

ŌTAKI TODAY

otakitoday.com

TĪHEMA/DECEMBER 2023

Ngā Kōrero o Ōtaki

Ōtaki Today wishes all its readers, advertisers and supporters meri Kirihimete, and a fantastic year in 2024.

Kelly-Anne first wāhine carver

The graduation of Ōtaki's Kelly-Anne Ngatai as a fully qualified wāhine carver was a highlight of Te Wānanga o Raukawa's graduation ceremony on Friday, December 8.

She is the first wāhine to complete Poutuarongo Toi Whakarākai – Whakairo (Bachelor of Design and Art – Carving), after joining the course to study full-time three years ago. She says the same rigour by kaiako (tutors) Chris Gerritsen, Bill Doyle and Brian Climie was applied to her as the male carvers.

"I did exactly the same work, and I loved it," she says. "The kaiako were fantastic. As a wāhine I feel privileged to be allowed to carve alongside the men."

Carving has traditionally been a male domain.

Kelly-Anne acknowledged her mother, who died only last year.

"She gave her blessing before she passed. She would have been proud that I've graduated."

Kelly-Anne and the four other 2023 whakairo graduates are heading to the South Island early next year to work on a pou (meeting house pillar) and kōwhaiwhai (painted patterns) at an Ōamaru marae.

More than 400 people enrolled with Te Wānanga o Raukawa graduated on Friday with heke (diploma) through to tāhuhu (master's degree), making it was the biggest number of graduates ever.

Graduands and their whānau were welcomed into Ngā Purapura, Ōtaki's world-class training facility, for what

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LEFT: Te Wānanga o Raukawa's first ever wāhine whakairo (woman carver) to graduate with a degree, Kelly-Anne Ngatai, at the graduation ceremony on December 8.

BELOW LEFT: Fleur Coleman of Auckland and Prayash Chhetri of Wellington were graduating in Poutuarongo Puna Maumahara (Bachelor of Information Management).

BELOW: Graduating from Poutuarongo Toiora Whanau (Bachelor of Social Work) were, from left, Kiri Toheriri, Anna Puihi, Westeria Black with son Manawanui Lazarus, Leanne Hepi (in green behind), Charlene Ngamu and Hayley Campbell.

Photos Ōtaki Today



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WHAT'S ON

LIGHT UP ŌTAKI presents **CHRISTMAS WONDERLAND** at the Ōtaki College hall, Mill Rd. Open Wednesday 20 – Saturday 23 December, 6-8.30pm. Entry by koha will be donated to the Ōtaki Foodbank.

FESTIVAL OF POTS AND GARDEN ART: January 19-24, at Anam Cara, Rangiu Rd, Ōtaki. See otakipotteryclub.org

ŌTAKI KITE FESTIVAL: On Ōtaki Beach February 17 and 18, 10am-4pm. Kites, entertainment, food trucks and stalls. Bring a kite or buy one at the information tent.

ŌTAKI MUSEUM: See the current exhibition about the Railway area of Ōtaki. Visitors can also play the old theatre pianola while at the museum. The Anne Thorpe Reading Room is open at the same times as the museum, 10am-2pm Thursday to Saturday, except public holidays. 49 Main St. Ōtaki. 06 364-6886.

TOI MATARAU GALLERY: Toi Matarau is a summit for multidisciplinary arts where Māori and indigenous artists gather, collaborate, are inspired and supported. See toi.maorilandfilm.co.nz

TOTE MODERN: Ōtaki Pottery Club's own gallery and workshop at Ōtaki-Māori Racing Club, Te Roto Rd. Open 10am-3pm Friday to Sunday. See otakipotteryclub.org

TOI MAHARA, Mahara Place, Waikanae. The Kāpiti Coast's district gallery has reopened bigger and better than ever. See toimahara.nz

COMMUNITY BOARDS: The Ōtaki Community Board next meets in 2024 at 7pm, Tuesday March 5 in the Gertrude Atmore Lounge (attached to the Memorial Hall). The first Waikanae Community Board meeting in 2024 is at 7pm, Tuesday February 27, at the Waikanae Community Centre, 28 Utauta St. The public is welcome at community board meetings. Search "meetings and agendas" at kapiticoast.govt.nz from two days before the meeting for the agenda, which is also at council libraries and service centres. To speak at a meeting, register by calling 04 296 4700 or 0800 486 486, or email democracy.services@kapiticoast.govt.nz

ŌTAKI MARKET: on every Sunday on old SH1, opposite New World. Runs from 9am-2pm. Contact 027 234-1090.

COMMUNITY NETWORKING: An opportunity for any agency providing a service to the people of Ōtaki to find out what each other is doing. First Tuesday of every month, 9.30am for an hour at the Gertrude Atmore Supper Room (by the library). Contact Marilyn 021 2255 684.

CASUAL GET-TOGETHER: A new resident of Ōtaki? Looking for company? Come for a coffee and chat, 10am on the first Wednesday of every month at RiverStone Café (next to Kathmandu). All welcome. Contact Marilyn 021 2255 684.

ŌTAKI GARAGE SALE: Third Saturday of the month, 9am-11.30am, Presbyterian Church, 249 Mill Rd. 06 364-6449. Rev Peter Jackson 021 207 9455, owpresb@xtra.co.nz

POETRY IN ŌTAKI: Ōtaki Library Supper Room, 10.30am-noon third Friday of every month. Bring your own or a favourite. Contact Philip 021 977 834

ŌTAKI STROKE SUPPORT GROUP & WELLNESS CENTRE: Meets for "Sit & Be Fit" classes, 10am Friday mornings at Senior Citizen's Hall, Rangitira Street. All welcome.

ŌTAKI LIBRARY – ALL SESSIONS FREE: (Except public holidays)

JP service every Monday 10.30am-12.30pm;

Age Concern every 2nd Thursday 10am-noon

Greypower 1st & 3rd Thursday 10.30am-1.30pm.

CHOIRS Let's Sing Ōtaki, Tuesdays 2-3pm, Hadfield Hall. Kāpiti Women's Choir, Mondays 1.30-3pm, Baptist Church, Te Moana Rd, Waikanae. New members welcome. Enquires to Ann-Marie Stapp 021 492 127.

WAIKANA BEACH INDOOR MARKET: Second Sunday of the month, 10am-1pm, at the Waikanae Beach Community Hall, 22 Rauparaha St, Waikanae Beach.

To list an event, contact debbi@idmedia.co.nz

Negotiations had eye on next election

Minor parties in the three-headed National led coalition government have carefully used the negotiating process for ministerial portfolios to establish a base from which they can politic their causes as a prelude to the next general election.

Sectoral interest areas to which they gave particular attention include the aged, the farming community and country regions. Each of these interest areas stand to benefit, not least because National in its allocation of ministerial roles provided for definitions of portfolios that will allow its representatives to operate in similar but different aspects of activities that impact within them.

For example, NZ First has achieved the portfolio of minister for seniors to be held by Casey Costello. But National has complemented the NZ First allocation through Louise Upston, including in her portfolios the role of minister for the community and voluntary sector that entitles her to move among similar age groups to those covered-off by her more junior Cabinet colleague.

National has retained agriculture in the face of strong efforts by both Act and NZ First to get their hands on this prime political spot for relations with the farming community. But having secured the position it has had to concede to Act that the former president of Federated Farmers, Andrew Hoggard, should be an associate minister of agriculture and agree to Mark Patterson of NZ First having a similar associate role.

That Shane Jones has secured a ministerial position as minister for regional development

further enhances the potential of NZ First to lift its profile among rural communities and present itself as a generous benefactor to community organisations looking for support in areas under economic strain.

This careful and calculated political manipulation with the future in mind comes against a background of almost hysterical reaction by many Labour and Green activists toward the coalition's ability to form a government. They threaten to further disrupt remaining goodwill in electorates where the swing to the centre-right of the political spectrum reflected a tiredness of Labour in office and the "government knows best" approach it adopted.

The outpouring of invective against Christopher Luxon since the election surpassed by a country mile the anger apparent among National supporters when Winston Peters chose Jacinda Ardern ahead of Bill English to lead a government in 2017. It has been matched by what commentator Karl du Fresne called "the media's war on the new government".

He wrote that the media was functioning as the opposition and the press gallery had stepped into the vacuum while a demoralised Labour Party licked its wounds.

"War was declared on the day the coalition ministers were sworn in. The tone of the media coverage over the ensuing three days has been relentlessly carping, petty, quarrelsome, and negative. We are seeing Ministers baited and goaded in a way that never happened under Labour," du Fresne wrote.

It may well be that activists to the left of the spectrum soon find reasons other than the

Israeli-Palestinian conflict to take to the streets. Matters coming forward for resolution include a tighter relationship with the US and Australia through the Aukus security arrangement as spearheaded by Winston Peters; health and welfare re-orientation; changes to the way the Treaty of Waitangi is interpreted in courts and reductions in public service numbers. Already the government is locked in debate with the Department of Internal Affairs on abandonment of Labour's Three Waters project.

The association of Aukus with Australia's moves to acquire nuclear-powered submarines adds an element of nuclear politics sure to further rack-up street protest, especially as the NZ First leader will be at the front end of New Zealand efforts to link with the organisation.

But the Labour Party's ability to shake government resolve on this issue is likely to be hampered by its appointment of David Parker as its foreign policy spokesperson. While Peters is a potent combatant on the podium in defence of the positions he adopts, Parker is wooden, introverted and to date more sleep inducing than rousing as an orator. His public persona does not match his backroom skills of progress through the ranks of his party.

The coalition's aim for early action is clear from its 100-day plan. Parliamentarians face a heavy workload in the week preceding Christmas and an early return in 2024 to maintain legislative momentum. By the end of the 100 days New Zealand voters who opted for change will know it is well under way.

Meantime, merry Christmas and a happy New Year to all *Otaki Today* readers.

■ Bruce has been an economics and business editor, and a foreign correspondent in Washington, London and Hong Kong.



POLITICS

BRUCE KOHN

CARTOON OF THE MONTH

By Jared Carson

Summer in Ōtaki!

ŌTAKI TODAY

Ngā Kōrero o Ōtaki

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Note *Ōtaki Today* no longer has a landline.

DESIGN by ID Media Ltd.

PRINTED by Beacon Print, Whakatane.

CONTRIBUTORS: PERA BARRETT (Good Thinking) • SIMON BLACK (Ōtaki Community) • CAM BUTLER (Cam's Corner) • TIM COSTLEY (The Electorate) • DAVID LEDSON / NICKY TREADWELL (Museum) • FRASER CARSON (Media & Community) • JARED CARSON (Cartoons) • KYUSS CARSON (Kids' puzzle) • STEVE HUMPHRIES (Science) • KATH IRVINE (Edible Backyards) • BRUCE KOHN (Politics) • BROOKE MCGOWAN (Law) • MICHAEL MOORE (Te Horo) • CHRIS WHELAN (Your Business).

Ōtaki Today online: otakitoday.com
ISSUE 66: ISSN 2624-3067
ONLINE: ISSN 2744-354X
Next copy and advertising deadline: January 9. **Publication:** January 17, 2024.
Delivery: If you don't receive your copy of *Ōtaki Today*, please call us.

Ōtaki Today is a member of the NZ Community Newspapers Association

John, Rex in Hall of Fame

John Barrett and Rex Kerr are this week being inducted into the Ōtaki College Hall of Fame.

In a ceremony at the college on Friday night (December 15), the honours board in the college hall will include their names alongside David Pritchard and Chris Parkin (inducted at the inaugural Hall of Fame function in 2018), and Pete Housiaux and Jackie Sutton (2021).

Rex, who was principal of Ōtaki College from 1976-1997, is the first staff member to be honoured.

John was a student at the college from 1961-65, leaving at the age of 16. He says he enjoyed his school days, but was never considered an academic.

“No, there were plenty of kids smarter than me,” he says. “What I do remember is that the teachers were a good bunch of people.”

John’s recognition by the XŌtaki College Alumni Trust, which administers the Hall of Fame, is yet another award for his considerable achievements in the community and the business realm. Last year he was inducted into the Business Kāpiti-Horowhenua (BKH) Hall of Fame.

John is best known for Kāpiti Island Nature Tours, a business he established with sister Amo in 1999. The whānau has lived and farmed on the island for several generations.

The business grew out of a youth



BACK AT COLLEGE: Rex Kerr, left, and John Barrett at Ōtaki College, where Rex was principal from 1976-1997, and John a student in the early 1960s. Photo Ōtaki Today

development programme John initiated on the island. Parents of the rangatahi wanted to visit, then friends of the parents, and the seed for a tourism venture was sown. John is the managing director of the multi-award-winning business.

He is passionate about nature-based tourism and is a strong advocate of indigenous education.

Among his achievements are: founding trustee of Kāpiti Skills Centre; founding member of Kāpiti Marine Reserve Management

Committee; founding member of the Leadership Council of World Indigenous Tourism Alliance; past chair of Te Ara a Maui-Wellington Regional Māori Tourism Alliance, and the NZ Māori Tourism Council; former director of Tourism NZ; past board member of Te Wānanga o Raukawa. He is chair of the Māoriland Charitable Trust, chair of Raukawa Whānau Ora Ltd, and a director of Te Wānanga o Raukawa Foundation.

During Rex’s 21 years as principal

of Ōtaki College, he saw the roll peak, in 1985, to 680 students (it now has about 450). He introduced te reo Māori into the college curriculum.

Rex was president of the Rāhui Rugby Club for 10 years, and has been patron since 2014. He wrote extensively about Ōtaki’s history, with books on the Ōtaki railway station, the Ōtaki River, the RSA, the Ōtaki Scholar and Ōtaki’s prominent early citizens. He contributed several historical articles for Ōtaki Today and the Ōtaki Historical Journal.

