

Berry Orchard to feature on TV



LEFT: Mike and Angela Roy are excited for Piopio Berry Orchard to feature in an upcoming episode of *Country Calendar* on TVNZ 1.

AS ANOTHER berry season comes to an end, we'd like to take a moment to say a heartfelt thank you to our incredible staff, our loyal customers, and the wider Piopio community for your continued support. Every visit to the orchard, every punnet of berries purchased, and every real fruit ice cream enjoyed helped make this season one to remember. We truly couldn't do it without you.

Although the orchard has been closed for a couple of months, there's been plenty happening behind the scenes. Winter is one of our busiest times as we prepare for the season ahead, and we're currently installing additional tunnel houses to increase production and continue improving the orchard. It's all part of our ongoing commitment to growing the best berries we can and ensuring Piopio Berry Orchard continues to evolve season after season.

When we reopen in October, we'll once

again have all your favourites - strawberries, blueberries, raspberries, and blackberries - along with even more apples after they proved so popular during our very first season of apple production. We're excited about what's ahead and are grateful to be able to invest back into the orchard and our local community.

You may have already heard the buzz... we're delighted to share that Piopio Berry Orchard will feature on TVNZ's Hyundai Country Calendar on Sunday, October 18, 2026.

It was a real privilege to welcome the Country Calendar team to the orchard, and we'd like to sincerely thank the crew for the time, care, and professionalism they brought to telling our story. We're incredibly proud to have the opportunity to showcase not only Piopio Berry Orchard, but also our wonderful little corner of New Zealand.

We hope the programme gives viewers around the country a glimpse of what makes our community such a special place.

A special thank you also goes to our amazing staff, who embraced the filming process and helped showcase what makes the orchard what it is today. The programme simply wouldn't have been possible without their hard work and enthusiasm.

We hope you'll tune in to TVNZ 1 at 7pm on Sunday, October 18 to watch our story and see a little behind the scenes of life at the orchard.

Until then, we wish everyone a safe, warm, and enjoyable winter. Thank you again for your continued support, and we look forward to welcoming you back when we reopen in October for another season of fresh berries, real fruit ice creams, and friendly faces.

Mike, Angela, Jessie & Maggie

Beautifying Piopio

IMPORTANT – PLEASE READ

IT MAY NOT be noticeable just yet, but plenty is happening behind the scenes within the Project Piopio team.

One project well underway is creating a new website; necessary as the existing one is very dated, causing a few issues. The new website is planned to be 'live' at the beginning of November. We are naturally keen to have all the information displayed as accurately as possible. The current information in the Birdtalk is being used, so we urge everyone to read this issue carefully and advise us of any updates – very important for community organisations.

If you have listings, (e.g. accommodation) on the current website, (www.piopio.net.nz), please also review these. Of course we always welcome new listings.

Contact Jenny 021 141 1243 (welcome to text) or email projectpiopiotrust@gmail.com

That's all from me, but there are other exciting projects happening behind the scenes; Art Project stage 2, and town beautification.

Art Project stage one - being the children's' art competition - was completed last year. Stage two, planning for the replacement of the large framed artwork within the village, is now underway, along with replacing the 'Welcome to Piopio' and Domain signs.

A small team is working on further town beautification. This involves assessing existing plantings in the village and also planning some new features. Do you have an interest in landscaping and would be keen to be involved in designing planting ideas to further enhance Piopio's Main Street? We have funding available but are looking for a few more people to join us with this project.

Contact Nicky 021 429 985, Trudy 027 826 8500 or email projectpiopiotrust@gmail.com; more information in the next issue.



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Lions update

THE CLUB has had a very busy but rewarding time recently. The main source of activity was the Fieldays from which we grossed \$53,000. This was thanks to several local groups helping us, plus help from Lions members and partners.

The club was able to make financial contributions to the groups who assisted us.

