

# Māngere's 275 times



Our stories, our people, our Māngere  
Kōrero paki ō tatou, Tāngata ō tatou, Ngā Hau Māngere ō tatou

## EXHIBIT SPOTLIGHTS MĀNGERE 'GEM'



Vinesh Kumaran (right) and club volunteer Jamie Austin stand next to one of the exhibition boards featuring Jamie

**An award-winning local photographer's latest exhibition is highlighting the amazing work of volunteers who help keep one of Māngere's favourite organisations chugging along.**

Māngere resident Vinesh Kumaran has completed a series of unique portraits of the people behind the Manukau Live Steamers club - who run the miniature steam, diesel and electric locomotives at Centre Park most Sundays (depending on the weather).

The exhibition is running at the club off

Robertson Road till February 16.

Kumaran says he wanted to document the volunteers behind this beloved club having seen them operate in the area over many years.

"I live just around the corner from here and I've always driven past Centre Park and I've seen the tracks and I've wondered about the club here," he says.

"So through my work - photography - I'm able to explore different worlds and this series here talks about not only the people who are involved with trains but also people that help provide a service to our

community."

Club member Nathan Addis has been a member of the club for four years and enjoyed being part of the exhibition.

"It was very cool," he says. "It was very interesting as an experience to go out and learn a little bit about photography too."

Kumaran hopes the community can gain a deeper appreciation for the club and the service they provide at a minimal cost.

"These train rides on Sundays are quite unique to South Auckland, it's quite unique to Māngere and I think it should be celebrated."

## MĀNGERE MOUNTAIN FIRE UPDATE



The investigation into finding those responsible for the massive fire that broke out on Māngere Mountain/Te Pane o Mataoho in late January is still going according to Māngere-Ōtāhuhu Local Board chair Tauanu'u Nanai Nick Bakulich.

Media reports at the time said the fire was over three hectares in size, with 19 fire crews called in to battle the blaze.

But Bakulich says the fire could have been even more destructive ... **(continued on page 2)**



# PLAY RECLAIMS MANA FOR WORKING STUDENTS



Photo: Filippo Iupati

Lauie Tofa (standing), from Māngere, playing Mr Tala and Rulon Brown, playing working student Ben in 'Truant'.

**A production about bringing back mana to working students was performed recently at the Māngere Arts Centre in collaboration with Black Friars Theatre Company, Māia Centre for Social Justice and Education and BRAVE The Village.**

The production *Truant*, which was informed by academic research from the Māia Centre, tells the story of five students who have to juggle work responsibilities to support their families, while also dealing with the stigma of being absent from their high schools.

The play is based on real-life stories told to researchers, who also had lived experience themselves as working rangitahi.

Their work involved speaking to 28 young people across five South Auckland schools and culminated in the *Working Students from South Auckland Research* report.

Kaiwhakahaere at the Māia Centre, Dr Michelle Johansson, who is also the Creative Director of Black Friars, then turned the research into a script for the play.

Dr Johansson says given the government's recent focus on truancy, she

hopes decision-makers can gain a new perspective on the challenges young people face.

"We want people to remember how amazing our kids are, the media does a disservice often by pitying our young people, particularly in South Auckland who have to work to support their families when actually it's much more complicated and complex and much more wonderful."

Mike Piper, who is chair of the Māngere Principals' Association and principal of St Mary MacKillop Catholic School, shares similar thoughts about this issue.

"Attendance at school is a very complex issue with many layers to it, one thing alone will not help raise attendance. Supporting and engaging with our families is the start, building positive relationships and having conversations as to how we can help. Please engage with your school get to know your teachers, come and say hello to your principal."

One of the researchers involved in the report Saleria Mafuahingano says whatever students choose, it's important communities see the bigger picture and the wider benefits to work.

"Many see [work] as a way to contribute to their families, gain work experience, become more independent and self-reliant, and have an increased sense of their own mana ('status')."

While fellow researcher Oriana Ngapoko says students don't need "pity" but support to make the best choices for themselves and their families.

"We need to be adding more mana and finding ways to help students balance their work and education."



Photo: Filippo Iupati

Brave Researchers - Rooptu 2: Manu Salima, Oriana Ngapoko, Saleria Mafuahingano & Kaitlyn Perez

## MĀNGERE MOUNTAIN FIRE UPDATE CONT...

(continued from page 1) had it not been for the Tupuna Maunga Authority installing a fire break, which "prevented further damage". "The investigation team is still in the CCTV phase. The investigation is still very much active.

"The updates from the community with potential leads have been helpful and I have asked the investigation team to keep me posted."

