

# The Wairoa star

TE WHETU O TE WAIROA

## Inside today

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**COLOUR AND FUN AT THE WAIROA A&P FAIR:** Lulu the clown, a familiar face at the A&P fair, brings her showtime animal ballooning to the green for Tilly Bullock.

SEE ALL THE A&P FAIR FUN ON PAGE 2

## 'Whales' euthanised after two strandings

A POD of 35-40 false killer whales and bottlenose dolphins stranded on Sunday afternoon at Taylor's Beach on Māhia Peninsula.

Initially it had looked as if the human barrier pushing them away from the shallows and beach would be successful.

They were re-floated at high tide at about 3.30pm, assisted by the local community.

Unfortunately the entire pod then re-stranded at a remote and inaccessible reef point further south from Taylor's Beach on Māhia Peninsula.

The Department of Conservation (DOC) assessed the whales and dolphins as having an extremely low chance of being re-floated and surviving.

DOC Gisborne Operations Manager Matt Tong said they made the difficult decision to euthanise the animals to prevent them suffering overnight.

"This is a sad outcome for these whales, particularly after the successful re-floating earlier today.

"However, they are clearly suffering and euthanising them is the most humane course of action."

The stranding incident was first reported to DOC at about 2pm Sunday afternoon. A DOC team travelled from Gisborne to Taylor's Bay, arriving by 5pm, by which time the whales had been initially re-floated.

DOC acknowledged volunteers, iwi and the local community, who came to the beach to assist with the initial re-floating of the whales.

Whale and dolphin strandings are common in New Zealand.

Why they strand is not fully known but factors can include sickness, navigational error, geographical features, a rapidly falling



**A HARD CALL:** The false killer whales were euthanised after they stranded again at a remote reef on Sunday early evening.

Picture by Shannon Rogers

tide, being chased by a predator or extreme weather.

Most of the stranded pod were false killer whales (a species of dolphin), with a small number of bottlenose dolphins.

■ For more information on marine mammal strandings, see Marine mammals via DOC's website (doc.govt.nz)

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