



NP Positive Ageing, Newsletter - Taupaenui NOVEMBER 2025... Issue 129

Kia ora, Talofa lava, Kia orana, Malo e lelei, Fakalofa lahi atu, Talohani, Bula vinaka, Ni Hao, Namaste, Greetings...

NPDC Elections - the carnival is over...

**Message...
from
Lance
Girling-
Butcher**



There is an old warning about 'being careful of what you wish for because you may get more than you bargain for' that has a ring of authority when looking at the results of the New Plymouth local body elections.

Fired up by emotive words from ill-informed central government politicians, the few who bothered to vote, 46per cent, in New Plymouth, have returned a council that is heavy on those wanting to cap rates and other budgets.

While there's nothing wrong in trying to keep rates down and look after those on fixed incomes, there is a happy medium. The result ignores a most disturbing nationwide trend that has more to do with the inadequacies of rates as a means of funding local authorities rather than preserving the things that make this district such a vibrant and welcoming one.

Rather than criticising the efforts of local government politicians to do the best they can with the resources they have, central government would be far better considering a rates

review that puts these operations on a more equitable footing. Local bodies have long complained to the government still charging GST on rates. It's a tax on a tax and totally unfair and unjust.

Past entrepreneurs have left the district with a rich heritage and it would be sad if this has to suffer because central government cannot find a better way of helping local government to meet it's inflationary costs.

Besides this, there is also a good argument for local government to get a share of the GST and general tax generated from spending that they have played a role in encouraging.

This year New Plymouth got off to an amazing start with large crowds drawn to the Festival of Lights, WOMAD and Te Matatini. It would've been a

considerable benefit to the council to have got a share of the GST this generated in the business community with figures running into the hundreds of thousands.

Now we have a council comprised of people with a no-frills campaign designed to cut council spending back to basics and talking about undoing projects that have already been completed and capping rates at levels will below the 10% mark.

This totally ignores the fact that Councils going back 100 years have fought desperately to keep rate increases within bounds and gone through budgets line by line in an effort to be fair to citizens. This is not intended as criticism of new Mayor Max Brough and his rates reforming team, but just

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A Newsletter for those interested in improving the quality of life for all persons in Taranaki

Please note: The views/opinions expressed in this newsletter may not necessarily reflect those of Positive Ageing



Taranaki Kowhaiwhai panel - The Hammerhead shark, Mangopare - 'keep positive, see it through'

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to indicate there is a high risk that in keeping such taxes down we damage the very thing that makes this place so special.

Brough and co fought a fair campaign and won a fair fight with resounding success. This gives them a mandate to do all they can to achieve greater economies. It is just they may find that the regulations that govern such efforts will frustrate some of their ambitions as they have with similar campaigns in the past.

Many will remember Len Howers who also stormed onto the Council, full of indignation at rates increases but only lasted a few months before apparent frustrations trying to work with the local body legislations that delay decisions and cause long periods for consultation caused him to resign.

Recent problems over GST in the past term have been a timely reminder of what happens when budget cuts go too deep and valuable staff are lost and important issues muddled.

Already we have seen two effective and outstanding councilors from the last turn lost in the confusion of voter over-reaction. Amanda Clinton-Gohdes and Bryan Vickery will be missed from round the debating table for their many obvious skills and abilities.

Only time will see how this all pans out, and we can only wish Brough and his team all the best. Just be careful with our wonderful district.

Lance Girling— Butcher.

***Together, we can,
and do,
make a difference.***

Local Council elections loomed...

The results are in, councilors have been sworn in, the first 100 days have been planned by the Mayor and we, the rate payers, will be keen to see how it will all work out.

Clearly, rising rates were a major issue as were those 'tim tam' cycle ways. Some one had to pay! Some would-be councilors were both creative and strategic in their campaigns and results showed their efforts paid off.

