

MATARANGI BEACH PAPER



Whangapoua
Matarangi
Kuaotunu
Otama
Opito Bay
Te Rerenga
Wharekaho

Government Presses Pause on Regional Amalgamation



The central government's sudden pre-election freeze on local government mergers has thrown a spotlight on the ambitious blueprint designed by three eastern Waikato local authorities. While Local Government Minister Simon Watts has paused the Head Start pathway until early 2027 to address wider regional representation gaps, the joint submission from the Thames-Coromandel, Hauraki, and Matamata-Piako district councils reveals a massive proposed administrative and economic shift for the region.

Titled *Simplifying Local Government - Starting from Strength*, the joint outline proposal was submitted on 4 August 2026. The blueprint details a collective strategy to dissolve the three existing territorial authorities and establish a single, unified

entity known as the Waihou-Piako-Hauraki-Coromandel unitary authority.

Had the proposal proceeded on its original fast-track timeline, the new unitary authority would have instantly become a major macroeconomic player in local government. Financial modelling within the submission reveals that the unified council would manage net assets valued at an impressive \$3.703 billion and serve a combined population of approximately 93,500 people.

The merger was structurally designed to eliminate duplicated corporate overheads, streamline back-office software systems, and consolidate regional infrastructure management. For instance, the plan would bring 2,360 kilometres of local roads under a single network management contract.

Financially, the unified entity was projected to generate an estimated annual revenue of \$320.7 million. The blueprint highlights that this collective revenue pool would offer the region far greater economic resilience against severe weather events and climate challenges than the individual councils could manage alone. Furthermore, the combined entity would boast a remarkably low initial net debt-to-revenue ratio of 34 per cent.

This strong balance sheet was a core pillar of the submission, intended to give the unified region substantial additional borrowing capacity to fund a multi-year capital works programme focused on infrastructure stability and asset renewals. To effectively govern this massive geographic and financial footprint, the three councils engineered a specialised two-tier governance framework. This arrangement was specifically designed to resolve the primary tension of the amalgamation, which was preventing smaller, distinct beachside settlements like Matarangi or Whangamatā from being politically drowned out by larger, inland urban centres like Matamata, Paeroa or Thames.

Under this proposed model, regional scale issues would be elevated to a strategic central table consisting of an overarching regional mayor elected at large and a streamlined governing council of twelve to fifteen members. This tier would manage macro-responsibilities such as civil defence, land transport, biosecurity, and maritime concerns.

The second tier formed the democratic heart of the local communities. The proposal outlined the creation of statutory local boards, which would be legally empowered to control local rates, community grants, and local bylaws. This mechanism ensured that local knowledge remained central to

decision-making and that coastal residents retained direct authority over their immediate environments. Beyond financial and political structures, the submission proposed a progressive shift toward environmental asset management. The boundaries of the new unitary authority were explicitly drawn to align with natural catchments rather than arbitrary historical borders.

The plan merged the management of the interconnected Waihou and Piako catchments with the Coromandel Peninsula marine environments. This would allow a single local government body to handle regional flood protection, catchment health, and the Sea Change marine spatial plan in direct tandem with the neighbouring Auckland Council. Additionally, the blueprint ensured that all existing Treaty settlement obligations and partnership commitments with local iwi and hapū would transfer seamlessly to the new authority.

Despite community engagement datasets showing that an eastern Waikato authority is the most favoured geographic option among local participants, the plan remains on ice. Central government ministers advised local leadership that no final decisions would be signed off before the election, a move believed to be driven by coalition partner NZ First's desire for more deliberation. For now, the legal amalgamation originally planned for the 2028 local elections remains in limbo.

However, the three partnering councils maintain that their exhaustive financial and governance modeling has not been wasted, serving as a strong foundation for post-election negotiations on local government reform. As the broader conversation around local government reform moves forward after the election.



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G.J. Gardner. HOMES



The School Bell

The end of the term saw several Te Rerenga School students participating with excellence in a variety of inter-school competitions, both academic and sporting. For a small school, we certainly punch above our weight!

Students from all schools between Coromandel and Whangamata gathered at Te Rerenga School in the last week of term for the Eastern Coromandel Schools Speech Final. There was a very high quality of speeches but we were delighted to announce that Te Rerenga School was the overall winner, with 3 of our 4 finalists being placed. In the Year 5 & 6 final, Fallon Fanning came 1st equal with her well performed speech "My favourite sports start with an S." In the Year 7 & 8 final, Struan English was placed 1st with his entertaining speech "Road Works" while Niko Varga was placed 3rd with his speech "I'll do it in a sec! The perfect strategy to get out of doing things." Our 4th finalist, Fletcher Diskin, also spoke extremely well, helping us secure the overall champions title! Congratulations to all four Te Rerenga students. We are very proud of you all.

A week earlier, we had our Peninsula Schools' Maths Ex competition in Tairua. Both the Year 5/6 and Year 7/8 teams won! The Year 7/8 team even had to compete in a tie breaker question against Mercury Bay Area School, which was very exciting and had everyone cheering. Again we were extremely proud of the Year 5 & 6 team: Jessica Lendrum, Leo Maiden, Jake Dixon and Sēan Given; and the Y7 & 8 team: Aoife Given, Fay Devoy, Struan English and Rosalie Watts.

We also had several teams attend the Adventure Racing event at Opoutere, and once again Te Rerenga students performed extremely well at a challenging event that required team work and orienteering through forestry tracks and rugged terrain.

Results were:

Our Year 5/6 boys - Team SOS - 1st Place; Year 7/8 girls - Troop of Ducks - 2nd Place; Year 7/8 mixed - The Wandering Weirdos - 2nd Place and the Year 5/6 mixed - Te Rerenga Compasses - 3rd Place

This netball season Bella Dixon, Mary-Mei Foreman, Holly Adlam, Ella Commins and Ena Redfern from our Year 7/8 netball teams, trialled and were selected for the Year 7 Mercury Bay Netball development team. The girls played in 6 different tournaments across the Waikato and Bay of Plenty winning 70% of their games. The team won the Waihi tournament and came 2nd in the two day Rotorua tournament, by a count back on points differential. It was a successful season with the girls all developing their skills and making new friends. At the recent Mercury Bay prize-giving 3 out of the 4 trophy prizes went to Te Rerenga Students. Ena received a new award for Etiquette, Ella for the Most Improved and Mary-Mei received an award for her dedication. Well done girls, it was an awesome season!

