

# GE campaigner wins place on board

By Peter de Graaf

Elections to the Far North's three community boards delivered few surprises, with voters returning long-serving members in Kerikeri and Kaikohe.

Exceptions include organic farmer and GE-free campaigner Marty Robinson, who joins long-time board members Florence Annison and Doug Turner in the Kerikeri subdivision of the Bay of Islands-Whangaroa Community Board; and Kelly van Gaalen, a key player in Kaikohe arts and business, who joins incumbents John Schollum and Win Stephens as Kaikohe representatives on the Kaikohe-Hokianga Community Board.

In Kaitia, farmer David Senior was returned to the Te Hiku Community Board. He is joined by newcomers Adele Gardner, a former council employee, and Ivan Alvarez of Te Hiku radio. Terry Greening and Belinda Ward comfortably retained their Russell-Opua and Pahiia seats, respectively, in the Bay of Islands-Whangaroa Community Board, but former Kawakawa-Moerewa rep Johnson Davis was pushed out by Margaret Wikaire. With just 23 votes between them, both will be waiting for the final results later today.

A number of high-calibre candidates missed out, including former PE teacher and Maori traditional sports expert Harko

Brown, who sought re-election to the Kerikeri subdivision of the Bay of Islands-Whangaroa Community Board. Candidates were elected unopposed in Whangaroa, North Hokianga and South Hokianga.

## COMMUNITY BOARD RESULTS

Successful candidates marked with an asterisk. Note these are provisional results only. Final results, including special votes, will be announced later today.

### ■ Te Hiku Community Board

North Cape subdivision: Murray Rae\* (590), Willy van der Sluis (265).

Whatuwhiwi subdivision: Lawrie Atkinson\* (482), Petrina Hodgson (361).

Doubtless Bay subdivision: Mike Ward\* (576), Clara Lugnet (413).

Kaitia subdivision: David Senior\* (1275), Adele Gardner\* (1106), Ivan Alvarez\* (758), Ngawai Herewini (692), William Pomare (688), Yvonne Smith (659), Rosanne Taylor (651), John Kenderdine (472).

### ■ Bay of Islands-Whangaroa Community Board

Whangaroa subdivision: Bruce Mills\* (elected unopposed).

Kerikeri subdivision: Florence Annison\* (1883), Marty Robinson\* (1702), Doug Turner\* (1645), Jerry Twigden (1512), Harko Brown (1462), Sandy Myhre (989).

Pahiia subdivision: Belinda

Ward\* (701), Paul Gorringer (471).

Russell-Opua subdivision: Terry Greening\* (787), Peter Clark (405), Gray Phillips (75).

Kawakawa-Moerewa subdivision: Margaret Wikaire\* (333), Johnson Davis (310), Kathy Dunn (265).

### ■ Kaikohe-Hokianga Community Board

North Hokianga subdivision: Pauline Evans\* (elected unopposed).

South Hokianga subdivision: Louis Toorenburg\*, Garry Clarke\* (elected unopposed).

Kaikohe subdivision: Kelly van Gaalen\* (1193), John Schollum\* (902), Win Stephens\* (808), Shaun Reilly (787), Mike Edmonds (654).

# Rare sea mammal may call North home

By Peter de Graaf

New research has shown that an enigmatic, dolphin-like marine mammal could be living off the Northland coast.

Previously it was thought the false killer whale or pseudorca — which, despite the name, is not an orca but a rare type of dolphin — was just an occasional visitor to New Zealand waters.

Thirteen years of observation by Opuia-based Masters student Jochen Zaeschmar, however, led him to realise the false killer whale is far more common in New Zealand waters than previously thought.

He now believes there is a “strong possibility” a small resident population is living off northeastern New Zealand.

Mr Zaeschmar's work, and that of fellow members of Massey University's Coastal-Marine Research Group, also revealed a curious long-term relationship between the false killer whales and the more common oceanic bottlenose dolphins.

In more than 90 per cent of encounters the false killer whales were observed with bottlenose dolphins. The same dolphins were seen with the false killer whales over periods of up to five years and distances of 650km.