In conjunction with Te Kuiti Lions we took the caravan to the Te Kuiti Muster which was another successful and enjoyable day.

The food caravan has also been at the Aria School Orienteering Day which was a fun day. It was great to see so many kids out there enjoying themselves.

We also assisted with the catering at a Fielday held at Rorison's quarry.

This may sound like a lot of hard work - it is - but it is also a lot of fun.

We recently held our Change of Officers at the Panorama along with Te Kuiti Lions with a theme of "P". We had Priests, a Policeman, a Pom, Poker Player, Princess, lots of pink attire and some pink hair. A very enjoyable evening. Steve Cooper is once again our president.
Gavin Todd

Rural Women NZ

Thanks!

Our local branch of Rural Women NZ extends our thanks to the Piopio Lions Club for the opportunity to work in their caravan at the Fieldays. We have done it for several years now. This is our sole fundraising effort for the year which meets all our needs/activity costs. Very much appreciated.



Tony & Paula Buckman
t.buckman@xtra.co.nz



06 752 9713
SH3, MOKAU

FEEDBACK & ARTICLES WELCOME!

Community feedback and articles are welcomed and appreciated. The views published in this publication are not those of the editor but of the contributors. Articles must not be longer than 280 words and may have accompanying photos. We reserve the right to edit any material.

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Piopio Fruit & Veg Stand

WE'RE into winter mode at the Community Stand, with lots of lovely citrus, some kiwifruit and a mix of winter veggies. Our jam makers are also stepping up; it's the time of the year to use last summer's seasonal bounty from the freezer on those rainy days.

You may have heard that I had a wee incident at our Community Stand a few weeks ago. Big rig trucks were blocking access, so I had to hike in with my contributions with help from a local gentleman. People started to take things before I'd taken my photo or put them out properly (too many wedges of pumpkin!). So I found myself flustered when asking a young woman not to take more than one pot of the strawberry jam that I'd made. She wasn't happy when asked to "leave some for others," and expressed herself accordingly, questioning my authority with a choice word not part of my vocabulary. I was shaken. The day's FB post went viral, over 900 comments. People from Timaru to Kaikohe were wading in with a diverse range of opinions on greed, entitlement, blaming me for creating my own

problem by donating jam and giving to others! Social media: the good, the bad and the ugly pretty much. I got tired of moderating and took the post down.

As a result, I've switched gears a bit with my homemade jams for the community, delivering to seniors and others around the village. I'm still managing the stand and contributing fruit, veggies and fresh eggs weekdays. I'll put a random jar or two of jam there as well eventually, my psychological wounds have almost healed. My assistant tells me the world is made up of all sorts. While I know the episode with this woman was a random incident, I don't want to go through another morning like that, especially before my coffee at The Fat Pigeon!

Check out our Facebook page for updates on what's on offer most weekday mornings, recipes and growing tips. Please don't hesitate to contact me with any questions or issues, and many thanks for your continued support—it makes a difference.

Karen Barrett

Karen Barrett

struanfarm@gmail.com

0275 727 407



Have your say: NO to the Supercity, YES to the King Country Council, Te Rohe Potae

A **GRASSROOTS** campaign has recently kicked off to support the "Head Start" application being made by Waitomo and Ōtorohanga Districts to merge and form the King Country Council.

This move is in response to Central Government's directive to councils across New Zealand to propose amalgamations within a three month window or "they will be done for you." The merger of Waitomo and Ōtorohanga has been endorsed unanimously by elected members of both councils. Our rural communities are similar in profile and demographics; we also share the rich history of our iwi, Ngāti Maniapoto.

Councils across the Waikato Region have been left scrambling to determine what might work for their respective communities. A number are pushing for a region-wide "supercity" based in Hamilton.

Our campaign strongly opposes being part of any urban-centric "supercity."

Once proposals are submitted it may be that historic parts of the King Country Te Rohe Pōtae not currently parts of Waitomo and Ōtorohanga Districts may choose to join us. The three month window mandated has not allowed time for such discussions to progress with effective consultation.

