

NZ TONIGHT**Kiwi growers dig deep**

PAGE 3

**WORLD****Climate changes on Boxer**

PAGE 8

**SPORT****Henry ready to rumble**

PAGE 11

**MOVIES****Russell Crowe's latest**

PAGE 13



Auckland Sat: 23°/15° Sun: 22°/13° 	Hamilton Sat: 24°/16° Sun: 20°/10° 	Wellington Sat: 18°/11° Sun: 17°/10° 	Christchurch Sat: 17°/8° Sun: 16°/8° 	Queenstown Sat: 18°/5° Sun: 15°/5° 	Dunedin Sat: 16°/8° Sun: 15°/7°
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MINE BLAST: 27 MISSING



WELLINGTON, NOV 19 – Emergency services assembled overnight for a rescue bid to be mounted at first light this morning for the 27 people missing in the Pike Creek Coal mine 46km northeast of Greymouth.

“St John has sent a team of paramedics to the West Coast ... in preparation for any rescue efforts which take place tomorrow,” an ambulance spokesman said tonight.

Tasman Police district commander Superintendent Gary Knowles travelled from his Nelson headquarters to oversee the police team who were gathering in Greymouth.

However, the emergency workers – including the West Coast mines rescue squad – tonight remained outside the mine portal amid concerns about ventilation inside.

One concern was that the mine might still have pockets of “fire damp” or explosive methane gas, which could not be ventilated because the mine’s fans were not working.

Air quality testing was being carried out.

“This is a very uncertain and worrying time for families and friends of the miners and contractors who are at the mine,” Superintendent Knowles said. “We are working closely with mine officials and other emergency services to do everything we can to help with the rescue operation.”

At least 27 miners were tonight still unaccounted for – 15 mine employees and 12 contractors – following the explosion at the isolated underground mine.

Police spokeswoman Barbara Dunn said an electrician went into the mine to investigate a power

outage about 3.50pm and discovered a loader driver who had been blown off his machine about 1500m inside the mine shaft.

Two men, Russell Smith, 50, and Daniel Rockhouse, 24, fled to the surface following the explosion, and were being treated for moderate injuries at Grey Base Hospital.

Six ambulances were at the mine’s processing plant in Atarau, halfway between Greymouth and Reefton, and three rescue helicopters had been sent from Nelson, Greymouth and Christchurch.

The mine entrance is about 2.2km long, and then branches out “roadways” in the coal seam.

Thirty-six tags belonging to miners were still hanging on the board at the entrance to the mine.

Mr Smith and Mr Rockhouse indicated three

Continue reading

on the INSIDE

**WE NEEDED A FAIRYTALE**

New generation of royals

Page 5

**DAMN THE TORPEDOES**

Tom Petty & the Heartbreakers

Page 14

**KINECT REVIEWED**

Rife with problems

Page 19

Mother runs over and kills baby son

WELLINGTON, NOV 19 NZPA – An 18-month-old toddler was killed when his mother ran him over in a Hastings carpark today.

The boy was Jabrill Eyles, Senior Sergeant Stuart

Flemming of Hastings police said. The accident happened on Heretaunga Street West about 4pm.

The toddler’s parents were “distracted” by what had happened and police would interview the

mother when she was in a condition to be spoken to, Mr Fleming said.

It would be some time before any decision on whether charges were laid would be made, he said.

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Music



Dan Harr/AdMedia/NEWSCOM

When Tom Petty & the Heartbreakers said 'Damn the Torpedoes'

LOS ANGELES—The adage about what doesn't kill you makes you stronger hardly has a more powerful musical manifestation than the story behind Tom Petty & the Heartbreakers' 1979 album "Damn the Torpedoes."

That tale has become a central part of the mythology of rock 'n' roll, one that aspiring artists of any stripe might look to as a source of inspiration and reassurance in the face of the hurdles that inevitably spring up in front of those who are pursuing a grand vision.