“We believe this is the first time that long-term relationships between two dolphin species have been documented. The reasons for this relationship remain unclear but better prey detection and predator avoidance as well as social factors may play a role.”

“It's pretty cool that this is happening right at our doorstep,” Mr Zaeschmar said.

So far he had identified 61 individuals, distinguishable by unique markings on their dorsal



fins, 85 per cent of which had been seen repeatedly off the Northland coast. All were linked in a single social network, suggesting they belonged to the same population.

The false killer whales appeared off New Zealand between December and May before departing to unknown waters.

“We're not sure how far they move so that will be the subject of further research. We want to know where they move and if they still associate with bottlenose dolphins in that time.”

False killer whales are not considered threatened in New Zealand waters but DoC concedes more research is needed to assess their status. Given that Hawaiian studies had shown resident populations could be small and genetically unique, Mr Zaeschmar said it would be prudent to reassess their conservation status here.

False killer whales (*Pseudorca*



**VISITORS:** Rare false killer whales in the Bay of Islands.

PHOTO/JOCHEN ZAESCHMAR

*crassidens*) belong to the dolphin family and are closely related to the pilot whales that frequently strand on the Northland coast. Their confusing name comes from their skulls, which are similar in shape to that of the orca.

Before the latest study, most knowledge of false killer whales in New Zealand waters came from infrequent stranding events. The study was published in the *Marine Mammal Science Journal*.

# Survey shows it's the council that needs fixing

By Mike Dinsdale

The incoming Whangarei District Council should heed of a survey that shows the council is one of the biggest problems that needed fixing in the district while it is also one of the barriers stopping Whangarei thriving, MP Phil Heatley says.

Mr Heatley has released the results of his survey of constituents, which asked a number of questions, including relating to barriers stopping the district thriving and problems that needed fixing. He sent questions to 7000 households in the electorate and 977 responses were received.

When asked what one issue needed fixing most in the district, unemployment and roading were the joint top issues that needed fixing, while third on the list was Whangarei District Council, followed by rail and crime.

Barriers preventing the district progressing were, in order, infrastructure (28 per cent), poor perceptions and marketing (22 per cent), lack of a major hotel/conference centre (19 per cent) lack of tourist attractions (16 per cent) and Whangarei District Council subdivision, development and business restrictions (15 per cent).

“In my constituency office I often get queries about Whangarei District Council issues that I pass on to the WDC,” Mr Heatley said. “The new council will have to take those issues to heart, and I will make sure they will.”

With cannabis, 62 per cent thought it should not be illegal.

# Young mother clocked at 157km/h during chase

By Kristin Edge

A judge has told a Whangarei mum, who was clocked by police travelling at 157km/h and led officers on a 24km chase, she was lucky to be alive to be a mother to her two young children after some horrendous driving.

Toni Lee Cherrington-Wikaire, 22, appeared in the

Whangarei District Court last week and pleaded guilty to a charge of dangerous driving on September 6.

Cherrington-Wikaire was spotted travelling south at speed on State Highway 1, near Whakapara BP Service Station about 8.15pm.

She was driving so fast it caught the attention of a police officer going in the opposite

direction, who then turned on the flashing lights and began to follow Cherrington-Wikaire.

She was followed all the way to Kamo and in that time was seen overtaking vehicles while crossing double yellow no-passing lines and several times overtaking on the brow of a hill.

She also overtook a tanker and trailer unit and forced oncoming traffic to swerve to avoid

a head-on collision.

Road works on Kamo bypass forced Cherrington-Wikaire to overtake a line of waiting traffic. She drove on the inside lane and forced others out of the lane, including an off-duty police officer who was in the queue.

Cherrington-Wikaire finally stopped near Winger Cr, in Kamo. When spoken to by police she was very apologetic and

admitted she had done a stupid thing and was just “clocking it”.

Judge Simon Maude told Cherrington-Wikaire it was lucky given her horrendous driving she was still alive to be a parent for her two children.

Judge Maude sentenced Cherrington-Wikaire to 80 hours' community work and disqualified her from driving for nine months.