Sign our online petition on www.change.org, which can be found here: <https://www.change.org/YestotheKingCountryCouncil>

Look out for our purple signs around the Districts, along with stickers for your fence or vehicle.

For more information contact:

Karen Barrett

struanfarm@gmail.com

Piopio Legends Pathway

We are looking into having a 'Piopio Legends Pathway' in Piopio.

Please forward your nominee's name, so we don't miss anyone.

CRITERIA:

- be from the area that Piopio services
- have lived here for more than 5 years
- may not have represented NZ overseas, but has gained a world record
- includes awards like MBE, authors, artists, explorers.

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WHETHER it is calving on the dairy flats or lambing on the hill country, this stretch of the year asks a lot of farming families. Long hours, broken sleep and the physical demands of the season all take their toll.

While we can't change what this season demands of us, there are a few simple ways to support your body and mind through one of the busiest times in the farming calendar.

Bank Extra Sleep When You Can

Sleep is usually the first thing sacrificed, whether it's a 4am calving round or another lambing beat at dusk. The effects run deeper than simply feeling tired. Even one night of significant sleep loss affects concentration, mood, inflammation and the way our immune system functions.

Research tells us that regularly sleeping five hours or less is linked to poorer long-term health outcomes.

If you get the chance to catch up on sleep, take it. Even one full night's sleep can make a real difference, and on the days that it's not possible, a short 10 to 15 minute nap has been shown to noticeably improve alertness after a broken night.

Support Your Recovery

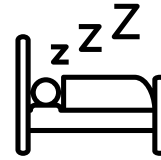
Physical work places greater demands on your body, increasing the need for nutrients involved in energy production, muscle function and recovery. One of these is magnesium.

Magnesium is an essential mineral found naturally in foods such as leafy greens, nuts, seeds and legumes, although dietary surveys suggest many New Zealanders don't meet the recommended intake. Including more of these foods with regular meals and plenty of protein helps your body keep up with the physical demands of the season.

For some people, particularly if muscle cramps, fatigue or poor sleep are becoming ongoing concerns, additional support may also be worthwhile.

Look After Your Mental Wellbeing

One of the less visible effects of a busy spring is the mental load. Broken sleep, physical exhaustion and long days can leave us running on empty, making it harder to think clearly, stay patient and keep challenges in perspective. You may even find yourself catastrophising, where a small setback starts to feel much bigger than it really



Laree Rauputu
Naturopath
Cultivate Health



is. That's a normal effect of fatigue, not a personal weakness.

If you notice yourself or someone around you becoming overwhelmed, don't ignore it. Reaching out early to a partner, friend, neighbour, GP or another trusted health professional can help prevent stress from building into something more significant.

A few extra hours of sleep where you can find them, regular nourishing meals, and recognising when you're simply running on empty won't change what the season asks of you. But they can make a real difference to how you come out the other side.

Remember, you are your farm's most valuable asset.
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Thumbs up to Piopio Domain helpers

THE FIRST HALF of the year has seen a remarkable amount of work undertaken at the Piopio Domain to ensure our local facilities remain pristine, welcoming, and well-maintained for all who use them.

As the hub for our local rugby and equestrian sports, as well as a gathering place for the wider community, it is important that the Domain continues to be presented to a high standard.