Te Wānanga o Raukawa graduation

from front page
was the 42nd graduation for Te Wānanga o Raukawa.

The day was filled with emotion and elation. Graduands were both nervous and excited, and whānau were clearly proud to witness the big event. Those who couldn’t get in to the auditorium were able to watch the big screen outside, where the weather was perfect for whānau photographs, children’s activities, and entertainment from Ōtaki’s own Tui-Eilish Tahere-Katene.

“It was a wonderful celebration and acknowledgement of student achievement and their whānau support,” says Wānanga tumuaki Mereana Selby. “We’re thrilled with the attendance, which was higher than ever before, and the high number of graduates, especially at undergraduate and postgraduate degree level.”

“This is a strong affirmation of the Māori education model, the importance of language and cultural revitalisation, and the expression of tino rangatiratanga.”

■ More photos on Ōtaki Today’s Facebook page



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Bi-lingual signs aid communication

Neuro-diverse tamariki who don't speak are being encouraged to play in public spaces via new communication boards.

The first of a series of seven boards throughout Kāpiti Coast was unveiled at Haruātai Park in Ōtaki on November 30. On hand were representatives of Kāpiti Coast District Council and Ngā Hapū o Ōtaki, who collaborated on the project that includes information in te reo Māori.

The council's play projects coordinator, Cat Wylde, says the communication boards are part of a process to make local playgrounds accessible for all abilities.

"While the boards include symbols for yes/no and counting numbers, there are additional symbols for running and jumping, and stand-out pieces of equipment such as slides."

Heni Wirihana Te Rei, tumuaki of Te Kura Kaupapa Māori o Te Rito in Ōtaki, says the boards ensure the communication needs of neuro-diverse tamariki and their whānau in immersion language environments are met.

"We're really pleased to see the first of these signs installed and look forward to more being rolled out across Ōtaki and the wider district soon."

Ngā Hapū o Ōtaki chair Denise



At the unveiling of the bi-lingual signs at Haruātai Park on November 30 were, from left, Kirsten Hapeta of Ngā Hapū o Ōtaki, KCDC Iwi Partnership group manager Deanna Rudd, team group manager Hara Adams, KCDC play projects coordinator Cat Wyle, Te Kura Kaupapa Māori o Te Rito tumuaki Heni Wirihana Te Rai, and Ngā Hapū o Ōtaki chair Denise Hapeta.

Photo Ōtaki Today

Hapeta says the boards support Ngā Hapū o Ōtaki's vision – Kia Ukaipō Te Reo Māori ki Ōtaki – for Ōtaki to be officially recognised as a bilingual town.

The boards include a QR code for uploading the communication tools to digital devices, allowing families to use the tools in other parks and public spaces throughout Kāpiti.

The Haruātai Park boards are the

first to be installed, with the all-abilities Lorna Irene Drive Reserve playground in Raumati South to follow soon, making the playground fully accessible, not just physically accessible. More boards are planned in or near playgrounds at Aorangi Road Reserve, Mazengarb Reserve, and Maclean Park (Paraparaumu), Marine Gardens (Raumati Beach) and Campbell Park (Paekākāriki).

The project began in Kāpiti after Cat Wylde saw similar boards being used in Tairāwhiti Gisborne.

She says the project sought advice from speech language therapist Kristina Pinto and TalkLink Trust, and engaged with the council's Disability Advisory Group, a mana whenua translator, local speech therapist Sarah Courtage, and parents of non-speaking rangatahi

Rebekah Corlett and Nicola Stoddard-Edmonds.

Rebekah, who is also on the Disability Advisory Group, says communication is a human right, and play is an integral part of growing up.

"The communication boards are a form of AAC (Augmentative and Alternative Communication) that non-speaking people use to communicate."

ŌTAKI TODAY

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New youth space launched

A new youth space, Te Haemata, has been opened with a gathering of whānau, youth leaders, mentors and supporters at the Barbershop in Aotaki Street.

The space, initiated by Te Puna Oranga o Ōtaki, is set to become a hub for local rangatahi, allowing connection, fun, leadership and support. However, Te Haemata is not confined to a fixed location; it will be predominantly mobile, housed in a branded caravan stocked with equipment for various activities. The approach aims to make the youth space accessible to a wider audience, bringing the experience directly to the community, and led by rangatahi.

Te Puna Oranga says its initiative is guided by the rangatahi of Ōtaki, with support from Ngā Hapū o Ōtaki, and in partnership with Kāpiti Coast District Council. The collaboration aims to align the space with the community's needs and aspirations.

Te Haemata has its first event on Saturday (December 16) at the Ōtaki Beach basketball courts, with its new caravan and staff from Te Puna Oranga.

Ashleigh Manga is leading rangatahi activities originating from Te Puna Oranga.

Kāinga Ora reveals new homes

By Ian Carson

The first seven of 21 new Kāinga Ora homes will be housing families by February.

Kāinga Ora showed off four homes built at 43-45 Matene Street at an open home on Sunday, December 3. Two are 2-bedroom houses, two are 3-bedroom.

The new homes will provide much needed housing for families both on the Ministry for Social Development (MSD) waitlist and Kāinga Ora customers. A total of 177 families are on the waiting list for the area. Anyone housed through Kāinga Ora will be on that list.

Kāinga Ora senior stakeholder relationship manager Josh Clark says the priority for Kāinga Ora is to rehouse people who are in Ōtaki, or have a strong connection to the town.

“In some instances we have to temporarily relocate families in order to build new, warmer, drier homes.” Josh says. “They’re excited about moving back here – and in a brand new home.”

The block at 275 Mill Road, on the corner of Dunstan Street, has three houses that are also near completion. They include a 1-bedroom home and two 2-bedrooms.

Other Kāinga Ora developments in Ōtaki scheduled for completion mid-2024 include:

- 5-9 Matene Street – six new homes



Kāinga Ora staff at their open home in Matene Street on December 4. From left: Senior stakeholder relationship manager Josh Clark; advisor customer liaison Anton Botha; lead service designer Shane Ngan; project manager, construction and innovation, Daniel Eason; and manager community engagement and partnership Abbie McKoy. Photo Ōtaki Today

including three 2-bedrooms and three 3-bedrooms

- 22-26 Kirk Street – five 3-bedrooms and one 4-bedroom
- 12 Tōtara Street – one 2-bedroom and one 3-bedroom.

Kāinga Ora is also looking at how to develop a block at 45-47 Aotaki Street. All the new homes under construction are being built by Lower Hutt firm EasyBuild, but local labour and contracting for services such as landscaping are sourced locally as much as possible.

They are all built to Healthy Homes standards.

The Matene Street open day demonstrated how far public housing has progressed. The homes are spacious and well equipped, including heat pumps and water tanks that provide grey water.

“People are genuinely excited about making a new start,” Josh says. “We see how proud they are when they show their friends and family around. It gives us a buzz, too.”

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Challenges for Ōtaki shops, but signs positive

By Ian Carson

When NZ Natural moved its clothing store out of Ōtaki’s Railway shopping strip recently, some locals became concerned about a retail slide, but one expert says there are positive signs.

Chris Wilkinson, whose First Retail Group drafted a retail strategy for Elevate Ōtaki earlier this year, says there’s still plenty of confidence in Ōtaki.

“NZ Natural has built a very large and successful online audience,” he says. “It’s a good example of a business transitioning strategically to a model that can serve a broader and more resilient audience in a more economical way.

“From conversations with them during development of the [Ōtaki] strategy, it was clear that they were comfortable and positive about the future success of the precinct, but were wanting to concentrate greater emphasis on their Australasian e-commerce sales.”

That was confirmed to *Ōtaki Today* by NZ Natural chief executive Phil Grant, who says the company has boosted its e-commerce considerably. Sales from the 2022-23 year show online at 55 percent, the Norsewood store 30 percent and Ōtaki at 15 percent.

However, Phil acknowledges the expressway has made the Ōtaki highway area a much nicer shopping experience, from being able to park easily to road noise reduction.

“One of the factors we will miss is the try-before-you-buy online factor at Ōtaki from the Wellington market,” he says.

Chris says he’s heard of interest in Ōtaki from others in the outdoor clothing category, and as the First Retail strategy points out, “building ‘cluster and destination value’ around this and other categories could help the precinct find its USP [unique selling proposition] as a place to travel to for these products”.

It would also fit well with the area’s “gateway to nature” potential that Chris believes is imperative for future tourism marketing.

He says there are other positive signs at the Railway, where businesses are expanding or moving in to the area.

Jacqui Simpson at Books & Co has recently bought the building the store occupies, which includes a small space next door. She says that space will be set up to trial a children’s bookshop annexe called Books & Co Kids.

“We do feel very positive about the Railway retail area with it being a much more pleasant destination now for shoppers,” Jacqui says. “It is very convenient for people to pull off the expressway and visit us, as well as the cafés and other shops; parking is usually easy and our local community do want and need a good range of retail options.”

She says local support has given her the confidence to invest in the precinct.

Just next door to the bookshop is a new bakery, Blackhood Bakes, which opened on November 22.

Owner Harry Kharoud says he’s been overwhelmed by local support for his bakery, seven years after he first visited Ōtaki.

“We were cruising around and stumbled upon this little piece of heaven,” he says. “I don’t know how to explain it, but Ōtaki had this very positive, calming effect.

“At that time I dreamt of opening a little bakery of my own in this town. I am hopelessly in love with the community of Ōtaki, the love and support they had offered us from day 1.

“We try to bring something different here, and we have received overwhelming feedback and support from the community. At the end of the day it’s all about family, and we have that embedded in us, we love our family and Ōtaki is what family is.”

Chris says the arrival of the bakery is an important step in enriching Ōtaki’s food and beverage offering, which First Retail also identified as a priority.

“Places and offers like this, that locals might be travelling outside the area for now, are especially important with the revocation work that could otherwise be impactful for businesses,” he says.

Revocation is a process in which Waka Kotahi “revokes” the state highway status and hands the road over to Kāpiti Coast District Council. Kerb-to-kerb enhancements on the road are part of the deal. That work has already begun and will continue for another two years.

The effects on accessibility, convenience and visitor experience during revocation works were identified by First Retail as key risks.

“Businesses, many of which are already facing challenges from changes in audience and spending, now face upcoming disruption from construction which they are unprepared for. Furthermore, the precinct lacks the collective representation to ensure impacts are minimised and mitigated, wherever possible.

“We need to double down on maintaining and growing goodwill and priority for this area, which requires enablement of the promotional, curatorial and community-building aspects of the strategy with priority.”

He recommends engaging a local specialist who can do this alongside the businesses.

“Ōtaki still needs to tell its story cohesively and needs to be recognised as an important part of the district’s tourism plan.”

This is especially important given Ōtaki’s attraction as a place with seasonal events, which include the Ōtaki Kite Festival, the Māoriland Film Festival, and the Festival of Pots and Garden Art. The district also hosts weddings, has a unique Māori racecourse, new cycleways and other recreational attractions.

Chris says the retail precinct should be the area visitors orientate to and from, but it needs strong advocacy.

“I see a very exciting future for Ōtaki, but we need to work on building those anchor attractors and heighten consumers’ awareness of the area’s offer and experience.”



“I see a very exciting future for Ōtaki, but we need to work on building those anchor attractors and heighten consumers’ awareness of the area’s offer and experience.”

- Chris Wilkinson



Ōtaki College students who delivered food parcels and cash to the foodbank from a college “mufti” day. Back row from left are Ōtaki Foodbank chair Graeme Baumgart, Christian Lange-Gerrard, Lance Filimaua, Hamish Campbell, Max Lansbury, Nikora Cameron, Giorgio Bevan and Mana Toimata; front row Finn Butler, Ethan Bevan, foodbank manager Lucy Tahere, Noah Carpenter, Matthew Hall, Zach Heenan, Sam Auld and Ihaka Cameron.

Photo supplied

Foodbank benefits from community generosity

The Ōtaki Foodbank is delighted with the response to a recent appeal for food to get it through the expected Christmas period demand.

The appeal, organised by the Friends of the Ōtaki Foodbank, netted more than 200 bags of food, which were collected by the volunteer group.

“Manaakitanga – Small town, big heart – this slogan certainly proved to be true,” says Friends organiser Don Howden. “It is humbling to see how our community responded so positively to our appeal.”

A few days earlier, a group of Ōtaki College students collected food items and more than \$400 in cash from a college “mufti day”.

Foodbank chair Graeme Baumgart said the appeal and college support was appreciated by the foodbank.

“We do rely on our community for support and they certainly have given this through these appeals. We thank the community for another example of this spirit of caring for each other – manaakitanga.”

Donations can continue to be made at any time to the foodbank, located in Main Street.

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CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR CLOSEDOWN

We would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your support this year, and advise you of our Christmas working hours.

We will be closed from 4.30pm Wednesday December 20, 2023, and normal business will resume on Monday January 8, 2024.

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We would like to wish you all a very **Merry Christmas** and a **Happy New Year**, and look forward to your continued support next year.

From Dean and the team at Riverbank Engineering.

