

Protection of staff No 1 for local organisations

TE KUITI Police support Te Kuiti Work and Income New Zealand's decision to double security and adopt zero tolerance to abusive behaviour.

The stance follows the recent fatal shootings at Ashburton (*Waitomo News*, September 9).

"We totally support this," says Te Kuiti Police Sergeant Craig Lindstrom.

"Police have had to deal with a number of unacceptable and intolerable matters at the Taupiri St Work and Income offices over the years.

"There haven't been any recent events. However, police are certainly backing WINZ in the current situation."

REGULAR PATROLS

Mr Lindstrom says police have an ongoing relationship with WINZ and Community Link, and there is a regular police presence within the building.

"I have spoken with manager Simon Hepi since the Ashburton event and we're making regular patrols through the complex," he says.

"It is a terrible situation for those staff. They do accept that, in their line of work, they have come across people with frustrations, but they should not have to bear the brunt of those frustrations."

NO TOLERANCE

Waitomo mayor Brian Hanna says he will not tolerate abusive behaviour towards frontline staff at the Waitomo District Council offices, or at any other council facility.

"When Minister of Social Development Paula Bennett spoke at Hangatiki recently she said very strongly WINZ staff have probably tolerated a lot more poor behaviour from clients than they should have," says Mr Hanna.

"We do get the odd abusive person at the Te Kuiti counter, and our girls handle them very well, but it's not something we want."

He will also deal directly with any complainants. "I normally say to staff if they get someone who's got a real problem to put them through to me and I'll deal with it."

Mr Hanna says council's frontline staff are there

to do a job and are not responsible for council's decisions.

"Abusive language or behaviour is not a common occurrence and I won't have our staff who are there to help ratepayers, treated in that manner.

"It's something we don't tolerate and we can take quick action if needed."

At the same time he backs the ability of council's frontline staff to handle the "prickliest" of people with diplomacy and customer surveys show they do a "fantastic job".

"We don't turn anyone away, but we make sure they are respectful in their enquiries."

TRAINED

Otorohanga mayor Max Baxter says all council front counter and service staff have had training in dealing with unpleasant situations and abusive behaviour.

Staff have the option of taking a customer aside to discuss their issue and the front counter is under video surveillance in case a situation gets out of hand.

"The layout of our offices means the front counter is within hearing range of all our management offices," says Mr Baxter.

"The chief executive's door is usually open so he is constantly aware of what's going on in reception.

"If anyone did raise their voice, you can be assured half a dozen managers would be there very quickly. And the building department guys are also very handy, so there's a fair amount of backup if something got out of hand."

Mr Baxter says over the years there have been a couple of instances where a ratepayer has been asked to calm down, but no-one has ever been ejected from the building.

"The shootings in Ashburton were horrendous. The WINZ ladies [who were killed] were just doing their job and certainly no-one deserves what happened to them."

Mr Baxter says the safety of ODC staff is paramount.

"They're just like your family, in many respects. You've got to look after them and protect them."

IN BRIEF

Temporary helipad

NORTH King Country patients needing treatment at Waikato Hospital will now be flown by the Westpac Rescue Helicopter from a temporary landing site at Te Kuiti Aerodrome.

Te Kuiti Hospital's helipad has been closed while the medical centre undergoes an \$830,000 makeover to meet earthquake standards, which began September 5. (*Waitomo News*, September 2)

Before the six-month project started, Civil Aviation Authority and Waikato District Health Board representatives

approved an interim helipad at the airfield that sits alongside SH3.

SH1 delays

NORTH King Country residents heading south of Cambridge on SH1 can expect minor delays.

About 12,000 cubic metres of sand must be moved from the west side of SH1 across to the east side, as work on the Cambridge section of the Waikato Expressway continues. Work started yesterday and should be complete within a month, weather permitting.

POLICE DESK



September 13

A 41-year-old Te Kuiti man was arrested for trespassing at an Awakino Rd home after refusing to leave when asked by the owner. He was released from police custody shortly after and issued with a

pre-charge warning.

September 14

BURGLAR(S) entered an unsecure garage on Waitete Rd and stole a television.

CALLOUTS



WESTPAC RESCUE HELICOPTER

ON September 13, rescue personnel flew a Hamilton man with a suspected broken leg to Waikato Hospital after he rolled his bike on farmland near Taharoa.

Westpac Rescue Helicopter.

VOLUNTEER FIRE BRIGADES

PIOPIO

A FEMALE driver heading south to Waitara lost control of her car and hit a bank on SH3, 5kms south of Piopio on Sunday morning. St John officers treated her at the scene, while firefighters cleaned up spill fuel.

OTOROHANGA

FIREFIGHTERS responded to two medical callouts on September 11 and 16.

AN Otorohanga man was driven by his partner to Te Kuiti Hospital after suffering a heart attack on September 16. Due to construction at the medical centre affecting the helipad, the 49-year-old was transported to Te Kuiti Aerodrome by St John ambulance and flown to Waikato Hospital by the

SCHOOL HOLIDAYS

A Waitomo News special feature

Borrow two library books during these school holidays and receive an Activity Pack.

Create a jellyfish in a bottle, mini mice racers, puzzles, origami and lots more!

Packs are for ages 5-12 years and will be available from **27th September 2014.**

Numbers are limited so be in quick!

Waitomo District Library

Open Mon- Fri 10am to 5pm
Sat 9.30am to 12.30pm
Phone 07 878 1028

Otorohanga District Library School Holiday activity

KIDS' BOLLYWOOD DANCE CLASS

with Anju Desai

Come along to a fun, active hour of Bollywood dancing with experienced teacher Anju Desai. Learn glamorous, expressive dance moves & enjoy the funky music!

This is a free event for children aged 6-12 years ONLY and will be followed by afternoon tea.

Friday Oct 10 - 2-3.30pm
St Johns Hall, Kakamutu Rd, Otorohanga

Please phone the library to register 07 873 7175

Maniapoto St, Otorohanga
DC Clibbery, Chief Executive, Otorohanga District Council

Spring School Holidays at Waitomo!

KIDS GO FREE!

Kids go for FREE on all Aranui Cave Combo's. Visit Aranui Cave, Waitomo's best kept secret, to discover ancient caves formations and explore a natural forest reserve - you may even spot a weta!

Twin Cave Combo	> Waitomo Glowworm Cave > Aranui Cave
Triple Cave Combo	> Waitomo Glowworm Cave > Ruakuri Cave > Aranui Cave

Valid from 20 Sept - 12 Oct 2014. For terms and conditions see our website.

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