NP Positive Ageing, Grey Power and Age Concern Taranaki were pleased that they had the interests of ensuring candidates who had previously not had experience on council had the opportunity of being seen and heard.

It was disheartening for candidates to face so much vitriol in the social media and even an open thinly veiled death threat against one candidate. One threat was made at a election forum at a local church—for goodness sake.

I congratulate those candidates, particularly women, who stood knowing the levels of cowardly agro they are likely to receive from anonymous sources on line. It is a sad commentary on where society is heading with this issue.

It is all so easy to criticize anonymously those that are offering their skills, expertise and enthusiasm for what can, at times, be a rather thankless task.

Opinion—Gordon Hudson



**I get enough
exercise just
pushing my
luck.**



Bizwaremagic's Funny Quotes

**And that's a wrap on another
day where I acted like I knew
what I was doing....**



Taranaki Kowhaiwhai panel - The Hammerhead shark, Mangopare - 'keep positive, see it through'

So much to do...so much to see... and much of it free...

As Lance Girling-Butcher has alluded to in his column in this newsletter—there simply is a feast of art, craft, culture available throughout November.



31 October—9 November

With over 60 artists throughout Taranaki, displaying their creative talents in this year's 12th anniversary—this event just gets better and better.

Extremely well organized and promoted this is a time to get inspiration by someone else's creativity. Brochures are everywhere—eg at Gover Street Gallery, Govett Brewster, NPDC - so many shops and business.

Centuria Garden Festival...

In it's 38th year with an impressive 44 wonderful gardens with 30 or more 'special' events. This year they are collaborating with the NP Floral Art Club celebrating 70 years.



This fascinating sector just keeps on growing. The Fringe Garden Festival offers prime examples of innovative sustainable gardens.

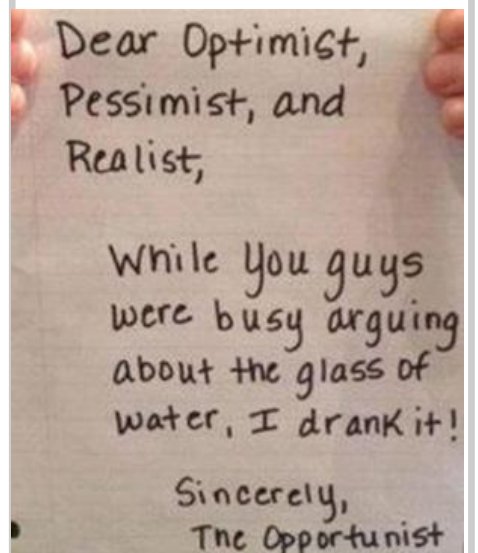
There are opportunities to purchase plants, get practical advice, enjoy the wide spectrum of gardens arts and crafts, hospitality and all for just \$2 a person, payable at each garden gate.



3 October—8 November

A marvelous array of events celebrating and protecting our heritage.

Like elsewhere, this programme offers more opportunities with much to suit the most discerning. Most events are at no cost but it does pay to register to ensure you can be accommodated.



**ITS FUNNY
HOW NOBODY
NOTICES
WHAT YOU DO
UNTIL YOU
DON'T DO IT.**

Some hints on public speaking...thanks Wally...

Public speakers should be light, tight, bright and right.

We stand up to be seen, speak up to be heard and shut up to be appreciated.

He speaker asked the MC if he had put enough fire into his speech. "Better if you had put more speech into the fire" he replied.

Strapping lads...

Perhaps it's time we sued the Ministry of Education.

All the men of my generation who were thrashed on a regular basis by those entrusted with our education, teachers armed with leather straps and bamboo canes, should try for compensation.

Between the ages of six and 16, thick leather straps were slashed across our outstretched hands or bamboo canes thwacked around our nether regions.

Girls and women teachers were largely exempt from these beatings though the harshest beltings were often meted out by male teachers who'd been asked to carry them out by a female colleague.

