

# ŌTAKI TODAY

otakitoday.com

PEPUERE/FEBRUARY 2023

Ngā Kōrero o Ōtaki



Kites back p12-15



Gwen's 3000km trek p11



Yep, hole in one! p24

## Ōtaki gets chunk of water funds

Ōtaki Pool is a beneficiary of Kāpiti Coast District Council's successful application for Better Off funding, part of the government's support of councils to transition to the Three Waters water service entities next year.

The pools gets \$500,000 for a low emissions power source. While it's only a small part of the \$5.26 million for Kāpiti, Ōtaki stands to gain more, as it will take a chunk of:

- \$325,000 to enable collaboration, capability-building and sustainability projects, including resourcing Ngā Hapū/Ōtaki Porirua Trust Board for sustainable food production
- a \$300,000 contribution to new public toilets at Chrystall's Bend on the Ōtaki riverbank, on the Waikanae River Trail, and at Hemi Matenga Reserve in Waikanae
- \$300,000 to support the Ngāti Raukawa/Te Āti Awa/Ngāti Toa Confederation to develop and implement Māori housing solutions
- \$250,000 for an education hub investigation, workshops with strategic partners, community engagement, expertise, and iwi capacity funding.

The council successfully applied for funding for 14 new or accelerated, scaled up, or enhanced community well-being projects already in the Long-term Plan 2021-41.

Of the \$2 billion available through the Better Off package, council has been allocated \$21.05 million. The first tranche of \$5.26 million is available now and must be spent by June 30, 2027. The second tranche of \$15.79 million, under a separate process, will be available from July 1, 2024.

Whether tranche 2 will still be available might rest on the outcome of the General Election in October.

"In our submission, we'll continue to push for positive Three Waters outcomes for our community and advocate for our district's needs to ensure they're met in the face of a changing climate and unprecedented growth," says Mayor Janet Holborow. "This includes ensuring clarity around who is responsible for the collection of water charges and how price-quality regulation will work, how councils' Three Waters debt is determined, and who is liable when there are issues.

"For now, we're responding to government's requests as required and taking advantage of any funding that's available."



REVEALED: The piles of the old 1901 bridge protrude from the water while children swim nearby in the Ōtaki River. The bridge was the first – apart from the rail bridge – across the river.

Photo Ōtaki Today

## Old bridge piles emerge

Unusually low water levels in the Ōtaki River have revealed the remains of the original traffic bridge, built in 1901.

The wooden piles of the bridge were seen clearly recently on both sides of the river, between the bridge on the old state highway and the rail bridge. It's a popular swimming spot for families during summer time.

The old bridge was opened on May 21, 1901, with great fanfare by the New Zealand premier, Richard John Seddon. The premier arrived by the midday train, and after refreshments at the Jubilee Hotel in Waerenga Road, marched with other dignitaries to

the bridge to officially open it. The party returned afterwards to the Jubilee for a banquet.

Before the bridge was built, access into and out of Ōtaki to the south was by fording the river on stagecoach or horse, mainly at the river mouth. Floods often meant crossing was impossible, and it was a dangerous operation, with several fatalities recorded.

A bridge had already been built across the river for the railway when it was opened in 1886.

The wooden 1901 bridge was replaced by one of reinforced concrete and used by traffic late in 1937 (but officially opened on February 5, 1938). The bridge still in operation was opened in 1955. The expressway bridge is the fourth to span the river.

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## WHAT'S ON

**Ō2NL DROP-IN:** The Ōtaki to north of Levin expressway project team is hosting a drop-in session in Ōtaki where it will be available to answer questions about the new highway. It will be at the Memorial Hall supper room, 2-5pm on Thursday, February 16. If you have questions meantime, email O2NL@nzta.govt.nz or phone 0508 625 4636.

**ŌTAKI KITE FESTIVAL:** 10am-4pm February 18-19. Free, family friendly event at Ōtaki Beach. Kites, stalls, a Kelly & Co big dig, and entertainment from the Fleetwood Mac inspired band Gold Dust Woman, Tui Soul and James Stent. See pages 12-15.

**ŌTAKI COMMUNITY BOARD:** The next meeting of the Ōtaki Community Board is on Tuesday, March 7. Board meetings are in the Gertrude Atmore Lounge (attached to the Memorial Hall). The **Waikanae Community Board** meets on February 28 at the Waikanae Community Centre, Utauta Street. 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.

**MĀORILAND FILM FESTIVAL** Māoriland Hub, 68 Main St, Ōtaki. March 15-19. See maorilandfilm.co.nz

**TOI MATARAU GALLERY:** Māoriland Hub, 68 Main St. See toi.maorilandfilm.co.nz.

**TOTE MODERN:** Ōtaki Pottery Club's gallery and workshops, Ōtaki race course, Te Roto Rd. Open 10am-3pm Friday to Sunday.

**ŌTAKI MUSEUM:** "The way we were: glimpses of days gone by" exhibition showcases a range of items from the museum and other collections. Play the old theatre pianola while you're there. The Anne Thorpe Reading Room is also open when the museum is, 10am-2pm Thursday to Saturday, except public holidays. 49 Main St. Ōtaki. 06 364-6886.

**ŌTAKI MARKET:** SH1, opposite New World. Open every Sunday during daylight time. Runs from 9am-2pm. Contact Georgie 027 234-1090.

**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

**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 and 3rd Thursday 10.30am-1.30pm.

**MAHARA iti**, 2 Mahara Place, Waikanae. Mon-Fri, 10am-4pm. All welcome. Free entry.

**PARKINSON'S SOCIAL SUPPORT GROUP:** Get together time for those with Parkinson's and their families. 10am, 3rd Tuesday of each month. Relish Café, Elizabeth Street, Waikanae. Enquiries: Prue 027 416 5029.

**PARKINSON'S CARERS SUPPORT GROUP:** Meet at the Mediterranean Foods, Coastlands. 10am, 2nd Wednesday each month. Enquiries Hazel 904 7243.

**CHOIRS** Let's Sing Ōtaki, Tuesdays 2-3pm, Hadfield Hall, Te Rauparaha St, Ōtaki. Kāpiti Women's Choir, Mondays 1.30-3pm, Baptist Church, 286 Te Moana Road, Waikanae. New members for both choirs always welcome. Enquires to Ann-Marie Stapp 021 492 127.

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

# Opportunities for the new PM

## Opportunity knocks for the Labour Government.

The new leader can reshape its legislative plans to better suit the divisive political climate that Jacinda Ardern has left him with.

The key question that Chris Hipkins faces is whether the Cabinet and caucus are prepared to make the shifts necessary to at least give him the chance to seize the opportunity. Public opinion polls suggest that unless they are, his stay as the country's leader will be short lived.

The four most contentious policies have been well identified – Three Waters, the TVNZ-RadioNZ merger, the income assurance scheme and He Puapua. The first and last of these are to a significant extent important business of the Māori caucus.

To get this group on-side the prime minister can argue they should remember that if National achieves a governing majority in October its success in achieving a separate Māori health authority will be undone, as will other initiatives they plan to cement in a greater Māori say in everyday decision-making at central and local government level.

He must also satisfy Labour's solid financial backer – the trade union movement. This will probably be easier to persuade that change is necessary because pragmatism in pursuit of long-term gain is familiar to union leaders. And the PM can promise them a suite of policies for Election 23 that are aligned to their demands.

Against this background we can expect in the next few weeks to gain an understanding of Chris Hipkins' abilities to lead government. The Auckland rain deluge provided a chance to assess his crisis management ability. The ministerial reshuffle will by the time of



POLITICS

BRUCE KOHN

publication have shown his political skills at work.

Late last month a Roy Morgan poll showed the extent of the political challenge. Compared with October 2020, Labour's support was down 22.5 percent to 27.5 percent. Jacinda Ardern said she did not have enough "in the tank" to continue on for another four

years. This polling suggested the country had insufficient enthusiasm for her government's policies to want to give her those four years. On January 30 a poll taken after Hipkins' rise to the top put Labour neck-and-neck with National.

Parliamentary scuttlebutt that she and her deputy, Grant Robertson, along with Chris Hipkins and Megan Woods, plotted out the course of the change of leadership before Christmas had a strong ring of truth to it.

A government known for snafus in management of public business suddenly and surprisingly was able to pull off a change at the top within 10 days that gave any internal dissenters almost no time to organise a different scenario. Order and a sense of unity was preserved.

How long it can be maintained will depend on the approach taken by those who sense changes to policy threaten their interests.

That such a danger persists was confirmed by Grant Robertson's decision to pull out from selection to stand for Parliament in his Wellington Central electorate and instead go on the Labour list. The decision means that if Labour is not returned to office in October, Robertson can gracefully retire from politics without a by-election being necessary. This was a prudent personal move but not one that demonstrated confidence in the new leader's ability to turn polls in Labour's favour.

About the time Robertson made his intentions clear, the transition unit of the Internal Affairs announced the appointment of new chief executives to lead three of the four new mega water companies to be created under the Three Waters project. The hirings were agreed before the change of Labour's leadership. It is assumed DIA had authority from the Local Government Minister Nanaia Mahuta to make the announcements. However, coming when it did the announcement suggested that unwinding Three Waters in the shape that it is now structured will be an even more expensive and complex task than if the announcements had been held off.

It is assumed that as all the three so far announced are already employed by public bodies, that they might be able to return to their existing positions if the mega-company plans are shelved. But as details of the agreements made with them have not yet been made public a degree of murkiness exists.

The transition board hopes to have boards for the new entities appointed by the end of June. By then the Government's stance on this controversial programme will be better known. By then the Three Waters local government resistance team might well have an alternative plan for submission to the main political parties and the public for consideration as a feasible alternative.

Opportunity knocks for Chris Hipkins. And what role will the Māori caucus play in the scenario that unfolds as its members, Nanaia Mahuta and Willie Jackson, have much political capital invested in the Three Waters project and the TVNZ-RadioNZ merger respectively.

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

## CARTOON OF THE MONTH

By Jared Carson

### Past revealed as river water levels drop. – News



## ŌTAKI TODAY *Ngā Kōrero o Ōtaki*

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# 'Trip of a lifetime' for Everiss scholars

Everiss scholars **Krishna Modi** and **Jessica Thomsen** returned to Ōtaki on January 26 after what they both described as a trip of a lifetime to England and Scotland.

Krishna was named as Ōtaki College's Everiss Scholar for 2021 and Jess for 2022. Krishna couldn't take the trip after her award because of Covid restrictions, so the two took the trip together this year. They had known each other before the trip, but "we're best friends now," Jess says.

The scholarship is the equivalent of the long-standing Ōtaki Scholar, which allows a visit to New Zealand annually by a student of Robert Gordon's College in Aberdeen, Scotland.

The Aberdeen college formed a big part of the trip that began in London on January 6. For Jess, particularly, London was a highlight because she'd never been out of New Zealand before.

"Just to see Big Ben and places like Westminster Abbey was fantastic," she says. "London has all these old buildings and there's such a busy atmosphere – everything's at a fast pace."

Throughout their trip they had people who had been organised to show them around, and in London it was former high commissioner to New Zealand George Duncan Raukawa Fergusson (the Raukawa in his name honouring links through his



**MEMORIAL:** From left, former high commissioner to New Zealand George Fergusson, Everiss scholars Jess Thomsen and Krishna Modi, and London-based RNZAF Wing Commander Steve Townley at the Everiss memorial in Cowie, Scotland.

*Photo supplied*

father, former governor-general Sir Bernard Fergusson, to the local iwi).

They went through the House of Commons and Buckingham Palace, and went on the London Eye and the underground tube trains.

After three days they flew to Aberdeen, where they had dinner with several former Ōtaki scholars, including the most recent, Angus Jack and Patrick Robinson.

At Robert Gordon's Krishna spent

time in the biology department – biology being her key interest after already completing a year of her medicine studies at Otago University. Jess had time in the junior school – she begins her primary

school teacher training soon at the University of Canterbury. They both spoke at school assemblies about the scholarships, and life in a small New Zealand town.

"People were genuinely interested in Ōtaki," Krishna says. "They certainly appreciate the importance of the Everiss and the Ōtaki scholarships. It's a big deal over there."

While in Scotland they had a personal half-hour chat with Princess Anne in the Throne Room at Hollyrood Palace, finding her well informed and interested about New Zealand.

But the poignant moment in the trip was when they visited the memorial of Carlyle Everiss at the coal-mining village of Cowie, near Stirling.

Carlyle was a Kiwi spitfire pilot during the Second World War. After his plane malfunctioned during an air combat exercise, he steered it away from the houses of Cowie and died in the crash. The Everiss scholarship is named in his honour.

"Everyone in Cowie knows about him, and people we spoke to knew families he saved," Krishna says. "They were very grateful for what he did."

Jess and Krishna were proud to wear their Ōtaki College uniform at formal occasions, and say the scholarship is worth aspiring to.

"Look at it as a goal, and go for it," Jess says. "It's so worthwhile."

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# Concrete pad gets makeover

By Ian Carson

**The concrete pad at Ōtaki Beach is getting a spruce-up, but serious work at the beach – potentially – could be a bit over a year away.**

Kāpiti Coast District Council’s Long-Term Plan has pencilled in \$872,000 in total to be spent on “Ōtaki Beach development” – \$56,000 in 2024-25, \$570,000 in 2025-26, and \$246,000 in 2028-29.

The reality, however, is that what’s called “road stopping” is a big impediment to any development. Land on the beachfront is technically a road, and that status has to be revoked in a long process. The council could also remove the funding in its three-yearly reassessment of long-term priorities, due in 2024.

Meantime, Kāpiti Coast District Council has engaged local contractor Concrete Doctors to fix the surface of the pad that has broken and cracked in recent years.

“They’re concentrating on the worst of the cracks and larger areas that require digging out and releveling,” Ōtaki Community Board chair Cam Butler says. “This work also includes grinding down any rough spots.”

After the area is water-blasted, council staff will repaint the markings for the basketball court and the padder tennis courts.

The refurbish has cost about \$15,000 – Cam says a total court resurface has been quoted at \$107,000.

“The contractor has indicated that the current work will give us a good useable surface for a further 4-5 years, but at some stage we will need to look at a total resurface of the area,” he says.

The concrete pad will be multi-purpose, suitable not only for ball games but also for skateboards and scooters.

The pad was in the 1950s and 60s a bustling skating rink, with a kiosk, music, games and skating competitions.

■ See historical article on page 22 – Life as a teen in 1950s Ōtaki

# Kāpiti WEA programme begins

**The Kāpiti WEA is beginning its series of educational courses for 2023 with a seminar by scientists James Renwick and Mike Joy.**

The two will discuss the crucial relationship between the atmosphere, water and climate change at Waikanae Presbyterian Church on February 18. It’s just the beginning of the WEA’s informative programme for the year.