Two new on Te Horo Beach Friends committee

Two new members have joined the Friends of Te Horo Beach committee after its AGM on November 29

Rupert Randall as new secretary and David Walshaw join president Nikki McGill, treasurer Matthew Ineson and Liz Koh on the committee. The Friends (FoTHB) has a history dating back to the 1970s, when it was established as a community organisation to support Te Horo Beach. Its aim is to make the beach and its surroundings safer, cleaner and more resilient. FoTHB says it is non-partisan and its core functions are to help maintain the beach, the defibrillator installed in the village and the CCTV cameras. “We arrange resuscitation training. We also aim to improve the beach and village environment and to support local residents,” FoTHB said in a statement for Ōtaki Today. “This year we’ve worked extensively with Renee Corlett from Wremo [Wellington Region Emergency Management Office] and the Te Horo Hall emergency hub to investigate and find ways to help Te Horo Beach be more

resilient in an emergency. “We’ve also run several social events to encourage neighbours to get to know each other better and we’ve had some great guest speakers.” The Friends has applied for and received community grants to help improve the beach environment. It’s asked the community for a list of what it would like to see improved. “Many of the items are general maintenance and restoration, which are the responsibility of the local and regional councils, so we’ve been meeting with council staff to get these improvements happening and into the council plans.” At a recent social gathering the Friends heard from James Willcocks, project director for Predator Free Wellington. That organisation has just helped make Miramar Peninsula predator free and is now moving into the Wellington CBD as part of its next phase. “He talked about the possibility of having a predator free Kapiti. We are keen to help explore this goal for Te Horo.” ■ To contact the Friends, email fothb15@gmail.com



THERE WAS plenty of cheer at the Te Horo Hall as the community gathered to celebrate Christmas on Friday, December 1. The get-together was organised by the Te Horo Hall committee, which is fundraising to restore the historic – but earthquake-prone – hall.

TOP: Members of the Kāpiti Brass Band entertain the crowd. Photo Ōtaki Today
ABOVE: Santa (AKA George Brickell) spread Christmas cheer at the gathering; and at left, Roger Papps and Neil MacInness were busy throughout the evening at the barbecue stand. Photos Michael Moore

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Ōtaki Today encourages letters to the editor. If you have something to say, write to us. Please include your full name, address and contact phone number. Only letters that include these details will be published, unless there is good reason to withhold a name. Please keep the word count to a maximum of 200 words. Note your letter may be edited for grammar and accuracy. Not all letters received will be published, and the publisher reserves the right to reject any letter. Write to Ōtaki Today, 13 Te Manuao Rd, Ōtaki or email ian@idmedia.co.nz
Note: The views and opinions of our contributors are not necessarily those of Ōtaki Today.

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Kilns centre opening

The Kilns at Te Horo, a lasting tribute to internationally renowned potter Mirek Smíšek, is open to the public from December 14.

Seven years in the making, The Kilns at Te Horo will become an integral part of the New Zealand ceramic arts scene. It will highlight the life and work of the celebrated craft potter, who lived in Te Horo for 30 years.

The chair of The Mirek Smíšek Arts Trust, Tony Hartvelt, says Mirek was a contemporary of many of New Zealand's best known craft potters, but was the first to have the confidence to attempt to make a living from his pottery skills.

“He gained an international reputation particularly for his economy of form and glazes reflecting the hills, forests, flora and waters of the region,” Tony says. “The Kilns at Te Horo is more than a tribute to Smíšek. It will take visitors on a journey through the ancient landscape of the Hautere bush to Smíšek’s iconic beehive kilns, his work and its latest interpretation by the resident artist now living and working on site.”

The opening of The Kilns is a culmination of more than seven years work by local people, Waka Kotahi and its contractors Fletcher Construction, Sparrow Construction and engineering consultants WSP.

“The support the trust has enjoyed from Heritage New Zealand, and Waka Kotahi and its construction teams, has encouraged the development of this project,” Tony says. “The trust has also enjoyed the support of successive Kapiti mayors, councillors, Ōtaki MPs and the community.”



Visitors look around the Kilns at Te Horo complex on November 29, at which an opening date of December 14 was announced. Photo Cam Butler

Heritage New Zealand has designated the remnant of the Smíšek property, his kilns and the renovated former Te Horo Railway Station a Category 2 Heritage site.

Still to come at The Kilns will be an arts centre, workshops and exhibition space, involving several more years of hard work and

community support.

“The trust believes The Kilns at Te Horo will be a significant centre for ceramic arts on the Kāpiti Coast – and New Zealand – complementing the strong artistic community already here and providing visitors with a further reason to come to Kāpiti,” Tony says.

IN BRIEF

New business group imminent

A year on from the opening of the PP2O expressway, Elevate Ōtaki has negotiated with Kāpiti Coast District Council to see its assets pass over to a new business association for Ōtaki-Te Horo. The new group will be established in the first half of 2024. The outgoing chair of Elevate, Adrian Gregory, who negotiated the arrangement, says the assets will include funding, the new Ōtaki Retail & Investment Strategy, street flags and a media platform that has played a part in profiling Ōtaki during the past 12 months. Businesses interested in the new association should contact adrian@helix4consult.co.nz

Beach guards back

Volunteers with the Ōtaki Surf Lifesaving Club are back on patrol at Ōtaki Beach. They will be there from midday to 6pm every weekend through summer. If interested in joining, juniors train on Sundays at 3.15pm; and anyone 14+ can contact the club via Facebook.

Seventeen fire call-outs

Seventeen incidents were attended by the Ōtaki Volunteer Fire Brigade during November. Perhaps reflecting residents’ desire to clear sections of strong spring growth, seven of the call-outs were for rubbish, grass or scrub fires. There were also: three “good intent”; two each for private fire alarms and property fires; and one each for a medical emergency, “special service” and assisting the Levin brigade.

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All Saints Church, which is undergoing external renovation.

Photo Ōtaki Today

Church gets spruce-up

Ōtaki’s All Saints Anglican Church in Te Rauparaha Street is getting a new roof and repairs to external cladding.

The restoration work is to fix a leaky roof, which has been made possible by a Heritage NZ grant. Further funding by anonymous donors is allowing re-rendering to the exterior of the concrete walls at the same time.

The church was designed by pre-eminent ecclesiastic architect Frederick Jersey de Clere, who pioneered reinforced concrete design in New Zealand. The Heritage NZ grant was from a fund that supported restoration of the architect’s historic buildings.

Frank Avers, a vestry member and the project liaison for the restoration, says while the roof had a few leaks, investigations had shown the church was still in good condition.

“There are no major problems, but it’s good to get the work done to future-proof the building,” he says.

The work is expected to be completed by mid to late February. While the church is closed, services are continuing as normal in the hall.

Meanwhile, the church’s ministers, Simon and Jessica Falconer, have moved on to a new parish in Upper Hutt. The vestry is in the process of recruiting a new minister.

ŌTAKI COMMUNITY: SIMON BLACK

Challenges and achievements

As we approach the end of the year, it’s timely to reflect on our journey and anticipate the future for Ōtaki.

This year has been a mix of challenges and achievements, setting a foundation for the exciting developments ahead.

Our unique position, straddling the boundaries of Kāpiti and Horowhenua, brings distinctive challenges, particularly in infrastructure and service provision. The Ōtaki community is serviced by Kāpiti Coast District Council, but for services such as health, police, justice, and corrections, we rely on authorities north of our area in Levin.

This has highlighted a critical need in our community – transport. The lack of direct bus services to Levin and inadequate transport links within Kāpiti and Horowhenua significantly impacts our access to jobs, education and essential services. Addressing this in the coming year is a top priority for the Ōtaki Community Board.

Despite these challenges, we’ve had significant accomplishments. We enhanced community resilience through the Wellington Emergency Management Office’s (Wremo’s) earthquake and tsunami drills, and hosted a safety symposium, laying the groundwork for making Ōtaki safer. Our advocacy for increased police presence has been successful, and we’ve strengthened our bonds with Ngā Hapū o Ōtaki. The Vision Ōtaki initiative has been instrumental in understanding our community’s aspirations.

Looking ahead, we’re excited about the revitalise Elevate Ōtaki project, which aims to build a robust business network and look to implement a retail strategy. Early in the new year we will present the results from Vision Ōtaki and hold community hui to discuss vital issues such as food security and community resilience.

As we step into the new year, let’s continue working together to shape an even brighter future for Ōtaki.

Meri Kirihimete and I wish you a safe and enjoyable holiday season.

■ Simon is deputy chair of the Ōtaki Community Board



Merry Christmas from all of us

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Season's greetings from Mayor Holborow

While we love our district year-round, summer is when Kāpiti truly shines.

With approximately 38 kilometres of coastline dotted by beautiful beaches and incredible views, it's no surprise Kāpiti is so popular with our visitors and those lucky enough to call this special place home.

Reflecting on my busy first year as Mayor, I'm proud of what Council has delivered while managing many challenges.

We've strengthened our partnership with mana whenua, started the Waikanae Water Treatment Plant upgrade, celebrated the opening of Toi MAHARA, confirmed a speed limit of 30km/h around Kāpiti Coast schools, worked with others to address our growing housing needs, adopted an age-friendly approach, started a new reservoir in Ōtaki and begun planning a second, approved a new Waikanae Library and Community Hub, celebrated Coastlands Aquatics Centre's 10th birthday, won an award for our all-abilities playground at Lorna Irene Reserve, installed approximately 600 metres of larger stormwater pipe in Paraparaumu, and

welcomed thousands of visitors at council-run and council-supported events such as the Kāpiti Art Trail, Food Fair, and Christmas Parade and Festival.

The Community Boards have been doing great work in their local communities, and I've also enjoyed getting out and meeting the many organisations and individuals who volunteer their time and energy to make Kāpiti an even more special place. Whether it's our Fire Service, Lions, Rotary, Foodbank or the numerous environmental restoration groups, there's so many working hard for our people and our environment. These organisations are even more important at this time of the year, which can be a challenging time for some in our community.

Looking ahead, we're preparing our 2024-34 Long-term Plan that will be with you for consultation in March, and continuing our Vision Kāpiti conversation to find out what matters most, what change you want to see, and what your aspirations are for the future.



So, this summer, while you're at the beach, hitting the park with the kids, hiking Hemi Matenga with your four-legged friend, or taking a dip in one of our beautiful rivers, have a think about what makes Kāpiti home for you. Join our Vision Kāpiti kōrero at haveyoursay.kapiticoast.govt.nz and share your thoughts.

Wishing you all a safe and enjoyable summer holiday period, one that I hope you enjoy in our beautiful district.

Kia pai ngā hararei – have a great holiday!

Janet Holborow
Mayor, Kāpiti Coast District Council



Kāpiti Summer – Feels Like Home

Summer is a time to connect with each other and the outdoors, spend time with our whānau and friends, and focus on our wellbeing as a community. A Kāpiti summer has something for everyone, with a big backyard for you to enjoy.

So why not explore your home more, with almost 80 kilometres of recreational walkways, cycleways, and horse-riding paths it's easy to do. Discover our 500 hectares of parks and sports grounds, make the most of our safe and affordable fun at Coastlands Aquatic Centre, Waikanae and Ōtaki pools, take advantage of our free splashpads, and check out our libraries' bumper summer of reading programmes and activities.

There's also a calendar full of events to help you make the most of our public spaces, facilities, and services – from the Waikanae Pool Christmas Party, Ōtaki Pool Whānau Day, and Movies in the Park, to the Council-supported Ōtaki Kite Festival, XTERRA, and Kāpiti Women's Tri.

All we ask is that you know where it's ok to fish, walk your dog, horseride, or launch your boat, and please keep our beaches free of vehicles outside permitted areas. Let's respect our environment and each other, and celebrate everything that makes Kāpiti feel like home this summer.

► **Visit: [kapitisummer.nz](https://www.kapitisummer.nz)**
for more details, where you'll also find a kids activity sheet and prizes up for grabs when you share your holiday snaps with us.



Keep safe in our public places

Our iconic beaches are a key part of our Kāpiti lifestyle. As Kāpiti gets busier over summer we want everyone to be able to enjoy our beaches safely. To keep us safe and protect our environment, our Beach Bylaw prohibits driving on most parts of the beach unless launching boats or using land yachts in designated areas. There are also zones in place for longline fishing, dog walking, and horse riding, so everyone can enjoy our shared spaces safely.

Swimming makes summer in Kāpiti sensational, but please be safe in the water. Swim between the flags at Paekākāriki and Ōtaki Beaches or visit our lifeguarded pools. Know your limits, never swim alone, and keep small children within arm's reach. Please also be aware of toxic algae in or near our rivers. Our furry friends are most at risk – even a small amount can kill a dog.

► [Visit: kapitisummer.nz](https://www.kapitisummer.nz) to learn more about keeping safe.



Visit our pools and libraries

Jump into to our pools for affordable fun this summer. We have extra activities throughout the holidays, with inflatables and games galore. Coastlands Aquatic Centre is hosting the Kāpiti Manu Regionals – show us your meanest Manu-bomb on 21 December for your chance to make it to the first ever Z Manu World Championships!

Our four ngā whare pukapuka (libraries) in Ōtaki, Waikanae, Paraparaumu, and Paekākāriki are your go-to for summer reading and holiday programmes. Take a new path to reading and join us for the opening of our StoryWalk® at Haruātai Park at 11am, 16 December.

► [Visit: kapitisummer.nz](https://www.kapitisummer.nz) for all that's on offer at our pools and libraries.



Explore our parks, cycleways and walkways

Enjoy spectacular views from one of our many escarpment tracks, take a gentle stroll along our river and estuary walks, or cycle the Coast35 trail. Whatever your fitness level, our network of tracks and trails offers everyone a chance to explore our sensational surroundings this summer.

We also have over 50 papa tākaro (playgrounds) so there's always something different to discover: splash pads, pump tracks, basketball hoops, flying foxes, pirate ships, skate parks, an all-abilities playground, and more! Throughout January we'll have multiple Find Your Play activities with free scavenger hunts and pop-up play equipment.

► [Visit: kapitisummer.nz](https://www.kapitisummer.nz) to explore more.



