

Temple owners counting the days



The interior of The Temple is undergoing a facelift

Paul Mountfort and Mehrdad Hojabri can't wait to see members of The Temple.

It's coming up four months since floodwaters destroyed the gymnasium housed in the heart of Edgecumbe – Riverslea Mall.

"We just want to get back and we're really excited that it's not too far away," Paul says. "It's been a case of 'not knowing what you've got until it's gone', but soon it will be back."

"Our new equipment is in the country, that's something positive, and the gym is receiving a facelift from top to bottom, which is positive too."

Paul and Mehrdad have missed everybody associated with The Temple and can't wait to see them all again.

Insurance information drop-in session

THIS SATURDAY
(29 July) 1 – 4pm

**Te Tari Āwhina Community Hub
at Edgecumbe Library**

INSURANCE PROVIDERS ATTENDING:

Tower • FMG • IAG (and associated brands AMI and State)

ALSO AVAILABLE:

• EQC • Whakatāne District Council Building Control (for enquiries about the building consent process.)

The Recovery Office has coordinated the drop-in session to address a need identified by the Community Focus Group (which did such a great job with the Expo in June). If you have questions for any of the providers listed above, then come along to Te Tari Āwhina between 1 and 4pm.

Please note: All insurance providers were invited to the Drop-in Session. Only IAG, Tower, and FMG will be at Te Tari Āwhina. If you have an insurance question about a claim lodged with another company, please contact your claims manager directly.

The Insurance Council of New Zealand website has information about resolving complaints, including how to contact the Insurance and Financial Services Ombudsman. [W www.icnz.org.nz](http://www.icnz.org.nz) P 04 472 5230 E icnz@icnz.org.nz

College Road stopbank rebuild

Work continues on plans for the rebuild of the section of College Road stopbank that breached in April. While initial geotechnical investigations have been carried out, further investigation and planning work awaits Bay of Plenty Regional Council gaining ownership of the surrounding land.

Bay of Plenty Regional Council continues to work with individual property owners to purchase all or parts of a number of sections near the breach site.

Once BOPRC has a full understanding of the engineering work that will need to be done for the rebuild, it will report back to the community to discuss plans and options for the site. We'll keep you up to date with progress.

Storm repairs across the region

Bay of Plenty Regional Council continues to assess flood damage and prioritise repair works across the region. Assessment involves site visits and also extensive use of drones to photograph hard to reach places.

That process has identified more than 500 sites across the flood protection schemes (covering more than 250km of riverbank, stopbank and other flood protection assets). While emergency repairs are ongoing, other jobs are being pulled into a restoration plan to provide a good picture of the damage, establish costs, and prioritise works.

Given the amount of rain in most areas of the catchments, it is proving difficult to get a window for construction and many works will have to wait until ground conditions improve to allow machinery to work at the sites.

Mayoral Relief Fund update

Close to 100 applications to the Whakatāne District Mayoral Relief Fund have been approved, with just over \$87,000 being distributed from a current donation total of almost \$170,000. Flood-affected residents across the district are eligible to apply and application forms are available at Te Tari Āwhina Community Hub (at the Edgecumbe Library), the Horizon Energy Whakatāne Library, Murupara Library, Kawerau i-SITE; and on the Whakatāne District Council website (whakatane.govt.nz). The next allocation meeting is scheduled for 10 August.



Hard graft for Edgecumbe Rugby

With 90 percent of the side affected by April's flood, Edgecumbe's rugby team has had to graft harder than most of their Baywide Division 2 opponents, but the extra work paid dividends.

"The flood happened right in the middle of the season and I honestly thought we'd lose a few of the displaced boys because of the extra travel they would have to commit to," says Coach Parekura Hale.

But distance did not deter the players, who went on to secure a spot in their division final played against Murupara on Saturday; Murupara emerging victorious, scoring 30 points to Edgecumbe's 5.

So happy to be home

Melinda and Karl are over the moon to be back in their Edgecumbe home and are quick to acknowledge that they couldn't have done it without the help of friends, coupled with excellent service provided by local contractors, tradies and suppliers.

"I do know we are one of the lucky ones," Melinda says. "Karl is a builder and took time off to do the bulk of the rebuild, but in saying that, we have gone hard from the moment we were able to."

She says it was important to not only get home for their son Daniel, but also to show him they were doing all they could to recover. The only halt in work was the time it took for a safety clearance for asbestos.



"Our friends have been awesome. They took over doing some of the stuff I found hard – like cleaning personal items and even getting rid of things that were beyond saving. I have to say a huge thanks to all of them for their help."

Daniel is more than happy to be back in his family home

More time for Rangitāiki River Scheme Review

The Rangitāiki River Scheme Review panel has requested more time to process and interpret a large quantity of information before finalising the review report.

The independent Review team, led by Sir Michael Cullen, is looking into the infrastructure and the circumstances that led to the breach of the flood wall and associated flooding through Edgecumbe on 6 April. Bay of Plenty Regional Council commissioned the Review in the days after the event, asking for the report to be completed by the end of July.

Regional Council Chair, Doug Leeder, says that in light of the volume of technical information that the Review panel is processing, it has asked for additional time to ensure a considered and thorough response, which means that it may be a few more weeks before the review is completed.

Sir Michael says that the Review has made good progress and thanks everyone who provided information and input.

Huge thanks to Holiday Programme supporters

July's action-packed school holiday programme went down a treat, with Edgecumbe young ones and parents praising the efforts of organisers. The Bluelight camp saw up to 20 students visit Rotorua and Taupo to enjoy a movie, fun in the snow and laser tag, and thanks go out to Bluelight Edgecumbe and Richard Hamer, as well as Wayne Lawrence, Robyn Emms and Nen Tulloch, for helping make it happen. Richard Hamer says the camp was for Edgecumbe teens, including those who attend Whakatāne High School or Trident High School, and the feedback on the event has been overwhelmingly good. The Edgecumbe Bluelight programme held at the Edgecumbe War Memorial Hall was also popular, with between 40 to 50 children attending each day; huge thanks to supervisors Jamie Woods and Sharon Roberts and organisations Te Puna Ora o Mataatua, Sport BOP, Whakatāne Library staff and Eastbay REAP - their support made the programme a true success.

Safety first in staying warm

With more cold weather on the way, it's worth bearing in mind the wisdom of Jon Rewi of Fire and Emergency New Zealand. Please keep all heating sources a metre away from clothes, furniture, children and pets – a screen guard is a good idea – and be sure to only use appropriate means of heating your home: BBQs are for outdoor use only, so should never be used in an enclosed space, and when using a portable LPG heater, it's important to test for leaks and to keep a window open for ventilation. Stay warm, but be sure to stay safe!