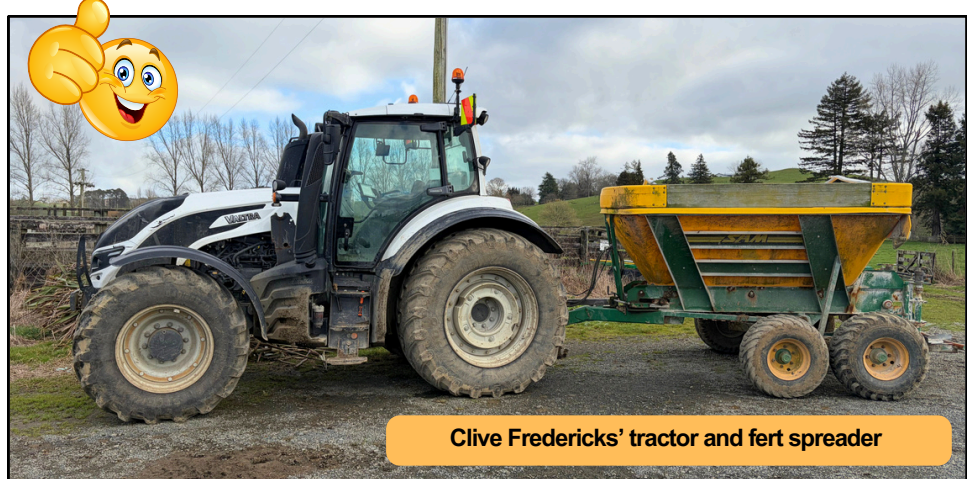
The ongoing upkeep of the grounds is only possible through the generosity and commitment of local people and businesses who willingly contribute their time, resources, and expertise.

On behalf of the Piopio Domain Board, I would like to sincerely acknowledge and thank those who have played a significant role in maintaining and improving our facilities this year...

A special thank you goes to Ravensdown for their generous donation of Super phosphate, and the work that Dani Jeffries did to secure this for us. This has helped enhance the condition and appearance of the grounds.

We are equally grateful to Clive Fredericks, who donated his time and equipment to spread the super.

Our sincere appreciation to Rorisons for donating Lime and Mac's Spreading for their contribution through the spreading of the lime and ensuring the job was



Clive Fredericks' tractor and fert spreader

completed efficiently and professionally.

We would also like to recognise Mark Barrowcliffe's spraying team for spraying the weeds around the Domain, donating their time and the weed spray. This has contributed greatly to the overall presentation of the facility.

A particularly heartfelt thank you goes to Matt Buckley, who is always willing to lend a hand whenever needed. Whether it is repairing fencing, fixing troughs, organising metalling, or tackling the many maintenance jobs that inevitably arise, Matt's dedication and practical support are invaluable to the Domain and the wider community.

We also extend our appreciation to the Waitomo District Council for completing

repairs to the Domain driveway following the significant washouts caused by flooding events.

The Domain is a community asset that benefits everyone, and it is inspiring to see the level of support it continues to receive.

The contributions made by local businesses, contractors, volunteers, and community members demonstrate the strong community spirit that exists within our district.

To all those who have contributed in any way, thank you. Your support helps ensure that the Rukuhia Piopio Domain remains a valuable asset for current and future generations.

Tony Schrafft

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Matariki celebrated at Piopio Primary

PIOPIO Primary School marked Matariki in a truly special way on Thursday, June 25, bringing together tamariki, whānau, staff, and invited guests for a day of learning, connection, and celebration.

In the days leading up to the event, the school was buzzing with preparation. Food was gathered and prepared, wood and stones arrived for the hāngī, and classrooms transformed into creative hubs as students worked on displays and presentations about each of the Matariki stars.

The celebrations began with karakia as the hāngī was lifted. The delicious meal, cooked by Rob Young and Jade Heald, was enjoyed by everyone who

attended. After lunch, whānau were invited to explore the impressive classroom displays, each one highlighting the significance of a different Matariki star. Tamariki proudly shared their learning and the beautiful creations they had made.

To conclude the day, the kapa haka rōpū performed to an appreciative audience, filling the hall with waiata and haka. The whole school then joined together for a final song, closing the celebration with unity and joy.

Piopio Primary School's Matariki event was a meaningful reminder of the importance of coming together, honouring culture, and celebrating new beginnings.