Experience our events

We're supporting a range of events that have something for everyone this summer. Bring the whānau to Waikanae Pool's Children's Christmas Party on 16 December for festive fun with music, games and a special visit from Santa. Or make a splash at Ōtaki Pool Whānau Day on 27 January. Fly high at the spectacular Ōtaki Kite Festival on 17-18 February. This whānau friendly festival will also have stalls and entertainment. For the more adventurous, you can choose your challenge with the XTERRA Wellington Festival on 23 February and the Kāpiti Women's Tri run on 25 February. Our summer events wrap up with Movies in the Park on Saturday 2 March.

► [Check out: kapitisummer.nz](https://www.kapitisummer.nz) for a full calendar of events and activities.



Find more ways to visit, explore, experience and be safe in Kāpiti this summer.

HUATAU/Comment

PLAIN SPEAKING: IAN CARSON

Graduation shows there’s plenty to smile about in this little town

Things are happening in Ōtaki. Mostly, they’re good things. Things that make us smile, make us optimistic, and make us think.

There are, of course, things that make us angry, or sad, such as the inevitable funerals where we farewell loved ones. But we accept that such events are part of the circle of life, as the Lion King said.

Countering the sadness has been the recent graduation ceremony at Te Wānanga o Raukawa. Hundreds of graduands from around the country gathered on a glorious Ōtaki day to receive the reward for their hard work.

Chatting with people as I took photos, I couldn’t help but notice how many were just so happy. Also evident was the pride from whānau



who in some cases had travelled the length of the country to witness those hard-earned achievements.

After more than 40 years of providing courses, Te Wānanga must also be proud of what it has achieved. The auditorium at Ngā Purapura was packed (photo above right), and every year there seem to be even more options for students who want to progress their knowledge and education in a te ao Māori context.

Many of the graduates were Ōtaki



people, who will now use their skills to make this an even better place.

Although a Ngāti Pākehā, I have deep-rooted connections here, and I feel the same pride that our little town has done so much, and still does.

Also on a positive note – but not a positivity shared by all – is movement at what we who have been around a while call the “Railway shops” on the old highway.

Whenever a big retailer moves out,

as NZ Natural did recently, rumours abound about how they were strategically shifting from Ōtaki to avoid the retail slump brought on by the expressway.

As the NZ Natural chief executive told me, that’s not why they moved (see page 7). While it’s not a good look to have an empty shop over the Christmas period, I have no doubt the store will be tenanted fairly quickly.

That confidence is supported by the

arrival recently of Blackhood Bakes, the purchase of one of the strip’s key retail buildings, and the imminent arrival of a new national retail outlet.

There will likely be more focus next year on the retail strategy developed earlier this year, and a proposed new business association has just got the green light to more effectively work with retailers and other businesses, to hold regular meetings and advocate for what this town needs.

We also have a new youth space, initiated by the hard-working team at Te Puna Oranga o Ōtaki. With a dedicated (and mobile) space, it’s more likely our youth will get support and guidance when needed.

That – and so many other things – have got to be good for Ōtaki.

■ Ian is editor of Ōtaki Today

THE ELECTORATE: TIM COSTLEY, MP



Ambitious plan for first 100 days

Our coalition government has roared out of the starting blocks, announcing an ambitious plan for its first 100 days in office.

Prime minister Christopher Luxon acknowledged that the last few years have been incredibly tough for many people across New Zealand. That’s why our coalition government has wasted no time announcing 49 actions we will deliver to start the process of improving New Zealanders’ lives.

Kiwis voted for a government focused on rebuilding the economy, easing the cost of living, restoring law and order and delivering better public services. Our government is starting the way we mean to go on: ambitious for New Zealand. Our plan includes introducing legislation to tackle inflation, repeal Three Waters, and withdrawing central government from Let’s Get Wellington Moving.

The coalition government has promised to rein in the astronomic public sector spending that Labour oversaw and will, as promised, introduce legislation to narrow the Reserve Bank’s mandate to price stability.

The explosion of crime under the previous government was shameful, and the prime minister has announced the prioritisation of several actions to make Kiwis and their families safer. That means getting rid of Labour’s prisoner reduction target, which meant fewer offenders going to prison even while violent crime was rising. The government is also making good on our promise to crack down on gangs by introducing legislation that will ban gang patches and insignia in public and ensure that gang membership is considered an aggravating factor during sentencing.

We have announced quick actions to improve New Zealand’s public services, like re-introducing key targets for the health system and, to lift educational performance, ensuring primary and intermediate schools are teaching an hour of maths, reading and writing from start of 2024, and banning mobile phone use in class.

New Zealand faces a number of challenges and New Zealanders can have confidence that the coalition government has both the team and the strategy to address them. I’ll be working hard in our region to ensure all of our actions translate into better quality of living for every Kiwi, and to ensure our region is no longer forgotten.

To view the full list of 49 actions in the coalition government’s 100-day plan, visit the Beehive website.

■ Tim is MP for the Ōtaki electorate

CAM’S CORNER: CAM BUTLER

Time for a well earned end-of-year break

And just like that it’s December! I know how it happens mechanically, but man it seems to have crept up so quickly.

I must admit after such a busy year the Christmas break is looking so enticing. The Ōtaki Community Board have been very busy bees this year and are well deserving of a break.

Fast track developments

No major progress in the Moy Estate development other than the decision-making board has asked for more information and asked for a traffic assessment. The traffic engineers have been the winners in this so far.

Ōtaki-Māori Racing Club development is progressing with The Wellington Company beaver away in the background.

Roadworks and bridge partial closure

Waka Kotahi has admitted that its communication was poor (their words, our



words were stronger) about the works, including the lane movements for the stretch from New World to Riverbank Road. On the plus side, the shared pathway is going really and so that part will be finished soon. As part of this works, the pothole and small lake at the carpark opposite New World have finally been fixed. That has only taken a couple of years.

The single-lane closure of the old SH1 bridge to come in the new year is still on the cards. When I mentioned to the Waka Kotahi reps that up to 25,000 people could come along to the Ōtaki Kite Festival in February they seemed taken aback and then noted that they are working on

mitigation measures, so no plan as yet.

Vision Ōtaki

The community board is truly appreciative of the community input so far in what they would like to see Ōtaki become in the future.

Have you had your say? Give us your thoughts and vision by visiting the Vision Ōtaki area at the library, fill in our postcards or head to the website: haveyoursay.kapiticoast.govt.nz/vision-otaki

Next year, in partnership with Ngā Hapū o Ōtaki, we are organising a number of events to allow the community to guide future strategy – feedback, current issues, food sovereignty etc. It is going to be a great 2024!

Keep being Sunny, Ōtaki.

• Like Ōtaki Community Board on Facebook

■ Cam is chair of the Ōtaki Community Board

TE HORO OUTLOOK: MICHAEL MOORE

Building a community partnership

During the past year, we have made progress toward some important issues.

Finally, we are getting some overdue attention for the Te Horo Beach Road flooding issue with KCDC applying to Waka Kotahi for “resilience funding” that will raise the most vulnerable sections of this critical access road.

After eight years of absence, the Waikanae/Ōtaki 290 bus service is stopping at Te Horo, albeit several kilometres away from the resident village. This follows the advocacy by beach resident and former councillor James Cootes, along with resident Colin Davies.

More recently, I’ve also worked closely with Gerard Zwartjes, who has displayed extraordinary tenacity and dedication in getting the 290 bus service reinstated. Cr Liz Koh has also shown leadership on this issue.

I’m delighted that the Waikanae Community Board has granted funds to



both the Te Horo Hall for heat pumps and curtains, and to the Friends of Te Horo Beach Residents’ Association to support their kaupapa.

Another project that I’ve been wanting to do is beautify the beach car park area, an area prone to coastal and vehicle degradation. We have just put a large amount of new soil around the grass area, and filled in pot-holes on the car park. Following input for ideas, over the summer we will get a beautiful mural on our 54-year-old toilet blocks!

Our beaches are very popular over the summer, so please keep to the tracks – dunes are tough buffers against the sea,

and they can be easily damaged. Also, keep vehicles away from where our wildlife is so that our whānau and visitors can enjoy our beautiful beaches safely, and keep your dogs on a leash around the Mangaone Stream mouth.

We must protect the fragile environment of our coastal ecosystem, which requires collaborative efforts to preserve the natural beauty and rehabilitate the Mangaone wetlands on our beachfront.

The Kilns at Te Horo centre opens in December, celebrating the legacy of Mirek Smíšek. The kilns were part of a ceramic art hub for more than 40 years. It is located on Jim Winiata Lane on the eastern side of the School Road over-bridge at Te Horo. See TheKilnsAtTeHoro.co.nz

Our first Waikanae Community Board meeting for 2024 is at 7pm on Tuesday, February 27, at the Waikanae Community Centre, Utauta Street.

■ Michael is deputy chair of Waikanae Community Board and a Te Horo Beach resident.

Beware phony claims in the name of fairness

Of all the things that politicians, and others, concoct to divide people – think Māori v non Māori; women v men; rich v poor; gay v straight – the most universally enduring is probably the gulf between those engaged with what’s happening in the world v those who, for whatever reason, are not.

People can be engaged in issues for positive or negative reasons, but for the unengaged, it inevitably supports many things they’d rather not see happen. If only they’d thought about it.

As Martin Luther King once said: “Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.”

Take our recent elections. It had been clear for some time that the Labour government would be spanked by the electorate and would be sent to the opposition benches. But how that would translate in the final vote was unclear.

Polling for months had not shown any great confidence in shifting the vote to the other major party and, instead, people seemed to toy with a vote for a minor party – any party, except National or Labour.

As it happened, the final vote

forced National to form an awkward three-way coalition, the first in New Zealand’s history.

I suspect there was a vote from the unengaged, this time, that was more than sufficient to influence the shape of government. Yes, as usual, many didn’t vote at all, but when one looks at New Zealand First’s vote going from roughly zero, for most of the past three years, to 6.08 percent in

October, or Act’s vote at above 15 percent in October 2021 to 8.64 percent in the October vote, the support seems as volatile and confused as a parliamentary anti-vax protest.

Does establishment of a coalition agreement settle this down? Well, no. In fact many will already be wondering if

it’s what they actually voted for.

One of the confronting results of this “mandate for change” is what looks like a tyre-shredding hitting of the brakes on the use of Māori language in government organisations, and the scrapping of Te Aka Whai Ora, the Māori Health Authority.

This prompted a response on LinkedIn from Dr Kirsty Wild, a public health and environmental sociologist at Auckland University.

“My heart is broken for my Māori

JUST A THOUGHT



FRASER CARSON



The fairness fairground plays out as a circus.

Image by Pixabay

colleagues in the public sector this week who are being told to use their te reo ‘a little less’. To be ‘a little less’ Māori. And we’ve seen it unfold enough overseas to know that right-wing populism is a form of bullying and it’s always restless. Who will be asked to be a ‘little less’ next? A ‘little less’ Pasifika? A ‘little less’ feminine? A ‘little less’ gay?

“This is bullying. It is discrimination. And it’s wrong. Māori rights are human rights. No going back.”

One thing that can’t go back is the folly of such regressive policies, and that will become increasingly

apparent. Many of the unengaged will simply shrug their shoulders, while some of the engaged will say it’s merely a re-set to a more level playing field, one where Māori have been favoured unfairly.

Or as the great human rights activist David Seymour loves to suggest, it’s all about Kate Sheppard and equal rights for all citizens.

Let’s just think about that for a minute. While it’s true that there are many marginalised, poor and imprisoned non Māori, they are statistically nowhere near the level of inequality that the general Māori

population lives under. So when you hear people talk about Māori privilege and the need for fairness, imagine the same people agreeing with something like this:

A spate of house burglaries hits a wealthy neighbourhood. The poor victims have been fleeced of not just insurable objects but also irreplaceable family treasures. A group in the community commits to raising money for the victims with the aim that it will go some way towards correcting an obvious, if random, unfairness. Then, someone offers a pearl of wisdom. “But what about those who weren’t burgled? Should they not have equal rights to the proceeds of the fundraising?”

Blatant unfairness, or just pretend fairness, creates new unfairness and, sometimes, unintended consequences. Just ask non Māori or non Pasifika arts organisations applying for government funding.

Nevertheless, this new government will happily bail out drought and cyclone-affected farmers and forestry owners, and landlords attacked by the dastardly Reserve Bank. But the generational inequity that continues for Māori, and others, is further enshrined by notions of phony “fairness” and the apathy and votes of the unengaged.

■ Fraser is founder of the community development websites [flightdec.com](#), [knowthis.nz](#) and [inhub.org.nz](#)



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TOI MATARAU

Placebos: Limits to what the mind can modulate

Part 2 of articles on the placebo effect

Despite tens of thousands of placebo-controlled trials in the scientific literature, there is still much to learn about the placebo effect.

As I covered in my last article (Nov 2023), most researchers are focused on testing specific treatments in which the placebo effect is only a nuisance variable to be controlled for. In placebo-controlled trials, researchers just want to show that their treatment or intervention is better than the placebo group. The “placebo response” of the placebo group being an entangled and undefined mix of spontaneous remission, regression to the mean, any number of confounds such as the Hawthorne effect where participants change their behaviour because they know they are being observed, and possibly some actual placebo effect.

And the standard double-blind placebo-controlled trial will underestimate real-life placebo effects, such as homeopathy, because it ethically requires that participants are informed that they might be assigned to either the placebo group or the treatment group.

So participants are always aware they might well be in a group that gets no effective

intervention, hardly conducive to producing a comprehensive placebo response that requires a person to fully believe they are getting an effective treatment.