During the last month several of our football teams have played at festivals in Rotorua and Hamilton to end their season. This is some information provided by the coaches: "What

a fantastic couple of weeks of football to finish the season! At the Rotorua Festival, our U11 boys played up a level, with some even playing two to three levels above their usual grade. They competed in seven-a-side matches and were incredibly competitive, finishing with two wins, one draw and two narrow losses. Every game was closely matched, and the boys showed great skill, teamwork and determination.

Then they headed to the Waikato five-a-side tournament, playing in the 10th grade. Despite losing a player at the last minute due to illness, the boys stepped up and had a fantastic tournament, finishing with three wins, one draw and one loss. It was great to see them enjoying their football, trying different positions and supporting each other throughout the day. A brilliant way to finish the season — full of fun, excitement and some great football! Well done Te Rerenga Red Bulls! The U13s had a fabulous day in Hamilton. It was awesome to play 5 new teams and come away with 4 wins! They really enjoyed the 5-a-side format."

We finished the term with Te Rerenga's Got Talent. It was a great afternoon celebrating the amazing talent we have within Te Rerenga School. The costumes were fabulous, students had practiced hard and our wonderful judges Teresa and Claire had a very difficult decision to choose our winners.

Well done to everyone who took part throughout the audition process and our finals.

The winners were:

Juniors:

*1st - The Moana Twins (Aubree & Bodhi)
2nd - Violetta
3rd - Tim, Tom and Timmy (Tawa & Reggie)
Seniors
1st - Two brains, zero sense (Alfie & Fletcher)
2nd - The puppety dupes (Luca & Molly)
3rd - Da Bros (Jillian & Sadie)*

Do you have a child at school with a pre-school sibling? Do you know of another family in the area who may be looking at Te Rerenga School for their child? Are they turning 5 in the next couple of years?

We would love to receive a Pre-enrolment Form for your child so we can have their details in our system. Having this information is really important to the school. It helps us with future planning, knowing our expected school numbers, and securing the funding we need to support our students.

If you have a little one who will be starting school in the next couple of years, please complete a Pre-enrolment Form and help us plan for the future of our school. There is a link to our enrolment form on our school website.

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

Mary Kedzlie Principal

Scott Simpson

National Party Candidate for Coromandel



Authorised by S. Simpson, scott.simpson@national.org.nz

CONGRATULATIONS CORNER



Featured : Te Rerenga School has had lots to celebrate this month with a number of academic, sporting and cultural successes. Congratulations to all the children who made their school so very proud. The children dominated events across the peninsula taking out the Speech and Mathex competitions and performing extremely well in a number of sporting events. Full details are in The School Bell. Your community applauds you on your success. Pictured are the Mathex (above) and Speech winners.



TEN YEARS ON IN THE MBP

Looking back at the October 2016 issue of the Matarangi Beach Paper, the community was tracking several local residents travelling abroad. The Kretings were overseas in Holland, the James family were in Portugal, and the Brickells were visiting Rome. At the same time, Leanne Rich was on a cycling trip through France and Ireland, meanwhile Leanne Robinson, Brenda Riggs, and Peter Hazael had travelled south to hit the New Zealand ski slopes. Ten years on, these major adventures remain a notable snapshot of our community's collective wanderlust during the spring of 2016.

The same edition highlighted several major upcoming community projects and environmental initiatives. Plans were first revealed for the 25 Trees of Christmas exhibition in Kuaotunu, alongside a comprehensive update on the long-term strategy for the Kuaotunu Food Forest. A decade later, these projects have shifted from initial concepts into established features of the local calendar and landscape, driven by the steady work of local coordinators and volunteers.

On the events and infrastructure front, organization was well underway for the 2017 A Taste of Matarangi festival. Simone Ririnui and her committee confirmed that Five O'Clock Shadow would headline the main stage, marking a significant milestone in the event's booking history. Finally, the paper confirmed that funding and logistics for the Kuaotunu Hall roof and floor upgrade were officially finalised. The completion of those structural works ensured the hall could safely continue to serve as a central venue for local gatherings and events over the subsequent ten years.



October 2026

Daylight saving has arrived, stretching out the evenings and giving us more time to enjoy a late afternoon or early evening Fish.

The August winner of our new Fish of the Month Challenge, sponsored by Howies Lawns & Mulching, was Paul Eden, who landed a 4.352 kg snapper. Congratulations, Paul! The September species was Kahawai, sponsored by Peninsula Forestry Services Ltd. The winner will be announced on our website on the 2nd October. John Dory is the target species for October sponsored by Coromandel Jetski & ATV Services, with full challenge details available online.

Our Annual Prizegiving is being held on 3rd October at the Matarangi Fire Station. We are looking forward to a great afternoon of celebrations. Details of all trophy winners will be published on our website in the week following.

The next tournament in the club calendar is The Great Labour Weekend Fishing Tournament to be held on Saturday 24th October 2026. This tournament is open to all. Registrations will be open in early October.

This tournament will be held in conjunction with the Zone 3 Interclub Snapper Tournament – Kilwell Trophy Challenge open to all current club members. The competing clubs include Matarangi Boat & Fishing Club, Mercury Bay Game Fishing Club, Whangamata Ocean Sports Club, Tairua Pauanui Sports Fishing Club, and Whangapoua Fishing Club. Our club currently holds the trophy, and we want to retain it for another year, so let's get behind this and bring home the winning snapper. Details are listed on the Labour Weekend Tournament page on our website.

For full details of the Fish of the Month Challenge, tournaments, membership, and upcoming events, visit our website at www.mbfcc.co.nz. You can also keep up to date by following the Matarangi Boat & Fishing Club on Facebook and Instagram.

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

Safe boating and limit your catch, don't catch your limit.

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Kauri 2000 Records Placed in Safe Hands



In the final stages of winding up the Kauri 2000 Trust, Trust Chair Alison Henry and long-time trustee Jill Kaeppli have handed the Trust's records to Geraldine Dunwoodie, President of the Coromandel Heritage Trust, for placement in the archives at The Treasury in Thames.

Here, they will be safely preserved in a controlled environment and remain available to the public.

Alison Henry noted that these records add to the story of kauri on the Coromandel, making it ideal to have the information in one place where it can be professionally cared for. Having the planting records at The Treasury ensures that 25 years of hard but rewarding work will never be lost.

