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## WHAT'S ON

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

**MĀORILAND FILM FESTIVAL:** March 20-24, Main St. [maorilandfilm.co.nz](http://maorilandfilm.co.nz)

**MULLED WINE CONCERT:** Renowned international pianist Nikolai Saratovsky will be playing at the Memorial Hall in Paekākāriki from 2.30pm on Sunday, March 10 to begin the 2024 series of Mulled Wine concerts. The programme will include a selection from Scarlatti sonatas, Chopin preludes, Brahms Opus 76, Debussy preludes and Rachmaninoff musical moments OP16. Information and tickets (\$35, student \$20) from [marygow@gmail.com](mailto:marygow@gmail.com). See [mulledwineconcerts.com](http://mulledwineconcerts.com)

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

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

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

**TOI MAHARA,** Mahara Place, Waikanae. The Kāpiti Coast's district gallery has reopened bigger and better than ever. See [toimahara.nz](http://toimahara.nz)

**COMMUNITY BOARDS: COMMUNITY BOARDS:** The **Ōtaki Community Board** next meets in 2024 at 7pm, Tuesday March 5 in the Gertrude Atmore Lounge (attached to the Memorial Hall). The first **Waikanae Community Board** meeting in 2024 is at 7pm, Tuesday February 27, at the Waikanae Community Centre, 28 Utauta St. The public is welcome at community board meetings. Search "meetings and agendas" at [kapiticoast.govt.nz](http://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](mailto:democracy.services@kapiticoast.govt.nz)

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

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

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

**ŌTAKI GARAGE SALE:** Third Saturday of the month, 9am-11.30am, Presbyterian Church, 249 Mill Rd. 06 364-6449. Rev Peter Jackson 021 207 9455, [owpresb@xtra.co.nz](mailto: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 & 3rd Thursday 10.30am-1.30pm.

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

**PROBUS CLUB OF WAIKANAЕ CENTRAL.** The club meets at 10am on the fourth Thursday of every month at the Waikanae Community Centre, Utauta Street. New members welcome. Contact Roger Faithfull: [probuswaikanaecentral@gmail.com](mailto:probuswaikanaecentral@gmail.com).

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

**RESPIRATORY SUPPORT GROUP KĀPITI** meets 2nd Wednesday every month (except Dec and Jan) at 1:30 pm, Coastlands Aquatic Centre Meeting Room. October speaker is Respiratory Physiotherapist. All welcome. Colleen 027 344 9987 or Ted 021 332 832.

**KĀPITI FLY FISHING CLUB** 7.30pm, Monday, February 19. Kāpiti Sports Turf Pavilion, Scaife Drive, Paraparaumu. Learn fly fishing skills, attend events/trips and make friends. Club meetings are 7:30 pm on the 4th Monday of the month (excluding December). Visitors welcome. Contact [kffsecretary@gmail.com](mailto:kffsecretary@gmail.com). See [kapitiflyfishing.org](http://kapitiflyfishing.org).

To list an event, contact [debby@idmedia.co.nz](mailto:debby@idmedia.co.nz)

## Benefit in co-ordinated welfare approach

**The rhetoric flowing between Māori leaders and politicians of all political stripes on the Treaty of Waitangi is obscuring public attention to what may be one of the government's most significant policy initiatives – its targeted approach to decreasing welfare dependency.**

Those involved in the treaty debate have reason to make common cause in a nationwide effort to curb the ever-growing list of individuals obtaining welfare benefits or the job seeker payments. All ethnic groups who make up the New Zealand community of today are represented in the rolls of state-dependents, and all have a variety of reasons to want to reduce welfare dependency.

The "go to" position of Labour and the Greens when members of the coalition government seek to address this issue is the claim that it is "beneficiary bashing". But a look at the issues that give rise to welfare dependency and at the outcomes that arise from so many being on the government's social payroll discloses that the issue is more than worthy of cross-party and cross-ethnic attention, rather than political drum banging to bolster claims to moral virtue.

That Labour in government had no answers is clear from Ministry of Social Development figures. These show that people of working age receiving a primary benefit totalled 378,711 at the end of last year. This compared with 280,177 in December 2017 when Labour entered government. Even more disturbing is that as a percentage of the working age population the number of those on a state benefit lifted from 9.6

percent in 2017 to 11.9 percent last year.

Economist Bryce Wilkinson says a rise in those on job seeker support is the reason for this. Numbers enrolled for this benefit have grown from 123,041 to 189,708. Those termed "job-ready" were up from 83,100 to 109,698, but unemployment figures in 2023 were 92,400 compared with 106,600 in 2017. A transfer of

unemployed beneficiaries to job seeker benefits seemed the reason for this change, because numbers not work-ready on the job seeker benefit had risen significantly.

The statistics provide a glimpse of the overall situation. They don't tell the story, however, of the impact this level of welfare dependency has on individuals and families. Nor of the lifestyle of those turning down jobs in industries that during the past

two-three years have shouted from the rooftops their need for more workers, many for unskilled duties. Among these were the horticultural, hospitality and construction sectors.

But while they shouted, social workers and analysts drew attention to the child poverty, drug dependence, home violence, increasingly low school attendance levels and signs of intergenerational passing-on of the issues confronting welfare dependent families.

It is this trend of intergenerational transmission that the coalition is taking aim at through its targeted approach, one that seeks to identify the causes of dependency at local community and family levels and evolve state support programmes tailored to produce results. Housing, home pressures affecting school attendance, and ability of children to attain basic language and day-to-day living skills, drug dependency, and mental illness are among the

issues to be confronted. Harnessing communities to work with and for central government is a key element in this approach that is intended to operate with performance indicators that demonstrate a programme or scheme operated by the service provider is working, or not.

It is not a beneficiary bashing exercise, rather a positive step in policy that in the short term will increase social welfare spending while offering a means of reducing state dependency over time.

That the strongest proponent of its adoption was former National prime minister Bill English should not be a reason for political and ethnic groups to revolt against it. After all, as evidence of the past six years demonstrates, the claimed social oriented parties on our political spectrum have failed miserably to find answers.

Adoption of the targeting policy will challenge Te Pati Māori, in particular. Does it intend to let the current hyperbole over the Treaty dominate its headline-grabbing gestures and speech making to the detriment of attention to positive moves likely to be of significant benefit to poorer communities seeking a way out of state dependency? Former Greens co-leader James Shaw demonstrated that a commitment to forge a positive working relationship in furtherance of a common goal could achieve progress at high political levels. Shaw did not win all his battles in Parliament or the Beehive, but the progress he made on climate change shows the benefits.

An agreed co-ordinated approach between the governing coalition and iwi leaders on this targeted approach offers more to reduce welfare dependency to the benefit of all than a prolonged exchange of rhetoric on the Treaty with accompanying insult, claim and counterclaim.

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

## POLITICS



BRUCE KOHN

## CARTOON OF THE MONTH

By Jared Carson

Don't let our pets cook in our cars! See page 5

ŌTAKI TODAY *Ngā Kōrero o Ōtaki*

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# Six-month lane closure looms

By Ian Carson

**Transport agency Waka Kotahi has confirmed traffic on the old Ōtaki River bridge will be reduced to one lane beginning late May – and continuing until December.**

Ōtaki Today reported last year that the bridge was to close in July 2023 for installation of a “clip-on” shared pathway. However, community backlash about a closure that would impede December holiday traffic led the agency to defer to this year. It told Ōtaki Today recently that work would have started before May this year, but with the Ōtaki Kite Festival this coming weekend, and other popular local community events in the coming months, it had deferred the installation date again.

“We are planning for the lane closure to begin in late May 2024 and continue until December 2024,” says Waka Kotahi infrastructure delivery regional manager Jetesh Bhula. “We are working with the project contractor to look at ways of reducing the time required for the lane closure.”

While construction is under way, stop/go traffic signals will be used to control the long-term single-lane closure on the bridge. Signal phasing will be set to account for expected peak traffic flows, with priority given to peak flow directions. Traffic will be monitored, and, if required, phasing will be changed to ensure traffic delays are kept as short as possible.

The project will work with the Waka Kotahi Wellington Traffic Operations Centre (WTOC) to monitor and manage priority access for emergency services as required.

“We appreciate pedestrians and cyclists will want access over the river, and we are working



The old Ōtaki River bridge, with a new path waiting to connect to the “clip-on”. Photo Ōtaki Today

with the contractor to provide pedestrian and cyclist access across the river during construction,” Jitesh says. “We do expect this work to affect traffic flows and create congestion. However, since the opening of the PP2Ō expressway, traffic volumes on old State Highway 1 have fallen by almost 60 percent.”

About 7900 vehicles now use it daily, compared to the more than 19,000 before PP2Ō opened. The lower traffic volumes and having an alternative route via PP2Ō is expected to mitigate a significant amount of the project’s impact.

