



## New RST Support Worker

After 15 years of farming in Northland, and seeing 11 floods in that time, Ben Smith is more than familiar with the difficulties local farmers are currently facing. He also has something of a personal connection to Edgecumbe farmers. "In 2014, we had a major flood and things were looking pretty grim, but a load of silage arrived as a gift from the farmers of Edgecumbe and I've always wanted to be able pay that back. And so here I am!"

Ben is working as part of the Rural Support Trust and can assist with everything from milking, calving, feeding and machinery work – get in touch with Jodie on (07) 306 2026 to find out more.

## Funding Updates

### Business

Twelve applications to the MBIE Whakatāne District Business Recovery Fund have been approved, with \$124,000 allocated. The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment has provided a \$200,000 grant to assist Whakatāne District businesses, which have suffered sustained disruption as a result of flooding and storm-related events, to get 'up and running' again.

The fund will not operate after 30 September; details and application forms at [www.whakatane.govt.nz/recovery-project](http://www.whakatane.govt.nz/recovery-project)

### Whakatāne District Mayoral Relief Fund

Ninety-three applicants have received payments from the Whakatāne District Mayoral Relief Fund. The distribution to date is \$106,000 from a total of \$170,000. 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.

### Lottery Recovery Fund

Following the April flood event, the Lottery Grants Board established a special \$1 million fund (The Rangitāiki River Stopbank Breach Recovery Fund) to assist organisations helping to improve the wellbeing of people living in Edgecumbe and the surrounding area. To date, this fund has helped: Whakatāne District Council employ Navigators to support individuals and whānau affected in Edgecumbe; Pou Whakaaro to operate its donated goods and storage facility; the BOP Acacia Charitable Trust to digitise photographs belonging to affected residents; and groups as diverse as the Edgecumbe Playcentre, Patutaatahi Kohanga Reo, Victim Support and Growing through Grief.

The special fund will remain open until all the grant has been allocated. If you think your organisation may be eligible, see the Department of Internal Affairs website.



## I'm (we're) still standing

Zumba instructor Erika Neuhauser wants the world to know that the people of Edgecumbe are still standing.

While she's still working out the details, Erika is hoping to lead a Zumba routine to Elton John's 1983 hit 'I'm Still Standing' on the bank of the Rangitāiki River.

"I want to show everyone that, in spite of historic earthquakes and recent floods, we are a resilient bunch and we will come back stronger."

She plans to choreograph a routine, post it online in the hope people will learn the moves, before organising a mass Zumba gathering on the riverbank, which could be filmed.

"Fingers crossed, it will go viral and everyone will see we're still standing."

## Free Wi-Fi Edgecumbe-wide



The Whakatāne District Council-led Recovery Office is working with internet service provider, Evolution Networks to provide free Wi-Fi to Edgecumbe and its surrounds for the next 12 months.

District Recovery Manager Julie Gardyne says the initiative will provide Wi-Fi hotspots that will effectively ‘enliven’ the town. “We’re covering the costs of the long-term infrastructure and free Wi-Fi for 12 months. The Wi-Fi access will be a great asset across the recovery effort, helping our Navigators and other agencies working in the community; businesses as they get back up and running; and families returning home. We’d like to acknowledge the support of Fonterra for this initiative, allowing us access to their buildings to mount equipment.”

We’ll keep you posted on progress via the Recovery Newsletter and Facebook page.



## Peter Kenyon

If you want to have a say in the future of Edgecumbe – mark Saturday, 2 September in your diary.

No stranger to the Whakatāne District, internationally-renowned community development expert Peter Kenyon will be facilitating a workshop from 3 – 6pm

at the Edgecumbe War Memorial Hall on 2 September. Mr Kenyon is Director of the Bank of I.D.E.A.S, which has worked with over 1,600 communities in more than 55 countries, including Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and Canada. He is known for inspiring fresh and creative ways to stimulate community and economic renewal and is an advocate of developing communities from the inside out; and of community members investing themselves, their ideas, assets and resources in the process.

The workshop is open to all interested parties and will provide opportunities for people to share and discuss ideas for the future of Edgecumbe and the Rangitāiki Plains area. The information gathered will feed into the Edgecumbe Community Plan.



## Welcome to the EDGE Zone

Bay of Plenty Rugby has continued its commitment to supporting flood-affected Eastern Bay fans by supplying free tickets to the first three Steamers’ Mitre 10 Cup home fixtures held at Rotorua International Stadium.

After the April event, the Bay of Plenty Rugby Union pledged the help of its supporters to assist with the Edgecumbe appeal. The Chiefs franchise, along with a number of local rugby clubs, schools, kindergartens and families, contributed an abundance of food, rugby balls and clothing to affected Eastern Bay communities.

“When our high performance players delivered the goods, the volunteers and recipients were extremely grateful. The group had created a buzz among those affected, with Steamers flags being proudly waved and Steamers rugby balls being passed around. We could see some proud Bay of Plenty supporters, even though they were in the midst of so much devastation,” says BOPRU CEO Mike Rogers.

**The Whakatāne District Recovery Office is assisting with ticket distribution. Tickets are available today (9am – 4pm) and tomorrow (9am – 1pm) at Te Tari Āwhina – Edgecumbe Library. On Monday 21 August, tickets will be available (11am – 2.00pm) in the Whakatāne District Council foyer. Please refer to the Recovery Facebook Page for ongoing distribution information.**

**Tickets are available on a first-in, first-served basis for those in red or yellow flood-affected properties and people will need to bring proof of address to collect their tickets.**

**250 tickets are available for each of the following Bay of Plenty Steamers Fixtures at Rotorua International Stadium:**

- Friday 25 August v Hawke’s Bay, 5.45pm
- Thursday 31 August v Wellington, 7.35pm
- Wednesday 20 September v Southland, 7.35pm

## Te Tari Āwhina update

Rhonda Van Tilburg joins the Recovery Team from Monday as Coordinator at Te Tari Āwhina – Community Hub at Edgecumbe Library.

Also this coming week, the portacabin outside Te Tari Āwhina will be removed, as the health and wellbeing support provided by NASH transfers to the Recovery Navigator Services.

The Navigator Service provides personalised assistance to help flood-affected people to access a range of services, information and resources to meet the challenges of getting back on their feet.

The Navigators will be at the Hub from 10am to noon, Tuesday to Fridays – or you can contact them by calling Whakatāne District Council on 306 0500 and asking for Navigators; or email [navigatorservices@whakatane.govt.nz](mailto:navigatorservices@whakatane.govt.nz)