Kauri 2000 began with a goal of planting 2,000 kauri to mark the new millennium and help restore trees lost to milling

in the early 1800s. The charitable trust was established with Dame Cath Tizard as patron, supported by guidance from forestry and conservation experts.

The original target soon grew as the vision of restoring kauri forests on the Coromandel captured public support from people across the community.

Donations came from New Zealand and overseas, BNZ Markets provided sponsorship, and hundreds of volunteers and school students helped the Trust plant more than 55,000 kauri across the Coromandel Peninsula over the next 25 years.

While it is sad to see this initiative close, it is the end of an era for a truly remarkable project that finishes on a high note, having far exceeded its original goals for the peninsula.

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October 2026

Why are my rates changing?

**WE'VE CHANGED TO A CAPITAL VALUE RATING SYSTEM.
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For most properties, there are two major changes at play:

- The 2026/27 Annual Plan average rates increase of 3.97%.
- The move from Land Value to Capital Value rating.

The Annual Plan increase affects the total amount of rates Council collects.

The move to Capital Value doesn't increase the total rates collected. It changes how general rates are shared between properties.

Some properties will pay more, some less, and some may see very little change.



www.tcdc.govt.nz/rateschanges

WHAT'S THE LONG TERM PLAN?

You'll likely hear more references over the coming months to our Long Term Plan (LTP) for 2027-2037 that we're working on.

Our LTP sets the direction we're heading for the next 10 years and provides a long-term focus for decision-making. It outlines all the services and projects we're planning, what they're going to cost and how we'll fund them (including what rates increases are likely to be for the next 10 years). To accommodate change Council also develops an Annual Plan in years two and three of the LTP and produces a new LTP every three years. Our current LTP is for 2024-34 and the next LTP will be adopted in 2027. www.tcdc.govt.nz/ltp



What's happening over Labour Weekend?



KERBSIDE COLLECTIONS AND TRANSFER STATIONS

Rubbish and food waste collections are a day later following Labour Day, Monday 26 October. Check your local kerbside schedule at www.tcdc.govt.nz/bindays. Our seven refuse and recycling transfer stations are open daily, including Labour Day Monday. For more info, visit www.tcdc.govt.nz/rts



OFFICES | DISTRICT LIBRARIES

Our offices (and AA services) and district libraries are closed on Monday 26 October. You can still contact us 24/7 at 07 868 0200, customer.services@tcdc.govt.nz



THAMES POOL

Thames Centennial Pool is closed on Labour Day, Monday 26 October, resuming normal hours. www.tcdc.govt.nz/pools



DOG RESTRICTIONS

Over Labour Weekend, many of our beaches have restrictions on dogs. Look out for Council's traffic light signage and check the rules in your area at www.tcdc.govt.nz/dogownerguide



ALCOHOL BANS

Alcohol bans are in place over Labour Weekend from 4pm Friday to 4pm Monday. www.tcdc.govt.nz/alcoholcontrol

Smoke testing to be carried out



For about two weeks from Monday 12 October, Council will carry out smoke testing of the local wastewater network.

People may see white smoke emerging from manholes, gully traps and other areas. The smoke is harmless but if it enters a building, people should ventilate and notify the testing crew or Council.

The testing involves:

Matarangi Drive, Pine Close, Mercury View, Sands Crescent, Kelly Jade Avenue, Karo Drive, The Fairway, The Tee, Ashley Place, Ngaio Drive, Ranson Crescent, Harbour View Drive, Ti Kouka Crescent, Nikau Close, Pohutukawa Place, Tairua Close, Kotare Way, Boat Ramp Road, Taniwha Place, Kowhai Avenue and Ocean Close.

More information on smoke testing can be found at www.tcdc.govt.nz/smoketesting

Transfer station hours

From Monday 5 October, Matarangi transfer station will move to new operating hours of: 10am to 3pm, seven days a week.

The change follows consultation through the Annual Plan process and is intended to improve the cost-efficiency of operating the district's least-used transfer stations.

It will remain open throughout Labour Weekend. www.tcdc.govt.nz/rts

PREPARE NOW FOR AN EL NIÑO SUMMER

Due to a strong El Niño, a hot, dry and windy summer is likely on the way for the Coromandel. This means greater risk of drought, vegetation fires and water restrictions. While we can't do much about weather, we can take steps now to protect our families, properties and communities.

Looking after the Coromandel is a team effort. We all have a part to play. Stay in the know and find out more El Niño tips at www.tcdc.govt.nz/elniño

Take steps now to help protect your families, properties and communities.

On tank water? Check it now.



Clear long grass, tidy up around buildings and reduce fire risk.

Check in on neighbours.



Stay in the know. Keep an eye on weather, fire and Council updates.



www.tcdc.govt.nz/elniño

OUR NEXT MERCURY BAY COMMUNITY BOARD MEETING WILL BE WEDNESDAY 21 OCTOBER FROM 9AM AT OUR SERVICE CENTRE 10 MONK ST, WHITIANGA. WWW.TCDC.GOV.TZ/MEETINGS

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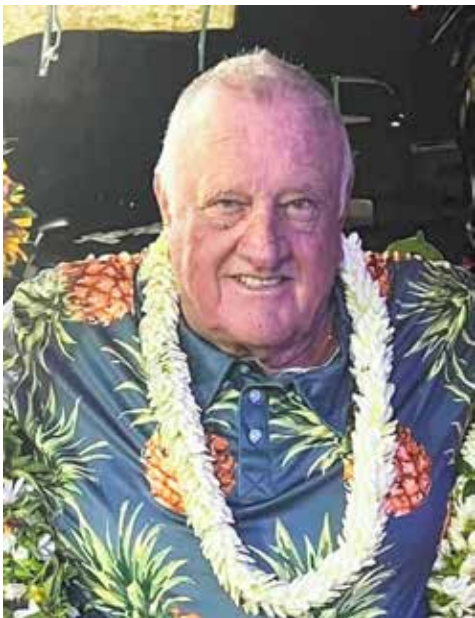
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Obituary: Dugald Hoyland (1951 - 2026)



The local community has lost a true stalwart with the recent passing of Dugald Hoyland at the age of 75. A devoted family man, loyal friend, and tireless community servant, he packed an extraordinary amount of life, hard work, and good humour into his seventy-five years.