A similar lane closure currently operating on the Waikanae River bridge has brought anger from motorists and local residents, and drawn a roadside protest supported by Ōtaki MP Tim Costley.

So why does it take so long to “clip on” a shared pathway?

Waka Kotahi says the works for both the Waikanae and Ōtaki bridges are significant,

requiring substantial planning, design and construction.

While the term clip-on sounds simple and straightforward, the agency says the work involved is far more sophisticated and detailed.

At Ōtaki, the clip-on will be a 2.5-metre-wide shared path that will be installed on the upstream (eastern) side of the old Ōtaki River Bridge. This is an element of the completion works (revocation) for the Peka Peka to Ōtaki (PP2Ō) expressway project.

Project crews will install a steel substructure on each of the 14 bridge piers to support the new clip-on pathways. This requires scaffolding under the bridges to provide a platform for work crews.

In the case of Ōtaki, the scaffolding can’t sit in the riverbed because of flood risk. A substantial rainfall could wash away scaffolding; it has to hang from the bridge deck. To do this, the scaffolding must be anchored to the lane from the top of the bridge. That means an entire

bridge lane must be closed 24 hours a day until the new shared pathway is installed.

“We appreciate a full lane closure does have a significant impact on traffic and does cause congestion and delays,” Jetesh Bhula says. “However, the nature of the work involved and the necessity to anchor the scaffolding to the bridge means no other viable options are available.”

The project has been worked on with the Kāpiti Coast District Council, community and various stakeholder groups. The latter includes the PP2Ō Community Liaison Group, Ngā Hapū o Ōtaki and Friends of the Ōtaki River.

The project will ensure walkers, cyclists and locals using old SH1 have a safe way to cross the bridge. The current downriver side of the bridge has had a narrow footpath for years, but it has no barriers against traffic.

“Separating walking and cycling paths from the road is the best and safest option as it removes any chance of pedestrians and cyclists being at risk from live traffic lanes,” Jetesh says.

The agency says it continues to discuss the project and its impact on traffic flows with the council. More information is expected to be sent out to residents, businesses and community groups as plans are developed further.

However, Waka Kotahi advises residents, businesses and road users to plan for the project and its impact. It anticipates congestion and delays to be worst when the project starts, but will reduce as people become used to the work and adapt to the lane closure.

■ More details about the project can be found on the NZTA/Waka Kotahi website. Search for “Ōtaki River shared path” at nzta.govt.nz

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Photo Ōtaki Today

## Beach dump concern

**The alleged assault of a man who confronted dumpers of green waste at the Ōtaki River estuary has highlighted the delicacy of the local ecosystem.**

In the early evening on January 31, the man noticed a ute with a large bag of green waste on the back. He had seen evidence of dumping around the beach before and was suspicious.

Police say he followed the ute and when the occupants were about to dump the waste, he confronted the male driver. Two other people – a man and a woman – were also in the vehicle.

The driver immediately became aggressive and argumentative, stating that he had right to do what he wanted.

He pushed the victim in the chest twice, forcing him backwards, and then threatened to “punch your teeth in”, and made further threats.

A 45-year-old Ōtaki male was arrested and charged with assault and threatening language. He was bailed to appear in the Levin District Court on the February 7. He did not enter a plea and was to appear again on February 21.

One man who did not want to be identified,

fearing retribution, told *Ōtaki Today* the evidence of green waste – and other rubbish – is evident in many places around the estuary.

“The whole area is a key native ecosystem that’s had a huge amount of work done by Friends of the Ōtaki River, and the regional and district councils,” he says. “It’s an important site for recreation and food gathering.”

He understood the area of the latest incident was planted about 20 years ago.

“The problem with dumping garden waste is that it’s often contaminated with exotic weeds and seeds like blackberry and colvulvulus that just take over. The work then becomes weed control.”

If Kāpiti Coast District Council receives information about people dumping waste – usually to avoid tip fees – it will issue a warning with the possibility of a \$400 fine.

KCDC advises people observing waste dumping should contact them by phone (04 296 4700 or 0800 486 486), putting in an online service request at [kapiticoast.govt.nz](http://kapiticoast.govt.nz) or via the free mobile Antenna app.

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# Hot dogs a worry with heat

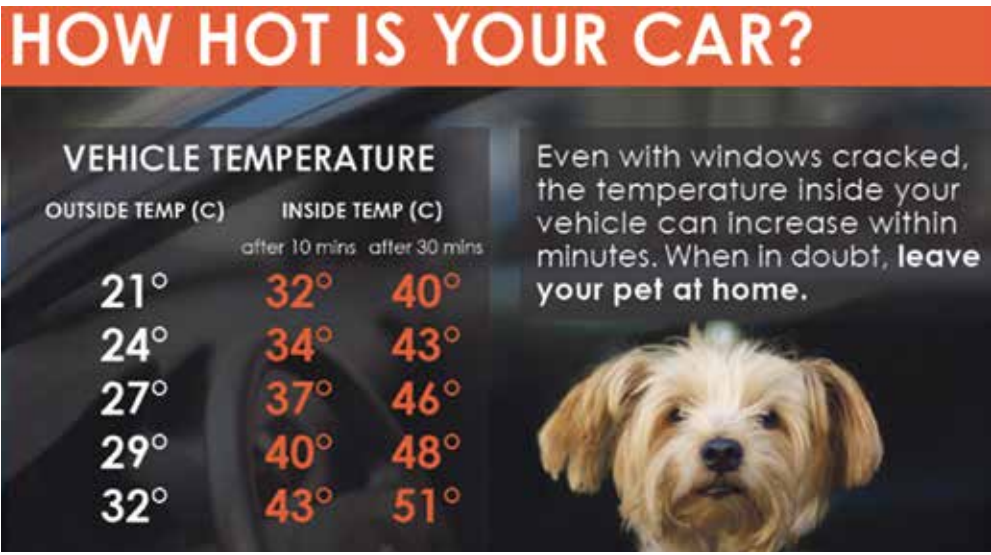
The observation of animals – mostly dogs – confined in vehicles on summer days has concerned some locals.

One person who contacted Ōtaki Today said she knew of several instances of dogs being left in cars during the heat of the day.

“The window is usually down, but that’s not going to keep a car cool when the outside temperate is hot,” she says. “In fact, the temperature in a car can rise rapidly. So even a short time stuck in a car can cause serious distress to a dog.”

She sent the diagram at right to illustrate how quickly a car can heat up.

Dogs in hot cars can suffer from potentially fatal heat stroke in as little as 15 minutes. They struggle to cool down even when a window is left open or water has been left in the car.



## IN BRIEF

**Body likely Duncan Hill**  
Police say a body located by members of the public on February 5 while hunting in dense bush in the Ōtaki Gorge area is likely to be that of Duncan Hill. Duncan was reported missing in October. The death was not being treated as suspicious.

**Rotunda fundraiser**  
The Friends of the Ōtaki Rotunda are staging “A Night to Remember” at Raukura, Kāpiti Performing Arts Centre, on March 2. The event has taken on a special poignancy with the recent death of Mary-Annette Hay, who donated her last 15 paintings to be auctioned. She was also due to recite one of her favourite passages from Shakespeare. In addition to the auction there will be a premiere performance of a short film about the rotunda currently under production by film-maker Steve LaHood. Finger-food will be provided and there will be raffles with prizes from local businesses and a display of Health Camp First Day Covers.

■ Tickets \$70 from Eventfinda (\$65 for groups of 10 or more)

**Eight call-outs to alarms**  
Of the 25 call-outs for the Ōtaki Volunteer Fire Brigade in January, eight were to attend to private fire alarms. Five were for rubbish, grass or scrub fires, and there were three each for property fires and medical emergencies. There were two motor vehicle crashes, and two “good intent” calls. Local firefighters assisted a neighbouring brigade once, and there was one “special service”.

# Choir extends welcome to new singers

Since its post-pandemic return to regular recitals, the Kāpiti Women’s Choir has gone from strength to strength.

A membership drive this time last year brought new singers to the choir and director Ann-Marie Stapp hopes to encourage even more women to join in this year.

“Singing in a big group is a lot of fun,” Ann-Marie says. “It’s a great way to make new friends, and, if you’re part of this choir, give something back to the community.”

The Kāpiti Women’s Choir performs in retirement villages and nursing homes all over the Kapiti Coast. It’s highly sought after and already has a busy schedule of gigs lined up for 2024.

“It’s well known that singing lifts the spirit,”



Ann-Mary says. “It releases those feel-good endorphins in the brain that make you happy. It makes our audiences happy, too, and this is what this choir is about. I find it rewarding to see our audiences enlivened by our performance, especially when they join in our sing-alongs.”

Research has proven singing slows down cognitive decline. It also improves fitness,

especially core strength because the moment you open your mouth to sing, your abdominal muscles are put to work.