Soft covered text books, particularly the school atlas, could be slid down the back of your shorts to cushion the blow and gave a resounding "whop" when they came in contact with the cane. I'm sure that many of the teachers doing the caning knew about the books, but their hearts were no more in the painful process than those of my schoolmates and me.

Six strokes of the cane were known as "six of the best" and if you were stoic enough to endure them without shedding tears, you would swagger back into the classroom and hold up six fingers to your admiring classmates. Blokes smirked and girls swooned (in your head...).

But spending the rest of the day sitting on a hard classroom chair with a backside scored by smarting weals from a caning is no fun at all.

The toughest among us would be back out running around the playgrounds at breaktime and smirking in the direction of the teachers staff room.

Although the beatings were carried out by male teachers, I don't recall any of my schoolmates developing a pathological hatred of



men or teachers....or, for that matter, the girls who tittered when you were banished to the staff room to await punishment.

There was no judge or jury – summary beatings were carried out by teachers for whatever misdemeanours they considered deserved them – in many cases, just a deep seated envy (pardon the pun) of our youthfulness.

Nobody seemed to suffer ongoing hardship and psychological scarring or lived lives of alcoholism or crime.

And I wonder what happened to all the straps and canes after corporal punishment was banned from New Zealand schools in 1990? Perhaps they were incinerated in one glorious bonfire surrounded by grim faced teachers convinced that mayhem would ensue in the classrooms without them.

Many of the teachers were, themselves, survivors of the English school system that our own education was modelled on...so perhaps making boys bend over brought back happy memories for them.

Scant sympathy could be expected on the home front. Many of my schoolmates expected to

get a good hiding when they got home for being in trouble at school and my own mother would say :” what have you done now?” in an exasperated manner.

The prospect of getting a good caning taught me to talk my way out of trouble – though it didn't stop me from playing the fool. That's stuck with me for life.

Thousands of boys must have suffered pain and humiliation at the hands of psychopathic teachers. Often our teachers hadn't long returned from WW2, and were inured to brutality.

Still, maybe it's time we took out a class action suit against the educational establishment – after all, if it wasn't for all those canings, we could have become orthopaedic surgeons or supreme court judges.

Thank you Lyndsay Wright.

**Does anyone
know if we can
take showers yet
or should we just
keep washing
our hands ??**

Activities in November...



AQUA WALKING: Tuesday: 4, 11, 18 and 25: 10-11am - It's amazing! Great for improving stability and fitness. Held at the Methanex Pool, Bell Block. Cost \$4. Please register with Pauline (06 759 9196) **prior** to entering the class.

WARM UP WEDNESDAY: 12 and 26: held at 33 Liardet Street, NP. 9.30-11.30am. "Warm up" with us and enjoy great music and some tasty hot soup and toast. Gold coin donation.

DROP IN CAFÉ / SOCIAL MORNING: Thursdays, 6, 13, 20, and 27: 9.30-11.30am. Held at Age Concern premises, 33 Liardet St. Socialise, connect and make friends. Varied programmes.

OUTING in SEPTEMBER: Wednesday 19: Check this out with Pauline...

MENS GROUP: Monday 24: meeting at 33 Liardet Street at 10.00am—12pm. Mens group—details to follow.

INGLEWOOD Social Afternoon: Thursday 13 and 27: 1.30—3.30pm Held at Lifegate Centre, 6 Mamaku St., Inglewood. 'Connect' and enjoy a lovely afternoon tea.

COASTAL CONNECTIONS OKATO Tuesday 4: 1 - 3pm at the Hempton Hall Supper Room. Lovely food, great company, excellent guest speaker.

WHAT'S ON IN WAITARA: FRIDAY 7, 14, 21 and 28: Singing and fun and afternoon tea. 1 - 3.30pm, Senior Citizen's hall. 3 Warre Street, Waitara.

Contact: Pauline Julian
Age-Connect Service Coordinator
06 759 9196 or 0800 652 105
pauline@ageconcerntaranaki.org.nz
Office Hours:
9.30-1.30pm Monday to Friday.