The WEA (Workers’ Educational Association) was established in 1915, making it the longest provider of adult education in New Zealand. The Kāpiti branch – one of seven in New Zealand – began in 1978. It’s a non-profit organisation dedicated to promoting “ideals of a just, equitable and sustainable society through the medium of education”.

Saturday seminars and courses throughout the year cover a range of topics, from history and geology to economics and water colour painting.

“Our activities cover a wide variety of relevant and stimulating subjects, taught by experts in their field,” says Kāpiti WEA education sub-committee convenor Kevin Clark. “We try to cater for everyone.”

The WEA also has bus trips to places of interest – this year to Whanganui and Bushy Park, Kai Iwi.

Course and seminar tutors and speakers are often local Kāpiti people with expertise, but others, such as renowned artist Alfred Memelink of Petone, come from other parts of the country. Some seminars are taken by professors from Victoria University.

Courses are mostly funded by membership, which is \$25 a year, and a \$100 season-ticket that includes membership, gives free entry to all seminars and discounts on courses and bus trips. All activities are open to the public.

Most courses and seminars are on Saturdays and last about three hours.

■ For information and courses planned for 2023, visit [geethal.nz/KapitiWEA](http://geethal.nz/KapitiWEA)



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WOW: A section of the Christmas Wonderland at Ōtaki College. Photo supplied

## Light up Ōtaki sparkles

Light Up Ōtaki at Christmas raised more than \$1550 for the Ōtaki Foodbank, and proved that volunteers are vital for the success of community events.

The event focuses around the Christmas Wonderland at the Ōtaki College hall, but also includes a business challenge for the best Christmas display, and production of a map so people can tour the lit-up houses.

It's run by the Ōtaki Promotions Group, which also organises the kite festival and community expo.

This Christmas was only the second Light Up Ōtaki event, but already it's grown in popularity with an impressive hall full of lights, Christmas decorations and a Santa. Entry is by koha.

"It's only through the generosity of creative volunteers – Rebecca and Sam Whitt, Joseph and Lisa Te Wiata, Lynda Brown, Lisa and Bernard O'Brien – that we are able to turn the hall into something so spectacular," says co-ordinator Kirsty Doyle. "They put in a huge amount of time to put it all together, and even donated many of the great displays. This sort of thing just doesn't happen without people like these."

Kirsty offered special thanks to the Ōtaki Community Board and KCDC for funding, Ōtaki College for use of the hall, and business supporters Concrete Doctors, Gardner Homes and Ōtaki Today.

# Taylors Road glitch to be fixed with new signs

Taylors Road area residents are relieved new signs will give visitors clear guidance about how to get to the area at the northern end of the new expressway.

Previous access was off the old State Highway 1 just north of the Waitohu Stream bridge. However, with the expressway, the northern section of that road has been removed so traffic heading north must turn at the top of The Ramp onto the expressway.

It's confused people wanting to find Taylors Road, as signage north past Te Manuao Road says "Road Closed" and "North – Follow Detour". Detour arrows point along Waitohu Valley Road, Dittmer Street and Te Manuao Road, guiding motorists heading north back to the expressway.

However, the old highway will still take people across the Waitohu Stream bridge and turn them west under the expressway to Taylors Road.

Contacted by Ōtaki Today, contractor Fletcher Construction said it would rectify the situation with signs that are currently being made. Stating "Taylors Road Access Only", they will be installed soon.

Meanwhile, expressway work is continuing, despite opening on December 23. To enable the opening before Christmas, construction of permanent tie-in works between local arterial roads and the old SH1 was delayed, but that work is being done up until about March 20.

A detour will be in place for north and south-bound traffic on the old highway just north of Makahuri (formerly known as Marycrest). Depending on direction of travel, this will require traffic to detour off the old SH1 and use either Te Hapua Road (to the north) or Te Horo Beach Road (to the south), then rejoin SH1 past the closure.

Over the six-week period, works will include:



DETOUR: Temporary signs urge north-bound motorists to detour via Waitohu Valley Road. Photo Ōtaki Today



- rebuilding the tie-ins between old SH1 and local roads
- completing the shared pathway
- rebuilding the entranceway to the Makahuri underpass
- installing pedestrian traffic lights
- building a new rail crossing
- completing private accessways and sealing.

The first quarter of 2023 will be busy for the team as it also works to complete the 10km shared path – for walkers, cyclists and horse riders – which is a significant project in itself. A lot of work has to go into constructing a crossing for the path over the old SH1 by Makahuri.

Attention has also turned to completing work on local roads and other outstanding tasks for the project. The southern tie-in to the Mackays to Peka Peka section of expressway has involved speed restrictions so final road surfacing and line marking could be done.

Other work included:

- painting of the iconic Ōtaki Pink carnation, featuring the handprints of local students, within the shared path underpass
- landscaping works around the gateway sculptures
- northern entrance destination signage to encourage motorists to stop over in Ōtaki.



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# Pots festival draws 5000

The Festival of Pots and Garden Art had its 14th event in late January, drawing about 5000 visitors through the gates at Anam Cara.

With sunny weather throughout the week-long event, organisers at the Ōtaki Pottery Club were delighted. At press time they were still counting the commission on artwork sales, but along with the \$5 a head gate charge, they were expecting a bumper take.

“We were extremely pleased with how it all went,” said Sue Wilson, co-convenor of the festival along with long-time potter Rod Graham. “We had many comments about the quality of the artworks that were on display and for sale.”

She said a more professional approach to the display of artwork indoors enhanced the overall feel of the festival.

“We got new screens and plinths and it made a big difference.”



BUSY: Festival co-convenors Rod Graham and Sue Wilson on the busy Saturday morning at Anam Cara. Photos Ōtaki Today



# Beach blocks on way out

**The concrete blocks barring access to the beach at Te Horo are being removed.**

The blocks were installed by Kāpiti Coast District Council just before Christmas after a submission to the Waikanae Community Board. However, opposition from several Te Horo Beach residents was swift, arguing there had been no consultation.

Mayor Janet Holborow weighed in on the debate and asked staff for the barriers to be removed, “so that we can re-set the conversation and come up with a solution which is good for the community, good for the environment, and avoids behaviour which disturbs beach users and the beach ecosystem” (see *Janet’s View*, page 16).

The council says the blocks were put in as a temporary measure after complaints about driver behaviour on the beach, and damage to the ecologically important Mangaone Stream mouth.

“The blocks are not intended to be a permanent feature, but council officers do need to ensure that the intent of the Beach Bylaw 2021 is achieved,” group manager place and space Mike Mendonca said.

“We are working through the issues associated with this across the district. We need to strike a balance between enabling public access, maintaining public safety, and protecting our precious ecosystems.”

He said the blocks were being removed after discussion with members of the Te Horo community, but the issues that prompted their initial placement remained.

The blocks will be discussed at the next Waikanae Community Board meeting on February 28.

Ōtaki Today understands the blocks were being removed about the time of publication.

Tall Poppy

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ENTERTAINERS: Some of the Let’s Sing Ōtaki choir at Ocean View Residential Care – from left standing, Pamela Kinghorn, Jan Harris, Margaret Andrews, Bev Rutherford, Liz Everett, Heide Hoffman, Sue Watson and Judith Miller. Seated are Jillian Boyd (pianist), Peter Hakaraia, Brenda McHugo and Norma Joslin.

Photo Ann-Marie Stapp

# Singing ‘good for health’

The Let’s Sing Ōtaki choir is back to a full programme this year after the disruptions of Covid.

The “revival” can’t come soon enough for choir leader Ann-Marie Stapp.

“Covid made it really difficult,” she says. “People got used to being at home, but people need people. Being part of a choir is not only satisfying and a lot of fun, but also a great way to socialise and meet new people.

“It builds your social capital.”

The choir couldn’t rehearse or take concerts to the rest homes, and there were all sorts of rumours about how singing was somehow bad for health with Covid lingering in the community.

Ann-Marie says singing is quite the opposite.

“It’s good for you – for your health and well-being. It’s a form of exercise. People feel good singing.”

Returning to choir practice – at Hadfield Hall from

2-3pm on Tuesdays – is an opportunity for the choir to “renew and rebuild”, she says.

Choir member and guitarist Bev Rutherford says she’s looking forward to the choir meeting more regularly.

“Now we’re back, we’re keen to get some new members and start enjoying ourselves again.”

The choir has a wide variety of songs in its repertoire, including those from the First World War, traditional English, Irish, Scottish and Welsh folk songs, musicals and Māori waiata. If they fit the format, group members’ favourite songs are also included.

There’s a \$5 per session fee to cover costs. At present the choir has about 20 members, but it’s hoped the numbers can rise to the 40 of days past.

“There’s no limit to the number, and no singing experience is necessary,” Bev says. “Just come along and have some fun.”

■ Contact: Ann-Marie, [amstapp@xtra.co.nz](mailto:amstapp@xtra.co.nz) or 021 492 127

# Bridge club celebrates 40 years with free tuition

Ōtaki Bridge Club celebrates its 40th anniversary this year, and is looking to the future with a special offer for new members.

An anonymous donor is sponsoring the 10 lessons that are normally \$50, so they are free. The waived fee includes the first year’s membership of the club and all the comprehensive notes required to play the card game that can be traced back to 16th Century England.

“We know a lot of people have kept away from social gatherings in the past couple of years,” says club secretary Claudia Duncan. “But we’ve been delighted that our players are coming back and enjoying not only the bridge, but the social interaction as well.”

Claudia says bridge is a game for life.

“It combines logic, strategy and intuition, with a bit of luck. It’s great for your brain, it’s fun and gives people valuable social contact.”

The lessons begin on Wednesday, March 1, running weekly from 7.15pm.

The club has about 75 members and games are on Mondays from 11am-3pm (half an hour for bring-your-own lunch); Tuesdays in the evening from 7.15-10pm; and Thursdays from 1-4pm.

Although the club began in 1983, bridge has officially been played in Ōtaki since 1924, when the Ōtaki Ladies’ Bridge Club came into being. Vera Simpson began her bridge playing with that club and is the Ōtaki Bridge Club’s longest playing member.

For its 40th anniversary, the club plans a celebration for past and current members on Sunday, June 25.

The word “bridge” comes from a Russian version of whist, called “biritch,” meaning announcer or herald (bridge players “announce” their contract bids) and which was introduced to Constantinople in the 1880s.

Researchers have found that mentally challenging games such as bridge offer intellectual and social stimulation on a routine basis. Bridge’s intricacies make it particularly appealing for those who want to sharpen their acuity with mental gymnastics.

■ Ōtaki Bridge Club, 75 Aotaki St. Enquiries or to register, contact Claudia 021 885514 or or [claudia.duncs@gmail.com](mailto:claudia.duncs@gmail.com), or Sheridan 022 092 0137.

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# Lance focuses on garden ‘results’

Lance Bills is carrying on a long tradition of retailing and gardening for the Bills family with Harrisons Gardenworld at Peka Peka.

It’s a tradition the family has been in for at least 150 years in and around Ōtaki, and for Lance, the past 30 years. The garden centre he owns was run for 10 years before him by his parents, Arthur and Judy, who once ran Flavourfield Orchards, which is now part of Penrays at Te Horo. Arthur and his brother-in-law, Robert Eales, started the original Ōtaki Vegetable Market opposite Dalgetys (now Mowbrays), where Web2Print is nowadays.

But while tradition is important to Lance, and the experiences of his forebears helps, he’s more concentrated on the business of providing quality plants to customers.

“Success is a great motivator for our clients, so our business is about helping people get the results they want from gardening,” he says. “For plants to survive and thrive, they have to be good quality. We stand by that, offering a guarantee on every plant we sell.”

Lance says that when people are disappointed with the results, they can give up on gardening.

“That’s a real shame, because gardening has huge benefits for people’s health and well-being – plus it saves money in the household budget.



GARDEN GURU: Lance Bills at his Harrisons Gardenworld in Peka Peka.

Photo Ōtaki Today

“For many people, the garden is their happy place. It’s where they relax, get some exercise and watch plants grow and produce fruit and vegetables for the family table.

“There’s just nothing like picking and eating a fresh plum off the tree, or putting a fresh lettuce or just-ripened tomato in a salad. The flavour of that kind of freshness is unbeatable.

“You can’t get that with a product that is kept artificially fresh to look good on a shop shelf.”

In purely monetary terms, research has shown that good gardening gives a \$20 return on every \$1 spent.

Harrisons sells a full range of products – fruit trees, shrubs, flaxes, flowers and vegetables, as well as potting mix and garden tools.

But Lance says he’s worked hard on providing products that are a bit different. For example he’s fulfilling a big demand for more mature trees, part of the trend towards instant gardens.

“People have a vision of their new garden, and like to see a tree that won’t take years to grow to full size.”

Customers are also looking at how

to grow in compact gardens, part of the trend towards smaller sections. They are wanting fruit trees in pots for the patio, that can be taken with them when they sell the property.

And after the movement towards minimalist grasses and flowers with muted colours, the trend is now full colour.

Lance has about 1.5 hectares of land at the back of the Peka Peka garden centre where he and his team have a production nursery to provide the larger trees and much of the other plants sold in the garden centre.

He says there’s no such thing as a green thumb.

“You’ll succeed if you have the right advice and the right products for the location. If you want to know what does best in your area, go for a walk around your neighbourhood and see what’s growing well in other gardens.”

Harrisons is part of a chosen group of independent garden centres that work together to source and select new plants, superior seeds for the home garden and a range of garden products such as fertilisers and potting mix under the ican brand.

The Garden Independents Network is a group of 12 garden centres throughout the country. It includes Lance’s Peka Peka centre, and another Harrisons Gardenworld he operates in Feilding.

■ Harrisons Gardenworld, 23 Peka Peka Road, Peka Peka. See [harrisons.co.nz](http://harrisons.co.nz)

Terisa Ngobi

MP for Ōtaki

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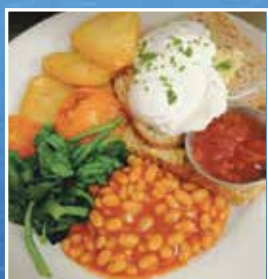
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Head down, one foot after the other. Gwen Lauder heads along Ninety Mile Beach at the start of the Trail journey.

Photos courtesy of Gwen Lauder

# ‘Determination’ conquers Te Araroa

By Ian Carson

**Blisters at the beginning and a rolled ankle towards the end failed to deter Gwen Lauder from completing the gruelling 3000 kilometre Te Araroa Trail.**

The Ōtaki woman set out from the top of the North Island on October 17, and got to the bottom of the South Island nearly 100 days later, on January 23. It was an epic journey, and by far the longest the experienced hiker had completed.

Gwen has done long walks on trails in France, Spain and Portugal, but Te Araroa was nearly twice as long. It takes not only physical endurance, but mental toughness to complete. There were times when Gwen was tested, but her determination to finish won out.