“A lot of people are shy about singing or say they don’t know how, but it really is something that comes to most of us naturally. Singing can be learned, and there’s no better way to do this than in a choir where you have other singers supporting you.”

There’s no scary audition for the choir.

Anyone interested in joining, or who just wants to come along and try it out, will be warmly welcomed. All you need to do is turn up. Rehearsals are held on Mondays, during term time, from 1.30 to 3pm at the Baptist Church, 286 Te Moana Road, Waikanae.

■ Ann-Marie Stapp, 021 492 127 or amstapp@xtra.co.nz

# THE NEW YEAR has kicked off with a BANG!



## Reflecting on January:

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16 Listings

9 Sold



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'24

# Innovation to help save Te Horo Hall

By Ian Carson

**The Te Horo Community Hall Society is at a pivotal stage in its restoration project for the historic hall.**

Having received strong support through a local survey to save the hall from almost certain demise, the committee sought tenders for earthquake strengthening, finally deciding on Crowe Construction and Associates. This work will cost about \$350,000, which will include finish work, such as painting and floor sanding, insurance and regulatory requirements.

Hall society chairman Andrew Annakin says quake strengthening remains the hall committee's first priority.

"There's little point in doing anything else without it," he says. "If we only raise enough to quake strengthen the hall and make it suitable for future users, then that is all we will do. But now that we have a clear budget to work to, we can begin the serious business of fundraising."

Having set the target, the committee is embarking on an ambitious and innovative fundraising drive led by Te Horo local Grant Robertson. Through his real estate connections, Grant has secured a donation of \$3000 from Property Brokers Ōtaki for marketing and promotion.

But now it gets interesting, with the idea of the Great Te Horo Road Rai\$e. It's a concept that challenges designated areas of Te Horo (roads or a cluster of roads) to raise \$10,000 or more during March, April and May.

"This is three months of concentrated effort, innovation, and fun among neighbourhoods to outdo each other for a good cause," Andrew

says. "If we raise \$400,000, earthquake strengthening will be undertaken, painting and redecorating undertaken, plus a new kitchen will be installed. If we raise \$500,000, we hope to convince KCDC to help put car parking on the adjoining KCDC-owned paddock."

Every Thursday, one of the "roads" can make use of the hall for fundraising, which might include debates, celebrity speakers, long lunches, dancing or card games.

Area 12 (Addington and Te Waka roads) is kicking off the campaign with a quiz night at 7pm on Thursday, March 7, followed by a committee-hosted opening drinks at the hall the next day, Friday, March 8.

Road Rai\$e champion Grant Robertson says he's been overwhelmed by residents' enthusiasm.

"The sheer imagination and the wide variety of ideas based on what most suits each 'road' group is amazing," he says. "It's going to be an incredible event. If nothing else The Great Road Rai\$e is a fantastic way to meet your neighbours, have fun, and contribute to something local and important to all of us."

In support of the "roads", the hall committee is organising a monster raffle with big prizes, and a major promotion one weekend each month on which teams can hang their events.

While Road Rai\$e is the most exciting and engaging part of the hall's funding plans, other avenues are being pursued such as the Lotteries Commission and other large donors. Several companies and corporates might also be interested in supporting the hall.

■ Look for Te Horo Hall on Facebook. A new website will be online soon. Contact: Andrew Annakin 021 665 089 or Grant Robertson 021 660 113

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# Big programme for Māoriland

**The Māoriland Film Festival (MFF) is now the largest indigenous film festival in the world, and this year will see the largest programme offered as well.**

One hundred and sixty-eight films from 111 indigenous nations will screen in Ōtaki from March 20-24.

Now in its 11th year, MFF will offer 11 feature films, eight feature documentaries and 16 short film programmes.

Festival director Madeleine Hakaraia de Young says the number of eligible films submitted for programme consideration is the largest ever. Films for 2024 are coming in from Aotearoa, Australia, Canada, United States, Finland, Norway, Kazakhstan, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Cook Islands, Greenland, Fiji, India, Kenya, Marshall Islands, Palestine, Mexico, Nepal, Russia, Sierra Leone and Taiwan.

“Every year, we see the groundswell of indigenous storytelling continue to grow,” Madeleine says. “Māoriland is a global event so we prioritise bringing new communities and voices to the festival.”

"It's never been more important for indigenous voices to be heard. We see the power of film storytelling to grow empathy and create change."

“Every success in our indigenous screen community grows our ability to go further.”

The theme of this year's festival – Kia Tau Te Rongomau – is a call for peace. MFF has worked with Rachael Rakena to curate an exhibition on Ōtaki's Main Street with artists Tame Iti, Regan



**Sonia Snowden and Emily Hakaraia at the 2022 Māoriland Film Festival.** *Photo Ōtaki Today*

Balzer, Johnson Witehira and Ngātaiharuru  
Taepa in response to this theme.

“We’re honoured to have these esteemed artists share their response to this theme, and to have them as our 2024 Māoriland Keynote at Rangiātea Church on Wednesday, March 20.”

Screenings will begin that evening with the world premiere of season two of *The Reciprocity Project*, a series of short films that reframe the relationship we have with the Earth, other living beings, and one another. They ask: What does a “return” to land, language, and reciprocal practices mean to you and your community?

With seven films from seven nations (United States, Canada, Finland, Rotuman, Taiwan, Sierra Leone and Kenya), the project explores the time-honoured and current ways of indigenous being in the face of the current climate crisis.

**Things may start to look a little different around here, but it's still us!**

Over the next few months you'll start to see a few changes here at Inpro Group. We have made the strategic decision to merge with Futurisk. Futurisk are a well established insurance broker based in Manawatu who have been working in the industry alongside us for over 30 years. By merging we will have access to more insurance providers and products, as well as a larger pool of knowledge from our combined teams. This is a really exciting step forward which will help us to future-proof your continuous service and grow our offering.

During this merge we will be transitioning into the Futurisk branding, but in terms of how your existing insurance is looked after nothing will change, it will be the same Inpro team behind the scenes. If you have any questions or concerns please feel free to reach out to me or one of our team members.

Kind regards,



**Rex Duckett**  
Managing Director & Financial Adviser  
rex.duckett@futura-risk.co.nz  
027 444 2733

## What you need to know

### What does this mean for my insurance/mortgage?

There are no changes to how your existing or upcoming insurances will be looked after, just a change of logo and internal processes.

### Who do I get in touch with about my insurance/ mortgage?

There will be no change in the way you can get in touch with us. You can still ring, email or come in and see us like you usually would. Our phone numbers will be staying the same, however, we will be transitioning to new email addresses, but our old ones will still work too.

## Our new contact details

**Rex Duckett**  
rex.duckett@fukurisk.co.nz  
027 444 2733

**Becky Spiller**  
becky.spiller@futrisk.co.nz  
info@futrisk.co.nz  
0800 367 467 (ext 2)

**Monique Duckett**  
monique.duckett@futurisk.co.nz  
0800 367 467 (ext 11)

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The logo for Fenwick Accountants features the word "FENWICK" in a large, bold, blue sans-serif font. Below it, the word "ACCOUNTANTS" is written in a smaller, orange sans-serif font. A stylized graphic element, consisting of two curved lines (one blue and one orange) that sweep upwards and to the right, is positioned behind the text.



# College hosts former students

A small group of former students were welcomed back to Ōtaki College on Friday, February 9, to mark the college's 65th anniversary.

Most were from the first five years of the school opening, which was in 1959, when it was known as Ōtaki District High School. Organiser Ron Gibbard was from that first year. He was joined by other "59ers" Heather Watson, Lennie Nichols, Raymond Moy, Paul Overend and Jack Rikihana. The reunion was tinged with

sadness with the news that one of their contemporaries, Rosalie Hakaraia (nee Thomas) had died. She was arriving for her tangi at Raukawa Marae as the former students were gathering at the college.

Max Lutz gave a short speech about the XŌtaki Alumni Trust, outlining the many projects and scholarships it had supported since it began in 2014.

The former students had a cuppa in the staffroom and were enlightened about current practices with a tour of the college by principal Andy Fraser.



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OBITUARY

# Ōtaki a strong influence

By Anabright Hay.

Ōtaki played a unique role in the life of Mary-Annette Hay, the maternal granddaughter of Ōtaki community leader, businessman and philanthropist Byron Brown.

Mary-Annette died at Waikanae on January 30 aged 98, but she left her heart in the buildings, streets and sandhills of Ōtaki. That is where she spent her happiest childhood years in the company of her adored grandfather.

Attending and speaking at the launch of Di Buchan’s book, *Aiming High*, at the Ōtaki Museum a few months before her death was a fitting final chapter in Mary-Annette’s long life.