Dugald's deep connection to the area began long before he became a permanent resident. He and his late wife, Barbara, alongside lifelong friends Dave and Christine Wight, spent many summers holidaying in Kuaotunu in their caravans. The turning point came in the early 1980s when the Hoyland and Wight families partnered to purchase two sections in Kuaotunu from Martin Hodge, along with the local petrol pumps and tanks.

Dugald and Dave operated the pumps until they secured planning permission to build what is now the iconic Kuaotunu Store. A plasterer by trade, Dugald ran his plastering business alongside the store and pumps. In those early days, always willing to do what it took to support his family, he even drove the local septic tank truck as a relief driver for Bob McClintock.

After ten successful years running the Kuaotunu Store, the families sold the business, but Dugald's entrepreneurial spirit didn't slow down. He bought and developed the Ideal Garage franchise from Bruce Johnson, owned Whitianga Car Sales and the Stunned Mullet fish and bait shop for several years, and founded Whitianga Towing. Even in his later retirement, he kept moving, finding immense joy in driving local school buses—a job he absolutely loved.

Beyond his business ventures, Dugald was the ultimate club man, dedicating decades to local organisations. He spent countless hours helping build the Kuaotunu Fire Station into what it is today, successfully securing its club licence. He was a dedicated member of the Kuaotunu Fire Brigade for some 40 years, spending many of those years on the committee, and was heavily involved with the Mercury Bay Club.

His community footprints were everywhere. He was a member of the Buffalo Lodge and was actively sitting on the lodge committee the memorable night the Whitianga Town Hall caught fire during one of their meetings. An avid fisherman, he competed in numerous tournaments with the Mercury Bay Game Fishing Club on the various boats he owned over the years. He also laced up his boots for the Mercury Bay Rugby Club, later playing for the "Merky Golds" golden oldies division.

In his later years, Dugald found great camaraderie as a member of the North Island Model A Club. He thoroughly enjoyed travelling the country on various car rallies and was due to receive his prestigious 40-year badge from the club this year. In 2013, he with Dave and Christine Wight famously organised a massive rally around the Coromandel Peninsula, drawing over 100 vintage cars to the area.

Dugald loved his family, his friends, his music, his fishing, a good party, and sharing an odd beer or two with mates. He leaves behind a legacy of hard work, community grit, and endless good times. He will be deeply missed across the Mercury Bay.

Thanks to Dave and Christine Wight for their assistance in writing this Obituary for Dugald.

Rising Seas and Tsunami Risks Highlighted for Mercury Bay North Coast

Matarangi and neighbouring eastern Coromandel beaches face a projected 15 to 20 metres of coastal erosion over the next century alongside elevated local tsunami risks, according to recent regional council data.

Recent findings from the Waikato Regional Hazards Portal highlight our coastline as an area of concern. The regional tsunami strategy reports show that the open coast of Mercury Bay North carries an elevated risk. This zone stretches from Otama Beach out to Great Mercury Island and includes Whangapoua. A local or regional tsunami could reach these shores quickly. Residents and visitors need to understand these natural hazards to stay safe.

Sea levels are rising due to a changing climate. The regional council tracks coastal hazards closely across our region. Their long-term projects show that eastern Coromandel Peninsula beaches could lose 15 to 20 metres of land over the next hundred years. This gradual loss of sand and soil will reshape our shoreline, impacting coastal properties, dunes, and local access ways over time.

These findings are built on advanced environmental modelling and decades of local research. To project the long-term coastal erosion baseline, coastal engineers combine historical beach surveys, aerial

photography, and drone data with empirical formulas tracking sand movement.

Meanwhile, the tsunami hazard zones are determined through deep-water computer simulations. Scientists model maximum credible events, such as severe earthquakes along the Tonga-Kermadec Trench, to map exactly how waves interact with our unique offshore topography, Great Mercury Island, and local shallow bays.

Knowing where the risks are helps everyone make better choices for future building and conservation. Matarangi residents can prepare by learning local evacuation routes.

The comprehensive digital mapping tool is built directly into the Waikato Regional Hazards Portal, which allows you to type in any local address to see its specific risk footprint. Printable community guides and local emergency plans are published by the Thames-Coromandel District Council, which includes a dedicated Matarangi Tsunami Evacuation Map poster displaying local safe zones. For an interactive national overview, you can also use the National Emergency Management Agency Get Ready Tsunami Map to inspect boundaries across the region.

These official maps use a clear colour-coded system to separate threat levels. The red zone covers the beach, marine areas, and estuaries, which can be affected even by very small tsunamis. The orange zone includes low-lying coastal land and residential areas that could be flooded during a large event. The yellow zone extends the furthest inland, mapping out wider areas that could be flooded in a very large, rare scenario.

If a long or strong earthquake occurs, civil defence advice for our coast is simple. Do not wait for an official warning, immediately evacuate all zones, and head to the designated white safe zones on high ground.

GOOD SORT OF THE MONTH

If you have been down by Jack's Ramp lately, you will notice the rescue belt box looks significantly sharper and easier to spot. We can thank this month's Good Sort of the Month, Graeme Richer, and his crew for the fresh makeover.

Taking a hint from Dave Comp, Graeme got a small team together and applied a fresh coat of paint. Because Jack's Ramp sits right on the edge of the Whangapoua Harbour, ensuring

this lifesaving equipment stands out is critical for everyone utilising the reserve.

Graeme also used his spare paint down at the village green to spruce up the life rescue tube box at the walkway beach access. It only took a few minutes and some leftover paint, but it makes a massive difference.

While we hope no one ever needs this equipment, it is reassuring to know it is clearly visible. This community effort serves as a fantastic visual upgrade and a vital reminder. Take a moment this week to brush up on your rescue belt knowledge—you never know when a few minutes of prep

could save a life.

As a token of appreciation, Graeme can pick up a complimentary coffee from the Matarangi Mataz coffee cart down by the Dunes Shop. Thank you for your hard work, Graeme!



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Petition Presented To Parliament

Reported by Mike Brown



Janie Bassett, representing the Coromandel-Colville ward, Maree Smith, representing the Tairua-Pauanui ward, and I, representing the Mercury Bay ward, travelled to Wellington to present the petition to our local MP, the Hon. Scott Simpson.

On Wednesday, we travelled via Barrier Air to Auckland. At Auckland, the fun started with Janie and Maree making friends with the security screening personnel at the airport. I just walked through.