Friends accompanied her for the first part of the journey – Mike Bartosh, formerly of Ōtaki, walked until they reached Kerikeri; Paul McKimm, formerly of Paraparaumu stayed until National Park; and Sarah Winchcombe of Palmerston North, a long-time travelling companion of Gwen, who had to be hospitalised at Whangārei for reasons unrelated to the trek.

The remainder was on her own, but rarely without seeing another hiker on the trail that’s famous around the world.

Gwen says she’s been tramping most of her life. Her father, Reo Gallagher, was a keen bushman, and she and husband Warren Lauder would often take long trail hikes before he died suddenly in 2011.



At 66, Gwen proves that age is not much of a barrier to the physical demands of a trek such as the Te Araroa Trail.

“But you’ve got to prepare well,” she says. “You can’t just decide one day that you’re going to do the trail and then wander off”

Gwen’s preparation involved gym work several times a week at Ngā Purapura and a walk from her Waitohu Plateau home to the beach and back along the river. Sometimes it coincided with a gym workout, and in total it covered about 16 kilometres. A loaded pack of 15-16kg was part of the conditioning routine (a trail pack should be about 8kg excluding food and water).

Good tramping gear is also important, highlighted by the experiences of many people along the trail who were clearly not well prepared.

“Some people were just carrying too much unnecessary stuff, and sometimes they didn’t have clothing that would keep them warm and dry,” Gwen says. “One shivering Japanese woman asked me if I was cold in the night – her sleeping bag couldn’t keep her warm.

“Unfortunately a lot of overseas people don’t realise how changeable New Zealand’s weather can be, and how cold it can get even in summer.”

The beginning of the trail was always going to be the hardest. Gwen had been warned about the sand of Ninety Mile Beach in the Far North. It makes for hard going, and despite Gwen’s training, she got blisters on her feet. Determined as she was, she just walked through it and the blisters healed.

Then halfway down the South Island, near Methven west of Christchurch, she rolled her right ankle. She managed to hobble 3km to the next hut, but as a trained nurse, she knew she wouldn’t be able to continue on foot.

Undeterred, she rang her son, Bradley, who recommended a good e-bike. He decided to join her and they completed the trail to Bluff on bike.

“I’ll go back to Methven and walk the rest of the trail some time soon, just so I can say I’ve walked it all,” Gwen says with a smile.

With the remarkable scenery of areas such as National Park, the Whanganui River, Nelson Lakes and Lewis Pass – plus the people she met, especially the “Trail Angels” who are part of a volunteer assistance network – she recommends the trail to anyone with the time, fitness and determination to experience the real New Zealand.

**GOT THERE:** Gwen at Bluff (left) with her e-bike, bought after she rolled her ankle at Methven.



Paul McKimm, Mike Bartosh, Sarah Winchcombe and Gwen Lauder at Ahipara Holiday Park.



Day 1: October 17, leaving Hukatere Lodge, Houhora, near Ninety Mile Beach.



Heading to the beach from Hukatere Lodge.



Hooray, 100km done, at Ahipara Holiday Park.



Lunch stop at Kerikeri.



After 31km, a comfortable chair. Ocean Beach, Whangārei Heads.



Scenery at Havelock in the South Island.



# ŌTAKI KITE FESTIVAL – February 18-19

## Festival promises high-flying kites and

**After a Covid-induced cancellation last year, the iconic Ōtaki Kite Festival is back.**

The festival has grown since its inception in 2013 to be one of the most anticipated events in the Wellington region – and the biggest kite festival in New Zealand.

Once again in 2023, there will be kite flyers from throughout the country, bringing their best kite creations to Ōtaki Beach on the weekend of February 18-19. Kites range from the huge Peter Lynn kites depicting sea creatures, flying horses and other animals, to long strings of tiny kites. They all create a spectacular display on Ōtaki's expansive beach.

The kites are roped off in a huge arena stretching south from the surf club along the beach, ensuring the safety of the public. Visitors can walk close to the kites and talk to the flyers about their kites. They're also encouraged to bring their own kites – or buy from the organisers' stall.

Over the years, the Ōtaki Promotions Group, which runs the event, has incorporated a range of other activities in the weekend's programme.

The Big Dig for children is always popular, and is this year sponsored by local real estate company Kelly & Co. There are some big prizes to be won for children from 11am on the Saturday (see page 15).

Entertainment is also a key ingredient, with performers on stage throughout the weekend overlooking the grassed area outside the historic pavilion. The Stevie Nicks/Fleetwood Mac tribute band Gold Dust Woman returns this year, performing from 12.30 on Saturday (see page 14).

Local solo artist Tui Soul also returns, at 1pm Sunday (see page 15), on a high after recently clinching a record deal. Her former singing partner James Stent is on at 3pm on Sunday. Zeal has also compiled a line-up of Kāpiti bands throughout the weekend.

The powerful sound of the Taiko drums has always been a popular feature of the festival, and the drummers return to perform on the grass at midday and 2pm on Sunday.

The festival includes plenty of food and craft stalls, and many community organisations take the opportunity to fund-raise or simply promote their activities – for many it's the biggest fund-raiser of the year.

The festival obviously relies on the weather – rain hampers kite flying, and a hot day with little wind can mean few kites in the air. To keep up-to-date, visit the festival's Facebook page (look for Ōtaki Kite Festival) or go to otakipromogroup.nz





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## WEEKEND PROGRAMME



### SATURDAY

February 18

- |         |   |
|---------|---|
| 11.00am | • Kelly & Co Big Dig<br>• Queen of Hearts (Zeal band) |
| 11.45am | Occult (Zeal)   |
| 12.30pm | Gold Dust Woman                                       |
| 2.45pm  | After Shave (Zeal)                                    |
| 3.20pm  | Nyjah (Zeal solo)                                     |
| 4.00pm  | Fuzz Drive (Zeal)                                     |
| 4.30pm  | Close   |

### SUNDAY

February 19

- |         |                        |
|---------|------------------------|
| 11.00am | River Snake (Zeal)     |
| Midday  | Taiko Drummers         |
| 1.00pm  | Tui Soul (solo)        |
| 1.30PM  | Caravel (Zeal)         |
| 2.00pm  | Taiko Drummers         |
| 3.00pm  | James Stent (solo)     |
| 3.30pm  | Powercut (Zeal)        |
| 4.00pm  | Ciorstiadh (Zeal solo) |
| 4.30pm  | Close                  |

*Programme may be subject to change*

*Kite flyers will be in the kite arena both days 10am to 4pm, weather permitting*

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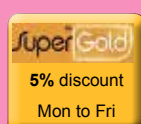
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# ŌTAKI KITE FESTIVAL – February 18-19

## Gold Dust Woman a festival highlight

**Gold Dust Woman, the band that plays the hits of Stevie Nicks of Fleetwood Mac, and Tom Petty, are on stage again at the 2023 kite festival.**

The tribute band played at the 2020 kite festival, with crowd feedback ensuring an invitation to return by the organisers.

The band is Kāpiti-based and boasts the experienced skills of Ōtaki drummer Jared Carson, and Ōtaki backing vocalist Lynley Christoffersen.

Jared revels in the role of Mick Fleetwood.

“Mick has for decades been the soul of Fleetwood Mac, so it’s an honour to be able to play many of the songs his band is renowned for,” Jared says.

The kite festival will be one of the last opportunities to hear the band perform Stevie Nicks and Tom Petty songs, as it will soon be changing its set to play just Fleetwood Mac, as a tribute to Fleetwood Mac member Christine McVie, who died last year.

The band has shows booked throughout the North Island in 2023.

The kite audience will hear hits such as *Dreams*, *Go Your Own Way*, *The Chain* and *Free Fallin’* with the lead vocals of Rachel Williams channelling Stevie Nicks to a tee.

Other band members include Greg White (guitar and vocals), Mitch Dean (keyboard), Cam Sutton (lead guitar), James Hammond (bass), Olivia Marie (backing vocals).

Gold Dust Woman plays from 12.30-2.30pm at the kite festival.



DUSTED: Gold Dust Woman at a Southwards Car Museum auditorium concert in 2021.

Photo Ōtaki Today

# ŌTAKI TODAY

*Proud to support the Ōtaki Kite Festival*



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**Published by ID Media, also publishing historical publication Ōtaki Yesterday, and lifestyle publication Ōtaki Street Scene**



# Home crowd for Tui, James

Ōtaki singers Tui Tahere Katene (stage name Miss Tui Soul) and James Kereama Stent are returning to the kite festival after wowing the crowds in 2019.

Video recordings of the teenage strars' performance then led to thousands of Facebook views within days, and invitations poured in for them to sing at other big events.

Tui has since gone on to sign a recording contract and James is in demand for events throughout the country.

They even had a song written for them by Kāpiti author and songwriter Avril McDonald. It came about after Tui and James's involvement in an international children's book music project, Feel Brave.

The entertainment co-ordinator for the 2019 kite festival, Graham Rikihana said at the time: "They're both talented and they didn't disappoint the thousands of people who heard them sing."

Now performing individually, Tui and James are on-stage at the 2023 kite festival at 1pm and 3pm respectively on the Sunday.

RIGHT: James and Tui in 2019.



DIGGERS: The last Big Dig, in 2021 attracted hundreds of kids. Photo Ōtaki Today

## Big dig, big prizes

The kite festival weekend kicks off with the hugely successful Big Dig for the kids from 11 am on Saturday, February 18.

It's sponsored by real estate company Kelly & Co, which is offering four bikes from the local DecoBikes, as well as 200 colour print T-shirts and 500 Paekakariki Pops to the diggers who retrieve a token from the sand in the designated area on Ōtaki Beach. Declan Cox at DecoBikes is also providing a helmet for each of the bikes.

"We're honoured to be able to be a part of this amazing Ōtaki event, and really excited about meeting new and old friends over the weekend," says Kelly & Co director Derek Kelly. "We love the fact that so many folks make the trip from all over the country to the coolest town in Aotearoa."

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## BUSINESS NEWS

### "HAERE MAI, COME VISIT" CAMPAIGN A SUCCESS

Initial feedback from retailers, supported by a strong digital response, indicates that the "Haere mai, come visit" advertising campaign delivered by Elevate Ōtaki has been a success.

Created to encourage people to visit Ōtaki once the new road opened, the campaign was aimed at the "drive time" audiences of Kāpiti, Manawātū and Wellington and ran across both digital and print media.

At the same time, the Ōtaki stories that were told across Small Town Big Heart Facebook and Instagram profiles helped to position Ōtaki as a place to come and spend the day - whatever your interests are.

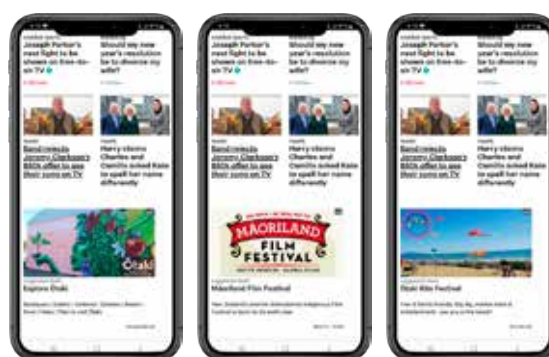
Elevate Ōtaki Chair Adrian Gregory said "It was incredibly satisfying to see the campaign adverts running on the mobile home page of Stuff - particularly given there was so much interest in the Royal Family at the time. The businesses and events that opted into the campaign will certainly have had their profiles raised as a result of their involvement."

The campaign ran for the first two weeks of January and was found on Facebook, Instagram, and Stuff as well as double-page



spreads in the Dominion Post, Manawātū Standard and Kāpiti Observer.

See the next Business News email for your opportunity to provide feedback on the campaign.



### DESTINATION BILLBOARD READY TO BE INSTALLED

Elevate Ōtaki have received notification from the Waka Kotahi project team that the northern expressway promotional billboard is ready to be installed.

The aim of the billboards is to encourage people to take a break from their journey in a place they will be welcomed.

Developed in conjunction with Waka Kotahi, the artwork was created to meet their strict roadside billboard policies while representing the manaakitanga of the town.



# HUATAU/Comment

PLAIN SPEAKING: IAN CARSON

## Urban designer poses critical question: What’s the plan for Ōtaki?

**I had a meeting recently with Stuart Niven, a Wellington-based urban designer of international renown.**

My brother Fraser brought him to Ōtaki so we could discuss the future of Ōtaki and how it might look – literally. Will we get multi-storey apartment blocks close to town and traditional quarter-acre sections chokka with town houses, and what sort of leisure spaces could there be?

How do the separate parts of town integrate with each other, and how could we make the most of the key buildings, such as the railway station?



They’re reasonable questions to ask as big numbers of people are expected in coming years to move to the town and wider district.

Stuart was smart enough not to offer answers without getting a better picture of Ōtaki, and what’s important to the community.

So I gave him a list of what I

thought were places he should see. Fraser drove him past places such as Rangiātea Church, Raukawa Marae, Te Wānanga o Raukawa, the beach and so on. Stuart was impressed with what he saw, and no doubt started building a mental picture of how Ōtaki could develop from an urban design perspective.

His reaction brought me back to a critical question he asked of me in our meeting: “What’s the plan for Ōtaki?”

I told him about the expressway revocation project and Elevate Ōtaki’s strategy to bring enhancements mainly to the Railway shops area.

We also discussed housing developments, especially those planned at the race course. And we talked about the need to house members of our existing community so they don’t get pushed out of town by high rents.

But the question still stuck in my mind. I could tell Stuart about projects, but I couldn’t reasonably tell him what was the big-picture plan for Ōtaki.

Which led to a realisation that much happens in this town in isolation. Sure, there are some strong groups and projects, but they generally fail to drive broad initiatives

or represent Ōtaki people as a whole.

What about the community board, I hear. Yes, it’s democratically elected, but it tends to focus on advocating for projects and doesn’t have Māori representation in a town with nearly 40 percent of people who identify as Māori.

Ngā Hapū Ōtaki is probably the organisation closest to protecting the interests of Ōtaki, but it doesn’t represent Ōtaki as a whole.

There’s an opportunity to bring together the various communities of interest in Ōtaki, if we have the will.

■ Ian is editor of Ōtaki Today

THE ELECTORATE: TERISA NGOBI, MP

MAYOR’S VIEW: JANET HOLBOROW



## Extra support for families, businesses

**Our government is focused on the bread and butter issues that matter most to New Zealanders, here and now.**

That’s why we’re providing extra cost-of-living support to families and businesses in Ōtaki, and across the country. Last week we announced that we’re extending our fuel tax cut, our reduction on road user charges, as well as half-price public transport until the end of June.

While this won’t fix everything, we know transport is one of the biggest expenses for households and reducing that cost is one practical way we can quickly ease some of the pressure that New Zealanders are facing right now.