Then there are the problems of getting funding to research a potential therapeutic intervention that can’t be patented, and determining how the placebo effect would be used given the ethical dilemma of deceptively



SCIENCE
DR STEVE HUMPHRIES

providing a sham treatment – albeit one that might be helpful. It’s also hard to study something when it’s not clear exactly what you are studying: the placebo effect is a non-specific umbrella term for a whole range of possible mechanisms that include expectancy effects, classical and operant conditioning, and social modelling.

The study of the placebo effect requires elaborate study designs and careful analysis. So what

do we know about the extent and limits of the placebo effect?

There is substantial evidence for placebo analgesia, which makes sense in terms of evolutionary biology. We have evolved the ability to sense pain as a protective measure: you sprain your ankle, it hurts, and you then limp to protect your damaged ankle.

But we have also evolved the ability to modulate that pain depending on our



Image by Ewa Urban, Pixabay

perceptions. If you are being chased by a bull, you can run across a paddock and leap a fence all without feeling any pain from your sprained ankle. Our perception and awareness of the situation changes our perception of our pain – in this case, stress-induced analgesia.

Equally, if you feel in control of your pain, or you reframe your pain in a less negative way, or you distract yourself from your pain, your pain might reduce: your brain “decides” that feeling pain is no longer a priority – a useful evolutionary adaptation. There is a survival advantage to being able to control pain. In short, the brain has evolved endogenous pain-relieving mechanisms controlled by our consciousness.

A placebo, which gives us an expectation of pain relief and a sense of control, uses these innate pain-relieving neural pathways. Experimental studies show that, at least in part, placebo analgesia is mediated by endorphin and cannabinoid neural pathways, and brain scanning studies have also located specific areas of brain activity when a person is having a placebo response.

The placebo effect is “all in your head”, in a very real, and measurable, physiological sense.

The psychologist Irving Kirsch, on reviewing FDA (US Food and Drug Administration)

antidepressant clinical trials, concluded that most of the benefits of antidepressants can be accounted for by the placebo response. It’s perhaps not a surprising finding given a core symptom of depression is hopelessness and pessimism, while a placebo offers hope and an expectation of improvement.

In general, placebo effects are strongest for self-reported experiences such as pain, depression, anxiety, nausea and fatigue. These are “soft” endpoints that require subjective assessment and can be modulated by the mind.

But there are limits to what the mind can modulate. A placebo won’t fix a broken leg or shrink a tumour. While the placebo effect offers a fascinating insight into the mind-body connection, it’s not some New Age way to harness the power of the mind to completely heal the body.




Sham (placebo) surgeries have produced impressive changes in reported pain and quality of life, but no changes to objective “hard” endpoints such as CT scans or blood results. In studies using placebo asthma medication, people report improved breathing, though objective measures of airflow show no change.

However, there are studies that indicate that

placebos might be able to change some hard endpoints, such as modifying immune system responding. The limits of the placebo effect have yet to be fully determined.

Some placebo researchers assert that when placebo mechanisms and effects are better understood we will be able to drop the poorly defined umbrella term “placebo” and talk of helping people in terms of its specific active components. Then we can stop talking about an inert treatment that has a therapeutic effect.

■ Health scientist Dr Steve Humphries is a director at Hebe Botanicals in Ōtaki. He was previously a lecturer at Massey University and director of the Health Science Programme.




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MAHI MĀRA/Gardening

Growing good tomatoes

Here are my very simple, tomato growing strategies. Each strategy is a key thread, and success comes when they are all in action – weaving together a resilient, enduring web in which your tomatoes easily thrive.

A warm life

Tomatoes need warm air and warm soil from the very beginning. Raise seedlings in seed mix that's 20C. Transplant once night temps are 13C and soil is 18C. Thermometers give you all the info you need – one for the soil and one for the air.

Drainage

Poorly drained soil is no place for tomatoes. Fungal disease flourishes in cool, wet, airless ground. The long term solution is to sort your drainage out – don't shy away from this task! It benefits your whole garden, and in most cases, solutions are simple – plant trees, and fix downpipes and gutters! Short term, grow your tomatoes in pots.

Err on the side of dry

If tomatoes had to pick between too wet and too dry, they'd choose dry. Not that dry is their optimum, but it's better than wet! Barely moist is tomato perfection. Tough love in the teenage years (from established seedling until flowering) is an opportunity to push the gap between waterings. This forces them to stretch their roots out and makes them more resilient in the long run.

Strong seedlings

For the best adults, you must start with the best babies. This doesn't mean the biggest, it means the sturdiest and most vital. Look for a robust stem and strong new growth, and flat, dark green

foliage. Beware leaves with purple or yellow tints, or contortions, and roots exploding out of the pot!

Fungal allies

Fungal threads throughout your soil shows you fungal allies are present. Tomatoes do well in their presence, by cropping better and showing more resilience towards pests and weather extremes.

The recipe for beneficial fungi is simple – home-made compost mulched "fungal" paths, biological sprays, diverse groundcover, soil that's rarely disturbed, and soil that's always covered.

Local varieties and home saved seed

The right variety makes all the difference. Discover them in your community – locally successful, heritage varieties are your best choice.

Save the seed from the tomatoes that thrive in your garden, and build your own seedbank. Good genes for the win!

Fertility

Good home-made compost is the ultimate food for a brilliant tomato crop. Most tomatoes are overfed, the reason behind most pest and disease. If you are short on home-made compost, bolster it by saturating the ground before planting with a biological brew (liquid seaweed and either EM garden 1 or compost tea), and adding either vermicastings, really well rotten manure, or seaweed. A living mulch of buckwheat, marigold, phacelia and crimson clover provides ongoing fertility. Chop bits as they encroach the crop, and drop them as mulch. Regular biological sprays are the cherry on top.

Light and air

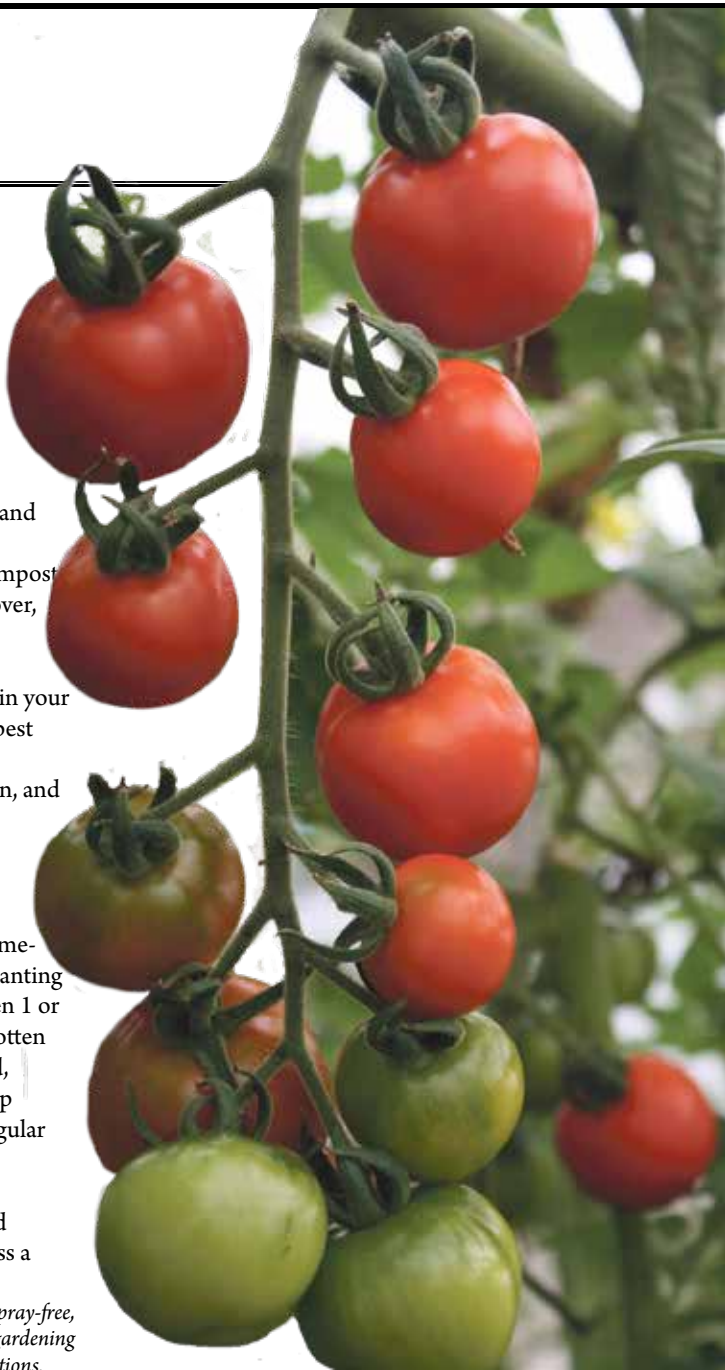
Tomatoes benefit greatly from good light distribution and airflow. Pruning as a single leader, and stretching them across a sturdy frame, achieves both.

■ *Kath has been growing vegetables to feed her family for 21 years. Spray-free, natural, low-input food gardens are her thing. Kath offers organic gardening advice through her articles, books, workshops, and garden consultations.*



THE EDIBLE GARDEN

KATH IRVINE



HĪTŌRIA/History

Kiwi innovation led to first locally made 'talkies'

December 1 this year was a special day for film historians – it was the 125th anniversary of the first film shot in Aotearoa New Zealand.

It was on December 1, 1898, when photographer W H Bartlett shot footage at the Auckland Industrial and Mining Exhibition. The completed film was available to view at his Queen Street photography studio by Christmas that year.

At Ngā Taonga Sound & Vision, the nation's audio-visual archive, that milestone got us thinking about other film-making firsts. For example, the first New Zealand-made sound films, "talkies".

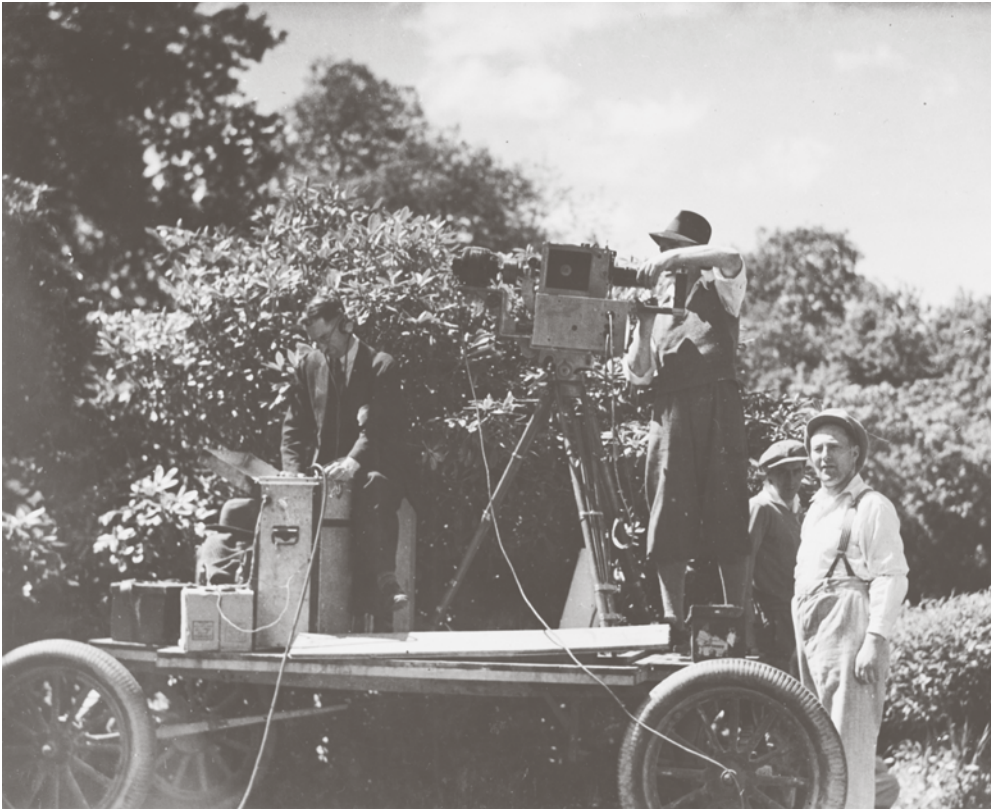
Audiences at the Paramount Theatre in Wellington were able to watch talkies from overseas as early as March 1929, but it took a few more years before local movies included sound. One reason was that sound films were expensive – it cost twice as much to make a film with spoken dialogue than one without.

There was also no easy way to buy a sound film camera in those days. The Hollywood studios that pioneered synchronised sound in films such as *The Jazz Singer* kept their new technology under wraps.

That meant New Zealanders who wanted to make talkies had to build their own versions of sound recording and playback equipment almost from scratch.

In 1929 the film-maker and projectionist Ted Coubray invented the first sound film system in Australasia, which he called Coubray-Tone. In the early years he used it to capture newsreels, as well as test footage of people speaking and playing instruments.

A few years later another film-maker,



On location on the Tairei Plains during filming of *Down On The Farm* are, from left, Jack Welsh (sound unit) and Lee Hill (camera), with Hugh Duncan (assistant) and Stewart Pitt (associate producer) standing behind.

Image Ngā Taonga Sound & Vision, ref S0419.

New Zealanders who wanted to make talkies had to build their own versions of sound recording and playback equipment almost from scratch.

Dunedin's Jack Welsh, recorded the sound on the first two feature films with sound made in New Zealand. They were *Down on the Farm* (1935) and *The Wagon and The Star* (1936).

Down on the Farm was shot in Southland and Otago, with a mostly amateur cast from Dunedin. The script has not survived but the premise seems to have been a simple one: two



rival farmers have to put aside their differences when their children fall in love. It wasn't exactly a polished production, and the few international reviews were scathing.