Our flight on Air New Zealand to Wellington was uneventful until it came to landing in strong, gusting winds. One of these gusts caught us just prior to touchdown, forcing a go-around. The pilots did an amazing job of landing on the second attempt, which was rewarded by everyone on the plane clapping.

We were contacted by TVNZ 1 to do an interview at 7:20 am the next morning. This was later confirmed, though with a maximum of two participants allowed. Janie volunteered to sit this one out, and it was decided that she would instead present the petition to Scott at Parliament on Thursday morning.

Here are some comments on the TVNZ 1 interview: Maree did a brilliant job. Chris Chang read out a statement from BreastScreen Aotearoa saying that there were insufficient numbers for a fixed site in Whitianga. This is just the latest in a list of unqualified statements we have received from BreastScreen Aotearoa and BreastScreen Midlands in reply to specific questions we have asked them.

Notably, the details missing from their statement were the actual numbers they were talking about

and the specific geographical area of coverage they were referring to. Can anyone in our community remember the last time BreastScreen Aotearoa or BreastScreen Midlands surveyed our community to see if the mobile unit is still fit for purpose?

Fortunately, we have just done this for them through our petition. A total of 2,777 Coromandel Peninsula residents have stated that they support a fixed site in Whitianga.

We went to Parliament at 10:00 am. Scott met us at the entrance to the Beehive, and we walked to the steps of Parliament where Janie presented the petition to Scott on behalf of the people of the Coromandel Peninsula. This is an important step in the parliamentary petitions process, as an MP needs to sign and present the petition to the petitions desk.

We then had a session with Scott at his offices, discussing our project and the petition process from this point forward. On Tuesday the 22nd of September, the petition is presented to Parliament for ratification, after which it is placed into the queue of petitions to be reviewed by the Petitions Select Committee.

Because of the upcoming election and the fact that a new Petitions Select Committee must be established afterward, it is unlikely to be looked at until the first quarter of next year. Scott was a very generous host and took us on a mini-tour of the Parliament buildings, which was greatly appreciated by all of us.

We returned to Whitianga on Friday, but not before Janie and Maree made even more friends with the security screening staff at Wellington Airport. I just walked through again.



This is my first fire report on behalf of the brigade so I will keep it short.

Mark is currently taking 3 months leave, which is well deserved.

The crew have been busy with weekly winter training keeping their skills up to date.

Callouts this month have been quieter with 2 medical events.

We held our AGM on the 16th of September which was well attended.

The annual Malcolm Spry Memorial golf tournament is coming up on the 16th of October at the Dunes with preparations progressing well, if you haven't got your team entered yet get your entries in now.

With daylight saving starting in late September it's a good time to check all your smoke alarms and replace their batteries.

Stay safe everyone.

Brendan O'Connell

**Acting Chief Fire Officer
Matarangi Volunteer Fire Brigade**

TCDC Satisfaction Survey

The 2026 Thames-Coromandel District Council Satisfaction Survey shows overall performance satisfaction rose to 39%, with core services rating at 51%. Infrastructure performed exceptionally well, led by wastewater reliability at 94%.

However, financial perceptions remain low; only 29% feel they receive value for money, and 22% view rates as fair. Improving the Council's image is now the top priority due to its heavy influence on public perception, with residents demanding wiser spending, better transparency, and a stronger focus on core services.



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The Mercury Bay Future Fund at Momentum Waikato provides residents and visitors with the opportunity to donate now, or give through your Will, to a locally driven funding vehicle dedicated to the area from Matarangi down to Hot Water Beach.

It is one of six Coromandel 'place based' endowment funds established last year by Momentum Waikato Community Foundation, in partnership with Thames-Coromandel District Council and a network of committed community people. Five are based on the Council's wards – Coromandel & Colville, Mercury Bay, Tairua & Pāuanui, Thames and Whangamatā, and the sixth covers the entire Peninsula.

The Mercury Bay Future Fund was launched first, with a function late last year at the CORO Café in Whitianga that featured Sir Stephen Tindall, a driving force behind community foundations in New Zealand.

Whitianga accountant Geoff Balme is a volunteer Mercury Bay Fund Champion. "Living here, it can feel a bit isolated, but that can work both ways," says Geoff.

"Our community, knowing it is 'out on a limb' geographically, responds by pulling together. "The age and economic demographics of the Mercury Bay area suggest that collectively we currently have the 'ways and means' to take care of the local community and those things that are important to it.

"The Mercury Bay Future Fund makes it easy for you to leave a legacy for the community you have enjoyed and the local causes you care about," says Geoff.

As with all endowments managed by community foundations like Momentum Waikato, the Fund is being built up through

donations, bequests and its investment income.

The scale and therefore diversified risk profile of Momentum's professionally managed investment portfolio, which is made up of dozens of such funds, provides better returns and greater distributions than a single trust or a small community could achieve alone.

Once the Fund has reached sufficient size, most of its income will go out as grants to charitable community entities in the Mercury Bay-Matarangi area, either via decisions of a committee of locals and Momentum reps, or as per donors' wishes. The rest is re-invested to keep the Fund growing.

Many of you reading this want to help and improve your favourite place, so please consider a gift in your Will to the Mercury Bay Future Fund - your generosity will go further, forever.

To start the conversation and find out more – please contact Fund Champion Geoff Balme at gbalme@extra.co.nz and visit momentumwaikato.nz/mercurybayfuturefund.



Featured: Fund Champion Geoff Balme

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Ngāti Huarere Challenges WRC's Wastewater Consent



Our local iwi trust has lodged a formal appeal in the Environment Court, calling for tighter restrictions and a faster construction timeline for the new Matarangi Wastewater Treatment Plant.

The Ngāti Huarere ki Whangapoua Trust filed the Notice of Appeal on 01 September 2026. Signed by Trust Chair Wanda Brljevic, the appeal challenges a recent decision by the Waikato Regional Council Hearing Panel.

That panel, consisting of independent Hearing Commissioners Mrs Cherie Lane, Dr Ngaire Phillips, and Mr Steven Wilson, granted the Thames-Coromandel District Council a 35-year resource consent to discharge treated wastewater into the Mapauriki Stream and Whangapoua Harbour.

Crucially, Wanda Brljevic explicitly reinforces that the Trust does not want the project declined.

Ngāti Huarere fully supports the critical need for a new, substantially upgraded wastewater

treatment plant to service the Matarangi community. Alongside fellow presenter Tony Brljevic, the Trust has actively championed the necessity of this infrastructure upgrade throughout the initial 2024 hearings and the reconvened sessions earlier this year.