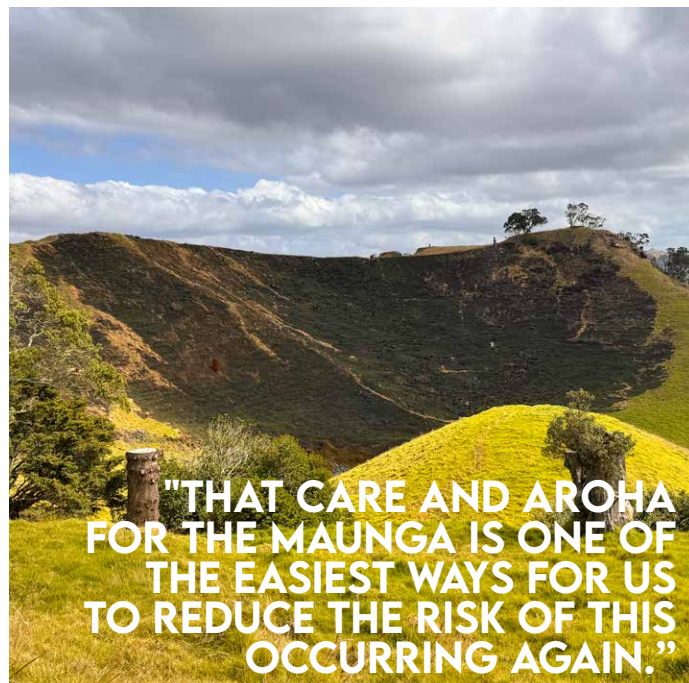
For Zane Wedding, General Manager at Māngere Mountain Education Centre, seeing the maunga in flames was a massive shock.

"It was sad in so many ways, this is a space, we care for, love and teach about every day," he says. "And watching it burn 'i poouri taku ngaakau', but, sometimes people lose sight of the fact that Te Pane o Mataoho is also a

significant archeological heritage site, a waahi tapu to mana whenua. The fire burned so hot and spread so rapidly I had real fears it would spread toward and engulf the Tholoid. That section of the maunga is incredibly significant because of the stories and history connected to it, so in spite of the massive area the fire covered I was grateful it was isolated ... and some of the waahi tapu were left unscathed."

Wedding says if people knew more about the area's history, they might be less likely to cause such damage.

"When you know the significance of the maunga, you look at it very differently, you walk upon it very carefully. That care and aroha for the maunga is one of the easiest ways for us to reduce the risk of this occurring again."



**"THAT CARE AND AROHA FOR THE MAUNGA IS ONE OF THE EASIEST WAYS FOR US TO REDUCE THE RISK OF THIS OCCURRING AGAIN."**



# HEAD GIRL HOPING TO UPLIFT YOUTH

By 'Alakihihifo Vailala

PMN News

**When Manuia Fox-Romia received the call confirming her selection as Head Girl of Māngere College, it felt surreal.**

"I was at somebody's prize-giving, and I was told that I would get the call that night. I was anxiously waiting, constantly checking my phone.

"When I was told the news, it was just so surreal to me because I think if I look back to year 9, somebody who did not know anybody, somebody who was so shy and just joined every extracurricular group they could, it's such a gigantic leap for me."

Now in her final year at Māngere College, Fox-Romia's journey is not just a personal success story but also an inspiration to Pacific youth and a testament to the power of education and determination.

**Building confidence through debate**

When Fox-Romia started at Māngere College, she struggled with confidence and social skills.

But instead of withdrawing, she channelled her energy into debating.

"I joined debating initially as a strategy to make friends," she said.

What began as an after-school activity



Manuia Fox-Romia, Head Girl of Māngere College

turned into a life-changing experience for Fox-Romia.

"Debating allowed me to find my voice, express my views, and build confidence in a space where I felt both challenged and supported."

She excelled in debating, and her talent did not go unnoticed.

Fox-Romia eventually represented the school as part of the Manukau regional

debating team at the New Zealand Schools National Debating Tournament in Wellington, winning three out of seven rounds.

"It's so crazy to say that something I joined as a way to make friends turned into one of the biggest achievements of my life," she said.

**Embracing cultural identity**

For Fox-Romia, she says attending Māngere College was as much about academics as it was about connecting with her cultural roots. Being half Cook Island Māori and half English, she found that Māngere's predominantly Pacific environment gave her a deeper understanding of her heritage.

"At Māngere College, I've learned so much about myself and my culture," she says.

"It's been a space where I could fully embrace who I am while also learning about other cultures within our Pacific community."

**A vision for Pacific youth**

As head girl, Fox-Romia's primary goal is to uplift Pacific academia.

"I want students to feel empowered in their learning. Education should feel accessible and exciting, not like a chore."