We must accept finite disappointment, but never lose infinite hope.

- Martin Luther King Jr.

Love your hips...

Are you at risk?

Unless you've injured yourself in a fall, avoiding a fall is probably the last thing on your mind.

Falling over shouldn't be considered part of the normal ageing process, but we need to be realistic. As we grow older, underlying conditions or problems, with balance, strength or mobility do increase our risk of falling.

Each year, one in three people aged 65 and over will fall. For people aged 80 and over, the risk increases to one in two. That said, many falls are preventable.

One of the ways everyday New Zealanders are reducing their falls risks is by attending exercise classes especially designed for them.

Community group strength and balance classes will support participants to improve their strength and balance and help them live stronger for longer.

Strength and Balance classes...

Participants not only benefit physically, but socially as well.

For further information please see www.livestronger.org.nz or contact Hilary Blackstock via email...hilary.blackstock@sporttaranaki.org.nz

THE good CAFE

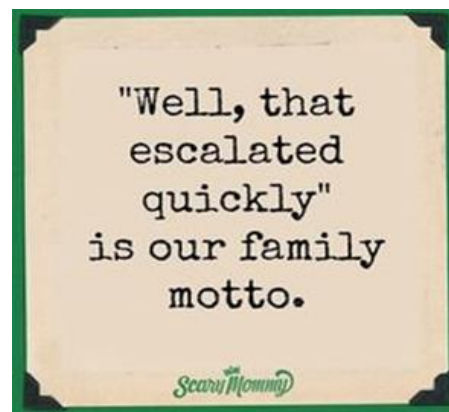
The Good Café is where you can enjoy a delicious breakfast served by loving volunteers, and do a good deed by donating generously for your breakfast.

Based at St Mary's Church's Vicarage, the atmosphere is welcoming, warm and busy where people from all walks of life enjoy great food while supporting local, national and international humanitarian causes.

The Good Café appreciates that some people are unable to donate. This is fine. You are welcome to enjoy breakfast.

Tuesday mornings

7.30 - 10.00 am
(Last orders at 9.45am)



Taranaki Kowhaiwhai panel - The Hammerhead shark, Mangopare - 'keep positive, see it through'

Somewhere along the way, democracy in Aotearoa New Zealand began to look less like representation and more like management. Governments keep telling us we have a voice, but every few years the same pattern repeats. Decisions are made without us, consultation is rushed or symbolic, and outcomes are already decided before the people have had their say.

The question we should be asking is simple. Do the mechanisms of democracy still protect us, or have they become a shell of what they were meant to be?

Aotearoa New Zealand's democracy was never meant to exist in isolation. It was built upon He Whakaputanga o te Rangatiratanga o Nu Tireni (1835) and Te Tiriti o Waitangi (1840). These are not symbolic gestures of goodwill. They are binding constitutional agreements that define how power and authority are shared.

Te Tiriti and He Whakaputanga established that Māori and the Crown would coexist as partners, each holding their own spheres of authority and responsibility. They were intended as the living framework of governance for this land, not as tools to be adjusted for political convenience.

When governments reinterpret or ignore these foundational documents, they undermine the integrity of both our democracy and our shared future.

Democracy should mean shared power, transparent process, and leadership that listens. It should be built on equality, fairness, and integrity. It should serve the people, not political donors, lobbyists, or ideological interests.

Yet what we see now is policy written in backrooms, accountability blurred by political spin, and leadership shaped more by power than by principle.

Parliament and Select Committees should test laws through public input, but major bills are often rushed through under urgency with minimal scrutiny.

The Official Information Act was meant to ensure transparency, but it has become slow, redacted, and inaccessible. Public consultations are run, but decisions rarely reflect submissions. People engage, yet the direction never changes. The public service, once neutral and stable, is being stripped of independence and memory through constant restructuring.