However, the core of the appeal rests on the fact that the current consent conditions fundamentally fail to protect a nationally significant ecosystem and allow the council far too long to complete the build. The iwi is fighting to ensure the infrastructure delivers genuine environmental improvement rather than just locking in a slow construction timeline while our local waterways continue to suffer.

For Ngāti Huarere, the Whangapoua Harbour is a sacred taonga. In their submission, the Trust stated that decades of wastewater discharge have degraded the mauri of the water, severely impacting their ability to exercise customary practices and gather kaimoana. The Trust argues that the Hearing Panel made a fundamental error by treating

the application as a simple renewal of an old consent. Because the previous system discharged onto land, and the new system discharges directly into water, the Trust maintains it is a brand-new activity. They are asking the Environment Court to enforce a strict, precautionary approach to protect the harbour from cumulative pollution.

The Trust's appeal focuses on three major changes to the current consent, starting with the construction timeline. The current consent gives the council five years to build and commission the new plant, during which the old, inferior discharge regime will continue. The Trust argues this is far too long given ongoing harbour degradation. They are demanding a strict 36-month deadline, noting that a 12-month design phase and 24-month build is entirely realistic and aligns with similar regional projects like the recent Kinloch treatment plant.

Additionally, the Trust labels the 35-year consent term excessive, pointing out that the Council's population projections only look out to approximately 2045, estimating 1,999 dwellings. They want the term reduced to 25 years so the community can reassess the environmental impacts sooner. To prevent infinite growth from overwhelming the environment, the Trust is also seeking a cap of 2,000 connections to the Matarangi wastewater system.

The appeal also targets procedural unfairness and ambiguous wording in the consent conditions. The Trust claims that the council submitted a heavily revised Environmental Management Plan after the public hearings concluded, denying submitters a fair chance to respond to the final terms before the Panel

closed the hearing.

Furthermore, they are asking the court to fix Condition 12(a). As currently written, the rule allows the council to exclude discharge volume calculations on days with heavy rainfall exceeding 10 mm.

The Trust notes that Matarangi sees roughly 50 heavy rain days a year, and warns that this loophole could mask the true amount of effluent entering the harbour.

The Environment Court will now look at the case to determine whether the consent conditions need to be amended before the new plant goes ahead.



Writers Weekend Workshop
Kūaotunu Hall, Coromandel
10/11 October 2026

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The Editor's Desk

This October, we are incredibly proud to welcome you to the 200th edition of the Matarangi Beach Paper. Looking back to when the MBP was launched by former publisher Michelle Dobson in May 2010, the transformation of this paper has been absolutely immense.

It started out as a modest, grassroots venture consisting of just a four-page A4 publication printed in simple black and white. Through years of steady growth, unwavering community and advertiser support, and a passion for positive local storytelling, we have successfully evolved into the substantial, 20-page full-colour tabloid newspaper you hold in your hands today.

Our core mission has always been to ensure that important local updates about people and places across the Northern Mercury Bay area never get lost to Chinese whispers or turn into unnecessary local rumours. Of course, when major local news breaks, you want to be right in the thick of the action as the journal of local record. Paradoxically, a couple of times when our stunning coastal area went straight to the top of the national news cycle and the pressure was truly on, I was actually miles away from Matarangi.

The first time was with the heart-breaking pilot whale stranding on the Matarangi spit on January 4 2020. I had just set off on what was meant to be a Saturday morning shopping trip to Auckland and was cruising through Thames when my mobile suddenly erupted. A frantic reader rang with an

urgent warning, telling me that I had better throw the car into reverse and race straight back because the situation on the beach was going to develop into a national news event. I spent the entire drive back and the rest of that breathless day fielding phone calls from major national newsrooms for live, on-the-ground updates from our corner of the Coromandel.

History repeated itself 5 years later when the massive Blackjack Hill Fire at Kuaotunu broke out on January 11th 2025. I had just arrived in Miranda for a weekend family visit about two hours away and had barely stepped through the door to greet the family when the call came through detailing the chaos and billowing smoke unfolding back home.

While we are delighted to connect with an even broader online audience today, we know there is still a special magic in the local physical paper hitting kitchen tables via the RD2 mail schedule. We are also thrilled that our physical print footprint has started expanding across the peninsula, with copies now readily available for pick up at the Coromandel Town Four Square and Whitianga New World.

The other thing I love is hearing from the loyal readers from overseas. Often I get emails from people living abroad as Kiwi expats who read the MBP as it is their monthly connection to their "happy place."

This 200 edition milestone belongs to our brilliant contributors, our loyal local advertisers, and most importantly, you, our readers. As we look ahead to the next 200 editions of the Matarangi Beach Paper, we remain committed to being your trusted, colourful, and sometimes cheeky local read that tries to keep things positive.

Conservation Corner

Boundary Traps, Wilding Pine Removal Locked in for Rings Beach Wetlands

Kia Ora Koutou,

Lots of progress in the last couple of months, with two new trap lines completed and traps deployed along them. These lines complete the boundary coverage that we have been working toward the last few years. Many thanks to Kauri 2000 and Pub Charities for the funding that allowed this to happen.

Many thanks also to Predator Free Hauraki Coromandel support team who did the hard work cutting tracks and installing the installations along the lines. Much of this country is steep and slippery and the work demanding, so good to have it ticked off finally!

We are also about to start the latest round of wilding pine removal. This year we will be targeting the bluff faces, both the eastern and western sides, where wilding regrowth is emergent. This too is very difficult work with pampas, gorse and Hakea, as well as old, felled pines hampering access and making work in there extremely challenging!

The native flora is coming back strongly however, and it is important to control the pine re-growth or they will eventually dominate, as they do in many parts of our environment.

Another project the group is investigating is a replacement structure for the main wetland

crossing. This was largely under water earlier in the year and is slippery and unstable. This will need to be publicly funded. If anyone is able to help financially with this endeavour, please get in touch via our website or Facebook page, or to me personally on 021 1740 721.

Mā te Wā, Dave Fitz



Photo: Spring is well underway as seen through these flowering Puawānanga (Clematis Paniculata) now in bloom in the Reserve. Photo Credit Dave Fitz.

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Where in the WORLD is the Matarangi Beach Paper?