It's a story worth revisiting, what with this week's deluxe reissue of the original album, which catapulted the group to a new level of commercial success and critical respect with its bold ambition and fearless musical execution. The album reissue follows the recent release on DVD and Blu-ray disc of a new "Classic Albums" documentary about what went on behind the scenes between the release of the group's 1977 sophomore album "You're Gonna Get It" and the arrival more than two years later of "Torpedoes," which yielded the hits "Refugee," "Here Comes My Girl" and the band's first top-10 single, "Don't Do Me Like That." They make excellent companion pieces, the home video edition of the documentary containing an additional 42 minutes of material not included in the August airing of a 56-minute cut on VH1.

Along with new and vintage interview and performance footage of Petty, guitarist Mike Campbell,

keyboardist Benmont Tench, bassist Ron Blair and drummer Stan Lynch, director Matthew Longfellow gets album producer turned often-elusive industry titan Jimmy Iovine on camera for his typically colorful insights. At one point, Iovine recalls telling Petty they had enough songs for the record. "It was the last time I ever said that to a band," Iovine says with a laugh. They also get engineer Shelley Yakus to elaborate on his perspective about what made "Torpedoes" successful on so many levels.

“PETTY RECOUNTS ORDERING BAND MEMBERS TO HIDE THE TAPES AT THE END OF EACH RECORDING SESSION AND NOT TELL HIM WHERE THEY WERE, SO HE COULD HONESTLY GO INTO COURT IF NECESSARY AND TESTIFY THAT HE DIDN'T KNOW THEIR LOCATION”

The creative process of songwriting and recording became inextricably tied up in the band's fight with MCA Records when the company bought the ABC Records label, parent of Shelter Records, which had signed and released Petty's first two albums. As the battle for control raged between a giant corporation and a band of rock 'n' roll brothers who'd driven across country from Gainesville, Fla., in hopes of making records, it became a classic David-versus-Goliath tale.

Petty didn't want their music — to them, their

lifeblood — treated like just another company asset, and the wily strategies they used to outmaneuver MCA's high-priced Century City lawyers showed them to be as smart as they were passionate about what they were working on in the recording studio. Petty recounts ordering band members to hide the tapes at the end of each recording session and not tell him where they were, so he could honestly go into court if necessary and testify that he didn't know their location.

Ultimately, as noted in the film, "MCA blinked," and Petty and the band won their freedom, which allowed them to sign with Danny Bramson's new MCA-affiliated Backstreet Records and put them out with an executive and a label that shared their commitment to the project, not simply the financial bottom line.

Musically inclined viewers should revel in what are effectively tutorials from Petty, Campbell and Tench about how they created what became the Heartbreakers' signature sound. Guitarheads will

love — or cringe at — Campbell's story of how he came to own the iconic Rickenbacker guitar Petty holds on the album cover — he paid \$150 for it from an Anaheim musician he found through a Recycler ad. Recording studio enthusiasts also should relish the light that Iovine and Yakus offer on the technical aspects of making the album.

Petty, like Neil Young and some other audiophile-minded rockers, is a big fan of the Blu-ray disc's ability to capture many more nuances of recorded music than can a CD, much less sonically watered down mp3s.

Any Petty fans with a Blu-ray player owe it to themselves to hear the album as close to the way the Heartbreakers heard it in the studio three decades ago. (In the Blu-ray version, the "Classic Albums" documentary also benefits from heightened video and audio quality.) But both the Blu-ray and CD versions of the album serve up nine bonus tracks, including one, "Nowhere," that even Petty had given up for lost decades ago. The Blu-ray adds videos of "Here Comes My Girl" and "Refugee."

In conjunction with other studio tracks left off "Damn the Torpedoes," such as "Surrender," "Casa Dega" and "It's Rainin' Again," and live or alternative versions of several of the songs that did make the cut, the bonus material fleshes out the picture of just how strong one American band became through its just-less-than killer struggles.

The Waiting