On top of that, slashing transport costs helps to reduce the fuel burden on businesses – keeping the cost of food and essential goods lower across the board, which is good for everyone here in Ōtaki.

As a government, we hear loud and clear that many New Zealanders, and many families, are struggling. We know people are worried about paying their grocery bills and paying their mortgages. The recent floods in Auckland and Northland have further exacerbated this, putting extra stress and financial pressure on households and businesses.

Cutting transport costs is a small step but it will help to give some extra relief through this tough period. The fuel tax cut will reduce the cost of an average 60 litre tank of petrol by \$17.25 and half-price public transport fares save an average person who pays two \$5 fares a day \$25 a week.

Here in Ōtaki, there is a lot to be positive about. For example, our government has opened the Peka Peka to Ōtaki (PP2Ō) expressway and we all know the difference this has made to safer roads and travel times. We have also contributed \$29.3 million to infrastructure that will enable about 1000 new homes to be built in Ōtaki.

We have also funded \$8.5 million to the restoration of the Waikanae estuary, which has created 92 local jobs. Our government’s investment in Sustainable Foods, a plant-based food producer in Kāpiti with a loan of up to \$1.25 million meeting our government’s low-emission, high-skill economy goals. We know this government has also provided free lunches in schools, free period products, minimum wage increase, benefit increases, extended the period of parental leave, increased sick leave, supported the establishment of Māori Wards and cost-of-living payments.

■ Terisa is MP for the Ōtaki electorate

## Looking for solutions that are good for community

**Many people will be aware of the controversy over the appearance of some concrete blocks just before Christmas in Te Horo.**

The blocks were placed at the northern beach access after a public speaking time submission to the first meeting of the Waikanae Community Board about ongoing breaches of the Beach Bylaw. The bylaw, passed in 2019, doesn’t allow access to the beach from that location and the elected members and staff who responded by installing the barrier had the very best intentions – to protect the environment and ensure compliance with the bylaw.

I’ve been through two beach bylaw reviews as an elected member, and each time it’s a huge challenge to balance the needs of different beach users, who are carrying out different activities in the same location.

Dogs and horses need to be considered (though decisions around dogs are primarily made through the dog bylaw), and protecting the environment is a high priority.

We also need to ensure accessibility to the beach for all users, including those with disabilities.



A piece of of work done during the bylaw process was a consultation around actions to be taken to ensure compliance with the bylaw. This included some pretty extensive engagement about whether to have a barrier at the northern Te Horo Beach access. Many people were involved in making the decision not to have a barrier, and that needs to be honoured.

So in the meantime, I’ve asked for the temporary barriers to be removed, so that we can re-set the conversation and come up with a solution which is good for the community, good for the environment, and avoids behaviour which disburbs beach users and the beach ecosystem.

Throughout this situation, we have heard from many members of the public who have problems with dangerous driving on beaches,

and this needs to be addressed. The removal of the blocks doesn’t condone access to the beach at this point, and we need to assess the ongoing viability of the informal carpark, but we’ll do that in consultation with the community, to come up with a solution which people can live with.

The Mangaone Stream area is a valuable ecological site, and a nesting site for sea birds. The area has potential for further environmental restoration, including working on improving water quality in the stream, enhancing the dune wetland, and providing information and education. I look forward to seeing how the council, the community board and the community comes together to enhance the area for the enjoyment of all.

Finally, I’d like to congratulate the Ōtaki Pottery Club on another hugely successful Festival of Pots and Garden Art. The quality and variety of the work was outstanding, and the event was once again impeccably organised and delivered. Thanks to all involved, including a team of well over 100 volunteers, for another wonderful festival.

■ Janet is mayor of Kāpiti Coast

TE HORO OUTLOOK: MICHAEL MOORE

## Plenty to focus on as busy year looms

**Our five-yearly Census is on March 7 and a general election on October 14.**

It will also be a big year on the Kāpiti Coast and we have much to focus on. In the Waikanae Ward, we must progress the rebuild of our library. Last November marked four years since the doors closed, and after countless hours, reports and talks, the building has been left to decay further. The community board, along with Waikanae Ward councillors Nigel Wilson and Jocelyn Prvanov, have had a strategic briefing and we’re determined to see the rebuild start this year.

With the opening of the expressway, revocation works are now under way along the old State Highway with a sensor-controlled safe pedestrian crossing at the Makahuri underpass.

At Te Horo Beach, the vehicular closure at the end of Te Horo Beach Road over the holiday period caused anger among some, while many have lauded protection of the area. Council staff saw this period of increased visitors and wanted to stop further degrading of the area. After the 2020 beach bylaw review, a barrier wasn’t supported, so long as people showed respect by not driving onto the beach and through the stream. This has not occurred.



What was most disappointing was the vandalism and damage to signage and infrastructure by a small number after incitement online. Vehicles also drove recklessly along the beach, weaving through beach patrons and across the stream in acts of defiance. It was a dangerous display of behaviour.

Keeping vehicles away from this area minimises impact on this unique environment. The mouth of the Mangaone Stream is an important ecosystem, home to many plant and animal species and rare nesting birds. The *Key Native Ecosystem Operational Plan for Ōtaki Coast*, published by Greater Wellington Regional Council, supports the stream, adjoining estuary and wetlands rehabilitation, along to the Sea Road carpark.

Human activity and vehicles threaten this

area. The regional and district council have a responsibility under the Resource Management Act for maintaining indigenous biodiversity as well as protecting significant vegetation and habitats of threatened species. The *Operational Plan* will give a strategic view of why this is important: See [tinyurl.com/KNEOtaki](https://www.tinyurl.com/KNEOtaki)

The Friends of Mangaone Lagoon are seeking funding for a rehabilitation plan of the entire Mangaone wetlands area that might also include boardwalks. Volunteers are undertaking predator trapping and I encourage locals to get involved. Rehabilitation of the Waikanae Estuary has been very successful and we can learn a great deal from their success.

If we can work towards making this part of our beach and coastline something special, it would be an extraordinary asset to protect it for future generations. Our legacy can’t be to just continue doing what has occurred for years and expect a different environmental outcome. The environment can’t speak for itself. We must.

*The Waikanae Community Board meets next at 7pm, Tuesday February 28, at the Waikanae Community Centre.*

■ Michael is deputy chair of Waikanae Community Board.



# Brown hits the fan as Auckland waters rise

**A**uckland Mayor Wayne Brown had planned a game of tennis on the day New Zealand's worst climate-related disaster unfolded.

So that morning, he sent a text to his mates to apologise for a "no show" saying he'd need to be dealing with the "media drongos".

As became painfully obvious later that day, Wayne urgently needed the media drongos to help convey some clear messages to a community under siege and in need of decisive leadership.

But mayor Brown wasn't contemplating any of that. This was an event he clearly hoped would pass without much bother, as illustrated by his lack of dialogue with the media throughout that day, and his very late and ineffectual declaration of an official emergency.

In the days that followed, the mayor attempted to deflect any blame for the shemozzle by pointing to the unprecedented weather event and that he was merely taking the advice of officials. Amid a petition and a chorus for him to resign, he rejected the criticism directed at him and initially refused any kind of apology.

The media picnic that ensued became a distraction from the main event – the disaster – and seemed to channel all the public frustration in the direction of one Wayne Brown.

Mayor Brown won the job at the 2022 local elections on a platform saying he would "fix Auckland" and "cut waste".

Few voters knew much about Wayne Brown, but his tough message attracted those

*As many politicians and Gary Glitter would attest, the problem isn't just what you did in the first place, it is the fudging afterwards that compounds matters. When the inconsistencies are revealed, what follows is contempt from the media and public opprobrium.*

## MEDIA & COMMUNITY



FRASER CARSON

who thought that Auckland needed fixing and was being unnecessarily wasteful. He also benefitted from a team of campaign professionals who ensured his campaign stayed on the rails and he would enjoy plenty of exposure, with the help of a campaign fund well above other candidates.

One obvious tactic of "keeping Wayne on the rails" was getting

him to avoid engaging with the mainstream media. Apparently, he's OK in a one-on-one interview, but he can have difficulties with larger groups, especially if he has to answer tough questions.

Through the campaign, Wayne Brown soon became the front-runner, despite his lack of engagement with the media. One can assume, because of this, he was widely cast as remote and surly. But maybe the electorate thought a need for a fresh face, after the engaging and media savvy Phil Goff, was what was needed. A tough hombre who doesn't need to talk – he will



Auckland Mayor Wayne Brown fronts the media during the Auckland floods.

just get on and things will happen.

On day one of his mayoralty, it's reported he took his whānau on a helicopter joy-ride over his new kingdom. And he immediately hung tough on what he wanted changed in Auckland Council, such as departmental leadership resignations and radical cost cutting. And all the while, he was refusing to talk to most media outlets, prompting a stream of "anti-Wayne-Brown" commentary.

Then some realities hit the new mayor. First, much of the budget he wanted trimmed was already committed or, on closer inspection, vital in some respects. Then, the heavens opened as Wayne was proposing to cut the number of media communications people in Auckland Council. Suddenly, the rain appears to have prompted a tyre-burning U-turn and he is now wanting more media communications people. Jeez, Wayne!

If there's a simple lesson in all this, it is that people who take on community leadership need to do just that – lead. As many politicians and Gary Glitter would attest, the problem

isn't just what you did in the first place, it is the fudging afterwards that compounds matters. When the inconsistencies are revealed, what follows is contempt from the media and public opprobrium.

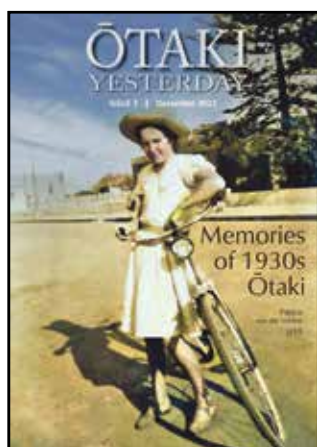
Wayne Brown would do well studying the book *Wayfinding Leadership* by Dr Chellie Spiller, John Panoho and Hoturoa Barclay-Kerr, which is self-described as bringing an innovative, practical approach to leadership and management.

Mayor Brown should be encouraged to read this paragraph:

"The conventional 'business as usual' approach to business and developing leaders is often insufficient for building the kinds of organisations we need today where 'leaders need to deal with complex organisational dynamics, respond to unpredictable and chaotic challenges, and create meaning and purpose amid uncertainty'."

Three cheers for that.

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



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# ChatGPT nudges Google for information dominance

**Not often has there been a shake-up in the technology industry like this.**

In December, AI (artificial intelligence) webpage ChatGPT launched, breaking internet records as its popularity grew to millions in just days. It has been so well used that the site has been at capacity for just about every day since.

That's been noticed by Microsoft, which just committed \$10 billion to OpenAI.com, the developer of ChatGPT.

ChatGPT is unique. It's given everyday people the power to chat in real time with an AI computer. Ask it anything, such as how to write articles about Ōtaki, complex computer coding, recipes and other how tos. It provides information on about any topic in a matter of seconds.

If Google can't take advantage of this in a serious way its days as being the default place to find information on the internet might be numbered. Of course one advantage Google has is that it offers many suggested answers, but how long its information dominance will last is questionable.

I asked business owner and developer Josh Bondy for his reaction to using the service: "ChatGPT is an excellent reference tool and provides great guidance on a subject you're unfamiliar with," he says. "But it's easy to mistake it for intelligence. It's only trained on existing data, so it won't produce anything truly creative or new – although sometimes it seems to."

"Humans are still required to extend beyond what has already been done."

I tried out ChatGPT and asked if it expected

## TECH STUFF



DAN CARSON



**ARTIFICIAL KĀPITI:** Artificial intelligence program DALL-E 2 created the image at left after being asked to provide a picture of Kāpiti in the style of van Gogh. The program is a big step forward in AI and has a wide range of potential uses and applications.

article left readers with a false impression. For example it said the Ōtaki-Māori Racing Club "hosts traditional Māori horse racing events throughout the year" (not sure what that would look like), and there were "many restaurants and cafes in the area".

It was close, but no chocolate fish just yet for the chatbot that's taking the world by storm.

Meanwhile, another form of AI has also emerged from the tech whizzes at OpenAI. It's DALL-E 2, and similar to ChatGPT, but it can generate images from textual descriptions.

I tried: "Give me a picture of Kāpiti in the style of van Gogh." You can see the result at left.

DALL-E 2 uses advanced machine learning algorithms to generate highly detailed, original images that it says can be used for various applications, such as product design, video game development, and digital art.

But just be aware that because it relies on existing imagery, there might be copyright issues if you intend to use for commercial purposes.

To try ChatGPT, register at [chat.openai.com](https://chat.openai.com); for the image generator, go to [openai.com/dall-e-2](https://openai.com/dall-e-2)

■ Dan has been in the IT industry for the past 20 years, previously with Fujitsu and Noel Leeming Group. He currently leads IT teams for Cigna Life Insurance NZ. He recently moved back to his hometown Ōtaki after work from home became the norm.

to replace Google with its AI service. It had a surprisingly candid response.

"It's difficult to predict exactly how many years it would be until an AI model could replace all of the capabilities of Google," ChatGPT responded. "The development of AI technology is ongoing and rapidly advancing, but it would likely take many years of research and development for an AI model to match the capabilities of a company as large and diverse as Google."

"It's important to note that Google is also investing heavily in AI, and it's constantly updating its services and products, so it would be a difficult task to replace it. Additionally, there are many ethical and societal implications to consider when discussing the possibility of an AI replacing a company like Google."

I also asked ChatGPT to write me an article about Ōtaki. It had some useful information and it was largely correct.

However, some of the nuances of the

# Get the basics right to face the challenges ahead

**As business owners, we know that no two days are ever the same, yet we still need to be alert and do the basics right every day.**

The right systems and processes and the best teams to run them, with leadership from the "top", guidance along the way and a relentless focus on customers and how we can serve them – these are the basics of every business and every organisation.

Last year we saw plenty of challenges, from supply chain issues to problems hiring staff (please, Chris Hipkins, sort out the restrictions at the border...) and the problems caused by having too much to do and too little time. But amid all that, business owners I've been working with have also had quite a few wins and plenty of fun. This year promises more of the same, so strap in for the ride!