Above is keen Matarangi hiker Kay Airey, who completed the iconic Tour du Mont Blanc trek in July. She took along the MBP to stay up to date. This bucket-list journey loops 173 kilometres around the Mont Blanc massif, crossing through France, Italy, and Switzerland over 11 days. Kay navigated 10,000

metres of elevation gain, tackling altitudes up to 2,600 metres and technical vertical ladder climbs. Along the route, she trekked past melting snowlines, spotting regional ibex and chamois, before descending into valleys filled with wildflowers, grazing cows, and traditional alpine chalets.



Matarangi locals Lesley and Brian Inger, Trish and Kevin Comer, Pam and Steve Ludlow, and Karen and Phillip McLeish—dubbed “The Gang of Eight”—recently returned from a spectacular month-long adventure in Africa. The group kicked off their journey in Cape Town, experiencing the exhilarating

low flyover at the All Blacks game, before wrapping up their trip with a world-class safari experience at the Umkumbe Game Reserve in Sabi Sands, Kruger National Park. Even though they forgot to pack an MBP I’ve been assured they read it on their phones whilst away!

Our Lost Locals



Today, we are spoilt for choice with our 21st-century local watering holes—Luke’s, Pipers, and The Dunes being the perfect modern spots to pop in for a pint and a yarn. Yet, long before these current establishments became the social anchors of our coastline, the wider Mercury Bay North area was home to a different breed of hospitality. During the wild frontier days of the kauri timber trade and the 1890s gold rush, a few bustling, long-lost public houses served as lifelines for communities of bushmen, miners, and drovers.

Down on the coastal flats of Kuaotunu’s Lower Township, the immediate thirst of hundreds of workers was quenched by competing establishments. The prominent Kuaotunu Hotel and the Royal Hotel dominated the seaside social scene, managed by colourful local figures like George Loram, Robert Ritchie, and Cornelius McManus. These publicans not only poured handles of beer but also invested heavily in mining reefs and sponsored community sports teams. Higher up the rugged slopes near the mine mouths of the Waitaia reef stood Angel’s Hotel, built around 1890 alongside a general store. This upland watering hole provided a sanctuary where exhausted miners could find a hot meal and a bed without making the treacherous trek down the hill after a long shift.

In the bustling settlement of Opitonui, where the Kauri Freehold Gold Estates company operated tramways and a massive

40-stamp battery, the Opitonui Hotel stood as a vital anchor for hundreds of labourers. When timber and gold routes converged on Whangapoua harbour, hospitality shifted toward Te Rerenga. Here, a historic homestead converted into a hotel in 1911 saw drovers hitching horses to a massive kauri tree, permanently altering its growth.

In stark contrast, isolated pockets like Opito Bay never developed a formal hotel, forcing farmhands into a long walk over the Blackjack hill to Kuaotunu just for a legal drink.

As the gold veins eventually pinched out, these grand structures avoided standard demolition through an incredible feat of recycling. When Kuaotunu’s population crashed, its two-story wooden hotel was systematically dismantled in 1917 and moved to Waitakaruru on the Hauraki Plains. Its neighbour, the rebuilt Royal Hotel, was similarly dismembered in 1920 and transported to Pukemiro as a boarding house for coal miners. Most remarkably, after a devastating fire struck Opotiki in 1904, the vacant timber Opitonui Hotel was dismantled, loaded onto ships, and transported by sea to the eastern Bay of Plenty.

Sadly the Angel’s Hotel was reclaimed by the advancing bush and eventually succumbed to the bush with its ruins lost in a later wildfire.

Featured: (Left) The Kuaotunu Hotel

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Milestone For Bluff Road Bridge Project

The Mercury Bay Community Board has formally thrown its weight behind a community-led plan to finally reopen the long-closed Bluff Road coastal connection. At its August meeting, the board voted to accept long-term ownership and maintenance of a proposed new pedestrian and cycling suspension bridge.

The decision marks a dramatic shift in local government council decisions, effectively reversing previous council stances that had stalled progress on the route for over a decade.

For years, the Thames-Coromandel District Council (TCDC) and successive community boards maintained that repairing the volatile, rockfall-prone cliff section of Bluff Road was a financial impossibility for district ratepayers.

However, the board has now officially revoked its prior decision regarding construction

funding barriers. By shifting the financial burden of initial construction away from the council, local representatives found a viable pathway forward.

The turning point for the board was balancing public safety against fiscal risk. Despite official closures and prominent warning signs, hundreds of walkers and cyclists continue to dangerously bypass barriers to use the coastal track below the crumbling cliffs.

Under the newly minted agreement in principle, the community board has committed to taking full legal ownership of the bridge and track once construction is complete.

Furthermore, the council will absorb all ongoing long-term maintenance and repair costs into its future budgets. This asset handover removes the massive public liability hurdle that has historically blocked grassroots

repair efforts.

However, council backing remains conditional. Before a formal handover can take place, a comprehensive coastal track assessment and a strict “whole-of-life” cost analysis must be completed to ensure the infrastructure will not become an expensive maintenance burden for future ratepayers.

The breakthrough is the direct result of a powerhouse collaboration between the Matarangi Ratepayers and Residents Association (MRRRA), the Kūaotunu Residents and Ratepayers Association (KRRA), and the Matarangi Community Trust. Under this community-led model, local groups will handle the initial capital development and construction costs.

Funding is expected to be raised through targeted community fundraising, philanthropic donations, and external

infrastructure grants. The proposed design centres on a specialised suspension bridge spanning across Bluff Cove. By anchoring the bridge into geotechnically stable rock faces, the design aims to completely clear the volatile slip zones below, re-establishing a flat, safe connection between Matarangi and Rings Beach.

While local organisers are celebrating the bureaucratic victory, authorities are reminding the public that the coastal route remains strictly closed. Geotechnical testing is ongoing, and the area remains highly unstable.

Until the suspension bridge is fully constructed and certified, locals and visitors are urged to use the steeper Department of Conservation (DOC) Matarangi Bluff Walking Track as the only lawful and safe alternative route.

A Friendly Reminder about the Big Blue Bin

The big blue clothing bin outside Richardson's Real Estate in Matarangi accepts clean, good quality clothing and linen to support local families through the Coromandel Independent Living Trust.

Daisy Armstrong from Richardson's shares a friendly local reminder about how to use this space properly, as the wonderful team at Richardson's kindly look after the bin on behalf of our town.