"The dialogue is a joke, the acting amateurish and the photography poor. After this our colonial cousins will be well advised to restrict their exports to mutton," wrote Britain's *Cine Weekly*.

The Wagon and the Star seems to have been received a bit better than *Down on the Farm*. A review in the *Southland Daily News* described the plot as follows: "A young man is down and out – without a penny and with very little hope. An older man shares with him his small store of cash and his unlimited optimism and dry humour. Thus equipped he sets out to conquer life – to hitch his wagon to a star."

Shot in Southland and Fiordland, with actors from Invercargill, it featured two original songs, *Men of the Road* and *I'm Gonna Hitch my Wagon to a Star*.

Sadly, *Down on the Farm* and *The Wagon and the Star* are both considered lost films, of which only fragments now survive. You can watch the remaining footage from both films at ngataonga.org.nz.

■ *Ngā Taonga has a huge number of recordings that capture New Zealand life. See ngataonga.org.nz. Get the Ngā Taonga newsletter using the Sign Up button at the bottom of the home page.*

PAKIHI/Business

Advantages, risks in buying off plan

Buying off plan means what it sounds like – buying a property off the plan for that property (and property development as a whole) because it is not yet built.

Off plan contracts

A contract for purchasing a property off plan will generally be a lot longer than a standard agreement to purchase a property. A lot of this is to do with the fact that the development might still have a lot of things to sort out, and clauses need to be inserted to say so.

Off plan contracts also include what's called a "sunset clause", which gives the purchaser the right to cancel the contract in certain circumstances if the development is taking too long. If the clause is used, the purchaser can give written notice of cancellation, and still get their deposit money back.

Advantages and risks

One advantage in buying off plan is having to pay less money upfront – there's no need for a builder's report, because the building doesn't exist yet. Deposits also tend to be lower with an off plan project compared to an existing build.

Another advantage is that you are buying a new build. The building will be built to current building standards, and you will have warranties/guarantees on the standard of the build, as per the Building Act 2004.

On the risk side, there can be delays that add months to the process, either with construction or with other issues

in the development, such as obtaining the titles.

There's also no way to predict with 100 percent accuracy what will happen in the property market from when you sign the contract to settlement. The value of the property could fall, which can in turn affect mortgage financing approval. If that happens and you can't complete the

contract, you could be out of pocket for the entire deposit or be forced to on-sell at a loss.

Managing risk

To manage the risks involved in buying off plan, it will be crucial to carefully review your financial circumstances both now and in the future. You could consider talking to a

mortgage or financial advisor about what you can afford, even if your situation were to change drastically.

Do some investigating – check out the developer's previous projects, drive by the project site with the plans and try to imagine what it will look like. . . . A little due diligence can go a long way.

Lastly, off plan contracts can be daunting and contain a lot of legal jargon. It's be important to talk to a solicitor early in the process so they can advise you on the contract, keep you informed of dates and deadlines, explain to you your rights, and what remedies you have if things go wrong and you need to cancel the contract.

■ Brooke works mostly in the Levin office of Wakefields Lawyers, and occasionally at Ōtaki and Foxton.

MATTERS OF LAW



BROOKE MCGOWAN

Stand up to surcharges on cards, Consumer urges

Consumer NZ is calling on New Zealanders to stand up to excessive surcharges on credit and debit card payments.

The non-profit is on a mission to arm shoppers with information about what constitutes a reasonable surcharge.

The Retail Payment System Act, which passed into law in November 2022, led to lower costs for businesses accepting card payments. This change was expected to save businesses \$105 million a year and mean lower surcharges for customers, too. Consumer is concerned these savings aren't always being passed on.

"Businesses shouldn't charge their customers more than what it costs them to accept a card payment. Unfortunately, as shoppers, we have no way of telling what businesses are getting charged so it's difficult to tell if we're being ripped off," says Consumer NZ campaigns manager Jessica Walker.

If you insert or swipe a debit or eftpos card when paying in person, you should not incur a surcharge. However, if you make a contactless payment with a debit card (by tapping it or using it online) you could incur a surcharge, but that fee generally shouldn't be more than 1%. If you pay by credit card, you shouldn't generally be charged more than 2.5%. In many cases, you should be charged less than 2.5%.

Retailers should not be profiting from surcharges, but Consumer is concerned many are.

"Big businesses usually pay lower fees for accepting card payments because of the volume of transactions they process, and this should be reflected in the surcharge passed on to the customer. If, for example, you pay your power bill by credit card, you're only likely to have to pay a surcharge of around 1%, or less.

"This lower surcharge is good to see, but the same can't be said for all businesses."

For example, earlier this year Consumer received numerous complaints about Ticketek, a big player in the event ticket market, which at the time was charging a payment processing fee of up to 3.5%.

"We asked Ticketek why its payment processing fee was so high. Ticketek told us it had reduced its surcharge to a standard 3% and would lower it further. However, we're still receiving complaints about Ticketek charging 3.5%. We think this is excessive.

"In our view anything higher than a 2.5% credit card



surcharge, or a 1% contactless debit card charge could be excessive."

Whenever a retailer is applying a surcharge, it must be clearly displayed, and retailers should offer at least one payment method that does not incur a surcharge.

It has been a year since the law changed, and according to Consumer, there is no excuse for businesses continuing to charge customers excessive surcharges.

Examples of excessive surcharges

Consumer asked people to share examples of excessive surcharging so it could gauge the size of the issue.

"So far we have received over 80 complaints from people who said they have incurred an excessive surcharge when making a card payment," Jessica says.

A patient at Ponsonby Dental Boutique told Consumer she paid a \$5 surcharge on an \$80 dental bill – that's a whopping 6.25% surcharge.

"The client tapped her credit card, knowing she would be paying a surcharge, but being stung by 6.25% is totally unreasonable."

Judging by the volume of complaints, parking providers are among the worst surcharging offenders.

"Some parking apps reportedly charge card fees in excess of 8%."

High surcharges also seem to be commonplace at accommodation providers, with many complaints of 3% surcharges at hotels and lodges around the country.

"If you come across a surcharge that you think is excessive, ask the business why it's so expensive. If you're not happy with their explanation, make a complaint to the Commerce Commission. Ultimately, we want to see an end to excessive surcharging."

‘Overwhelm’ can be a powerful signal for growth

Feeling overwhelmed with the constant changes in your business?

Don't see it as a burden, but as a powerful signal for growth. Overwhelm can lead to transformation, so it's crucial to invest in yourself as a leader during these challenging times. In fact, it's a call to level up your leadership!

As business owners we navigate through a sea of constant change. It's like steering a ship through both calm waters and unexpected storms. In the midst of these transitions, it's not uncommon to feel overwhelmed.

But what if I told you that this feeling isn't just a burden to bear, but a powerful signal for growth?

When the waves of change crash

against your business, you might feel a storm of emotions – stress, anxiety, and a sense of drowning in the responsibilities. You're not alone.

Many of us are sensing that the business climate is shifting. The next 24 months are poised to look quite different from the last. This is the reality we all face.

However, there's a silver lining. That sense of being overwhelmed can lead to transformation. It's

a wake-up call, a push toward a new direction. It's a sign that it's time to evolve, to level up. And yes, it's absolutely OK to feel this way.

Think of it as "perturbation" – a period of disturbance that precedes change. If you're in the thick of it, it's crucial to stick with it. Halfway

through, if you decide to jump ship, you risk losing the progress you've made. You won't experience the breakthrough that's waiting on the other side.

So how do we navigate from point A, where we are, to point B, where we want to be?

We often think it's a straight line, driven by numbers and metrics. But there's a crucial third point to this journey, point C, which forms a triangle rather than a line. Point C represents our impact on our business – the identity we carry and our development as leaders.

This is the crux of the matter. When you're feeling overwhelmed, it's a pivotal moment to invest in yourself as a leader. This investment sets you apart and propels you toward a better outcome. It's not just about running a successful business; it's about reaching your full potential.

You might be thinking: "But I've

been doing well compared to others." That's commendable, but are you playing to your potential? That's the question that matters.

Let's circle back for a moment. You're successful, you know your numbers, but you're also familiar with the weight of overwhelm. Perhaps you're pondering the future, questioning how the changing economy will affect your business. This sense of overwhelm is your inner voice demanding change, urging you to adapt and grow.

The journey through perturbation is challenging, but keep stepping forward. If you need guidance, seek it. The reward for persevering is more than just smoother sailing; it's about emerging from the storm stronger, with a better return on your investment and, most importantly, more time to enjoy life.

The "magic" you are looking for is found in the work you've been

avoiding – your growth as a leader.

There are countless stories of those who have weathered this storm and emerged victorious, having transformed their businesses and their lives.

If this resonates with you and you're ready to take your business and life to the next level, don't hesitate to reach out.

Here's to not just surviving the storm but thriving in its aftermath. And emember, when overwhelmed, embrace the change. It's the first step towards a brighter horizon.

Remember, only Action changes Outcomes.

■ Focus, accountability and mentoring are the keys to building a better business. To do things better, book a free 30-minute consultation to see what in my 25+ years in business can shift the dial for you. Call 022 2332 669 or see www.wcbe.co.nz

YOUR BUSINESS



CHRIS WHELAN

This series of profiles on local businesses is supported by Land Matters and Pritchard Civil



Ōtaki's Railway area shops, where Jo Stewart sees confidence in commercial property.

Photos supplied

Jo enthusiastic about Ōtaki potential

Strong connections to the Ōtaki district have brought Jo Stewart back after 16 years of selling commercial and industrial real estate in the Bay of Plenty.

As a member of the Bayleys Capital Commercial Wellington team, Jo's "patch" is the Kāpiti-Horowhenua area, but she acknowledges a special attraction to Ōtaki.

"Our family owned a property at Waikawa Beach from when I was born, so many weekends and every holiday were spent in the area," Jo says. "One of our highlights as children was to come to Ōtaki to roam the shops – we would always get lunch at Oz's hot bread shop."

Jo's great-grandparents lived in Ōtaki in their later years during the mid 1900s, and were involved in various community groups.

But now she's living in Kāpiti with her family and bringing her expertise and experience to help clients negotiate the world of commercial real estate.

Jo strongly believes Ōtaki is ready to take advantage of a new phase in its growth.

"While there has been some nervousness from the business community about how the new expressway might affect custom, it is super encouraging to see busy streets and foot traffic increasing," she says. "Evidence of increasing confidence is the recent sale and leasing of property along the old highway, which includes a new bakery and pizza shop, and the sale of the bookshop building to the bookshop operator."

"A new national retail brand is also arriving soon."

Jo says Ōtaki is incredibly lucky to have a diverse blend of

culture, history and manaakitanga, with great things being done by many good people – from business leaders, developers, community support operators and visionary locals.

"If everyone plays a small part in building this township, then it will absolutely thrive as the jewel on the coast."

Growth is offering real estate opportunities throughout Ōtaki. In the industrial area along Riverbank Road there are plenty of options for tenants and owner-operators to relocate their businesses, with convenient access to the expressway.

"We have seen companies securing land in 2022-23 for development and we're excited for a rebound of this interest in 2024 as the economy starts to settle after a roller-coaster 12 months," Jo says. "It's great to see some outstanding examples of quality premises in our industrial area, plus the work at Te Wānanga o Raukawa that showcases true examples of blending modern building technology with rich cultural design."

She says the many residential developments in the pipeline go hand-in-hand with business growth as Ōtaki becomes a destination for home and business owners looking to migrate from other areas for lifestyle, convenience and value.

"I'm very proud and honoured to be representing this town and being a part of its future growth."

Jo offers a service to all her clients that "treats people as I would like to be treated myself. Making a personal connection and gaining a true understanding of their needs to get them the right solution, is paramount to my business."

Jo works out of Bayley's Raumati office with an enthusiastic and supportive residential team.

■ To contact Jo, call 027 641 1680 or email jo.stewart@bayleys.co.nz



Jo Stewart with recent Ōtaki clients Jacqui Simpson of Books & Co (top) and Dil Aujla of Blackhood Bakes.



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HĪTŌRIA/History

Historic trees not all ‘notable’

Trees as landmarks are found all over the world. They have been so for centuries, used by most cultures to mark a significant place, a boundary, or perhaps an important date.

The reasons we plant trees (other than for food or shelter) are many and varied; our associations with them can be for a lifetime, or just a fleeting moment as we pass one that captures our interest.



Different species can be used to reinforce particular social or cultural norms – think yew trees in a cemetery. But also, for individual people, a tree can evoke emotive responses, positive or negative. In assessing a tree as “notable” and therefore protecting it under law, these subjective reactions can be problematic.

Section 6 of the Resource Management Act (RMA) requires local authorities to identify and protect significant trees as heritage features. As is the way of bureaucracy, once identified, “notable” trees are then rated, listed, put in a table, included in the District Plan as a schedule and given protection under those laws.

To understand the rationale behind the ratings, the methodology, aptly named Stem, is the nationwide system used by most councils to perform their duties under the Resource Management Act.

The Standard Tree Evaluation Method includes the following factors in determining whether a tree is notable:

- condition (health)
- amenity (community benefit)
- notability (distinction)
- historic
- scientific.

Within these factors there is an element of subjectivity, particularly in the words “amenity” and “notability”. Subjectivity is the thorn in the side of rationalistic methodology because one person’s idea of either of these factors can easily be different from another’s.

Kāpiti Coast District Council’s notable tree register contains 15 listings in Ōtaki. Chances are, in a town this size, there’s one near you. Perhaps you have given directions to someone using a tree or trees as a landmark, for example: “The courts are opposite the house in Domain Road that has the humongous pohutukawa.”

There are quite a few large pohutukawa in Ōtaki, just as there are many, many large norfolk pines and phoenix palms. Thankfully, not all trees are notable (or protected) only because of their size.