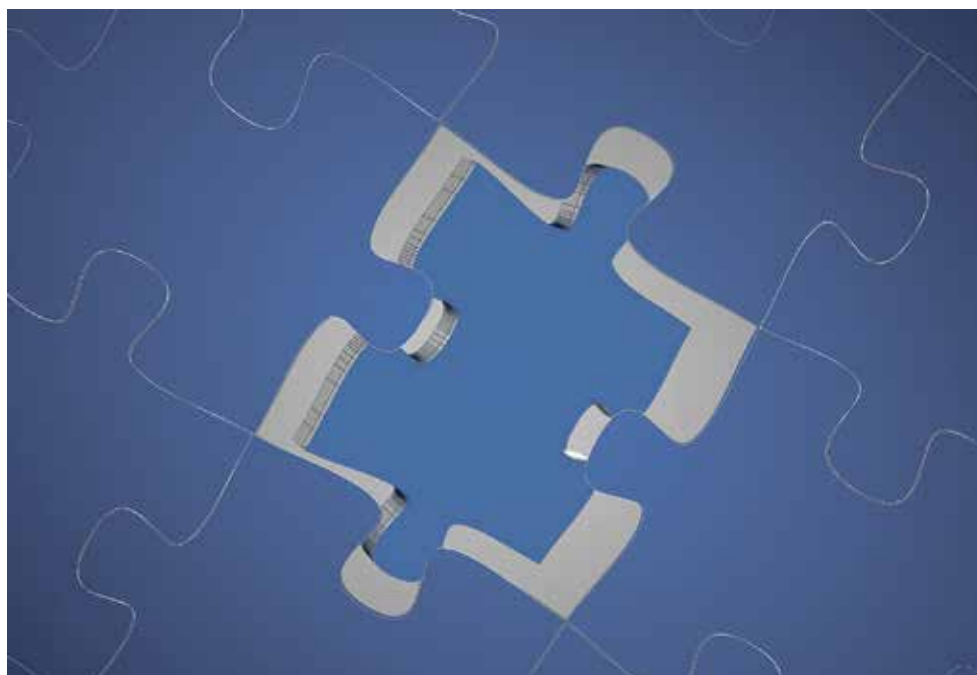
No matter what business you are in, or what level of the organisation you are at, some things are universal and seem to resonate, no matter what.

The first thing is that if you fail to plan, you might as well plan to fail (yes, it is an oldie, but it is still a goodie). If you haven't already done it, take your December/January reflections, get

## YOUR BUSINESS



CHRIS WHELAN



**PUZZLE:** Putting together the right pieces of the business puzzle will be vital in 2023.

Image 3D Animation Production Company, Pixabay

alongside a skilled planner you trust and set your goals, in detail, for the year. Any effort you put in now will be well worth the investment of time.

Second, detailed planning helps only if you know what you actually want to achieve, what your dreams are and what your 2023 BHAG (Big, Hairy, Audacious Goal) is. "Blue sky thinking" is a term coined recently by local business owners as we worked through their strategy and execution planning for the year.

What are your wild and wacky ideas, the ones you aren't sure you can achieve, but know that if you do you will be ecstatic about? What new things can you do this year to set your business apart? Is there one thing you absolutely must do better or differently to make this a good year?

If you can spend time doing the blue sky stuff it is liberating. It will open you up to thinking outside the box and free you to imagine what success can be.

Third, people work with (and resign from)

people, not businesses. If you are battling to find or retain staff it might be time to ask yourself what your culture is like. Do your staff smile, have a bit of fun, take themselves less seriously than their work? If so, great. But if not, now is the time to set the tone at the top and build a winning team.

Values (the fourth element, but the one that really can be the "first amongst equals" when it comes to setting yourself up for success) are at the core of *everything* we do. As business owners, we are the custodians of our company values and are always in the spotlight. No exceptions.

Role modelling is critical and extends beyond the workplace because values alignment and trust are the building blocks of building better businesses.

Fifth – and finally, only *action* changes things. All the thinking in the world isn't going to make one iota of difference without taking action, and there is no better time than right now. Don't procrastinate. You are either moving ahead or moving backwards, so build the healthy *Richtuals* and consistency that drive good habits and outcomes.

And remember, in all these things you are not alone. Grab a mate, get a coach or mentor and get moving, 'cos you can never get back wasted time.

You've got this!

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# Debate distorted by exaggerating tenuous evidence

**F**ollowing on from my January article, where lawyer and anti-vaccine activist Sue Grey lost the Baby W court case using the “expert” witness evidence of Dr Byron Bridle, I will now look at the studies Bridle used to support his view that the blood from Covid-19 vaccinated donors was harmful, and why the scientific community, and consequently the High Court, disagreed.

There is the Salk Institute 2021 rapid communication “research letter” (*SARS-CoV-2 Spike Protein Impairs Endothelial Function*. . . ) indicating that spike protein can damage vascular endothelial cells (cells that line blood vessels). For Bridle, and the anti-vaccine community, the report was the smoking gun showing that the spike protein was a dangerous “toxin” and, as Bridle put it, “We made a big mistake” producing a vaccine based on it.

In fact, a senior author of the study, Uri Manor, was so perturbed the report was being misunderstood and misrepresented by anti-vax groups that he wrote a much lengthier follow-up report (*SARS-CoV-2 Spike Protein Impairment of Endothelial Function Does Not Impact Vaccine Safety*) to highlight why they were wrong.

A key point was that the concentration of spike protein used in their hamster study was massively higher (by many orders of magnitude) than would be encountered with the Covid-19 vaccine. The study was designed to reveal any

possible mechanisms of harm the spike protein could do from a Covid-19 infection, it was not to determine if the Covid-19 vaccine was unsafe. “The (relatively) small amount of spike protein produced by the mRNA vaccine would not be nearly enough to do any damage,” clarified Manor. An important general principle of toxicology is that “the dose makes the poison” – everything is toxic at a high enough concentration; nothing is of concern at a low enough concentration.

Another key point was that the spike protein used in their hamster study was different to vaccine-derived spike protein, with the Salk Institute saying in a press release that the coronavirus spike proteins associated with Covid-19 infection “behave very differently than those safely encoded by vaccines”.

To understand this, we need to look at the historical development of the Covid-19 vaccines. In the 1960s scientists set to work investigating the newly identified human coronavirus, with its distinctive corona of spike proteins. The deadly, though contained, coronavirus outbreaks of SARS in 2002 and MERS in 2012, with case fatality rates of about 10% and 30% respectively, provided alarming incentives to expedite the development of coronavirus vaccines.

Even before the arrival of Covid-19, mRNA vaccines in lipid nanoparticles producing modified spike protein had already been tested. This included the

concepts of intramuscular injection into the deltoid muscle of the upper arm that allowed some drainage into the local lymph system and spleen for a robust immune response, but without too much entry into the circulatory system as the vaccine would be swept to the liver and degraded too quickly. The “experimental”, “warp speed” Covid-19 mRNA vaccines in fact arose out of decades of research and thousands of scientific reports.

In particular, the vaccine mRNA codes for a modified spike protein so that it anchors tightly to the surface of the arm muscle cells it is manufactured in, where it functions as a non-replicating fixed antigen target for stimulating an immune response. It is also in a stable “prefusion” configuration that produces a strong immune response from a relatively small amount of spike protein that doesn’t bind onto ACE-2 receptors used by the SARS-CoV-2 spike protein to gain viral entry into cells. In sum, vaccine spike protein was specifically designed to produce an effective immune response while mitigating potential risks of toxic effects.

Anti-vaccine groups repeatedly conflate studies investigating the potential damaging effects of SARS-CoV-2 spike protein (viral spike) with the behaviour of vaccine spike protein.

Bridle cites a study of Moderna-vaccinated healthcare workers, in which detectable levels of spike protein were found in the blood of 11 of the 13 participants, as evidence that vaccine spike protein enters the bloodstream, with implications for blood donation.

But the study used the ultra-sensitive SIMOA assay working at its limits of

detection and was measuring peak average spike protein levels of less than 50 picograms (trillionths of a gram) per millilitre of blood. That concentration is 100,000 times lower than used in animal studies that have indicated spike protein might be harmful.

By way of example, modern scientific assays are so sensitive that even the healthiest organically grown foods contain measurable quantities of lead, radioactive isotopes, and carcinogens. But the only thing that matters is how much is present – “The dose makes the poison”.

So, while Bridle proclaimed that “terrifying new research finds vaccine spike protein unexpectedly in the bloodstream”, a senior author of the study and inventor of the SIMOA assay, David R Walt of Harvard Medical School, explained that the presence of spike protein is “minute” and that “Bridle is taking our results and completely misinterpreting them”.

Anti-vaccine groups focus on the fact that vaccine spike protein is detectable in the blood, the scientific community focuses on the amount, and considers it to be a minimal concentration transiently entering the bloodstream, consistent with the vaccine performing as intended with most of the spike protein confined to the site of injection.

Bridle also cites a so-called “leaked” Pfizer document (anti-vaxxers love conspiracy and intrigue) as evidence of the vaccine travelling throughout the body. In fact, the document was a biodistribution study Pfizer submitted to Japanese scientists and regulatory

authorities to get approval for the Pfizer vaccine in Japan, so hardly embarrassing evidence Pfizer would need to hide.

“It’s the first time ever scientists have been privy to seeing where these messenger RNA vaccines go after vaccination,” said Bridle, making it appear that something completely unexpected had occurred, though the data were consistent with earlier animal biodistribution studies, with only very low levels of vaccine components travelling to other organs in the body. The biodistribution data were not of concern to the Japanese scientists who approved the vaccine in Japan, or other scientists around the world where the vaccine was approved in all countries.

Anti-vaccine groups call for a “healthy debate”, but cherry-picking results, misrepresenting studies, and exaggerating the most tenuous of evidence to create near impossible extreme scenarios is not how science is debated.

After a balanced scientific debate in high-level journals the scientific community has determined that blood donated by people who have had the Covid-19 vaccine is safe to use. There are anti-vaccine groups in New Zealand that disagree, though they also believe the vaccine secretly contains nanotechnology microcircuitry, or can make you magnetic! Choose your sources of information wisely.

■ 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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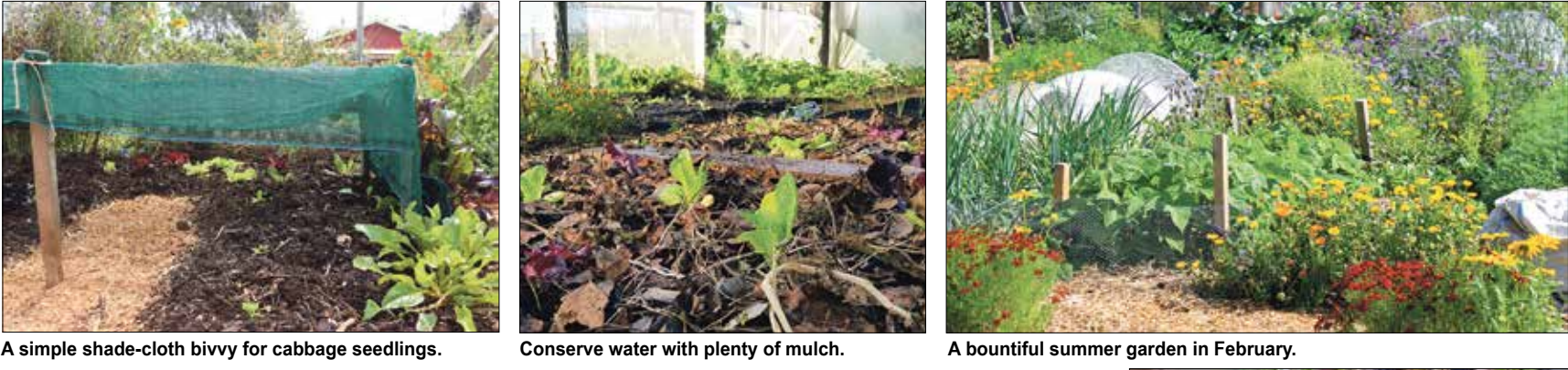




EDIBLE GARDEN



KATH IRVINE



# Cool crops to grow in the summer heat

**There's a bit of healthy tension in the midsummer vegie patch.**

We want to get cooler season crops in soon, such as leeks, parsnips and brassicas, because they take a long time from transplant to harvest. But conditions right about now aren't exactly their favourite. None of these crops are fans of intense heat. Add to that, the garden soil is likely tired, dried out and not necessarily crop-ready. We need some tricks!

**Time it right**

The evening is a glorious time to garden – gentle and cool. Use it for all of your planting and pricking on. This gives your seedlings the cool of night in which to recover. Don't expect them to handle roasting away in the full sun the day following! Tuck them in the warm shade.

**Conserve water**

Pre soaking seedlings is always a winner. Then, when you pop them out of their pot or tray, the roots stick nicely together. It's a particularly useful habit when water is hard to come by. Team this practice with watering the hole before you plant and this might be all the water you need to start the seedling off. Feel the soil to check though. Pushing your finger in is the best gauge. Add a bit more water if needed.

Watering like this saves you from having to water the whole bed. My preference is the whole bed if it's dry, but needs must. Planting next seasons dinners, is a priority.

Seal the deal and hold the moisture in by piling on mulch.

**No dig**

The worst thing you can do to dry and baked soil is to dig about

in it. Rather than trying to fluff it up (tempting when its rock solid) – leave it well alone and go on top. Lay newspaper or card directly on the weeds before dolloping on enough compost or good soil, to hold the seedling. Forgo the paper is there's no weeds.

**Good companions**

New seedlings do really well beneath older crops. Plant them among established green crops or crops where they find shade, shelter and an easy connection to established root networks that bring minerals, water and all the news.

**Create shade**

DIY the shade, if your garden is new, and absent of older crops. Shade cloth draped over cloches or stakes is the perfect substitute, and will slow transpiration, saving your seedlings from wilting. Which is what happens when water out is

faster than water in. And instead of steady growth, we get stop-grow, stop-grow and sometimes just plain stop.

The cooler air beneath the shadecloth keeps the water cycle steady, and seedlings upright and growing strong. The soil dries out slower – another bonus of shade – making your water go further. Further still, if everything is well mulched.

A surprising number of summer crops – basil, courgette, beans – produce really well, when under a bit of shade. As long as they are warm, that's the main thing. The sun can be pretty harsh!

■ *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.*



New seedlings beneath a peach tree.

# Focus on mortgage refinancing as rates rise

**With rising interest rates and no apparent respite in sight, could it be time to refinance your mortgage?**

The uncertainty regarding interest rates can be daunting and stressful. But refinancing is easier than you might think and could save you thousands of dollars in the short and long term.

**What is a mortgage refinance?**

Refinancing is the process of restructuring your lending to terms more favourable to your situation and current market conditions. If you change lenders, this might involve discharging your current mortgage and registering one in favour of your new lender (this is why refinancing is sometimes referred to as “re-mortgaging”). If you stay with your current lender, you will need only to register a variation of mortgage on the title of your property.

MATTERS OF LAW



FRANCESCA FLAWS

**Why would I refinance?**

There are several reasons you might want to refinance. For instance, if you have a fixed-term loan about to expire, you might want to refinance to find a better interest rate and loan term than your current lender is able to offer. Otherwise, refinancing can be useful where your income has changed, where you want to take out extra lending for property renovations, or where you want to consolidate your existing debt.