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## UPDATE FROM OUR LOCAL BOARD



**On behalf of the Māngere-Ōtāhuhu Local Board, Chair Tauanu'u Nick Bakulich has this message for our community.**

Happy New Year to our community, we hope you had a relaxing and enjoyable festive season. For those who worked through the holidays, we hope you find time to rest soon. As we enjoy the last of summer, let's stay safe on the water. Wishing everyone a great start to 2025, especially those preparing tamariki for the school year.

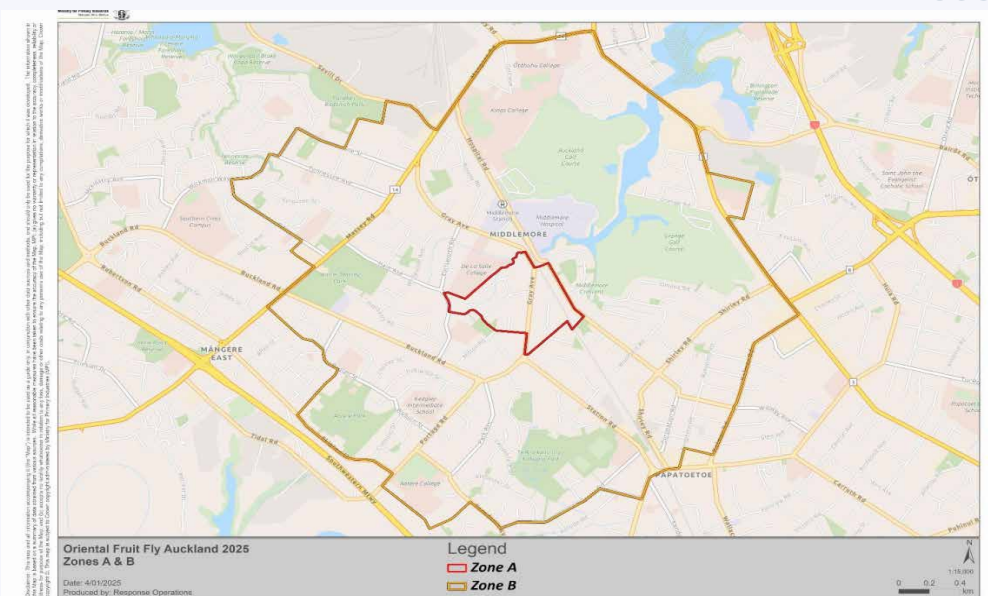
**Restrictions in Papatoetoe/Māngere after Oriental Fruit Fly Discovery**

A single male Oriental fruit fly was found on January 3 in a surveillance trap in a suburban backyard in Papatoetoe/Māngere. Restrictions will be in place until mid-February. Biosecurity New Zealand is leading the operation with Auckland Council's Environmental Services and Waste Solutions teams. The Oriental fruit fly doesn't pose a risk to human health but is highly destructive and could threaten fruit exports.

**What you need to know**

The area is divided into two zones A and B (see the map), each with different restrictions. To check if you are in the controlled area, visit Biosecurity New Zealand's website at [www.biosecurity.govt.nz](http://www.biosecurity.govt.nz) (search "Oriental fruit fly").

For more information, visit the Biosecurity



New Zealand website. Local libraries provide access to technology for those seeking information online. These restrictions mean some changes to rubbish (particularly food scraps) collections in the area. For more information on how these changes affect you, visit the OurAuckland website ([ourauckland.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz](http://ourauckland.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz)) and search "fruit fly").

**What You Can Do**

If you think you've found this fruit fly or its maggots:

Photograph it, capture it (if possible), and

call MPI's Pest and Diseases Hotline: 0800 809 966

**What's Coming Up**

Stay informed to engage with key issues and initiatives:

Consultation on local and regional annual budgets (Feb-Mar) – follow our social media for updates.

"Out and About" events, activations by Triple Teez in Māngere, and initiatives from Ōtāhuhu Town Hall Community Centre, Ōtāhuhu Business Association, and the Ōtāhuhu Youth Panel.



# COMMUNITY NOTICES

## FOOTBALL 4 FREEDOM

One-day culture and football festival at Walter Massey Park. Saturday 15 Feb, 9am-5pm. 7-a-side football tournament, Palestinian Music and stalls, bouncy castles and games for kids. All proceeds support Al-ahli football club in Gaza.

## MĀNGERE BRIDGE BIKE RAVE

Sat 22 Feb, 6pm-9pm. A flashy, fun party on two wheels - join us for a musical guided ride for all ages with Triple Teez. Follow the Triple Teez facebook page for updates.