Barbara Kuriger

MP for Taranaki-King Country

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\$50m boost for Awakino Gorge resilience

TARANAKI-KING COUNTRY MP

Barbara Kuriger and New Plymouth MP David Macleod have welcomed a major investment to improve the resilience of State Highway 3 through the Awakino Gorge, a route that is critical to keeping Taranaki connected with Waikato and the central North Island.

The Government has confirmed funding for resilience upgrades along the corridor as part of its \$400 million package of state highway resilience projects announced in Budget 2026.

"Anyone who regularly uses SH3 through the Awakino Gorge knows how important this route is for local communities, freight operators and businesses across the region," Mrs Kuriger says.

"The corridor between Mount Messenger and the SH4 junction has been closed 14 times since July 2021 because of weather-related events. Most recently, the road was closed for more than a month following severe weather earlier this year.

"Every closure causes major disruption for families, businesses and freight operators who rely on this route to move around the region and get goods to market."

The Awakino Gorge resilience programme has a high-level estimated cost of around \$50 million and will target some of the most vulnerable sections of the corridor.

"The aim is simple: keep this road open more often and get it reopened faster when severe weather strikes," Mrs Kuriger says.

Mr Macleod says the impacts of closures are felt well beyond the gorge itself.

"When SH3 closes through the

Awakino Gorge, the effects are felt right across Taranaki.

"For many freight operators, tradies and businesses travelling to and from New Plymouth, a closure can add at least five hours to the journey by forcing traffic to detour via Whanganui.

"That is hugely inconvenient, costly, and frustrating for people trying to get on with their day-to-day lives and run their businesses.

"There have been far too many closures over the past few years, and this investment will help make one of Taranaki's most important transport links more reliable."

Mrs Kuriger and Mr Macleod say the investment is part of the Government's plan to fix the basics and build the

future.

"Budget 2026 includes major investments to strengthen roads and other critical infrastructure, helping ensure New Zealand is better prepared for future weather events.

"We can't stop severe weather from happening, but we can be much better prepared for it.

"For Taranaki and the King Country, that means investing in the roads and transport links that keep our communities connected, support local businesses, and help drive regional economic growth."

Further work will continue to refine the final scope, design and delivery programme for the project.

3 Awakino Gorge resilience programme

North Island

Background

- SH3 between Te Kūiti and New Plymouth is a strategic freight route and priority lifeline connection, providing a vital link between Taranaki and Waikato, and further north to Auckland. It is an important corridor for freight and tourism operators, and for Port Taranaki, carrying around 2,700 vehicles per day, of which approximately 20% is freight.
- The challenging terrain and proximity to the West Coast means that this corridor is increasingly prone to severe weather impacts. There is no practical alternative route available.
- The corridor between Mount Messenger and the SH4 junction has been closed 14 times since July 2021 due to weather-related events. The longest of these closures occurred earlier this year with the road closed from 18 April 2026, re-opening fully on Friday 22 May 2026.
- This investment will increase resilience so the road can remain open more often and recover faster following severe weather events.

Scope

Confirmation of detailed scope is expected 2026/27. Broad scope of work is anticipated to be a mix of slope stabilisation, improved drainage and culverts, small retaining walls and works to redirect river flow away from road edge.

Key criteria	Assessment
NRAT critical or high risk	Yes
Lifeline priority	P1
Strategic freight route	Yes
Recent weather impacts	Yes (2026)

National Resilience Assessment Tool (NRAT)

The NRAT is an easily accessible digital tool that provides a nationally consistent overview of all the resilience disruption risks on the transport network. The tool makes it easier to assess, prioritise, monitor, and report on state highway damage/disruptions and network resilience more efficiently and effectively and allows funding to be targeted to the most critical sites.

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THE Waitomo Energy Services Customer Trust (WESCT) owns 100% of The Lines Company (TLC) on behalf of its beneficiaries, helping ensure the benefits of Trust ownership remain in our local communities.

Later this month, beneficiaries will receive their voting pack, which includes voting papers for both the WESCT Trustee Election and the Ownership Review Poll.