The pohutukawa in Domain Road is a real notable tree. We can guess this from its size, maybe, but it is the note “1898” in the column titled “Description/Significance” within schedule 8 of the Operative District Plan that provides the best clue as to its inclusion in the register.

Not having spoken to the owners of the Domain Road property, I have no idea whether they have a sense of pride in having a very large, very old protected tree in their front garden, or whether it’s a complete pain because it blocks all their sun (and probably for some of their neighbours, too).

The RMA, and therefore the council, tries to deal with this potentially difficult situation by balancing the rights of private property owners with the right of the community to enjoy the amenity value of a tree deemed notable. But the bottom line is that the pohutukawa is protected

under law, and anyone taking a chainsaw to it will be in deep trouble.

Notable trees not within private properties in Ōtaki include a kauri, planted in 1849 at the Old Mission Grounds in Te Rauparaha Street. The register rather enigmatically includes the comment that it is next to a Norfolk Island pine. The latter is presumably not so notable as it doesn’t have its own listing.

A collection of impressive trees on the site of the old maternity hospital include oak, elm and ash trees. The status of these trees as notable is likely to be for more than just their age and stature; many locals either gave birth, or were born in this place, which opened in 1899, so the community/amenity value is high.

Near the boundary between Ōtaki and Horowhenua districts at 44 Atkins Road is a kauri planted in 1937 “at the request of Mr Atkins” according to the register. At number 2 Atkins Road is an impressive collection of exotic trees, plus a nikau palm, two pohutukawa, a kowhai tree, a tōtara, puriri, and a ti kouka. All these trees could well have been planted within one large property since divided.

The main thrust of the RMA’s requirement for the identification of notable trees is to protect them against the effects of development. It is difficult to mitigate the effects of the destruction of a tree that has significance to a community. Planting a new one is not going to ease the feelings of outrage or sadness at the loss of a landmark. Often developers just have to suck it up and alter their plans to avoid that, and to gain resource consent under the District Plan.

A local example of this can be found in the relatively new subdivision of Gardner Place. The register notes that within the legal road there is a kauri tree. Unfortunately, there is no comment to explain why this tree is of notable value, so presumably it has been here long enough to warrant that protection.

So thanks to the RMA and KCDC’s District Plan we have several protected trees in Ōtaki. Some are on private land, probably planted before the town was subdivided into the mainly suburban paradise in which we live. For the occupants of the Domain Road property, that the pohutukawa will outlast them is a given, unless something untoward should happen to that magnificent specimen. I hope they enjoy its splendour as much as the rest of the community.

As with any bureaucratic system, local authorities will try their utmost to avoid falling into the issue of subjectivity. If you’re living under the limelight of a notable tree, it’s clear you just have to put up with whatever comes with that.

Ironically, if you are living in the shade of an enormous tree that hasn’t been deemed notable and wish the council to do something about that, too bad. Disputes between neighbours over an ill-positioned tree have been going on for as long as suburbs have been created. The council will say it has nothing to do with them, and to sort it out between yourselves.

That tree could be a pohutukawa on its way to achieving magnificence while its roots are munting your drains, a norfolk pine mimicking a church steeple as it blocks more and more of your winter sun, or perhaps a phoenix palm that can be seen for miles while it harbours rats and stabs you with toxic intent as you walk past.

In the dispute between you and your neighbour the subjective response to that tree is absolutely the point. Is it nostalgic, noble, noticeable, or simply a damned nuisance? It all depends on the individual’s view, or perhaps lack of it, as is often the case.



Image by Sharain Liew, Pixabay

REUNION

Memories revived as teen friends reunite

Memories of teenage years in the 1960s were revived at a recent reunion of Ōtaki friends.

Janice Roxborough (nee Jorey) organised the reunion of old teenage friends at the suggestion of John Harvey and Brian Roxborough.

The gathering began on October 13 at the home of Gerry and Jill Harvey in Manakau. There they enjoyed a meal, a drink or two and a reunion cake, but mostly the opportunity to talk again to friends who were so close, but now mostly separated by distance, both within New Zealand and overseas.

“We had a great weekend together and we’re planning to do so again every three years – election weekend again,” Janice says. “It was great for us to be able to meet again, just like the gang of old.”

The group drove past the homes where they once lived, and visited the cemetery where some of their family members, friends, schoolmates and people they knew in the community lay. There were also visits to the museum, to cafés and other familiar haunts.

A Saturday lunch barbecue was organised at Ōtaki Beach, just as they did so many times in the days of old. However the weather intervened and they headed to John Harvey’s home – the “party house” in the 60s.

A meal and drinks followed on Saturday night at the all-too-familiar Railway Hotel, with Sunday morning at Ruth Pretty’s café in Te Horo, then farewells and a late get-together for those still in Ōtaki.

“There were lots of wonderful, happy memories and friendships



FRIENDS: Back, from left, Peter Hewer (Auckland), Barry Sutton (Te Horo), Stan Giddens (Taupō), Brian Roxborough (Rangiora), Brian Henderson (Levin), Gerry Harvey (Manakau), Jan Roxborough (nee Jorey, Rangiora). Front: Adele Croad (nee August, Waikanae), Vivienne Jones (nee Ekins, Masterton), Anne Sutton (nee McChesney, Gold Coast), Lorraine Giddens (nee Cooksley, Taupō), John Harvey (Ōtaki), Coral Fergusson (nee Morgan, Palmerston North) and Cedric Hunt (Churton Park). Absent: Terry and Kathy Knowles (nee Arcus, Ōtaki), Bill Arcus (Australia).

Photo Ōtaki Today

rekindled – very precious,” Janice says. “I miss Ōtaki more now that I have got older.”

The friends took time to remember those who had since died, including Roger Jones, Stewart August, Wayne and Judy Richards (nee Martin), and Errol Croad, bringing a tear to many who had such fond memories of growing up in Ōtaki more than 50 years ago.

■ Janice’s parents, Eddie and Dulcie Jorey, were well known in Ōtaki. Their appliance store, Ōtaki and West Coast Trading Company, was a landmark in Ōtaki’s Main Street for many years.



In the dunes at Ōtaki Beach on January 28, 1967, were, from left, Janice Jorey, Brian Roxborough, Kathy Arcus, Stewart August, Adele August, Bill Arcus and Roger Jones. Inset: The reunion cake.



Many of the friends were part of the Ōtaki Judo Club. In this photo from the 1960s, they are at the back and from left, Brian Roxborough, John Harvey, Cedric Hunt and Peter Hewer.. The children at the front are unidentified.

Photos courtesy of Jan Roxborough

Te Puna
Oranga o
Ōtaki

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January 2024**



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Drop your coloured picture in to **Riverstone Café** by Jan 14 to win a \$20 book voucher or an *Animals in Vehicles* book.

OT KIDS' NEWS

JONATHAN CELEBRATES 191 YEARS

A giant tortoise named Jonathan has celebrated his 191st birthday on the island of St Helena in the Seychelles. He is the world's oldest living land animal, but his exact age is uncertain. He was at least 50 when he was brought to the island in 1882, making him at least 191, and potentially much older. "In spite of losing his sense of smell and being virtually blind from cataracts, his appetite remains keen," veterinarian Joe Hollins told GWR. "He is still being hand-fed once a week with a fortifying helping of fruit and vegetables by a small, dedicated team." Jonathan is a resident of Plantation House, where St Helena's governor lives, and holds the title of the oldest chelonian (including tortoises and turtles that have protective shells) in recorded history.



TOP NZ DOG NAMES IN 2023

The top dog names for 2023 have been released by the New Zealand Companion Animal Register. For the fifth year in a row, Luna is the favourite pet name across Aotearoa for cats, dogs and rabbits. Bella, Max, Milo and Teddy are also in the top five. Poppy, Coco, Buddy, Bailey and Charlie join this prestigious list in the top 10. Buddy and Charlie have seen a dip in popularity compared to 2022, while Bailey and Coco are enjoying increased favour among dog owners. Beyond the timeless classics, 2023 has witnessed a surge in names inspired by events of the year. Movies have played a significant role, with the name Barbie experiencing a staggering 1079% surge in popularity, closely followed by a 79% rise for Ken. Other Barbie-related names such as Alan, Dolly, and Sasha have also witnessed increased adoption. *The Little Mermaid* has made waves, boosting names like Ariel, Eric and Scuttle, while Ember, the protagonist of the film *Elemental*, has climbed the ranks. The New Zealand Companion Animal Register, or NZCAR, is the country's microchip database for any species of pet. It holds the details for 1.3 million pets, who can be microchip-scanned by veterinary clinics and shelters anywhere in the country and then reunited with their owners, should the animal ever be found wandering. What's your dog's name?

LIBRARY BOOK OVERDUE BY 100 YEARS

A library book, overdue by 100 years, has found its way back to the St Paul Public Library in Minnesota, US. The book, titled *Famous Composers*, a tribute to Bach and Mozart among others, still had the library's checkout slip from 1919. The book was discovered as someone sifted through a relative's belongings. St Paul mayor Melvin Carter said no late fines would be imposed! The future of the book is unsure as its delicate condition means it most likely won't return to circulation. The library will instead cherish it as an artifact with historical significance.



COLOURING COMPETITION

MERI KIRIHIME TE



NAME:

AGE:

PHONE:

WORD MAKER

RAUMATI



How many words can you make from Raumati? Answers are on page 23. Have a go, have fun.

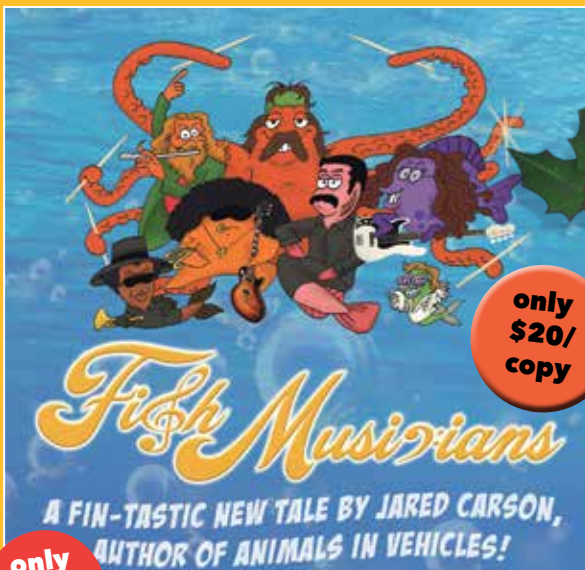
You can make 67 words from RAUMATI! And if you don't know the meanings look them up. I had to!



KYUSS'S DECEMBER WORD SEARCH

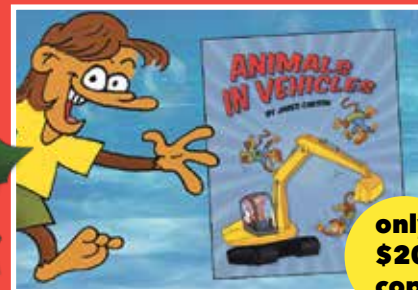
Circle the letters as you find the word.

COOKIES	Q X A U Q G Z B D R U F H D O P P S U I
PRESENTS	D G W R V K H D U D E T P C G K P N B E
SNOWFLAKES	M X C Y D U C H P E O L U R U S X O C O
YEARLY	S D K T R E E D S T N E S E R P O W B N
JOLLY	T C M H E N P H K P L S K E C F B F P T
REINDEER	A M Q J M U H Z Y L I U T D P Y L L O J
STAR	R J I U T P B J T X Q F Y N E G W A B O
MILK	U D R V C U E W H R K Z W I L K J K P B
SANTA	C K L I M J H M Z G D I L E N B D E B O
TREE	G A O R N Y N G B Z G W P R E X B S W O
KIN	Z M E J Z S O L D C B O E L R V S D A X
	L C N M P F K X O Q G J P D V N F Y T I
	V Z L A M M E B T A W P L F F M V L N D
	D V F D Z C C O W L M C O H Z G V R A W
	M R I X U I I T F F B H E H B B P A S Q
	Z C S E I K O O C T P F H E S A U E H P
	R O Y O F J J E Y L C X Y G O U T Y I Q
	A M Q J Y A U H N N A C B Y G S D V C K M
	F M E X W I D T B O S B W E I G E G I O
	Q F H H V K M W U Y T U G L D L Z E N O



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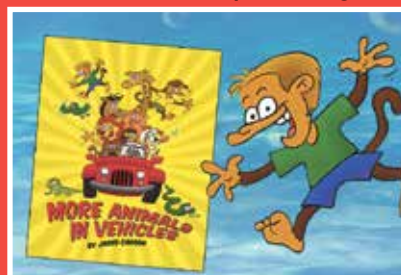
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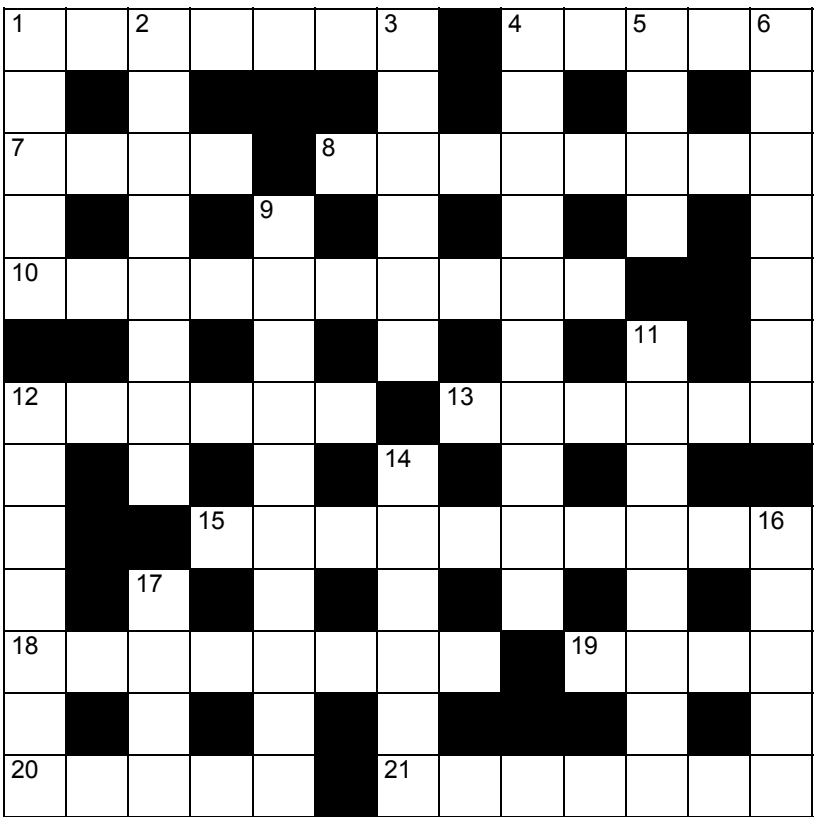
Order from: 027 698 7529