Media, once the watchdog of democracy, now struggles under financial strain and political pressure, leaving fewer voices able to challenge power.



Te Tiriti and He Whakaputanga are treated as optional, when in truth they are the constitutional foundations that give this nation legitimacy.

Integrity means holding the line when it would be easier to look away. It means honouring the agreements that gave this country its identity. It means not selling access, not rewriting truth, and not treating the people as obstacles to be managed.

When government uses democratic process as performance rather than substance, it weakens the very concept of representation. When it dis-

honours Te Tiriti, it weakens the foundation of Aotearoa New Zealand itself.

We need stronger systems that protect the promises already made.

We need laws that cannot be quietly reversed when power changes hands.

We need civic education that reminds people that democracy belongs to the people, not to the government.

We need constitutional safeguards that protect Te Tiriti o Waitangi, He Whakaputanga, and the democratic rights of all who call this land home.

Aotearoa deserves a system where participation matters, where decisions are made in daylight, and where governments cannot rewrite history once the people have spoken.

Because if the mechanisms of democracy no longer serve the people, and if Te Tiriti and He Whakaputanga are not honoured, then what we have is not democracy at all.

It is control dressed as choice, disguised as freedoms.



November is Melanoma Awareness Month

New Zealand has one of the highest incidence rates in the world, with approximately 35 to 40 people per 100,000 diagnosed with melanoma each year. It is estimated that four out of five skin cancer-related deaths in New Zealand are caused by melanoma.

That's why regular skin checks aren't just a good idea, they're essential.



Chair's message... It's crackers!

Well once again we are looking down the barrel of another Guy Fawkes night on November the 5th.



Why on earth we here in New Zealand, recognise the attempts of a provincial English catholic rebel along with his mates to blow up Westminster Palace and the Houses of Parliament in London on that day in 1605, beats me.

At the end of the day the gunpowder plot was a miserable failure and the man himself was hanged at the tender age of 35 not three months later.

The justice system obviously didn't take on too many appeals back in the 17th century, somewhat unlike today. The world is a different place 420 years later, and this stupid celebration should have no place in any way, shape, manner or form here in New Zealand.

There are costs to our communities up and down the country with many people having to deal with unnecessary harm to their livestock or pets, let alone injuries to people.

Apparently there have been 4000 injuries over the past decade costing ACC \$3.3 million. Every year a quarter of ACC claims from fireworks injuries are for children under the age of ten.

That makes for sobering reading, when the vast majority of the injuries to the kids are so easily avoidable by eliminating private sales. That's just what is reported, and there will be plenty more, that are never notified therefore don't get measured.

Don't even get me started on the financial costs, when there is a genuine cost of living crisis, and to see some people quite literally seeing their money go up in smoke, it seems to me, that something is seriously wrong with some people's thinking and/or logic. I haven't even mentioned the associated random fires, that come about because of out of control fireworks that FENZ have to try and deal with.

Wally Garrett – Chair, NP Positive Ageing Trust.

Positive Ageing NP

Your 2025/26 committee is:

Co Patrons - Peter Tennent and John Major

Chair - Wally Garrett

Deputy Chair - Richard Andersen,

Secretary - Stephanie Hansen

Committee - Michel Archer, Brian Eriksen, Lance Girling-Butcher, Gordon Hudson, Kate Knuckey, Margaret McCall, Callum Williamson

Newsletter - Gordon Hudson.

www.positiveageingtrust.org.nz

NP Positive Ageing is proud to be supported by:

COGS: Community Organisations Grants Scheme,

Ministry of Social Development,

New Plymouth District Council,

Pub Charities—New Plymouth

We are most grateful for their ongoing support.



A trust of older adults interested in improving the lives of other older adults by providing information, educational opportunities and providing advocacy when and where needed.



Taranaki Kowhaiwhai panel - The Hammerhead shark, Mangopare - 'keep positive, see it through'