

Motueka Valley Association Newsletter

the river, the land, the people

FEBRUARY 2020

Looking After Us: FENZ Ngatimoti Voluntary Rural Fire Force

Being responsible for keeping our valley safe from fires and attending other emergencies as required is an extremely commendable job done by a group of community volunteers. Ngatimoti Voluntary Rural Fire Force (VRFF) was the first rural fire station to be formed in the district.

Graham Durrant is the current Controller or Senior Station Officer for our community's Fire/Rescue service. He has been volunteering with Volunteer Rural Fire since it began in 1985 (around 35 yrs). It was originally set-up by the local community with the help of Tasman District Council (TDC). In July 2018, the rural and urban fire services around the country were merged into one under Fire and Emergency New Zealand (FENZ). Prior to that, the Ngatimoti VRFF and others were responsible for their own fundraising to supplement funding from TDC and local forestry companies. Under FENZ, they are now guaranteed funding which allows a much wider range of resources at their disposal such as Medical first response and Swift water rescue equipment to name just a few.

"Nothing has really changed since the merger except our funding is guaranteed. We sign a terms of engagement contract and our appliances and gear are now much more varied as is our training." Graham says.

Currently FENZ Ngatimoti VRFF has 18 active volunteers and they have a fortnightly practice on Wednesday evenings 7 to 9pm at the fire station. There is a permanent Wednesday evening booking at the Community Rooms for the volunteers, so they are able to access relevant power-point presentations for training purposes as needed. They have designated persons who organise training, check appliances and gear, and monthly duty personnel to look after the station area. They have a 4WD Tanker with large water capacity and a modern 4WD Smoke Chaser vehicle which carries up to 5 personnel, portable pumps and a limited amount of water.

NEXT MVA MEETING

Wednesday 12 February, 8pm
Ngatimoti Community Rooms

All welcome!

Graham volunteers with FENZ Ngatimoti VRFF because: "...Somebody's got to and I like to help the community." The Durrant family has lived in the valley for three generations. Graham's grandfather first settled in the Pokororo area growing raspberries.

"As our volunteers age, we are always looking for more volunteers. There is a process to become a volunteer with police and medical checks needing to be done. It can take a couple of months."

Irma Jager started volunteering with the fire service eight months ago and she is very enthusiastic about the work:

"... I enjoy being part of the team, they are very welcoming and encouraging. I have realised that everyone has something to offer. Plus we get heaps of training opportunities and through that my confidence is building."

Irma has been involved with putting out a dumped car fire and assisting when some people were stuck in the river.

As Graham says:

"Volunteering with FENZ doesn't mean you have to fight fires. There are many other jobs we need help with. We are often first at the scene, like when a baby was born prematurely and not breathing, the team were able to resuscitate the newborn as the ambulance and rescue chopper arrived to then take over – a very satisfying result for all concerned."

As well as wildfires, the FENZ Ngatimoti VRFF is a first response team for motor vehicle accidents, when powerlines are down, traffic management and medical emergencies. Also, for natural disasters and extreme weather events such as Cyclone Gita in 2018.

"When someone rings 111, the Communications Centre in Christchurch alerts the closest, relevant agency to deal with it. We are backed up by FENZ Motueka Urban Brigade &

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NGATIMOTI SCHOOL NEWS

2020 TERM DATES

TERM 1: Tuesday 4 February – Thursday 9 April

TERM 2: Tues 28 April – Fri 3 July

TERM 3: Mon 20 July – Fri 25 September

TERM 4: Mon 12 October – Friday 18 December



NGATIMOTI FESTIVAL DAY SUNDAY 25 OCTOBER ☺

Welcome back to school to all our students, teachers and families; particularly to our new students and their families. We welcome teacher Esther Kiddle who joins us as extra support for Term One and Two in the junior school. We are also looking forward to having Kathy Stephens back with us teaching Room 3 on Fridays, along with music with other classes.

School re-opens for learning on Tuesday 4 February. On the evening of **Thursday 13 February** we will hold our popular 'Infomingle'; a fun evening giving parents, students and teachers a chance to mingle and receive information for the year's learning.

Swimming Pool Thank you for supporting our school swimming pool once again this season. The pool has been very popular over the school holidays and will continue to be open for community key holders outside school hours during February and March. Key holders; if you no longer need your pool key please return it to the school office for your \$10 refund at any time.

Thanks to our wider community for treating our school grounds with such respect over the holidays. It is great to see people here playing or picnicking, and especially great when the grounds are kept tidy and litter free.

Our theme this year is 'Connections' and learning will include eco-systems, local stories, local industries and class camps for everyone. If you have a local industry that you would like to share, or you would like to be involved in school in any way, please pop in and make yourself known to Ali! ☺



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FENZ Tasman Rural north of the river and Tapawera Volunteer Fire Brigade to the south.

Over my time with the fire force in the Tasman region we have a proud record for extinguishing any forest fires before they generally exceed 4 to 6 hectares max. Last years' fire at Pigeon Valley was hopefully a one-off major severe weather-driven event that we all learnt an awful lot from."