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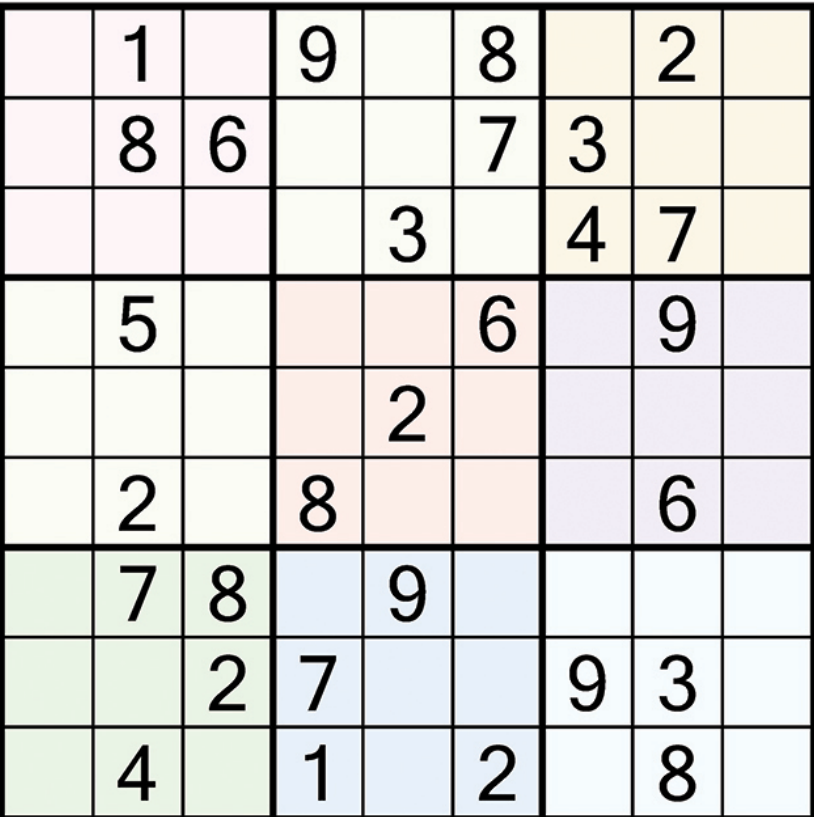
debby@idmedia.co.nz



THE CROSSWORD #NZ1919C (answers below right)



SUDOKU PUZZLES thepuzzlecompany.co.nz
EASY #63H Use logic and process of elimination to fill in the blank cells using the numbers 1 through 9. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and 3x3 block.



- ACROSS
- 1 Sell to the highest bid (7)

4 Native tree (5)

7 Skin complaint (4)

8 High-heeled shoe (8)

10 *Edmonds* *Cookery Book* slogan (4,2,4)

12 Shrewd (6)

13 Mail deliverer (inf) (6)

15 Generous (10)

18 Merry-go-round (8)

19 Quartet (4)

20 Gouge (5)

21 Steadfast (7)
- DOWN
- 1 Lisa ____, NZ

2 Repentant (8)

3 The physical world (6)

4 NZ's biggest farm, covering 1800sq km (10)

5 Carry (4)

6 Worship (7)

9 Government-owned dwelling (5,5)

11 Obstinate (8)

12 Camelids farmed in NZ since the late 1980s (7)

14 Undies (6)

16 Soil (5)

17 Afternoon (inf) (4)



DECEMBER KIWIANA QUIZ

Kiwiana celebrates unique icons that are a part of New Zealand culture and identity. *Answers bottom of page.*

1. More copies of this book have been sold than any other book in New Zealand. What is it?

2. What Christmas dessert has long been at the centre of a trans-Tasman argument?

3. What is the term that epitomises the “kiwi bloke” as someone who can turn their hand to anything?

4. Dave Dobbyn’s *Slice of Heaven* reached No 1 on the NZ music charts in what year? a. 1986 b. 1987 c. 1988 d. 1985.

5. Known as flip-flops in the UK and USA, and thongs in Australia, what do we call them in NZ?

6. Made of rolled oats, flour, sugar, butter, golden syrup, baking soda and boiling water, and popularised during the First World War, what are these?

7. What retro brand of soft drink dating back to 1918 was originally distributed in Foxton and as far south as Ōtaki, and north to Sanson? In 2010 it began enjoying a resurgence in popular cafés and some bars.

8. What song by NZ group Pātea Māori Club reached No 1 on the NZ music charts in 1984?

9. What is the popular soft drink with the slogan “World Famous in New Zealand since ages ago”?

10. The Longest Drink In Town — since 1968. What do dairies and ice-cream parlours use these iconic paper cups for?

11. What Pascall sweet was discontinued due to a lack of interest in 2008?

12. What adventure sport was commercialised in NZ in 1986?

13. What is a male farmer, hunter or bushman hailing from the deep rural south known as?

14. A small holiday home in NZ is also known as?

15. What popular NZ chocolate company is based in Porirua?

17. Arvo.
16. Earth
14. Briefs.
12. Alpacas
11. Stubborn
9. State house
6. Idillise
5. Tote
4. Molesworth
3. Nature
2. Conitite
1. Adams
- DOWN:
21. Staunch.
20. Score
19. Four
18. Carousel
15. Charitable
13. Postie
12. Astute
10. Sure To Rise
8. Stiletto
7. Acne
4. Matai
1. Auction
- ACROSS:
- ANSWERS
- #1919C
- CROSSWORD

Ōtaki River entrance tides
December 13 – January

<https://www.metservice.com/marine/regions/kapiti-wellington/tides/locations/otaki-river-entrance>

Please note: The actual timing of high and low tide might differ from that provided here. Times are extrapolated from the nearest primary port for this location, so please take care.

HIGH LOW HIGH LOW HIGH

THU 14 DEC - 04:56 11:05 17:21 23:26

FRI 15 DEC - 05:41 11:50 18:08 -

SAT 16 DEC 00:15 06:27 12:37 18:59 -

SUN 17 DEC 01:06 07:16 13:28 19:51 -

MON 18 DEC 01:59 08:08 14:23 20:47 -

TUE 19 DEC 02:56 09:04 15:22 21:45 -

WED 20 DEC 03:57 10:05 16:24 22:46 -

THU 21 DEC 05:01 11:12 17:28 23:49 -

FRI 22 DEC 06:08 12:21 18:31 - -

SAT 23 DEC - 00:52 07:14 13:25 19:31

SUN 24 DEC - 01:52 08:13 14:23 20:27

MON 25 DEC - 02:47 09:05 15:14 21:18

TUE 26 DEC - 03:36 09:51 16:01 22:05

WED 27 DEC - 04:20 10:33 16:45 22:48

THU 28 DEC - 05:02 11:13 17:26 23:29

FRI 29 DEC - 05:40 11:50 18:06 -

SAT 30 DEC 00:08 06:17 12:27 18:45 -

SUN 31 DEC 00:45 06:54 13:04 19:23 -

MON 01 JAN 01:24 07:31 13:42 20:03 -

TUE 02 JAN 02:03 08:09 14:24 20:45 -

WED 03 JAN 02:46 08:52 15:10 21:30 -

THU 04 JAN 03:33 09:41 16:00 22:19 -

FRI 05 JAN 04:27 10:38 16:55 23:14 -

SAT 06 JAN 05:27 11:42 17:53 - -

SUN 07 JAN - 00:13 06:32 12:48 18:53

MON 08 JAN - 01:15 07:34 13:49 19:51

TUE 09 JAN - 02:13 08:30 14:44 20:46

WED 10 JAN - 03:07 09:21 15:35 21:39

THU 11 JAN - 03:56 10:08 16:23 22:30

FRI 12 JAN - 04:43 10:54 17:11 23:19

SAT 13 JAN - 05:30 11:40 17:59 -

SUN 14 JAN 00:07 06:16 12:27 18:47 -

MON 15 JAN 00:55 07:02 13:14 19:35 -

TUE 16 JAN 01:44 07:51 14:04 20:25 -

WED 17 JAN 02:34 08:42 14:56 21:17 -

THU 18 JAN 03:27 09:38 15:52 22:13 -

FRI 19 JAN 04:27 10:40 16:53 23:14 -

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RAUMATI WORD MAKER
ANSWERS from page 22: **7-letter word: 1. timarau.** 6-letter words: 2. amauti 3. amrita 4. atrium 5. tamari 6. trauma. 5-letter words: 7. amrit 8. maria 9. atria 10. raita 11. riata 12. tiara. 4-letter words: 13. amia 14. amir 15. arum 16. atma 17. maar 18. mair 19. mara 20. mart 21. maut 22. mura 23. rami 24. tram 25. trim 26. airt 27. aria 28. aura 29. raia. 3-letter words: 30. aim 31. ama 32. ami 33. amu 34. arm 35. mar 36. mat 37. mir 38. mut 39. ram 40. rim 41. rum 42. tam 43. tum 44. air 45. ait 46. art 47. rai 48. rat 49. ria 50. rut 51. tar 52. tau 53. tui 54. uta. 2-letter words: 55. am 56. ma 57. mi 58. mu 59. um 60. aa 61. ai 62. ar 63. at 64. it 65. ta 66. ti 67. ut.

SUDOKU SOLUTION #63H

DECEMBER KIWIANA QUIZ ANSWERS:
1. Edmonds Cookbook. 2. Pavlova. 3. No Biscuits. 4. a. 1986. 5. Jandals. 6. Anzac. 7. Foxton Fizz. 8. Poi E. 9. L&P. 10. Milkshakes. 11. Sniffers. 12. Bungee jumping. 13. Southern man. 14. Bach or crib. 15. Whittakers.

Padder tennis makes comeback

By Ian Carson

Passion and enthusiasm are not difficult traits to recognise.

So it is with Paul Grubi, a former professional tennis player and coach and founder of the not-for-profit impact organisation Padder Tennis NZ (PTNZ). Fortunately for Ōtaki, Paul now lives in the town, where his passion is leading to a comeback for padder tennis.

“We’re reviving the iconic New Zealand school playground game so more kids have free access to build the necessary skills required for all racquet sports, particularly tennis,” Paul says.

Through PTNZ, Paul has got local schools enthusiastic by running padder tennis coaching programmes, providing bats, balls and nets, and even painting courts.

He’s enlisted sponsorship from local businesses such as New World, Kelly & Co, Web2Print, Hunting & Fishing, Mixed Media Design, The Blackwood Bakes, and Hori. He has also secured a \$750 grant from the Ōtaki Community Board to buy equipment.

Kāpiti Coast District Council has also been supportive, getting the big concrete pad at Ōtaki Beach patched up and painted with three padder tennis courts – with a fourth still to be installed.

Paul hopes a series of summer weekend programmes at the beach



A group of paddertennis sponsors and supporters gave the game a go on Thursday, December 7, at the newly painted Ōtaki Beach courts. Photo Tim Beere

courts will attract players of all ages and abilities.

“It’s a sport that lots of people remember from their school days, or they might have played a lot of tennis,” he says. “But it’s also something youngsters are taking to.”

From 10am-4pm over five weekends starting on January 6, Paul is leading a free coaching programme and encouraging people to “give it a go”.

On February 10-11, he’s also organised a singles and doubles

tournament at the courts with prizes to be won.

Padder tennis is similar to tennis, but on smaller courts and using wooden or carbon fibre bats. Standard tennis balls can be used, or low compression balls for older or

less skilled players. The bats are not available in sports stores, but Padder Tennis NZ has them available for sale.

“We want the game to be as affordable and accessible as possible for everyone,” Paul says.

■ See paddertennis.nz



Numbers boosted for Ōtaki Triathlon

The Ōtaki Triathlon on Sunday, November 26, attracted about 100 participants, almost doubling the numbers from last year when it was revived after an eight-year hiatus.

Ōtaki Pool manager Shelley Ashton says the event, organised by pool team leader/event manager Kiana Ngaata, can only get bigger.

“It’s a fantastic community event,” she says.

“The people participating were of all ages and abilities – some giving it a go for the first time, and some real competitors.

“We can see even more joining in next year.”

The timing of the event is ideal because it gives triathletes a test early in the season. Plenty of triathlons are scheduled around the country during the summer.

The Ōtaki Tri is a sprint distance team or individual triathlon, including a 5km off-road run at Haruātai Park, a 20km road ride through Ōtaki, and a 400m pool swim.

LEFT: Participants head off for the running section of the Ōtaki Tri. Photo Simon Neale



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