In the book, Di says Byron was perhaps the best unofficial public relations officer Ōtaki ever had. He loved the town with a passion and never missed an opportunity to promote its virtues, she says.

Mary-Annette told Di that in Ōtaki Byron saw all the features that made him proud of this country – fresh air, good water, sunshine, a land where children would have a fair chance in life to grow up and become decent citizens. He followed this belief with action and gave the land for the Ōtaki Children’s Health Camp, the country’s first permanent health camp for children that opened in 1932.

The Feltham Children’s Home, built in 1935 and now Ocean View Rest Home was

also on land Byron donated to the Open Brethren.

Byron was involved in many other Ōtaki land and community projects. Di Buchan says in her book that Byron was one of Ōtaki’s greatest benefactors – a man very generous with his time and his money. Mary-Annette



Mary-Annette Hay at an Ōtaki Museum function in 2022. Photo Ōtaki Today

was a regular visitor to his Moana Street beach house and loved holding his hand as he walked around Ōtaki. He would exchange greetings with labourers, kuia, kaumātua and politicians, and greet his Māori friends in te reo, which he spoke fluently.

Mary-Annette was deeply influenced by Byron’s love of philosophy and poetry, especially Shakespeare and Dickens. His skills as a broadcaster, actor, sportsman and community leader were also greatly admired. Mary-Annette absorbed the confidence she had gained from her grandfather to become a well-known watercolour artist, actress and wool promoter for the Wool Board in the 1940s and 1950s.

Byron Brown and his wife, Susie, a member of the Bright family, are buried at Rangiatea Church. It’s easy to imagine the soul and spirit of their granddaughter, Mary-Annette, will be floating in the air somewhere close by.

■ Anabright Hay is the daughter of Mary-Annette Hay  
A celebration of Mary-Annette’s life will be at the Plateau Events Centre, Parkwood Retirement Village, at 4pm on Thursday 4 April. All welcome.

# Two great people, one book

- Aiming High: The story of Byron Brown and his granddaughter Mary-Annette. By Di Buchan
- Reviewed by Vivian Manthel-French

Byron Brown’s contribution to the development of New Zealand is centred in Ōtaki, which early last century was a small seaside town in a predominantly Māori settlement.

Byron was a young man from Wellington looking for a more healthy place to live to cure his rheumatism and poor lungs. He was a man on a mission for success, and in achieving that, he helped the young town to flourish. With its fertile flat land and warm climate he could see its potential. He made it his home, soon learning the Māori language, which he loved.

With his boundless energy, enthusiasm and generosity, the small town thrived. The book tells the story of his lifelong dedication to the world of literature and ideas, economic and social development and to social justice – from his hard early years he was at heart not only a passionate New Zealander but also a passionate socialist.

His granddaughter, Mary-Annette Hay (nee Burgess), was very close to him throughout her formative years, and had long wanted his life’s work to be recognised through a book. Historian Di Buchan, who has a special interest in Ōtaki, was just the one to help her. She took the challenge and for two years they met at Parkwood retirement village. Mary-Annette in her late 90s had a great memory and had kept many news clippings. Di wrote it all down. She supplemented this information with long and diligent research.

Mary-Annette loved her grandfather, and he loved her. They were very alike – both great performers. She shared his interest and knowledge of Shakespeare and, as an elocutionist and radio broadcaster, he taught her public speaking.

Mary-Annette showed talent as an artist and as an actress. After she had been to art school in Wellington she continued to paint, exhibiting with Watercolour NZ and the NZ Academy of Fine Arts, and became a successful actress. In the mid-1940s she became the promotions officer on the New Zealand Wool Board, travelling all over New Zealand with her wool-promoting presentations, which she wrote, designed and produced.

Like her grandfather, she became interested in local politics, becoming a founding member of the Wellington Civic Trust. serving on its board for 25 years.

Te Papa has held two exhibitions about the wool industry in New Zealand, both featuring Mary-Annette. The second exhibition (in 2007) focused on her and featured many of the beautiful woollen gowns from international designers that Mary-Annette had exhibited in her stage shows. The exhibition was called The Queen of Wool.

The story of Byron Brown and Mary-Annette’s contributions to this country is a hidden history of New Zealand. Its telling makes a valuable contribution to our historic record. It’s written in such a clear and compelling way that you feel as though you were there. I found the book so interesting I could not put it down. It was exceptional, both in the story and the quality of the writing!

■ Aiming High is available at Books & Co, RiverStone Café, Ōtaki Heritage Museum and Unity Books (Wellington).

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# ŌTAKI KITE FESTIVAL

## Simply spectacular – kites return to Ōtaki

Kites, a Big Dig, stalls and entertainment

**EVERY YEAR it just seems to get better and better.**

The Ōtaki Kite Festival is gaining a huge reputation not only locally and nationally, but throughout the world as a place where flyers can come to test their skills on Ōtaki Beach, show off their latest creations, and just enjoy the hospitality of a small town with a big heart.

This year a spectacular group of international kite flying guests are attending. They include Robert Brassington of Australia, fellow Australians Aneta Zurawski and Peter Carman, Karin Gurezka and Fritz Kiewit of Germany, and Petra and Thorsten Schulz, also of Germany. Each of them brings their own flair to kite festivals, and most of them have been here before.

A feature of this year's festival is the Big Dig, sponsored by local real estate company Kelly & Co. This year the Big Dig will be on both Saturday and Sunday, starting in front of the surf club at 11am. There will be arenas for youngsters (6 and under) and those aged 7-12.

Kelly & Co has offered a bike for each age group each day as prizes, with Decobikes donating helmets to go with them. Every participant will receive a Paekākāriki pop.

"We love it [the kite festival], and love sponsoring the Big Dig," Derek Kelly says. "It's always a huge turn out and a lot of fun."

While the kites remain the focus for the weekend, there will also be plenty of food trucks and a shaded area where visitors can enjoy their food out of the sun. There will be craft stalls, and opportunities for local organisations to fundraise or tell people about what they do.

As usual, a stage will be set up between the surf club and the pavilion, where there will be entertainment throughout the day. This year local singing sensations Tui Soul and James Stent return with separate acts after beginning their career as a duet.

One of the perennial attractions, the Taiko Drummers, will have two performances on Sunday afternoon on the grass in front of the pavilion.

Meantime, organisers are advising that Marine Parade in front of the festival – between Tasman Road and Koromiko Street – will be closed to traffic this year.

"If you park on a nearby street, please be considerate of residents," coordinator Kirsty Doyle says. "And come for the fun!"

■ For more information and updates, look for Ōtaki Kite Festival on Facebook



AUSTRALIAN Robert Brassington, was born in Hobart and like many Tasmanians spent many years away from his island.

Twenty-five years ago, Robert and Tracey returned from living in southern England, moving to the Tasmanian town of St Helens on the east coast. There they were involved in ornamental horticulture, both as their careers and passions.

Kite-making presented itself as a career change, and St Helens was chosen as an appropriate centre for small-scale production of dual-lined sports kites. It was an ideal retreat for surfing and had a climate conducive to growing a range of plant species. As time moved on, the direction of the business changed from wholesale sports kite production to decorative single-line kites and sculptural ground displays. That has been the focus for them for the past 20 years.

Travelling around the world as a guest exhibitor is now a regular occurrence. Robert has been honoured to represent Australia in Europe, the US and Asia at kite festivals and cultural events.

He is regularly designing kites and ground displays for US and European companies.



The Kelly & Co Big Dig attracts plenty of participants.



**17TH & 18TH FEBRUARY 2024 @ OTAKI BEACH**

# ŌTAKI KITE FESTIVAL

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# Learn about traditional Māori kites from fibre artists

**IF YOU’VE EVER WONDERED** about whether Māori flew kites before Europeans arrived, the answer will be at a kite festival stall occupied by artists from Māoriland.

The artists will share their mahi with the public through the stall, where visitors can come and see these taonga tuku iho, as well as learn more about what manu tukutuku (Māori kites) means.

Fibre artists Louie Zalk-Neale (Ngāi Te Rangi), Pip Devonshire (Ngāti Raukawa Te Au ki Te Tonga) and Sonia Snowden (Ngā Puhī), have been working on revitalising the mātauranga of flying recreational Māori kites, made with locally harvested raupō, harakeke and toetoe.

The Māori kite is known as manu tukutuku or manu aute. Manu means both kite and bird, and the word tukutuku refers to the winding out of the line as the kite ascends. Kites were also known as pākau, a name for the wing of a bird.

Kites were flown for recreation, but they also had other purposes. They were used for divination – to gauge whether an attack on an enemy stronghold would be successful, or to locate wrongdoers.

They were also a means of communication. It is said that when the founding ancestor of Ngāti Porou, Porourangi, died in Whāngārā, on the East Coast, a kite was flown and his brother, Tahu, the founding ancestor of Ngāti Tahu, was able to see it from the South Island. Sometimes people would release a kite and follow it, claiming and occupying the place where it landed.