**Is now the right time?**

If you're contemplating refinancing, you will



Image Mohamed Hassan, Pixabay

want to do some shopping around to see how other banks' interest rates compare to your current lender. If these rates are better than your current rates, it could be time to make the switch. There are several online tools that can help you to compare interest rates.

However, you will want to reflect on your current financing, too. If you're on a fixed-term rate, when does the term expire? If the term has not yet expired, there might be various break fees associated with ending the term early. Relatedly, if you received a cash incentive for financing with your current bank, its possible you will need to pay all or some of this incentive back to the bank. We recommend you check your loan documentation to see if this will affect you.

If your current interest rates are about to expire, it can be tempting to contact your current lender, request a fixed-term interest rate, and “re-fix” the documents accordingly. However, there is always the opportunity to

negotiate with your existing lender to try to get a better re-fix rate than their current standard rates and/or even a further cash contribution.

**Mortgage brokers**

If you're likely to find the above too overwhelming, or if you don't have the time to do it yourself, it could be useful to engage a mortgage broker.

Mortgage brokers help to take the stress out of the process and do all the comparisons for you. They can also provide advice about your short and long-term mortgage repayment goals and how they can be best achieved.

You might find that not only can you get better fixed-interest rates, but also higher cash contributions. This often means that the cash contribution covers the legal fees for the refinance and leaves plenty left over for some extra spending, as well as potentially saving thousands of dollars in interest.

■ *Francesca is a general practice solicitor based at the Ōtaki office of Wakefields Lawyers.*

# Top marks for council roading programme

**Kāpiti Coast District Council has been given the top rating for its roading programme in a recent Waka Kotahi audit.**

The three-yearly Waka Kotahi Procedural Investment Audit assesses how well government investment in local roading programmes is managed and delivering value for money.

Waka Kotahi typically invests 51 percent of the Kāpiti council's \$10-\$14 million annual land transport programme.

The audit showed the council's contract management, financial processes and procurement procedures were sound.

Council access and transport manager Glen O'Connor says the “effective” rating received is the highest available and means Kāpiti is doing a great job of the financial administration and processes associated with funding claimed from Waka Kotahi.

“This is really important work our teams do on behalf of the community and the audit result is testament to a job well done,” Glen says. “Making sure things like our contract management, procurement and financial processes are meeting the required standards helps us access the Waka Kotahi funding we need for our transport network.”



# HĪTŌRIA/History

## Life as a teen in 1950s Ōtaki

**R**ecently a few people have been posting on the Sunny Ōtaki Facebook page their memories of teenage activities in the 1950s.

I thought this would make a good topic for an Ōtaki Today article so I contacted some of the Facebook contributors and they recommended others. I hope you find their reminiscences interesting – and if you're old enough, some memories of your younger days might be rekindled.

One of the activities mentioned on the Facebook page was the skating rink that was next to the surf club. I suspect these comments were stimulated by recent publicity about upgrading the concrete pad where the rink used to be.

DI BUCHAN



**Otaki Museum**

The current exhibition at Ōtaki Museum has a photo of the rink in action with the caption: "Skaters unknown". One of those who posted on Facebook was Trish Brophy (nee Pat Lehndorf). Having gone through Trish's collection of skate park photos, I can now tell you that

the people in the foreground of the museum photo are Peter Jensen and Faye Purchase.

Trish has now donated other photos to our collection, which show Ron Wylie, Peter Denzil and many others who are unidentified at the park. Trish knew a lot about the rink because her father, Fred Lehndorf, started the skating sessions there. He took his wind-up record player down to the rink on weekends and played records for the skaters to dance to.

He also organised games for the skaters – a popular one involved spinning a bottle. Fred had made four tiles in the centre of the court with the motifs for the four card suits (hearts, diamonds, clubs and spades). At intervals Fred would spin a bottle on the tiles and all those standing in the area covered by the suit the bottle was pointing to would leave the rink until only one skater or skater couple was left.

Girls had special dresses made for skating (Trish's were made from her mother's cut-down ball dresses). Skate boots were in high demand and expensive. Trish remembers longing for proper boots, but her family could afford only worn-out marching girls shoes with wheels attached. The day she got proper skating boots was a highlight of her younger years.

Before lights were installed at the rink, spectators would park their cars along the edge and turn on their lights so skating could continue into the night.

For Heather Watson the pipi shells dropped on the skate park by the seagulls were a pain for the skaters. I imagine this would have been especially problematic at night!

Dances were a big thing and photos of these also feature in the museum's current exhibition. There were many local musicians, particularly Māori bands who played for the dances at the Ōtaki, Te Horo and Manakau halls. Dance classes run by Jimmy Eades were held in the building that's now the Ōtaki Bridge Club rooms, so boys and girls were pretty competent on the dance floor in those days.

Boys would gather on one side of the hall and girls the other. As the band struck up the compere would call out, "Gentlemen, take your partner for the next dance", and the boys would



**RUNNING THE RINK:** Fred Lehndorf, in centre with hat, running the card game at the beach roller skating rink. Earl Hazelwood is in the foreground.

Photo courtesy of Trish Brophy

rush across the room to get the girl they had their eye on.

Young people from further afield came to the dances on the train or by bus. A few were lucky enough to have a car or a boyfriend with a car.

Peter Jensen got his first car when he was 16. It was a 1934 Morris Minor with a wooden frame and floor. He described it as "a heap of crap".

Heather Watson recalls: "We girls all went together and looked after each other. Most times we had a ride there [to the dance] but not one back so one of us would get a boy with a car to take us all home. The boys didn't mind – they had a car full of girls and usually did a few laps past their mates to show off."

"If we could get a ride we would go to movies in Levin and Shannon for a change. The boys' cars were bombs and would get too hot on the hills and boil. Sometimes we would have to push-start them. It was all fun and to have a car was cool."

Friday and Saturday nights were when most of the action happened in Ōtaki. The shops were open until late on Fridays and busloads of people from Paraparaumu and Waikanae would

come up to do their shopping.

Peter Jensen remembers that for two hours Main Street was quite hectic and then suddenly, when the shops closed, there was silence. On Saturday, people would come

from far and wide to watch the movies.

Margaret Sutherland (nee

Sutherland) Photo Di Buchan



**A record player similar to the one Fred Lehndorf used at the rink.**



**Peter Jensen's first car, a 1934 Morris Minor.**

Photo courtesy of Peter Jensen

Wadham) remembers there being four movie sessions every Saturday – the 11am session was for children with movies provided by the British Children's Film Foundation, which was set up in 1951. The films were all about kids having adventures, films such as *The Famous Five* and *Danny, Champion of the World*. These were followed by sessions at 2pm, 5pm and 8pm.

Bicycles were the main mode of transport. Everyone had a bike and they biked everywhere. Maureen Jensen remembered the huge pile of bikes stacked up in the vacant section beside the Civic Theatre, none locked and all still there when their owners came out of the movie.

There were plenty of opportunities for flirting – at the movies, in the milk bars, at the dances and on the school bus rides to Horowhenua College before Ōtaki got its own secondary school in 1959. But according to Trish Brophy and Heather Watson, the thrill of the week was to be chatted up by the boys cruising Main Street on Friday and Saturday nights.

Heather described the scene: "Girls in their starched petticoats, boys in their stovepipe pants walking up and down checking out the talent till the movies started."

Between movies there were plenty of places to hang out, drink sodas or milkshake and in some places, listen to juke box music at places like the Golden Chicken opposite the Memorial Hall and The Ritz opposite the theatre.

In the 1950s and 1960s the Jaycees service club (forerunner to the Lions) ran a variety show each year in the Memorial Hall to showcase the local talent, of which there



**Margaret Sutherland, aged 14, when she won Miss West Coast Junior.**

Photo courtesy of Margaret Sutherland.

was a great deal. Margaret Sutherland recalls wonderful kapa haka performances. She particularly recalls the poi dances with the pois lit up with lights. The variety shows included beauty competitions with the winner being crowned Miss West Coast Junior. Margaret won this twice.

There were also beauty competitions at the beach. One year Maureen Jensen was awarded second place. Her prize was £1, not an insignificant sum in those days.

There were lots of memories of sports activities, but there is no room left on my page for these. Maybe next time!

■ My thanks to Trish Brophy, Heather Watson, Margaret Sutherland, Keith McLeavey, Maureen and Peter Jensen for sharing their memories.



OLD SCHOOL PHOTOS: MYSTERY FROM 1949

Compiled by Debbi Carson



**UNKNOWN:**  
This photo from our archives intrigued us. It's a classic school photo from the mid-century era, and possibly under one of the large trees at the Waerenga Road end of Ōtaki School. However, we don't know what school it is, or what class and certainly have no names. All we know is what's scrawled on the photo: "5, 1949". Are they 5-year-olds? Someone undoubtedly knows, so if you do, please give me a call or email – [debbi@idmedia.co.nz](mailto:debbi@idmedia.co.nz) or 027 285 4720 or 06 364 6543.



**LAST ISSUE'S PHOTO: ŌTAKI COLLEGE, 4th form (Year 10) 1971**  
Back row, from left: Clive Durand, Wayne Smith, Noel Turnbull, Neil Ivamy, unknown, Larry Morgan, Franco Dal Din, John Rice.  
Row 3: Brian Young, Michael Hockley, Patrick English, Karen Townrow, Shirley Searancke, Craig Jones, unknown, Graham Moffatt, Peter Tse.  
Row 2: Teacher Gary Girvan, Gillian Gray, Gwen Gallagher, unknown, Joanne Gimblett, Phillipa Vincent, Susan Lumley, Pauline Bennett, Denise Tapp, Debra Bird.  
Front: Janet Tate, Sandra Dorne, Elizabeth Cook, Alice Te Oka, Kathy Crombie, Anna Tambour, Vicky Farrow, Pauline Mudge, Betty Chung.  
*Photo courtesy of Debbi Carson (nee Bird).*

**GOT OLD PHOTOS?**  
If you have old school photos – or any photos of old Ōtaki – please get in touch. We're building our archive so we can keep publishing snapshots of life when the town and district were younger. Email us, or give us a call. Include names and other information as you can. Contact [debbi@idmedia.co.nz](mailto:debbi@idmedia.co.nz) especially if you have additions or corrections to captions.



**FESTIVAL:** A screengrab from F40270, Orange Festival 1967, by Norman Blackie.  
*Photo courtesy of Tauranga City Libraries/Ngā Taonga.*

# Norman's films digitised

Ngā Taonga recently completed an exciting film preservation project, at the request of Tauranga City Libraries, to digitally preserve 18 charming short films by Tauranga film-maker Norman Blackie (1899-1993).  
The films can be watched at [ngataonga.org.nz](http://ngataonga.org.nz)  
Norman was a keen amateur film-maker who arrived in Tauranga with his wife, Odine, in 1942. He worked at a sawmilling company and became involved with local community groups, which led him to put his cinematography skills to use.  
He captured a range of public events and celebrations for posterity. These include beauty queens performing their public duties, competitions, parades, construction works, parties and hāngī. Several of the films depict the Orange Festival, an annual event to promote Tauranga that started in 1961.  
Harley Couper of Tauranga City Libraries shared these thoughts:  
"What immediately grabs my eye when looking at Norman's footage, is the size of the crowds in the backgrounds. They line the streets and fill the squares, despite a population just 10 percent of our current. Yet Norman doesn't often focus on these crowds, their size is nothing unusual for him. For Norman it is the spectacle itself, the floats, the costumes, the games, the beauty queens and marching girls. It seems when something is happening, half of Tauranga comes out to cheer on the other half participating."



Norman shot his films on 16mm silent film, using a Keystone Model A7 camera, which he modified to switch between multiple lenses. It took a lot of skill to operate this camera, especially compared to a more modern video camera. The Keystone had a wind-up mechanism and ran at a usual speed of 16fps, although this was variable, and we have noticed a few instances where the film was running through the camera slightly fast or slow. The viewfinder was slightly offset from the lens so until the film was developed the film-maker couldn't be completely sure what he had captured.  
Despite all of this, the films look great, especially after digital preservation. The colours are rich, the detail is crisp, and Norman shows an eye for composition, seemingly always front and centre when something interesting was happening. The fashions, the home-made costumes, the eclectic parade floats and even dressed-up pets show a lot of individuality and creativity.  
Each movie in this newly preserved collection offers a delightful window into mid-century life in a small New Zealand city.  
■ Ngā Taonga has a huge number of recordings that capture New Zealand life. They can be explored online at [ngataonga.org.nz](http://ngataonga.org.nz). Get the Ngā Taonga newsletter using the Sign Up button at the top of the page.

Ōtaki Yesterday 2022

The 2022 issue of historical magazine *Ōtaki Yesterday* has been published. The cover story features an Ōtaki resident who recalls life here in the 1930s, straight after she came out of a Dunedin orphanage. Read also about Rikiville and the old house on the highway, Kaingaraki. These stories, and lots more are in *Ōtaki Yesterday*.  
• To order copies now, email [debbi@idmedia.co.nz](mailto:debbi@idmedia.co.nz)

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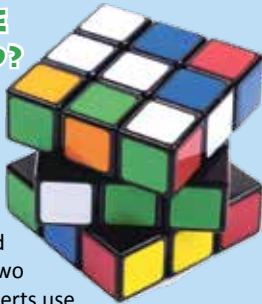
# TAMARIKI FUN

Drop your coloured picture into Ōtaki Today's box at **Riverstone Café** by February 27 to win a \$20 book voucher or an *Animals in Vehicles* book.

## OT KIDS' NEWS

### COULD YOU BEAT THE RUBIK'S CUBE RECORD?

The Rubik's Cube is one of the most popular puzzles in the world. It was created in 1974 by Hungarian sculptor and professor Erno Rubik. Solving the 3-D cube requires intelligence, patience, and deftness. While most people use two hands to solve the cube, many experts use just one hand or even their feet to solve the puzzle.



A 20-year-old Rubik's Cube expert, George Scholey, has just broken a Guinness World Record by solving 6931 of the puzzles in 24 hours. George's new record easily passed the 5800 set by Eric Limeback of Canada in 2013, but he said he was disappointed not to make it to 7000.

Here are five of the most influential Rubik's Cube solvers in the world. In November 2018, **Du Yusheng** created a world record for solving the 3x3x3 Rubik's Cube in just 3.47 seconds. **Feliks Zemdegs**, a 24 year old Australian speed solver, holds the record for solving the cube in the lowest average time – his record average time is 5.53 seconds. **Max Park** holds the record for solving the Rubik's Cube in just one hand in 6.82 seconds. He has set many other records throughout the world and has won close to 297 events. Max has autism, and has used the Rubik's Cube to enhance his social and fine motor skills. He's featured on a Netflix documentary, *The SpeedCubers*. His story is inspirational, and he is a shining example of what one can do if one determines to achieve something. **Mohammed Atman Koli** of India surprised everyone by solving the Rubik's Cube with one foot in just 15.56 seconds at the VTI Mumbai Cube Open 2019 in Mumbai. He has participated in more than 40 competitions and solved it more than 2721 times. On the same day, he also solved the Rubik's Cube 110 times with his feet in just an hour. He now holds a Guinness World Records title for the same. While solving the Rubik's Cube with one's feet is incredible, have you ever considered someone solving it blindfolded? **Max Hilliard** did just that and created a record for solving it in just 15.5 seconds! This included the time required to memorise the pathway, too. Max has inspired many people to try solving the cube without looking at it. Many have noted how exhilarating it feels to solve the cube while being blindfolded.