Please drop off only clean, good quality clothes and household linen. Unfortunately of late people have been using it to throw away dirty rags, torn clothing and recently an old TV set.

The trust sells these items in their shops to raise money for local families in need, so please do not bring broken household items, kitchenware, or old dirty rags. This facility is a donation point and not a rubbish bin.

Please check if the bin has space before you leave your items. If the bin is full, do not try to jam extra bags inside or leave them on the ground outside. Wonderful local volunteers empty this bin regularly, and keeping the area clear makes their job much easier while keeping Matarangi looking beautiful.



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Life Members Sponsor Junior Membership at The Dunes

Allan Dickinson and Bev Gwyn, as Life Members of The Dunes, decided to sponsor a Junior membership as a way of supporting the growth of Juniors playing at The Dunes. Applications have been received and “it was great to see the number of young players who are keen to benefit from this opportunity,” said Allan.

Because it was so hard to choose one applicant, Bev and Allan have chosen three

successful applicants, two Juniors over the age of 12 years and one Junior under 12 years.

The two older Juniors are Liam Tukiri and Luca Varga. Liam has a handicap of 8 and is wanting to lower this even more and Luca is wanting to lower his handicap so he will be eligible for the Club Champs next year. Both Liam and Luca can often be found working in the Golf shop or out playing and enjoying golf with their peers or other members.

Otis Marshall is aged 9 years and has been playing since he was 7 years old. He has participated in the Junior Tournaments held by The Dunes and is keen to grow his game.

“Both Allan and I will enjoy watching these players develop their golf and achieve their goals over the next 12 months” said Bev. “We will also watch with interest those Juniors who did apply and were not successful but whom we hope will not give up and will re apply next year.”



October 2026

Brilliant Venus gets ever lower in the western dusk sky as it rapidly sinks towards the Sun. It will reappear on the other side right at the end of the month in the dawn sky. It is accompanied by much fainter Mercury which can be seen to quickly rise up from night to night to pass Venus as Mercury has to move quickly to get around the Sun in only 5 months compared to Venus’ seven. The dawn sky has Mars and bright Jupiter on display while Saturn rises just after dusk and is in the sky all night. The Moon can help us find them all this month.

There will be several Chinese Tiangong and International Space Station (ISS) passes to view 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. It is always best to check the website heavens-above.com for updated timings.

October 1 – Faint Mercury has now risen to lie half way between brilliant Venus and the bright star Spica at dusk.
October 2 – Venus lies above faint Mercury in the western dusk sky.
October 3 – The Moon lies well above faint Mars and bright Jupiter at dawn while the ISS makes a good pass in the SW from 6:00am.
October 4 – Mars lies half way between Moon and bright Jupiter at dawn.
October 5 – The Moon now sits directly to the left of Mars at dawn with Jupiter lower down while the ISS makes a good long pass from the SW at 6:02am.
October 6 – The Moon is now half way between Mars and bright Jupiter and there will be a Tiangong pass in the west starting beside Venus at 9:00pm.
October 7 - The Moon lies midway between bright Jupiter and the star Regulus in Leo and we have a

long Tiangong pass from 8:01pm in the west ending right beside Saturn.

October 8 - Jupiter sits half way between the Moon and Mars at dawn while brilliant Venus and Mercury sit side by side at dusk and from 8:18pm there is a low ISS pass in the North and a Tiangong pass from 8:38pm in the west beside Mercury.

October 9 – Regulus is now half way between the Moon and Mars with Jupiter to its left while from 9:08pm there is a good ISS pass from the NW.

October 10 – The Moon is now lost in the Sun’s glow at dawn but bright Jupiter remains halfway between Regulus and Mars while from 9:19pm there is a long bright ISS pass in the NW.

October 11 – Faint Mercury has now moved to sit above and to the right of brilliant Venus at dusk and from 9:09pm there is a low ISS pass from the West.

October 12 – A minute crescent Moon now sits right next to Venus at dusk and there is a good ISS pass in the west from 8:20pm.

October 13 – The Moon now sits directly above Mercury at dusk with Venus lower down.

October 14 – The crescent Moon sits just below the red giant star Antares at dusk with Mercury and Venus lower down.

October 15 – The crescent Moon now sits just above Antares at dusk with Mercury and Venus lower down.

October 22 - The Moon is high above slightly yellowish Saturn after dusk in the east.

October 23 – The Moon is rapidly approaching Saturn after dusk sitting just above it and we have a short and low ISS pass from 9:15pm in the south.

October 24 – The Moon is now just to the left of Saturn after dusk in the east and we have a low ISS pass in the south from 8:27pm.

October 25 – Saturn now lies just above the Moon after dusk in the east and there is a good ISS pass in the SW from 9:15pm.

October 26 – The Moon rises later and lies below Saturn in the east.

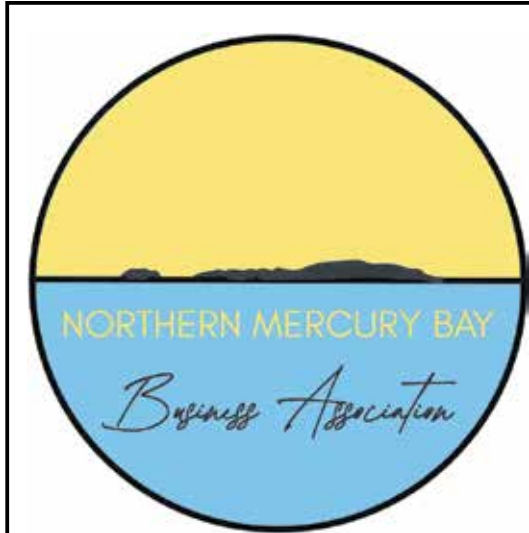
October 27 – There is a good ISS pass in the west from 9:16pm.

October 28 – There will be a long ISS pass from the SW at 8:27pm.

October 29 – We have another ISS pass from 9:16pm very low in the west.

October 30 – There will be a long ISS pass from 8:27pm in the west.

October 31 – There will be an early Tiangong pass from 5:47am in the west ending right beside Venus.



After a winter recess we are getting back on track and will hold a get together this month to discuss the Matarangi Summer Festival and a promotional sign for local businesses. If you could supply details for the sign we will then know what size and costings.

All welcome

Phone Simone 027 657 2980 for more information

Venue: Matarangi Liquor Store
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Time: 6pm

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