Kites were flown to celebrate the start of the Māori New Year, when Matariki appeared in the mid-winter night sky.

The frames of larger kites were usually made from selected lengths of mānuka (tea tree) and split lengths of kareao (supplejack). Smaller children’s kites were made from the stems of toetoe, kākāka (bracken), and various types of rush.

The coverings of large kites were fashioned from bark



Fibre artist Pip Devonshire.

cloth made from aute until the plant became almost extinct. Subsequently, raupō (bulrush) leaves, or the leaves of ūpoko tangata (cutty grass) were used. Flying lines known as aho tukutuku were made from fine twisted cord made from muka, the fibre of the flax leaf.

Kites were decorated with feathers, shells, carved faces, and coloured patterns drawn with black or red pigments from charcoal or clay mixed with shark oil. Some kites featured long feather tails known as pūhihi, attached to the lower end or wing tips. Others were decorated with horns, and some had shells held inside a hollow mask that rattled during flight. Some kites had a ring, called a karere (messenger), made of toetoe leaves or wood, which was blown by the wind up the line towards the kite.

From the 17 or so known types of Māori kite, only three types have survived. In all, seven original kites still exist and are held in museums in London, Hawaii, Auckland and Wellington.

The manu kākā was designed to resemble the kākā (brown parrot). The manu totoriwai represented the robin – its unusual construction required considerable skill and was only undertaken by men, usually of high rank. Elders were said to be the only ones who knew the spell that made it fly well.

One of the largest kites, an example of the manu kāhu (harrier-hawk kite), was documented by the artist Charles Barraud about 1850. It was 1.5 metres high with a wingspan of 3.6 metres. A mask bearing a moko (tattoo) was attached.

The manu aute was a generic bird-like kite, with a frame of mānuka covered with bark cloth made of aute (paper mulberry). This type was described by the 19th-century Ngāti Porou leader Tuta Nihoniho as having a head but no legs. However, a variation with a convex form, a head, long wings and legs, was known as a peru.

The birdman kite resembled a human, with the addition of extended wings. The mask of one held in the Auckland War Memorial Museum had teeth, a moko, and hair of hawk feathers.

■ Source: “Kites and manu tukutuku – Types of Māori kite”, By Bob Maysmor. Te Ara – the Encyclopedia of New Zealand.



This Māori birdman kite is held at the Auckland War Memorial Museum. Its name comes from its shape: a human body and head, with extended wings. It is very similar to the kite known as manu kāhu, shaped like a harrier-hawk, and to a type of kite made with bark of the aute (paper mulberry) plant, known as the peru.

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# ŌTAKI KITE FESTIVAL

## International flyers return to Ōtaki Beach



INTERNATIONAL guests Petra and Torsten Schulz are from Hamburg, Germany. This will be their second visit to the Ōtaki Kite Festival – they were here in 2015. They have been building kites for more than 30 years.

“It’s always fun to build a new project. We like nature, especially the beach, and are happy to make the sky more colourful,” they say.



KARIN GUREZKA and Fritz Kiewit are from Hamburg in Germany. Karin and Fritz both started flying and building kites in the 1980s. Karin has travelled around the world with kites, and this will be her third time visiting Ōtaki.



This year is the first time Fritz has attended the Ōtaki Kite Festival, and he says he’s very much looking forward to it.

Independently, they built single-line kites. Their favorites are stick-kites. Fritz is well-known for his black and white kites in many variations, 3D, appliqué designs and optical illusions. Karin and Fritz have an extensive collection of kites, of which 200 they made themselves.



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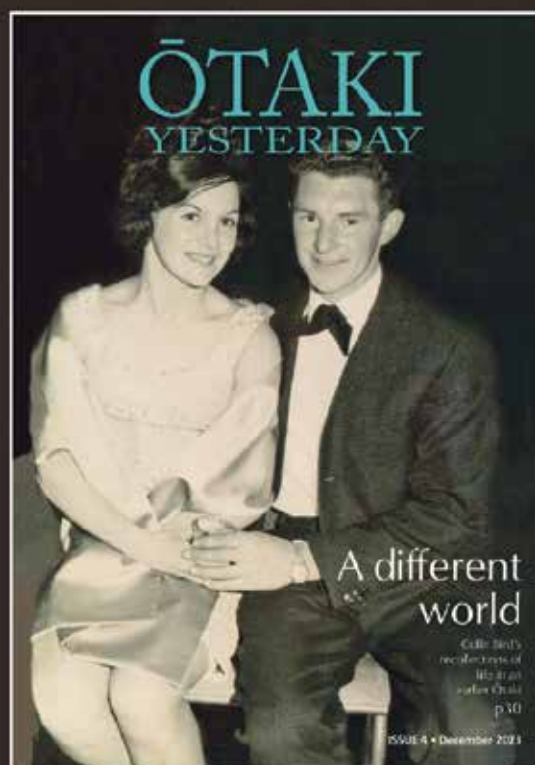
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Get the latest issue of Ōtaki Yesterday 2023 at the Ōtaki Kite Festival.

If you want to read other interesting historical stories about Ōtaki, copies of the previous three issues are also available.

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2020



2021



2022





HAILING FROM the Goulburn Valley in Victoria, Australia, Peter Carman and Aneta Zurawski have been flying kites together for more than 15 years. Peter has been making kites since he was a child and has a love for making cellular kites. Kite flying is a relaxing hobby for them both. As members of the Victorian Flash Mob Kite Flyers and Adelaide Kite Flyers they have attended many events in NSW and Victoria. This will be their second time flying at Ōtaki. Their favourite place to fly a kite is anywhere on a beach!



# WEEKEND PROGRAMME

## SATURDAY February 17

- 11am • Kelly & Co  
BIG DIG on the beach
- 11.15am • Zeal stage:  
Mia Nin
- Midday • Elemental
- 2.30pm • James Stent
- 3.30pm • Zeal stage:  
Power Cut



## SUNDAY February 18

- 11am • Kelly & Co  
BIG DIG on the beach
- 11am • Zeal stage:  
Ciorstiadh Hamilton
- 11.30am • The Shed Project
- Midday • Taiko Drummers
- 1pm • Tui Soul
- 2pm • Taiko Drummers
- 3pm • Zeal stage:  
Elodie & band
- 4pm • Zeal stage: Shekayna
- 4.30pm • Close

Programme may be subject to change. Kite flyers will be in the kite arena both days 10am to 4pm, weather permitting.

## CLOSURE OF SECTION OF MARINE PARADE, ŌTAKI BEACH FROM KOROMIKO STREET AND TASMAN ROAD, TO VEHICULAR TRAFFIC

Pursuant to the Transport (Vehicular Traffic Road Closure) Regulations 1965, notice is hereby given that Kāpiti Coast District Council, for the purpose of the Ōtaki Kite Festival, will close the following road to ordinary vehicular traffic for the period indicated hereunder.

**Road to be closed to ordinary vehicular traffic from 8:00am to 5:00pm approximately, on Saturday 17 February and Sunday 18 February 2024.**

Section of Marine Parade, Ōtaki Beach:

Between Koromiko Street and Tasman Road

During the periods of closure, the following provision will be made for ordinary vehicular traffic which would otherwise use the road:

**There will be a detour in place for residents only:**

**Marine Parade South Bound:** Left onto Koromiko Street, right onto Moana Street, and right onto Tasman Road.

**Marine Parade North Bound:** Right onto Tasman Road, left onto Moana Street and left onto Koromiko Street.

It will be an offence under the above regulations for any person otherwise than under authority of an authorised person to use the street for ordinary vehicular traffic during the periods of closure.



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# HUATAU/Comment

MAYOR'S VIEW: JANET HOLBOROW

## At a pivotal time, we honour the taonga of our relationships

On February 3 a Waitangi Day commemoration was held at Whakarongotai Marae in Waikanae.