The Trustee Election gives you the opportunity to elect 3 Trustees to help guide the future direction of the Trust. The Ownership Review Poll, held every six years, asks whether the Trust should continue to own 100% of TLC on your behalf.

As part of the Ownership Review, an independent report found that the current Trust ownership model returns around \$5.4 million of value to our community each year through TLC discounts for beneficiaries and lower line charges. It also concluded that continued 100% Trust ownership is the option most likely to provide stable, long-term benefits for beneficiaries and the wider community.

This year also marks the end of an era, with long-serving Trustees William Oliver and Janette Osborne choosing not to seek re-election when their terms conclude on 30 September. We thank them both for their many years of dedicated service and the significant contribution they have made to WESCT and our community.

When your voting pack arrives, we encourage you to take a few moments to read the information, cast your votes and have your say.

To learn more about the Trustee Election or Ownership Review Poll, visit www.wesct.org.nz

www.wesct.org.nz

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Soccer thriving at Piopio Primary School



PIOPIO Youth Sports Committee last year received funding for transportable soccer practice goals, and this year we were lucky to get funding again - this time for soccer balls.

Thanks to the Piopio Community and Districts Charitable Trust for their ongoing support.

This support ensures every child can practice with a decent ball after school to develop and improve their skills.

Piopio Primary and Aria School tamariki had a great season playing soccer in Term 2.

Soccer is very popular and this year we fielded the most teams ever entered.

Each Friday, teams travel to Te Kuiti for matches. Many thanks to the coaches this year who volunteered their time to make it all happen.

Caren Herman
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KC North U13 team takes the win

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KING COUNTRY Rugby held its North v South games recently at Rugby Park in Te Kuiti.

The North U13 Boys had an impressive win against South U13s, taking home the Des Graham Memorial shield.

Pictured are North U13 players (from left) Cooper Boddie, Amorangi Blakeway, Taine Pari, Tawita Taie, and Bentley Jones.

A number of local girls were selected for U13 girls team also.

Piopio

Piopio has a rich history rooted in early Māori travel routes, pioneering dairy farming, and a pioneering role in New Zealand school transport. Key milestones include early Māori settlement, 2002 town layout, and the 1924 school bus innovation.

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07 877 8700
027 210 1860

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Grace Cortes Montecinos
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YOUTH ACTIVITIES

Aria Playcentre
Hannah Bodger-Kearns
07 877 7898

Aria Primary School
07 877 7857

Aria Toy Library
ariatoylibrary@gmail.com

Curious Keas Preschool
Stephanie Brough
07 877 8224

Kohanga Piopio
07 877 8185

Mainly Music
All Saints Church, Moa Street
Music and movement for children 0-5yrs & caregivers.
Thursdays @ 10am
Cara 027 345 3389

Piopio Playcentre
Jo Stockley
021 148 7556

Piopio Primary School
07 877 8103

Piopio College
07 877 8173. Meeting rooms available for hire

COMMUNITY CONTACTS

Piopio Police
07 877 0490
Crime Stoppers
0800 555 111
We live in a great community so let's stop these few who are taking from us.
Tony.schrafft@police.govt.nz
www.crimestoppers-nz.org

All Saints Church Co-operating Parish of Piopio, Aria & Mokau
Main Road, Piopio.
Worship service 10am

King Country Christians
John 027 422 2250
Every Sunday at 10.30am
Senior Citizens Hall

Community Fruit & Vege Stand
Karen Barrett 0275 727 407
struanfarm@gmail.com

Housie
Thursdays 1pm Senior Citizen's Room All welcome.
Paddy Coffin 07 877 8367

Justices of Peace
Vikki Hall 07 877 8058
Clive Fredericks 07 877 8048
Katrina Hudson 0274 762 843

Piopio Garden Circle
Visits are 3rd Thurs of every month except Jan & Aug
Gillian Hooper 07 878 7880
027 345 9603

