

“HUGE WEEKEND” FOR AQUATIC CENTRE

Whakatāne District Aquatic Centre staff had a “huge weekend” in mid-July looking after the more than 2,000 people who took part in the festivities celebrating the Centre’s new status as a Council-run enterprise.

Manager Community Facilities, Paula Chapman, says a “normal weekend” would have seen between 300 and 500 people using the centre’s pools, hydroslide and fitness centre facilities.

“There were many people who contributed to the open weekend’s success, from the families who came and enjoyed quality time together, to the staff who spent both days having fun and keeping everyone safe.”

The water walker inflatable orbs brought in as a feature of the Saturday activity programme were a major hit, with young and old alike keen to test their balance and speed in a series of time trials. For non-swimmers, the face painting, bouncy castle and inflatable jousting activities were extremely popular. In the sheer fun-per-second stakes, the shrieks of excitement emanating from the hydroslide testified to its perennial appeal.

Mayor and Mayoress Tony and Linda Bonne and Deputy Mayor Judy Turner



were popular guests, as was Councillor Gerard Van Beek – all participating in the festivities.

Sunday’s free Aquacise sessions and Learn to Swim assessments were also well-supported, and despite the bad weather, more than 700 people visited the Aquatic Centre during the day, highlighting its attraction as a rainy-day destination for families.

General Manager Community and Economic Development, Julian Reweti, says the response to the open weekend

exceeded all expectations. “It’s fantastic to have received such great community support. We have big plans for the Aquatic Centre and look forward to welcoming people back to their community pool and gym on a much more regular basis in the future.”

He says the fitness centre operations in particular will be under close scrutiny during the next few months, with a view to developing a range of flexible membership plans.

FAMILY FESTIVAL FOR MURUPARA

Murupara residents will be in for a treat in October with a night of magic and storytelling at an outdoor festival.

Festival organiser and head teacher at Karamuramu Kindergarten, Carol Magee, says the family-focused event will have entertainment for everyone with interactive myths and legends, visual arts, performances and music.

“We will be working with community artists the Travelling Tuataras to put the festival together,” Mrs Magee says. “Workshops will be held prior to the event, so the festival will also celebrate the artistic creations from these interactive sessions.”

The festival has received funding assistance from the Murupara Community Board and Creative New Zealand.

MAKE A SPLASH WITH THE STEAMERS

The Bay of Plenty Steamers, who roll into town to take on Hawkes Bay in a pre-season warm-up match on Wednesday 8 August, will be engaging in a range of activities with the Whakatāne community this week.

The off-field activities will include school visits, an Olympic lunch with the Eastern Bay Chamber of Commerce and ‘The Splash’ at the Whakatāne Aquatic Centre.

The Olympic lunch will be held before the match at the Whakatāne Sportfishing Club and will see guest speakers discussing their favourite Olympic moments. Speakers include MC John Twaddle; Steamers Coach John Schuster; and Steamers CEO Mike Rogers.

The Steamers take on Hawkes Bay at Rugby Park at 2.00pm on Wednesday. School children are encouraged to go along and support the Steamers, with free entry offered to students in school uniform.

Following the game, the community is invited to meet and interact with the Steamers for ‘The Splash’ - a fun water polo match at 4.00pm. Anyone keen to join in only has to pay their entry to the pool and be ready to play.

COMMUNITY ASSET RETAINED

The Taneatua Community Board is delighted that an area of local purpose reserve land on Amokura Road is to be retained for community use.

The Council-owned land had been identified as a potential sale prospect and notice of the intention to have its reserve status revoked was given to the community in May. Part of the half-hectare property is leased by the Taneatua Kohanga Reo and the balance has been used as a “green space” since the reserve was vested in the Council as part of a subdivision process in 1980.

Both the Community Board and the Kohanga Reo made submissions asking that the revocation plan be dropped,

and at last month’s Projects and Services Committee meeting, Councillors accepted those submissions and directed that the property be removed from the District’s land divestment schedule.

“We were absolutely thrilled with that outcome,” says Taneatua Community Board Chairman, Diane Yalden. “The reserve is well-used by the children of the neighbourhood and it’s great that it will be retained as a green space asset for the whole community.”

Mrs Yalden and Community Board Deputy Chairman Luke Ruiterman presented the Board’s submission and both felt that it was a very fair process. “This shows that the Board can be a strong voice



Taneatua Community Board Chair Diane Yalden (front), with Board members (from left) Luke Ruiterman, Geoff Chater, Councillor Andrew Iles and Monty Kora.

for Taneatua and make a constructive contribution to decisions affecting our community.”

She adds that when a proposed subdivision behind the reserve goes ahead, the area will make an ideal children’s playground.

COUNCILLOR PROFILE - POUROTO NGAROPO



Galatea-Murupara Ward representative Councillor Pouroto Ngaropo has an extremely busy schedule, permanently. He is the Deputy Chairman of Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Awa and Senior Cultural Advisor for the Bay of Plenty District Health Board, serves on numerous Māori land trusts, has been a member of the Whakatāne District Council Iwi Liaison Committee and Whakatāne Museum Board for some 15 years and continues to serve the Council and the wider community as a cultural consultant on Te Reo Māori and Ngāti Awa traditions and protocols.

On top of those responsibilities, he finds the time to attend Murupara Community Board meetings and as many as possible of the Marae

committee meetings in his extensive ward, embracing Waiohau, Galatea, Murupara, Te Whaiti, Minginui and Ruatāhuna.

“I come from a farming community background and my great grandmother was of Ngāti Manawa and Ngāi Moewhare descent, so I have a strong affiliation with the area,” Pouroto says. “It’s a huge ward, and it’s been a real privilege to come to know its people and represent the issues that face them at the Council table.

“I stood for Council because I believe it is important to build relationships between Māori and Pākehā. We need to have a more unified District and I’m committed to helping make that a reality.”