As hundreds gathered to be welcomed into that historic and special place, it was clear that there is a strong commitment in our community to honouring this important anniversary. I recently took a trip to the Far North. Travelling to Te Rerenga Waiura Cape Reinga was a journey of discovery – the first arrival of Te Kupe, the life led there until the arrival of Europeans, the land taken, the lives turned upside down, and injustices that happened there. The North is also the home of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, the Treaty of Waitangi. Waitangi Day (February 6) is the anniversary of a unique founding document for our country; words that



embed and formalise the relationship with the indigenous people of Aotearoa, recognising their rights and our obligations as settlers and government. Nearly two centuries on, those initial words have continued to influence how our country operates. We have made progress as a country, to work together, to recognise and celebrate the unique culture that exists here, to learn from each other, to form relationships and partnerships. But this is a pivotal time. We have

everything to gain from building on relationships and honouring indigenous culture, and so much to lose if we don't. We also have a part to play in making sure that political motivation and lack of understanding don't stand in the way of continuing the progress we've made so far. Locally, Ngāti Raukawa Ngā Hapu o Ōtaki, are in the midst of Treaty settlements. Through that process, so much history has been uncovered and brought into the light. There is such an opportunity in the coming years to learn, to use that information to make sure we right the wrongs of the past and move forward together positively. As a council, we're proud of our enduring partnership with Mana Whenua. It's the longest standing partnership agreement of its kind in the country, and has formed the basis of a

constantly evolving and improving way of working together. From our Te Whakaminenga forums where we meet with our iwi partners, to our iwi representatives who sit at all council and committee meetings, consultation and engagement, housing work, and everything else we do together, this relationship is a tāonga, precious and strong. We are especially grateful for the strong commitment of Ngā Hapū o Ōtaki. So much effort goes in by our iwi partners to make it work, both by individuals and as a group. We are grateful for the commitment from all of our iwi to the work that goes on at council, and we're grateful for the learning opportunities they provide for us to discover te ao Māori and te reo Māori and embed these into our work as elected members and staff.

This learning isn't just within the council buildings, it is nurtured and flourishes elsewhere, at school, at work, in recreation, in everyday life. Māoriland is another opportunity to learn about the international context of indigenous culture – the oppression and suffering of people across the world whose historic struggles reverberate in the present. As we learn and gain understanding of events that unfolded in the past, it becomes clear that historic events resonate in the present, just as our tūpuna live on in our lives. The event at Waikanae was an opportunity for learning, growth, and reflection for all who attended. It was an opportunity to recognise the significance of this time, to honour our relationships and to celebrate the journey so far and what may come next. ■ Janet is mayor of Kāpiti

THE ELECTORATE: TIM COSTLEY, MP

## Why I went to Waitangi

In my first speech in Parliament I talked about the fact that we are all Kiwi, and how that shared identity is a great starting point for some of the conversations we hear about in the news.

I'm writing this in Waitangi where I've travelled to spend Waitangi Day with Kiwis from a wonderfully diverse array of backgrounds. I'm in Waitangi because this is the birthplace of our shared journey. I'm here because I think this is as important for Kiwis as going to Anzac Cove in Gallipoli. Most fundamentally, I'm at Waitangi because I want to be part of the conversation. It might feel difficult or uncomfortable, but I believe we should never be afraid of having genuine conversations about our shared journey as Kiwis.



Someone asked me recently why I'm going to Waitangi when "it might be a bit messy." My answer was simple: I'd rather have a messy conversation than not have one at all. But actually, my experience is that the conversation hasn't been messy. Away from the spotlight it's been warm, it's been genuine, it's been engaging. Often the news cherry-pick the controversial bits, but Waitangi every year is a celebration of our country, a day where almost everyone is smiling almost all of the time. In my role as MP I've seen the unity, the working together, the great advancements of iwi who have settled their claims. Ngai Tahu is a great example: a \$170m settlement by National in the 1990s is now worth about \$2bn with annual dividends to everyone from that iwi. This is one of the reasons National have always progressed treaty claims with priority: 27 in the last National government compared to a miserable 4 under the last Labour one. Over the weekend I visited Rangihoua (Marsden's Cross), the location of the first European settlement in New Zealand and where Rev Marsden made his first sermon on Christmas Day, 1814. It was not just a religious proclamation but a testament to the power of collaboration. Te Pahi, a Ngā Puhi chief, worked hand-in-hand with European settlers, demonstrating that a relationship built on mutual respect and cooperation can deliver the best outcomes. In 1814 that meant wheat crops and new technology; in 2024 that means better health, education, and tackling the cost of living. I believe that, like Te Pahi and Marsden, we are always better to work from a place of relationship, that through this we can find a more peaceful and more effective solution. ■ Tim is MP for the Ōtaki electorate

CAM'S CORNER: CAM BUTLER

## Take a look at the fantastic new beach mural

The Ōtaki Beach mural is complete.

The fantastic mural has just been completed by Theo Arraj on the Ōtaki Surf Club called *The Power of Tangaroa*. You must head down to the surf club and see it! The mural was made possible by a grant from the Ōtaki Community Board and Theo was commissioned to design and paint the mural.

We would dearly love to extend the mural around the corner to the block wall facing the court area, however this would need some sponsorship for it to happen. Is there an Ōtaki business, group or person that would like to assist the community in this? Please let us know.

**Fast track developments**

All quiet on this front with the Moy Estate and racing club developments both being quiet.

**River bridge partial closure**

You can hardly have missed the furore



from Kāpiti commuters about the one-way closure of the Waikanae Old SH1 river bridge. Protests, FB post after FB post and articles in papers were common fare as Waka Kotahi refused to budge from their plan to close the bridge to southbound traffic. And you might be worried about how the Ōtaki River bridge lane closure about May will go. This will at least be open both ways under light control, however there is going to be delays no matter what and drivers are going to need to plan for a slightly longer journey while the work takes place. The end result will be fantastic, we just have to get

through the pain first. **Kite festival**

The Ōtaki Kite Festival is so close! It is going to be awesome once more with an expanded food truck area as a section of Marine Parade will be closed to traffic. Appropriate sacrifices and prayers have been offered to the weather gods for fine weather and the right amount of wind.

**Vision Ōtaki**

The Ōtaki Community Board would still love more community input in what the community would like to see Ōtaki become in the future. Have you had your say? Give us your thoughts by visiting the Vision Ōtaki area at the library or head to the website at [www.haveyoursay.kapiticoast.govt.nz/vision-otaki](http://www.haveyoursay.kapiticoast.govt.nz/vision-otaki)

Keep being Sunny, Ōtaki. • Like Ōtaki Community Board on Facebook ■ Cam is chair of the Ōtaki Community Board

TE HORO OUTLOOK: MICHAEL MOORE

## Let's rid our coastal community of pests

It's estimated that 68,000 native birds are killed by introduced predators every single night.

Aotearoa is right at the top in terms of threatened and endangered species – about 4000 species across the country.

The director of Predator Free Wellington and a Te Horo resident, James Wilcocks, says we have a decision to make: Do we let these incredible species that exist nowhere else in the world slip off the face of the planet, or do we do something about it?

This inspiration has ignited an exciting and ambitious project being launched in our beachside community and I'm very positive about supporting and volunteering for it.

Last month a stoat was seen chasing a small endangered black-fronted dotterel that was breeding at our Mangaone Lagoon at the river mouth. I alerted the regional council, which oversees a pest management operation in the lower North Island. With their support, we've installed some traps around the wetland area at Te Horo Beach, a very important yet threatened ecological part of the Kāpiti Coast.



James Wilcocks recently spoke at a residents meeting about the enormous success of a community-driven pest eradication programme on Wellington's Miramar Peninsula. You can read about it here: <http://tinyurl.com/pfwmove>

With the support of James, the regional council's Environment Restoration programme, and Kāpiti council's biodiversity and landscapes advisor, Rachel Ashdown, the Friends of Te Horo Beach are launching Predator Free Te Horo Beach. David Walshaw is coordinating the project. We encourage anyone who wishes to host a trap on their property and assist further with the project to get in touch.

The presence of invasive species can wreak havoc, causing irreparable damage to our native flora and fauna. Among these invaders,

stoats, rats and their ilk stand out as particularly voracious predators, decimating populations of vulnerable wildlife. The act of predator trapping, while sometimes controversial, is an essential tool in conservation efforts, offering numerous benefits for both the environment and native species.

The black-fronted dotterels seen around the Mangaone Lagoon area, are uncommon in New Zealand but may be increasing slowly. The current population is thought to be fewer than 3000. They occur mostly in small numbers (typically 1-4 birds together).

If you would like to volunteer – and in particular we are looking for people to host a trap on their property – to participate or offer support, please get in touch. Training will be provided. Email [PredatorFreeTeHoroBeach@gmail.com](mailto:PredatorFreeTeHoroBeach@gmail.com). You can learn more about by looking for "predator free Te Horo Beach" on Facebook • The next Waikanae Community Board meeting is at 7pm, Tuesday February 27, at the Waikanae Community Centre, 28 Utauta St. ■ Michael is deputy chair of Waikanae Community Board and a Te Horo Beach resident.



# Doing good doesn't always get a smiley face

If there's a thing communities need more than ever it's the commitment of citizens to the "common good".

We see it in all the small things people do every day, which go beyond just looking after oneself. Hey, even hanging on to a piece of Peanut Slab wrapper long enough to throw it into a bin deserves a pat on the back.

But shouldn't we do better in acknowledging the commitments of some in our communities

## JUST A THOUGHT



FRASER CARSON

and well-being. It must also include people who dig into their own pockets to support things they care about.