### MILK BOTTLE TOPS TO SKATEBOARDS

Christchurch teen Neith Absalom is making skateboard decks by reusing plastic bottle tops. The 15-year-old first started researching products he could make with recycled plastic to earn some money. Number 2 plastics, from which bottle tops are made, kept coming up as plastic items that aren't always recycled. So he started collecting and worked out a process to reuse them. He first shreds the tops in a garden shredder, then melts them down in an old barbecue. Made from high-density polyethylene, the bottle tops are easy to melt safely at 120-150C. They form a hard slime that is then poured into a stainless steel skateboard frame made by his school friend, Monty. A recycled coffee sack made of hemp is embedded into the skateboard deck to give grip. Neith uses more than 1000 bottle tops to make a multi-coloured skateboard deck, which always has blue as a base colour because most people drink blue milk. It takes about one-and-a-half to two hours to fully melt the bottle tops down, applying pressure with a non-stick sheet. Neith then takes the board to the school's tech room to smooth out the edges and put holes in it where the wheels would be attached.

A decent cruiser skateboard deck can cost between \$150-\$200, but Neith's Over The Top Recycling decks sell for \$120 each. In the future, Neith hopes to use melted-down bottle tops to make longboards and kids' toys.

## COLOURING COMPETITION



## ŌTAKI KITE FESTIVAL

NAME:

AGE:

PHONE:



**WORD MAKER**

What makes a successful learner? Successful learners are leaders in their own learning, engage with the world around them, question everything, think for themselves,

Did you know the number of words that can be made out of the word **LEARNER** is **57**

are driven by their interests, push through challenges, are determined to succeed, and have inner motivation and self discipline.

How many words can you make from the word **LEARNER**? Answers are on page 26. Good luck, and have fun.



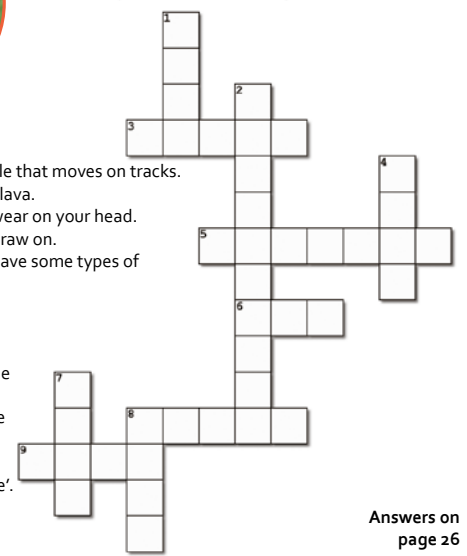
## KYUSS'S FEBRUARY CROSSWORD

### ACROSS:

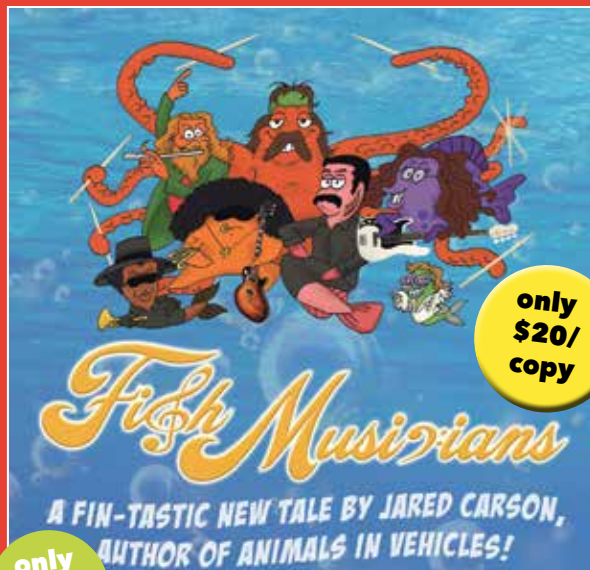
3. A transport vehicle that moves on tracks.
5. A mountain with lava.
6. Something you wear on your head.
8. Something you draw on.
9. Something you have some types of breakfast in.

### DOWN:

1. 365 days.
2. Things that people sing into.
4. The thing that the beach is covered in.
7. King of the 'jungle'.
8. The opposite of minus.

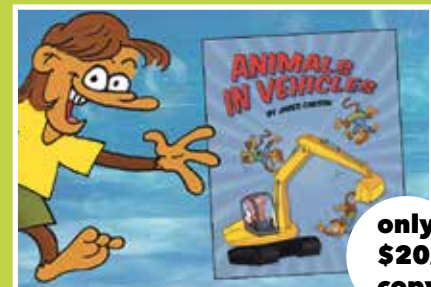


Answers on page 26



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10am-12noon Friday each fortnight. Denise 027 276 0983  
MAINLY MUSIC Hadfield Hall, Te Rauparaha St. 021 189 6510

ŌTAKI KINDERGARTEN 68a Waerenga Rd. 364 8553  
ŌTAKI MONTESSORI PRESCHOOL Haruātai Park, Roselle 364 7500  
ŌTAKI PLAYCENTRE Mill Rd. 364 5787. Mon, Tue, Thu 9.30am-noon  
ŌTAKI PLAYGROUP Ōtakiplaygroup@hotmail.com  
ŌTAKI SCOUTS, CUBS AND KEAS Brent Bythell 364 8949  
ŌTAKI TITANS SWIMMING CLUB Carla Lingnau 021 235 9096  
PLUNKET MANAKAU PLAYGROUP Honi Taipua St, T & Th 9.30am-noon  
SKIDS ŌTAKI out of school care, St Peter Chanel School. Sonia 027 739 1986  
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TAI CHI Gillian Sutherland 04 904 8190  
WHITI TE RA LEAGUE CLUB Kelly Anne Ngatai 027 256 7391  
WILD GOOSE QIGONG, CHEN STYLE TAIJIQUAN (TAI CHI) & CHUN YUEN (SHAOLIN) QUAN. Sifu Cynthia Shaw 021 613 081  
ZUMBA GOLD Te Horo and Ōtaki Anna Burns 02102430430  
To list your group, or update contact details, email debbi@idmedia.co.nz

CHURCHES

**Rangiātea** 33 Te Rauparaha St.  
06 364-6838. Sunday Eucharist 9am. Church viewing during school terms Monday to Friday 9.30am-1.30pm.  
**St Mary's Pukekaraka** 4 Convent Rd. Fr Alan Robert, 021 0822 8926. Sunday mass: 10am. Miha Māori, first Sunday of the month. For other masses see pukekaraka1@gmail.com  
**Ōtaki Anglican** Rev Simon and Rev Jessica Falconer.  
06 364-7099. All Saints Church, 47 Te Rauparaha St. Church service every Sunday at Hadfield Hall, 10am, Family Service. For Hadfield Hall bookings, email office@otakianglican.nz  
**Ōtaki Baptist** cnr State Highway 1 and Te Manuao Rd.  
06 364-8540. Sunday service at 10am. otakibaptist.weebly.com  
**The Hub** 157 Tasman Rd, Ōtaki. Leader Richard Brons.  
06 364-6911. Sunday service and Big Wednesday services at 10.15am. www.actschurches.com/church-directory/horowhenua/hub-church/  
**Ōtaki Presbyterian** 249 Mill Rd, Ōtaki. Rev Peter Jackson.  
06 364-8759 or 021 207 9455. Sunday service at 11am. See otakiwaikanaechurch.nz

MEDICAL

**Ōtaki Medical Centre** 2 Aotaki St, Ōtaki 06 364 8555  
Monday-Friday: 8.45am-5pm.  
**EMERGENCIES:** 111  
**AFTER HOURS: Team Medical**, Paraparamu: 04 297 3000  
Coastlands Shopping Mall. 8am-10pm every day.  
**Palmerston North Hospital** emergencies,  
50 Ruahine St, Palmerston North • 06 356 9169  
**Healthline for free 24-hour health advice** 0800 611 116  
**St John Health Shuttle 0800 589 630**  
**P-pull walk-in** Drug advice and support, Birthright Centre, every 2nd Thursday 6-8pm.

COMMUNITY SERVICES

**ŌTAKI POLICE** 06 364-7366, corner Iti and Matene Sts  
**CITIZEN'S ADVICE BUREAU** 06 364-8664, 0800 367 222.  
65a Main Street. otaki@cab.org.nz  
**AROHANUI HOSPICE SHOP** 11 Main St. 06 929-6603  
**BIRTHRIGHT ŌTAKI OPPORTUNITY SHOP** 23 Matene St, Ōtaki. 06 364-5524  
**COBWEBS OPPORTUNITY SHOP TRUST** 60 Main St.  
**OCEAN VIEW RESIDENTIAL CARE** Marine Pde 06 364-7399

DEFIBRILLATORS

Defibrillators, or AEDs (automated external defibrillators) can save lives in the event of a sudden cardiac arrest (heart attack). An AED is a lightweight, portable device that analyses the heart's rhythm and if necessary, delivers an electric shock, known as defibrillation, to help restore the heart's natural rhythm. They can be used by someone with little or no training. Through visual and voice prompts, AEDs guide users through an emergency by diagnosing the victim's heart rhythm. The following list is compiled from aedlocations.co.nz. Please let us know if any locations need updating.

**ŌTAKI**  
**Ōtaki Medical Centre**, 2 Aotaki St, 06 364-8555. The AED might not be available at certain times.  
**Ōtaki Library**, cnr Aotaki St and Main St. 04 296-4760. The AED might not be available at certain times.  
**Countdown Ōtaki**, Mill Rd, 06 364 9001. Open 8am-10pm.  
**Ōtaki Fire Station**, 96 Mill Rd, phone 111. The AED might not be available at certain times.  
**Ōtaki RSA**, 9 Raukawa St. Behind bar in lounge area. 06 364-6221. Open Mon: 9am-7pm, Tues 9am-9pm, Wed-Fri 9am-10pm, Sat 10am-9pm, Sun 11am-5pm.  
**Ōtaki Golf Club**, 2 Old Coach Rd North. Clubhouse, yellow cabinet at

downstairs office. Phone: 111 for combination to cabinet. Avail 24/7.  
**Te Wānanga o Raukawa**, 144 Tasman Rd, at main security office in white Portacom. 0800 926 264 Ext 0. Available 24/7.  
**Ngā Purapura**, 145 Tasman Rd, at reception. 06 364-9018. Available Mon-Fri 6am-8pm, Sat 7am-1pm, Sun 8am-1pm.  
**Ōtaki School**, 123 Mill Rd, in Administration Office. Open Mon-Thur 8am-4pm, Fri 9am-5pm.  
**Mowbray Collectables**, 257 Main Highway, at front counter on grey cupboard. 06 364-8270. Open Mon-Fri 8am-4.30pm.  
**Lumino The Dentists**, 31 Dunstan St, 06 364 8071. The AED might not be available at certain times.  
**Ōtaki Ambulance Station**, 51 Dunstan St, phone 111. The AED might not be available at certain times.  
**New World Ōtaki**, 163 Main Highway, external cabinet on highway, access code from duty manager during store hours. Phone 111 for cabinet combination. Available 24/7.  
**Ōtaki Surf Life Saving Club**, 43 Marine Pde, 06 364-7386. The AED might not be available at certain times.  
**Watson's Garden Centre**, 19 Bell St, in cabinet by front door. Phone 111 for cabinet combination. Available 24/7.  
**Transpower**, 47 Miro St. Open Mon-Fri 9am-5pm.

**Higgins Concrete**, 72 Riverbank Rd. In smoko room/kitchen. Drive in gate, first building on left. Phone 027 925 9157 or 06 364-0088. Open Mon-Fri 6am-4pm.  
**GBC Winstone Aggregates**, State Highway 1. In workshop inside south entrance, below the lock boxes. Open Mon-Fri 6am-5pm.  
**TE HORO/HAUTERE**  
**Private address at 149 Old Hautere Rd**, on fence at road gateway. PIN code controlled cabinet; phone 111 for combination. Available 24/7.  
**Te Horo Fire Station**, School Rd, phone 111. The AED might not be available at certain times.  
**Te Horo Beach Community AED**, cnr Te Horo Beach Rd and Dixie St. Secure external cabinet. Phone 111 for cabinet combination. The AED might not be available at certain times.  
**WAIKAWA/MANAKAU**  
**Frank Edwards Reserve**, opposite 6 Manga Pirau St, cabinet outside public toilets. The AED might not be available at certain times.  
**Manakau United Football Club**, inside pavilion, 38 Waikawa Beach Rd. The AED might not be available at certain times.  
**Manakau Hall**, external cabinet, 12 Mokena Kohere St. Available 24/7. Phone 111 for cabinet combination.The AED might not be available at certain times.  
– Source: aedlocations.co.nz

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ŌTAKI TODAY



THE NZ CROSSWORD

1905

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22

Across

1. Dietary fibre (8)

7. Ground meat (5)

8. Writer and director of Whale Rider (5,4)

9. Cut off (3)

10. Weaving machine (4)

11. Look up to (6)

13. Christchurch's former rugby ground (9,4)

15. Poorly (6)

16. Heroic (4)

18. Nap (inf) (3)

20. Person living next door (9)

21. Surname of an English baker who moved to New Zealand in 1921 and whose name is now a brand (5)

22. Aubergine (8)

Down

1. Of the kidneys (5)

2. Not identified (7)

3. Frozen rain (4)

4. Attention-seeking behaviour (13)

5. Corner (5)

6. Nag (7)

7. Indigenous people of the Chatham Islands (7)

12. Otago forest park (7)

13. Alternative name for tetanus (7)

14. Ancient wine jar (7)

15. Horrify (5)

17. Gold measurement (5)

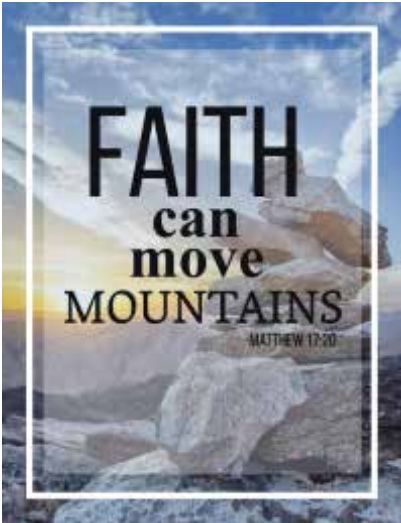
19. Fried potato (4)

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SUDOKU PUZZLES thepuzzlecompany.co.nz

HARD #39H 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. Puzzle solution below.