Laver Marine
07 877 8484 or 021 105 4737

Opportunity Shop/ Mustard Seed
Cara Bryant 027 345 3389

Mahoenui Hall
Lynette Adams
lynadams@xtra.co.nz

Piopio College Community Library
07 877 8173
library@piopio.school.nz

Senior Citizen's Organisation
Meetings first Monday of the month, 11am. All welcome.
Wendy Weinberg
021 0826 5622

Seniors' Exercise Classes
Wendy Weinberg
021 0826 5622

Marriage Celebrants
Clive Fredericks
027 280 3867
Heidi Preston
027 679 1931
John Darke
027 422 2250

Piopio Lions Club
Stephen Cooper 07 877 8711
027 205 9460
Gavin Todd 07 877 7700
Ken Perry 07 877 8035

Piopio Memorial Hall
Book venue or facilities through Waitomo District Council 07 878 0800

Piopio/Paearuhe Retirement Village
Jenny Brodie
07 877 8033

The Old Piopio Post Office Art Gallery 022 437 0789

Waitanguru Rural Women
Maree Jones 027 475 9805
06 752 9765

ACTIVITIES & ATTRACTIONS

Piopio POP (Tui Park)
Waitomo District Council
07 878 0800
Key for toilet available from the Cloverleaf tearooms or Snow Nicol

Piopio Market Day
3rd Sunday of each month
Alison Turner 027 615 8754

Piopio and Districts Museum
Saskia Buckman
07 877 8665. Key available from Piopio Superette.

SPORTS & RECREATION

Aria Squash Club
Secretary
Lee Alcock
ariasquash@gmail.com

Light Horse Club
President Helen Potter
helen.neilpotter@gmail.com

Line Dancing Club
Jenny Brodie
021 141 1243

Piopio-Aria Golf Club
Hamish Roach
027 578 5905

Piopio Bowling Club
Alan 021 0845 4198
Wendy 021 0826 5622

Piopio Community Sports (Rukuhia Domain)
Tony Schrafft
Tony.schrafft@police.govt.nz

Piopio Rugby Club
President Peter Hurley
021 117 2973

Piopio Swimming Club
Matt Carter 021 569 311
piopioswimclub@gmail.com

Pony Club
President Dani Darke
021 168 0220
Secretary Rebecca Were

Tennis Club
Reon Verry
07 878 8678

King Country Hunt
Master: Joy Hurley
027 577 7881

Trail Bikes & Moto Cross Track
Darren Lupton
07 877 8054

Waitomo Ski Club
Kim Tatham
07 877 8820

Waitomo Aero Club
Pete Voyce 07 877 8254
John Carter 07 877 8290

piopiobirdtalk@gmail.com

Happenings at the good ol' Aria Club

A quick recap of what we've been up to over the past two months; at the club where everybody knows your name...

- We've made a start on enclosing our outdoor garden bar area and installed a fireplace.
- We've given our interior a fresh coat of paint, making it feel bright and open.
- We held our AGM.
- We had a Matariki Kids Movie Night plus colouring comp.
- We presented Piopio Volunteer Fire Brigade with a \$1000 koha to show our appreciation.
- We hosted Matiere and Ohura Clubs to vie for the coveted McKenzie Plate (alas, it went to Matiere).
- Donald (Duck) MacRae won a signed Chiefs jersey.
- Daryl (Tux) Tucker won the Super Rugby picks, with Corey Barnsdall taking second place. Tux was also awarded Life Membership (and then won a \$500 membership draw... no good with Lotto though).
- We enjoyed a 'Big Day Out/Community Dinner' evening.
- Our recent Wild Food Cook-Off was won by Cushla Austin.



Clockwise from left: Garden bar fireplace; Matiere lifting the McKenzie Plate; Matariki movie night; \$1000 for Piopio Fire Brigade; winner Cushla



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