But there's often a delicate balance between the goodwill people wish to offer and the appreciation, or not, that is assumed. An obvious example is someone's insistence about taking a vision-impaired person across a busy street, just to realise that the person didn't need help or, worse, didn't want to cross the street. A white stick apparently doesn't signal surrender to the whims of a well-meaning citizen.

Another, more common, example is when people offer money to organisations where

the constraints are so unworkable that the organisation has to reject the offer and risk offending the would-be donor. Schools often have this with donated scholarships where, even though the cash is most welcome, the criteria add unwanted complexity or make it unworkable.

Then, there's a delicate balance between the work of local and government authorities, and citizens. There are countless people who tidy their street or local park, where the local authority will be thankful for citizen support.

But, volunteering sometimes seems to give citizens a licence to take things a little further. The NZ Herald recently reported an Auckland couple who worked for more than a decade to maintain one of Auckland's most popular beaches, picking up rubbish and removing discarded items to place in a "lost and found" they set up, marked with a hand-made sign. They also set up a "toy library" for beach toys left behind and a "stick library" for dog owners visiting the beach and nearby park.

But Auckland Council removed the "non-compliant signage" while extending their thanks to the couple.

The pair responded by saying their cleaning and tidying days were over after all traces of their volunteering was removed.

"I've done my stint, I just can't be bothered



any more," Jeanine Oxenius told the Herald, adding "I've done their dirty work for 10 years. They will now see how dirty the beach actually becomes."

Of course, the need for initiative from people in our communities needs to be encouraged. The reverse is a society where no one cares, and all community activity has to be funded or left to stagnate.

However, I had to laugh when reading about the painter employed by Tauranga City Council to white-paint the centre of a roundabout in front of one of the region's most popular landmarks. Apparently, the roundabout is routinely ignored and drivers plough through the middle, sometimes at speed. So painter Julian Sim took the initiative and covered the roundabout with a bright yellow smiley face and tongue (see above).

Maybe Mr Sim wanted to impress his girlfriend, but it predictably didn't impress the

council – apparently, they were shocked – and I'm left wondering if anyone dared to ask if it might have just been the solution for abused roundabouts everywhere.

Would people be so willing to drive over a smiley face that could not be ignored? And it might just have caused a little delight in the daily travels of grumpy citizens. It might even have become a tourist attraction with people travelling across the world just to be photographed beside it.

At last check, the roundabout had lost its little smile and was back to plain white, just how Tauranga City Council wanted it all along.

Phew, that's a relief and return to roundabout normal. No doubt the wayward painter was soundly reprimanded and docked some pay. But I also hope they extended their thanks for his cheeky and short-lived initiative.

■ 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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# Everything Ōtaki

February 2024



Photo: Well designed medium density housing improves the housing supply.

## Affordable housing matters to Kāpiti

**Access to suitable and affordable housing is pivotal to one of Kāpiti Coast District Council's core long-term goals – a resilient community that feels safe and connected and has support for basic needs.**

A warm safe home is something many take for granted but, like other parts of Aotearoa New Zealand and the world, we're facing an unprecedented housing shortage.

The housing shortage is causing stress for many people. It's not just about homelessness, although that is certainly the experience of some in our community. Rather, we don't always have the right housing in the right places for peoples' individual needs.

A lack of options means people are increasingly trapped in unsuitable accommodation. It skews the whole housing system: we see large families living in tiny motel rooms or transitional housing, while elderly people rattle around in their former family home, unable to downsize in their familiar neighbourhoods near friends and family.

Housing problems have a domino effect, causing or compounding other stresses on people, like paying essential bills, accessing educational or work opportunities, and poor mental and/or physical health.

It's all interconnected, but housing is often the first domino to fall. It affects our identity, wellbeing, and security, and contributes to issues that can span generations.

In 2022, Council published a report giving a comprehensive picture of the state of housing need in our district and asked in our Long-term Plan if we should take a bigger role in housing. The answer was a clear 'yes'.

This view was reinforced when we consulted on our 2022 housing strategy. As a result, we've been working on strengthening productive partnerships with iwi, central government, the private sector, community housing providers and the community.

### Our progress

We've made progress over the past two years, such as:

- partnering with Ngā Hapū o Ōtaki, landowners, and developers to successfully access a \$29.3 million government contribution to roading and water infrastructure to support housing needs in Ōtaki;
- starting work on setting up an affordable housing trust to provide more affordable rental and ownership units in the district;
- reviewing our older persons housing portfolio in readiness for engaging with you soon through the Long-term Plan on how we can provide a better service and more homes for older people in need;
- supporting providers to establish additional transitional housing services in our district; and
- improving our ability to help to respond to homelessness in the district in partnership with others.

Official statistics on the number of people waiting for social housing don't necessarily provide a complete picture of the true need out in our community. Community and personal wellbeing rely on getting housing right, and this remains a priority for Council.

► [Read 'Not Just a House, A Life' at kapiticoast.govt.nz/housing-needs-assessment](https://kapiticoast.govt.nz/housing-needs-assessment)



# We're consulting on a dedicated provider for older persons' housing

Council provides some accommodation for eligible older people in need of affordable housing, with 118 units in 10 locations across Kāpiti. But the need increasingly outstrips supply and we have long wait lists. Anecdotally, we know many people in need don't bother applying as they think they have little chance of getting in.

We've been reviewing how we can do better in this space, starting with understanding the current situation. We found existing Council housing for older people has a range of limitations:

- Some tenants may have complex needs that require specialist help but we're not set up or funded to provide social, emotional, and physical support services.
- Our existing housing isn't suitable for full wheelchair access and functionality.
- Our complexes may not be in the best location for access to shops, medical centres, and government services.

To build more affordable housing for older people we need access to subsidised capital and rental assistance, but councils aren't eligible for central government's income-related rental subsidy.

Instead, ratepayers subsidise our service, with Council rents set at 30 percent of our tenants' income. This covers 55–80 percent of the operating cost of the portfolio.

We don't see this as financially sustainable so we've been working closely with our tenants, community housing providers, and special interest groups to explore how we can meet our objective of delivering more and better housing for older people.

The review has suggested changes to our operating model may hold the key, so councillors have decided to consult with the community as part of the Long-term Plan consultation in March and April. We'll provide more details on the options before then.

► [Read more at kapiticoast.govt.nz/older-persons-housing-review](https://kapiticoast.govt.nz/older-persons-housing-review)



## Council's doing more in housing

Council's role in housing has primarily been to build and service the roads, pipes, and community facilities needed to support housing. We've always had a planning and regulatory role, and we own and manage 118 older persons' housing units at 10 locations across the district.

We got clear direction from our community to do more to respond to the housing crisis when we consulted on the 2021 Long-term Plan and 2022 housing strategy, and our 2023 age-friendly approach identifies housing as one of the key things we need to foster healthy and active ageing.

We know there is no silver bullet; there needs to be focus across several fronts, so Council's role is multifaceted. We're doing more to:

- make it easy (as a regulator and service provider)
- share the load (by partnering with others) and
- advocate on behalf of our district (including for central government support and funding).

► [Read more about Council's role in housing at kapiticoast.govt.nz/housing](https://kapiticoast.govt.nz/housing)



## Older people most affected by housing need

Research has shown older people are amongst those most likely to be affected by a housing need, and we know Kāpiti has a high and growing proportion of people over 65 years of age (26 percent compared to 16 percent nationally).

Older people who can't afford to buy into a retirement village are affected by the high cost of rentals, a shortage of smaller accessible units, and lack of secure tenancies.

In Kāpiti home ownership rates are declining, and an increasing number of people aged 65+ are starting to rent rather than own their home.

Research also indicates the largest growth in renters over the next 30 years will be aged 65+. The portion of Kāpiti renters aged 65+ is predicted to increase by 104% (1,820 households) over 30 years.

We have a plan to address this. We'll be consulting with you as part of the Long-term Plan on some options for improving the operating model for older persons housing.

► [Read more about being 65+ in Kāpiti at kapiticoast.govt.nz/strategies#age-friendly](https://kapiticoast.govt.nz/strategies#age-friendly)



## Affordable housing trust could help

Housing need is complex, and not solely the responsibility of one organisation or sector.

A key action out of our 2022 housing strategy was to look at how we improve our partnerships to help more people access affordable housing in our district.

Setting up an independent 'affordable housing entity' soon emerged as one of our councillors' priorities for the first year of the term. Council plans to confirm the final structure and membership in early 2024.

The entity could also become an option for managing our older persons housing portfolio, if it was decided that the portfolio should be transferred to a community housing provider.

Council will hear a report on the affordable housing trust at its 29 February meeting. Tune in online or read the report when the agenda is published.

► [Find council meeting agendas and watch the livestream at kapiticoast.govt.nz/meetings](https://kapiticoast.govt.nz/meetings)





The trench for the pipes from the reservoir to Te Manuao Road.

