortnightly
Lesley 021 280 0780

Recreational Darts

The Dunes, 6.00 pm every other Thursday
The Dunes 07 866 5394

Friday

Lawn Bowls

The Dunes, 2.15-4.15 pm
Wayne Davis 027 458 9544

Croquet

Woolams Ave, Coromandel 9.15 am-12 pm
07 866 8066

Saturday

Pickleball for all

Matai Place Courts, 8.30-10.30 am
Grant 022 383 6351

Hash House Harriers

3 pm winter and 4 pm summer
Bronwyn 0210 231 1130

Brew Crew (Home brewing)

Fire Station Matarangi
Phil Mosen 027 4761734

Sunday

Sunday Market

Matarangi Drive (in front of shops), 10 am-1pm
Long weekends summer to Labour weekend
Lesley 021 280 0780

Golf

The Dunes Golf Club Days - Affiliated Visitors
Welcome:

Mens 9 Hole Monday [Back 9] and Thursday

[Front 9] - 9.20am

Ladies 9 Hole Tuesday [Front 9] and Thursday

[Back 9] - 9.30am

Mens 18 Hole Wednesday - 10am

Ladies 18 Hole Thursday - 10am

Twilight 9 Holes Friday - 2.30pm-3pm

Mixed Haggie 18 Holes Saturday - 10.30am-
11.30am (Pre-register via The Dunes website)

March 2026 TIDES

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March Tides

| | High | Low | High | Low | High |
|----|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| 4 | | 02:05:00 | 08:19:00 | 14:36:00 | 20:45:00 |
| 5 | | 02:51:00 | 09:04:00 | 15:20:00 | 21:29:00 |
| 6 | | 03:37:00 | 09:49:00 | 16:04:00 | 22:11:00 |
| 7 | | 04:23:00 | 10:34:00 | 16:48:00 | 22:52:00 |
| 8 | | 05:09:00 | 11:19:00 | 17:32:00 | 23:33:00 |
| 9 | | 05:55:00 | 12:04:00 | 18:16:00 | |
| 10 | 06:41:00 | 12:49:00 | 19:00:00 | 18:44:00 | |
| 11 | 07:27:00 | 13:34:00 | 19:44:00 | 19:29:00 | |
| 12 | 08:13:00 | 14:19:00 | 20:28:00 | 20:20:00 | |
| 13 | 08:59:00 | 15:04:00 | 21:12:00 | 21:18:00 | |
| 14 | 09:45:00 | 15:49:00 | 21:56:00 | 22:18:00 | |
| 15 | 10:31:00 | 16:34:00 | 22:40:00 | 23:16:00 | |
| 16 | 11:17:00 | 17:19:00 | 23:24:00 | | |
| 17 | | 12:03:00 | 18:04:00 | 00:08:00 | 18:45:00 |
| 18 | | 12:49:00 | 18:49:00 | 00:52:00 | 19:33:00 |
| 19 | | 13:35:00 | 19:34:00 | 01:36:00 | 20:18:00 |
| 20 | | 14:21:00 | 20:19:00 | 02:20:00 | 21:03:00 |
| 21 | | 15:07:00 | 21:04:00 | 03:04:00 | 21:49:00 |
| 22 | | 15:53:00 | 21:49:00 | 03:48:00 | 22:35:00 |
| 23 | | 16:39:00 | 22:34:00 | 04:32:00 | 23:24:00 |
| 24 | | 05:36:00 | 11:47:00 | 18:01:00 | |
| 25 | 00:17:00 | 06:30:00 | 12:40:00 | 18:54:00 | |
| 26 | 01:14:00 | 07:30:00 | 13:38:00 | 19:52:00 | |
| 27 | 02:15:00 | 08:33:00 | 14:41:00 | 20:55:00 | |
| 28 | 03:20:00 | 09:39:00 | 15:47:00 | 22:01:00 | |
| 29 | 04:24:00 | 10:43:00 | 16:53:00 | 23:05:00 | |
| 30 | 05:25:00 | 11:43:00 | 17:54:00 | | |
| 31 | | 00:04:00 | 06:19:00 | 12:37:00 | 18:49:00 |
| 1 | | 00:56:00 | 07:08:00 | 13:26:00 | 19:38:00 |
| 4 | | 02:05:00 | 08:19:00 | 14:36:00 | 20:45:00 |
| 5 | | 02:51:00 | 09:04:00 | 15:20:00 | 21:29:00 |

LINZ

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A Taste of Central Otago
104 KAREAREA WAY | MATARANGI

PBN

3 beds, 2 baths, 1 car, 783m2

Greeted by twin peaks, this beautifully presented modern home, has the distinct flavour of the deep south, with its high pitch twin peaks and black corrugated exterior. Once you step inside, the uniqueness of the design is even more desirable. Sophistication meets comfortable chic in this spacious open plan interior, a design concept that cleverly brings together the kitchen, dining, and lounge areas. The warmth and sense of invitation, a testament to the thoughtfulness that went into designing this space to feel like home. Adding to the home's charm, standout features such as timber look planked floors give it a rustic yet modern vibe. This theme continues into the bathrooms, which sport a fresh black-on-white look that sets an absolute trend. The design decisions function in harmony to create a crisp, cool, and welcoming aesthetic. From a practical perspective, the house offers a perfect living solution for family living. It boasts three generously proportioned bedrooms, ensuring comfort and space for all. Additionally, the master bedroom has been carefully designed to include a walk-in wardrobe with ensuite. This beach bach is centrally located in Matarangi, in the brand new Beaches development with the shops and beach just a short stroll away.
Contact both Mark & Shirvani to secure.



Mark Hall Licensed Agent (REA 2008)
M: 021 607 135 E: mark@beachrealty.co.nz

Shirvani Hall Licensed Salesperson (REA 2008)
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