## TE ARA-RATA STREAM TEAM

Part-time flexi hours paid position coming up - looking for a Coordinator/Administrative superstar. Word/Excel experience essential. Social Media experience, graphics desirable. Check in through Facebook Te Ararata Stream Team and contact us at [teararata.stream@gmail.com](mailto:teararata.stream@gmail.com).

## MĀNGERE ENVIRO HUB ACTIVATION DAY

Corner of Elmdon St & Watchfield Cl, Thursday 27 February, 2pm-4pm. Come down and check out this beautiful community garden space, and eat a delicious hang!

## LIFE COMMUNITY KITCHENS

Free meals every Wednesday 5.30pm at Moana Nui a Kiwa Pools and Rec Centre.

## MĀNGERE EAST COMMUNITY CENTRE

### Before & After School Care & Holiday Programmes:

Transport, Kai and Activities for 5-13 year olds.

### FREE CLASSES

**MONDAYS:** Te Reo Māori (10am – 12pm & 6pm - 8pm), Sewing for beginners (5pm – 8pm)

**TUESDAYS:** Te Reo Māori (12.30pm-2.30pm), Sewing 10am-1pm, Hulafit (6pm-7pm), Ethnic Arts & Crafts (6pm-8pm)

**WEDNESDAYS:** Parenting Programmes (various dates/times)

**THURSDAYS:** Sewing for beginners (10am-1pm), Zumba classes (7pm – 8pm)

**FRIDAYS:** Korowai Class (10am – 2pm), Sewing for Beginners (11.30am – 2pm)

Bus Hire (32 Seater bus & 2 Mini Vans), Hall & Venue Hire  
FREE Parenting Programmes (Ante Natal, 3yr-8yr etc)  
Daily ESOL Classes (English for speakers of other languages)

**CONTACT:** [www.mangereeast.org](http://www.mangereeast.org) | [info@mangereeast.org](mailto:info@mangereeast.org)

## WHARE KOA MĀNGERE COMMUNITY HOUSE

141 Robertson Rd, ph: 09 379 2030, FB - @WhareKoa

### TERM 1 SCHEDULE:

**MONDAY** - Emerge Aotearoa 10.30am-12.30pm

**TUESDAY** - Ukelele Class 10am-12pm,  
Raise Up Youth 4.30pm-6.30pm

**WEDNESDAY** - Diamonds In The Rough 10am-12pm  
Adullum Art With Sio 6.30pm-8.30pm

**THURSDAY** - Tiare Taina Mamas 10am-2pm  
Eva Ma Le Koko 10am-2pm, New Programme (TBC) 6pm-8pm

**FRIDAY** - Polynesian Creative Arts 10am-2pm

## OPENING OF NEW CAFE AT MĀNGERE ARTS CENTRE

Coffee Island cafe are holding their official opening on Saturday 22 February at the Māngere Arts Centre.

## JIU JITSU 275 - MARTIAL ARTS FOR MĀNGERE

FREE Jiu Jitsu Classes for Youth. Tuesdays and Thursdays 4.30pm-5.30pm. Ages 13+. Māngere Town Centre stage area. Wear shorts. To register head to IG @jiu\_jitsu\_275

## PONO BOXFIT (FREE)

Mondays 6pm - 7pm, Māngere East Community Centre  
Wednesday 6.30pm - 7.30pm, Aorere College. Check us out on FB or Insta for more details. For men & women. Free.

## SIVA AFI FESTIVAL 2025

Friday 7 and Saturday 8 March 2025 at the Māngere Arts Centre. If you are wanting to compete, visit [sivaafiaotearoa.co.nz](http://sivaafiaotearoa.co.nz) to express your interest.



Welcome everyone to our first edition for 2025!

The beginning of the year has brought about some challenges but also lots of opportunities. With memories of the 2023 floods still fresh in our minds, it feels like all this fine weather has meant we've finally been able to fully enjoy summer, getting outside to exercise or be with family and friends. The town centre has also been a hive of activity with a range of great events, including the 'For the OGz' day, (pictured above) organised by TwoSevenFive and the recent Chinese New Year celebration.

But January hasn't been without new challenges, including the threat of new benefit sanctions for our whānau, the issues with late school lunches leaving many tamariki hungry and the ongoing political debates that stigmatise our people. But these issues are also a reminder for us all to be more united, better informed and to get empowered to take the necessary steps to ensure we not only come through this, but thrive. And here at 275 Times we'll be doing all we can to bring the news and information you need to make this year a success.

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## CONTACT

027 275 0097

09 636 2222

[mse.ltd@gmail.com](mailto:mse.ltd@gmail.com)

<http://mseltd.co.nz>



Editorial Team: Jo and Justin Latif

✉ [275times@gmail.com](mailto:275times@gmail.com)

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