8

1

3

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ŌTAKI TODAY

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LEARNER WORD MAKER ANSWERS from page 24:

7 letters: 1. relearn. 6 letters: 2. earner 3. leaner 4. nearer 5. ealer 6. reearn. 5 letters: 7. nele 8. arene 9. laree 10. learn 11. ranee 12. renal 13. reran, 4 letters: 14. allee 15. earl 16. earn 17. elan 18. erne 19. lane 20. larn 21. lean 22. lear 23. leer 24. nare 25. near 26. rale 27. rare 28. real 29. rear 30. reel. 3 letters: 31. ale 32. are 33. ere 34. ear 35. eel 36. era 37. ere 38. ern 39. err 40. lar 41. lea 42. lee 43. nae 44. nee 45. ran 46. ree. 2 letters: 47. ae 48. al 49. an 50. ar 51. el 52. en 53. er 54. la 55. na 56. ne 57. re.

MORE KAI QUESTIONS

Answers below.

1. What is the traditional method of cooking for Māori, especially suited to feeding large numbers of people?

2. Māori introduced kiore and kurī to Aotearoa, both valuable sources of meat. What animals are they?

3. Māori did not make pottery, so how did they boil water?

4. How did Māori preserve large quantities of food?

5. What are the ingredients in the dish toroi?

6. When Pākehā settlers arrived in Aotearoa, Māori embraced the new foods they brought with them. Potatoes were easy to grow, and pigs could be fattened quickly, so pork, pūhā and potatoes became a new staple meal. What was this called?

7. Māori kai (food) is prepared using a combination of kai moana and kai whenua. What are these?

8. What is Rewena Pararua and what is it made from?

9. Harakeke or New Zealand flax is a superfood, rich in omega-3. How is it available to use?

10. Horopito has an amazing pepper-like taste that gives it its common name, the pepper tree. This is a New Zealand native and one that's wild harvested. What is horopito also good for?

MORE KAI QUESTIONS: ANSWERS

1. The hangi (earth oven). 2. Kiore (the Polynesian rat) and kurī (the Polynesian dog). 3. They placed a red-hot stone in a wooden bowl of liquid. 4. By drying it, fermenting it, or sealing it in fat. 5. Toroi is a dish made with fresh mussels and pūhā (sow thistle) juice. 6. A boil up. 7. Kai moana (food from the sea) and kai whenua (food from the land). 8. A traditional Māori sourdough, this delicious bread is made from Māori potatoes (taewa tutaekuri). 9. It is available as unrefined oil and as seasoning. 10. Horopito is extremely helpful for upset digestion and inflammation, is a form of pain relief, and helps encourage circulation.

Ōtaki River entrance tides

February 8 - March 8

<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
WED 8 FEB	-	05:58	12:06	18:21	-
THU 9 FEB	00:23	06:29	12:37	18:54	-
FRI 10 FEB	00:54	07:01	13:09	19:28	-
SAT 11 FEB	01:28	07:36	13:45	20:05	-
SUN 12 FEB	02:05	08:15	14:25	20:47	-
MON 13 FEB	02:49	09:02	15:14	21:37	-
TUE 14 FEB	03:44	10:03	16:15	22:38	-
WED 15 FEB	04:54	11:18	17:28	23:53	-
THU 16 FEB	06:15	12:40	18:47	-	-
FRI 17 FEB	-	01:12	07:34	13:55	20:03
SAT 18 FEB	-	02:22	08:40	14:57	21:07
SUN 19 FEB	-	03:21	09:35	15:51	22:02
MON 20 FEB	-	04:12	10:24	16:41	22:52
TUE 21 FEB	-	04:59	11:10	17:27	23:38
WED 22 FEB	-	05:44	11:55	18:12	-
THU 23 FEB	00:21	06:28	12:38	18:56	-
FRI 24 FEB	01:04	07:11	13:21	19:39	-
SAT 25 FEB	01:46	07:55	14:04	20:22	-
SUN 26 FEB	02:29	08:41	14:50	21:07	-
MON 27 FEB	03:17	09:33	15:41	21:59	-
TUE 28 FEB	04:15	10:37	16:42	23:03	-
WED 1 MAR	05:31	11:54	17:56	-	-
THU 2 MAR	-	00:23	06:55	13:12	19:16
FRI 3 MAR	-	01:40	08:02	14:14	20:20
SAT 4 MAR	-	02:36	08:51	15:01	21:08
SUN 5 MAR	-	03:20	09:30	15:40	21:47
MON 6 MAR	-	03:56	10:04	16:16	22:21
TUE 7 MAR	-	04:29	10:36	16:48	22:53
WED 8 MAR	-	05:00	11:06	17:20	23:24
THU 9 MAR	-	05:30	11:36	17:52	23:54
FRI 10 MAR	-	06:01	12:07	18:24	-



# Pub quizzes a good measure of public knowledge

**Pub quizzes are good for a few things. They're fun, and if you have a smart team and a regular quiz night, they can be a reliable source of free booze.**

They're also a good way of measuring what things aren't generally well-known by people. I was once at a pub quiz on Rakiura (Stewart Island), where one of the questions was: "What year was the Treaty of Waitangi signed?" At first, I thought such a basic question said more about the population of Rakiura than anything else.

But when most of my team – who were not Rakiura locals – just sat there looking cluelessly at each other, it hit me. The year when te Tiriti o Waitangi was signed is such an obscure fact for the average New Zealander that it's worthy of being a pub quiz question.

Actually, just about any aspect of te Tiriti is.



Last month, new Prime Minister Chris Hipkins was criticised for not knowing what the Articles say (a quiz question his predecessor Jacinda Ardern also failed early in her term).

When I discussed this with a friend, they shrugged and said, "I don't know what the Articles say either."

I suppose the topic is much more relevant for me than the average person. As a contractor, I describe my services as "Tiriti-based policy advice", which naturally requires a deep understanding of the document, the intentions and expectations of its signatories, and its application in a modern context. I often find that people think te Tiriti only has relevance to Māori, and even then is only relevant for work in the public sector like mine.

The reality is that te Tiriti is relevant to

everyone. It is, after all, the reason Pākehā were even permitted to live and establish themselves here in Aotearoa. By granting the Crown kāwanatanga (governorship) under Article 1, rangatira allowed the Crown to create laws and govern its people. It was a remarkable agreement of shared power between the indigenous peoples of a land and the British Empire.

Another little-known fact about that remarkable agreement is that it was signed right here in Ōtaki. We tend to think of the place Waitangi, up north in the Bay of Islands, when we think about where te Tiriti was signed in 1840 (for those of you still wondering). But that was just the first copy; in total there were nine copies signed throughout Aotearoa, one of which was signed in Ōtaki.

The Cook Strait copy was signed here on May 19, 1840, by eight rangatira, most of whom were Ngāti Raukawa. Henry Williams, the missionary who translated the Treaty into te reo Māori, brought it here after it was signed in various

places including Wellington, Queen Charlotte Sound, Rangitoto ki te Tonga (D'Urville Island), and Kāpiti Island. Its signing here was witnessed by Williams and Octavius Hadfield.

After being signed here, the Cook Strait copy went on to be signed at Tawhirihoē, Manawātū, Waikanae, Whanganui, and finally Motungārara, where my tūpuna Te Rangihīroa signed it. Other rangatira who signed this copy include Kahe Te Rau-o-te-rangi, famous for swimming from Kāpiti Island to the mainland with her child upon her back; Rangi Topeora, a powerful leader of Ngāti Toa; and Te Rauparaha, who signed it twice – because of course he did.

These are the figures and the events that shaped the history of our town. It's important to know these things – not just so we can win pub quizzes, but so we know where we stand and why we stand here.

■ *Tihema is an uri of Raukawa te Au ki te Tonga, Te Ātiawa ki Whakarongotai, and Ngāti Toa Rangatira. He is a writer and consultant who grew up in Ōtaki.*

TĀKARO/Sport
|
Ōtaki Today, Pepuere/February 2023



**RIGHT: The Raukawa ki te Tonga U7s basketball team that won gold at the Māori National Basketball competition. Back row, from left, coach Nukuao Takao, Te Manutāiko Rikihana, Taumauri Picchi, Kohen Cooper, Te Whaiao Marshall, Mataia Peneha, Carter McClutchie, Erena Cooper (manager) and Harina Picchi; seated Alexi Law, Hineāio Gray and Mahuta Cooper.**

**U11 TAMA (left):** From left, back, Tainui Cooper, Riki Baker, Te Aumangea Maxwell-Osborne, Kobe Kemp, Carter-Jay Love, Matai Fisher, Rereahu Scheider, Rob Fisher (coach). Front: Arekatera Tukerangi, Kaitiaki Jahnke, Manaakitanga Moore, Tanerau Te Huna-Whaanga, Maxx Tanatui. *Photos supplied*



## Medals for Raukawa basketballers

**Raukawa ki te Tonga's women's A grade team and its U7 mixed grade brought gold home to Ōtaki after winning performances at the Māori National Basketball competition in late January.**

In total, Raukawa took two gold, two silver and three bronze medals. As an iwi, the medal haul gave it second place

overall in the competition held in Rotorua from January 23-28.

Raukawa took teams from the young U7 ages right up to masters (aged 45+) and had more than 200 members participating at the annual tournament. The competition has grown significantly during the past few years and now has more than 2000 people attending.

"The tournament is always a good way to bring our people within the Ōtaki community and those who whakapapa to Raukawa ki Te Tonga together through a positive kaupapa that supports their physical, cultural and mental well-being," says club manager Ariana Reweti.

Home gym for the teams is Ngā Purapura at Te Wānanga o Raukawa.



**U9 TAMA:** From left, Takoha Nepata-Marshall, Elijah Luke, Te Rākahereā Rēweti, Mahea Cooper, Arden Cooper, Ngarangikaitia Tapiata, Trist Rēweti (coach)



**U15 TAMA ŌTAKI:** From left, Teariki Peneha (coach), Kaylis Peneha, Taka Peneha, Paxman Tangitamaiti, Xavier Solomon, Fletcher Cooper, Shay-Marie Peneha (manager).



**U19 KOTIRO (above):** Back from left, Kirsten Crawford (manager), Te Wairere Hapeta-Milan, Te Akau Epiha, Tawhirikura Doyle, Ngapua Winiata, Te Waipiata Doyle, Buzz Crawford (coach). Front: Mikaela Bell, Bailey Taylor, Logan Crawford, Millie Forbes.

**WOMEN (left):** From left, Jaime Ratapu, Amiria Rēweti, Willis Fraser (baby), Hinekura Winiata, Amiria Cooper, Jasmine Ratapu, Tasha Webby, Rona Ruri, Taini Tomoana, Arapera Tapiata, Ariana Reweti (manager), Moses Solomon, Quentin Solomon (coach).



**SEMIS TEAM:** The Ōtaki women's bowls team, from left, Carol Parsons, Hilary Moore, team skip Jane Selby Paterson, and Judy Howell. *Photo supplied*

## Team bowls into semis

The Ōtaki Bowling Club's women's A team finished third equal at the recent 71st Taranaki women's fours tournament.

It's the biggest women's fours competition in New Zealand, with 84 entries from throughout the country.

The Ōtaki team was unbeaten until the semi-finals, completing the tournament third equal.

"This was a good result for a small club and well beyond our expectations," says team skip Jane Selby Paterson.





# 'Fingers crossed' for Ōtaki lifeguards

Ōtaki Surf Life Saving Club is pleased with how beach-goers this summer have been responsible at the beach, but they have their fingers crossed that they have no serious incidents through the rest of the season.

Club captain Peter Housiaux says Ōtaki has had a benign summer so far, with beachgoers for the most part swimming between the flags and being responsible.

"However, conditions like this can lull people into a false sense of security," he says. "Our beach can be very dangerous with holes and rips appearing as the weather changes and we see bigger surf conditions."

Two rescues this season were users of a kayak and jetski respectively.

"For all watercraft activities, it's especially important to check the conditions before heading out, know your own limits and make sure you have the appropriate safety gear, like lifejackets, leg straps, helmets etc."

He says it's worth talking to the lifeguards.

"Conditions can change quickly, and our lifeguards keep a constant eye on the beach ... and continuously scope the beach for hazards, keep on top of weather forecasts and understand the swell and tide conditions."

He says there's safety in numbers. Help is on hand with friends or family nearby.

Paid lifeguards are no longer patrolling during the week, but they will keep patrolling the beach at weekends from midday to 6pm until early March. However the club has a call-out squad for incidents outside of normal hours, which can be activated by dialling 111. Several of the Ōtaki lifeguards are based in and around town and are able to respond fairly quickly in an emergency.

Meantime, Surf Life Saving New Zealand (SLSNZ) is pleading with beachgoers to visit safeswim.org.nz to choose beaches patrolled by lifeguards, and always swim between the red and yellow flags to prevent more beach fatalities after incidents in other parts of New Zealand this summer.

Chief operations officer Chris Emmett says too many incidents have occurred outside of the patrol flags or outside of patrol times and locations, and could have been avoided.

"Last year our patrols rescued 726 people, and despite a record number of drownings across the country, there were no drownings between our red and yellow flags," he says.

"To keep yourself and your loved ones safe, we ask you to head to a beach where there are lifeguards and swim between the flags, as that's the safest place to swim."

"Keep it safe, keep it smart, and stay within your limits. Be sure to watch out for rip currents that can carry you away from shore and be smart around rocks. Please don't overestimate your ability in the water, and never swim or surf alone."

If you observe someone in trouble in an unpatrolled area, call 111 and ask for the police. They are in direct contact with all the marine rescue services around the country.

■ Beachgoers can check the Safeswim website, see safeswim.org.nz for patrol hours and locations; it has more than 90 lifeguard patrol locations throughout the country.



TOP SHOT: Grayson Lunman holds the flag for mum Kristen on the Ōtaki club's 12th green where she shot a hole-in-one.  
Photo Ōtaki Today

## Hole-in-one for lucky mum

Novice golfer Kristen Lunman teed off at the 12th hole on Ōtaki Golf Course and watched incredulous as the ball sailed towards the green, bounced and rolled into the hole.

Golfing partner and son Grayson, who's a talented golfer himself, also couldn't believe it, but was at least on hand to verify the event on January 16 at the par-3, 159m hole.

"It was only the sixth time I've played golf, so to see it drop into the hole was amazing," says Kristen, who lives with the family at Ōtaki Beach. "Grayson has been giving me a few lessons, so I'll credit him with what happened."

Kristen says she enjoys the course and friendly club and will be back for more, hoping for another hole-in-one.



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