The Pigeon Valley fire in February 2019 was found to have been accidentally started. The fire got hold in a young pine forest and burnt 2,300 hectares of forest, property and pastures before it was finally controlled and extinguished. It was the third largest bushfire in New Zealand's history. (www.stuff.co.nz/national/114968649/pigeon-valley-fire-cause-confirmed-as-sparks-from-disc-plough)

Most recently, when there was a fire on Mount Lodestone in Kahurangi National Park, FENZ Ngatimoti VRRF responded along with FENZ Tasman VRRF, stationing themselves at Flora Hut. From there, the fire team were able to provide water for the FENZ enlisted helicopter which sprayed water from its monsoon bucket to extinguish the fire quickly. The fire appeared to start from an illegal campfire.

"The most common call-outs are to investigate smoke. Often it's simply when someone is burning off and smoke is spotted and reported. We turn out to investigate and check whether or not a fire permit has been given (and extinguish if not). It's important to note that the use of machinery on an extreme fire risk day can lead to ignition, as was what happened at Pigeon Valley last year."

In this valley and the greater Tasman region burning off is not allowed without a permit which can be applied for on-line – www.checkitsalright.nz.

If conditions are too dangerous for burning, permits will be revoked and permit holders will be notified. However, it is the owners responsibility to monitor the conditions and if unsure about the appropriate conditions to burn, to check the fire index on the National Institute of Weather and Atmos-

pheric Research (NIWA) – fireweather.niwa.co.nz/region/Nelson%20Tasman.

The Richmond Hill fire lookout is manned 24/7 from late spring till autumn to check for any fires. With the summer season upon us now residents need to be aware of any fire risks around their property and follow the FENZ recommendations.

- Clear grass around electric fences.
- Keep areas around house as green as possible.
- Don't stack wood against outside walls of house.
- Clean gutters and other areas where leaves gather (as sparks will also gather there).
- Have access to water close by.

For anyone who would like to join FENZ Ngatimoti VRRF, you can call either Graham Durrant on 021 526 815, or one of the deputy controllers: Jim Perry on 021 135 7408 or Gavin O'Donnell on 021 528 865.

As of 27 January 2020, a TOTAL FIRE BAN for this area has been issued by FENZ. This means NO Burning Off, NO Fires.

-Fiona Nelson, reporter



MVA Committee update

From the December MVA meeting:

- **St James concert:** feedback about the concert; those who went really enjoyed the two singing groups and their different styles.
- **Speed limits in the valley:** TDC will be deciding in December on the proposed lower road speeds for the valley. Speeds on other roads will be consulted on by TDC later, and NZTA are also doing a review of State highways.
- **Bridge names:** TDC is looking into a request by the MVA to change some names on local bridges as they are not historically correct.
- **Reserves:** TDC are seeking ideas for identifying and managing reserves in Moutere-Waimea ward, including Ngatimoti Hall reserve and river esplanade reserves. Areas of public land not currently a reserve can be nominated for inclusion. Feedback closes end of March 2020 and anyone can make a submission.
- **Waimea Dam:** a public meeting is scheduled in Richmond on 17 December to provide an update on construction of the Waimea Community Dam.

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All are welcome to participate or just come and enjoy.

The date has changed to the 2nd Thursday of every month.

Proudly supported by Ngatimoti Hall Committee and the MVA.

Koha Appreciated

Lavish Gardens

Maintenance, makeovers, green waste removal.

Grant - 03 526 8035

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Medium Square Bales (13 Bale Equivalents): \$110 ea

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Pickup in Dovedale or delivery to be negotiated.

Motueka Valley Association

Meetings every 2nd Wednesday of the month at 8pm (7.30pm in winter) in the Ngatimoti Community Rooms.

Everyone welcome!

For community concerns email the MVA at info@mva.org.nz or contact any of the following **committee members**:

Greg Mason	526 8112
Peter Laufkotter	526 8554
Fiona Nelson	020 4160 1968

local halls/facilities

Ngatimoti Memorial Hall

• Bex Douglas • 021 173 1279 • ngatimoti.hall@gmail.com

Ngatimoti Community Rooms • Sarah Bradshaw • 526 8026

Pokororo Hall • Sylvia Arnold • 526 8282

Woodstock Hall • Kerry Hall • 543 3884

about your newsletter

- delivered on the 1st Thursday of the month to 500 homes in the Motueka Valley from February to December
- send stories, photos & ads by the 20th of the month to the editor, Jan-Albert Droppers: newsletter@mva.org.nz
- advertising rate: \$2.00 per column cm
- online newsletter + archives: www.mva.org.nz

Facebook: Motueka Valley Community



This is a closed group with over 1300 members supporting the exchange of goods, services and information within the valley. It can also serve as a place for connection during calamities.

www.mva.org.nz



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Ngatimoti Playgroup is your local Motueka Valley community playgroup focused on fun and friendships, for kids and parents/caregivers alike. We are a welcoming group providing play and socialisation opportunities for all preschoolers and their whanau in our community, regardless of eventual schooling choice. The sessions are free and held weekly during term time on Fridays between 9:15 and 12:15, but families are welcome to arrive anytime during the session to fit in with naps etc. We are based in the Ngatimoti School hall on Greenhill road. Bring a plate for shared morning tea and join in the fun. We love to see new faces and welcome back old friends, so come along or contact Marian for more info on 03 543 3613 / 021 2400 416 or ngatimotiplaygroup@gmail.com.



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