## Sound investment in water infrastructure

While parts of the Wellington Region are facing water restrictions, we're not anticipating any issues here on the Kāpiti Coast thanks to sound investment in the district's water infrastructure, such as the introduction of water meters, and the Waikanae River Recharge scheme.

With support from government's Infrastructure Acceleration Fund, we're now improving the resilience and fire-fighting capability of our water supply by building two new reservoirs in Ōtaki.

The first reservoir is underway, so you'll see a lot of activity over the coming months. We'll advise you about timing for the pipe installation along Te Manuao Road when it's confirmed, but at this stage we expect it to begin mid-February and take four months.

Our crews are currently completing installation of the stone columns to strengthen the ground and support the weight of the reservoir. This task is expected to be completed by the end of February. They're also trenching the pipes which run from the reservoir to Te Manuao Road.

The construction of the reservoir tank is expected to begin in March. This reservoir will improve our community's resilience and support current and future housing needs.

► Find out more at: [kapiticoast.govt.nz/otaki-reservoir](https://kapiticoast.govt.nz/otaki-reservoir)

## Creative Community Scheme open

Calling all artists - the Creative Community Scheme is now open! The scheme provides funds for practitioners and organisations to run arts activities that celebrate Kāpiti culture, Toi Māori/Māori Arts, and encourage community involvement.

Applications close Tuesday 19 March.

► Visit our website for more information or contact the arts grants team at: [creativecs@kapiticoast.govt.nz](mailto:creativecs@kapiticoast.govt.nz)

## What do you love for Kāpiti?

Our Vision Kāpiti kōrero is continuing this year so we can understand what our community want now and for our future. We've set up a Vision Kāpiti pop-up 'hub' behind Waikanae Library so we can hear what matters most to you. Come for a chat 10am–2pm weekdays until Friday 1 March, or join the conversation online anytime.

► Visit: [haveyoursay.kapiticoast.govt.nz](https://haveyoursay.kapiticoast.govt.nz) for more information.



## Growing together with over the fence cuppas

We're encouraging community-minded people to host Over the Fence Cuppa events with their neighbours this March.

Getting to know your neighbours is a great way to strengthen community wellbeing and help you be more prepared if disaster strikes - the people you live nearest to will be your most immediate and ongoing source of support in an emergency.

Cuppa events can be held anytime between Friday 15 March and Sunday 31 March. We have event planning resources, goody bags and a launch event to get you started. Registrations are open until 4 March.

► Visit: [kapiticoast.govt.nz/neighbours](https://kapiticoast.govt.nz/neighbours) for more information.



## Summer events

School might be back but there's still plenty of Council-run and supported events in Kāpiti this summer.

Fly high at the spectacular Ōtaki Kite Festival at Ōtaki Beach on 17–18 February. The festival offers a fabulous weekend of kites, family fun, market stalls and entertainment.

For the more adventurous, you can choose your challenge with the XTERRA Wellington Festival on 24 February and the Kāpiti Women's Tri on 25 February.

Movies in the Park is back on Saturday, 2 March at Waikanae! Grab a picnic rug and settle in for a screening of Despicable Me and Top Gun Maverick.

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





# The cost of alcohol consumption

In the early 1990s the French scientist Serge Renaud working at Bordeaux University made the epidemiological observation that despite the relatively high dietary intake of saturated fats in France there was a relatively low incidence of coronary heart disease (CHD) – an observation labelled in the title of his research paper the “French paradox”.

It was concluded that the explanation for the paradox might be the high consumption of red wine in France, with the polyphenol

SCIENCE



DR STEVE HUMPHRIES

resveratrol in red wine providing a protective effect. It was a message with immense popular appeal: you can eat all the rich fatty foods you like, as long as it's accompanied by a glass of red wine. What's not to like? That popularity grew after a CBS

60 Minutes interview with Renaud that promoted red wine as a protective factor against CHD. The show host concluded the programme by holding up a glass of red wine and declaring: “The explanation of the French Paradox may lie in this inviting glass.”

The show was a hit, and the following year red wine sales in the US increased by 40 percent.

But how sound was the science? An observed correlation between drinking red wine and less CHD doesn't establish a cause-and-effect relationship. The French people also consumed more fresh fruit, vegetables, olive oil, and fish – comparable to a Mediterranean diet. They

also ate less processed foods, had a lower sugar intake, and ate smaller meal portions with less snacking between meals. All dietary factors known to be beneficial for heart health.

In addition, the French had only recently started eating unhealthy levels of saturated fats, but chronic diseases such as CHD, take decades to develop. Finally, there was also an underreporting of CHD deaths in France due to the way their health authorities defined and categorised CHD deaths.

All these factors provided a reasonable explanation why relatively fewer CHD deaths were reported in France, without having to invoke the “health” properties of red wine.

But catchy headlines of red wine being healthy captured the public imagination, and drove people to buy newspapers, watch TV shows and visit websites – and buy red wine. As often happens when science is popularised, the nuances and uncertainties of the research were left out, study limitations were omitted, correlations were reported as if they were causal, and the significance of the research was magnified. And even when caveats were provided, people tended to gloss over them.

But could the resveratrol in red wine be health promoting? Red wine typically contains about three milligrams of resveratrol per litre, so you would have to consume about 80 litres of wine a day to get the equivalent dose of a resveratrol supplement, or more than 300 litres of wine a day to get the resveratrol equivalent dose used in many research studies. Claims that red wine is a useful source of resveratrol collapse when you look at the numbers – and you should always look at the numbers.

Additionally, at the time the French paradox was proposed, there was no clear clinical evidence that resveratrol, in any form or dose, could improve cardiac health, and now, 30 years

on, despite extensive research, that definitive evidence is still lacking.

The promotion of red wine as something that might be good for your health was very clever marketing, but it was never good science.

The French paradox has been misused to promote the idea that moderate drinking can be healthy, and so has the notorious “J curve”. Many epidemiological studies have reported a J-shaped relationship between alcohol consumption and health outcomes: with all-cause mortality and ill health being least for light-to-moderate drinkers (the bottom of the “J”); with much worse health outcomes for heavier drinkers, and slightly worse health outcomes for alcohol abstainers.

These J curve findings have been used by the alcohol industry to promote the notion that moderate drinking is healthier than abstaining – that is, moderate drinking is not just safe, it's beneficial.

But those observational studies, which were often funded by the alcohol industry, are heavily confounded. Abstainers might indeed report poorer health than moderate drinkers, but abstainers also tend to be older people, and they might report poorer health than moderate alcohol drinkers not because alcohol is healthy but because people might abstain from drinking because they have a health problem. And people who drink lightly or moderately also tend to exercise more, have a better diet, weigh less, and smoke less.

Recent studies that control for this confounding, including a 2023 meta-analysis of 107 observational studies involving nearly five million people, fail to find a protective health effect for light-to-moderate alcohol drinking. These findings, combined with an ever-increasing understanding of the physiological damage alcohol does, have led the World Health

Organisation to proclaim that “No level of alcohol consumption is safe for our health”.

Alcohol is a Group 1 (the highest risk group) carcinogen that is directly linked to at least seven different cancers, with alcohol being one of the main risk factors for breast cancer – with one in four alcohol-related breast cancers attributable to light-to-moderate drinking. And it is estimated that every year in New Zealand, more than 1800 babies are born with foetal alcohol spectrum disorder. Meanwhile the alcohol industry continues to aggressively target women (from pink rosé to Jane Walker whiskey), with women drinking more than ever. The marketing has been so successful that recent increases in alcohol-related liver disease and deaths are driven by women.

Individuals, and societies, will have to strike a balance between the social benefits of alcohol consumption and its costs. That starts with good science informing our decisions, and not believing a glass of wine might be good for our health.

■ 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.

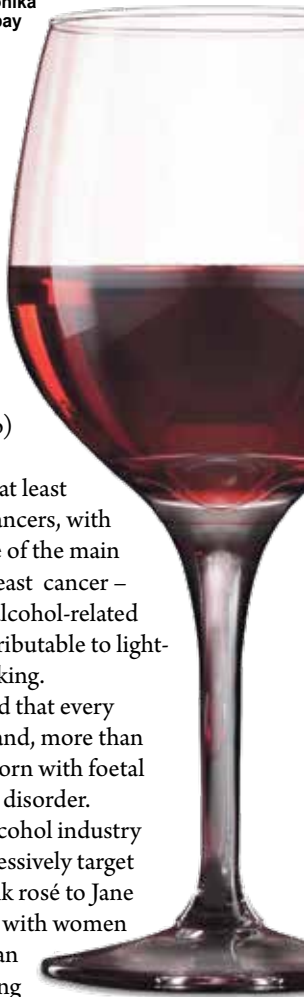


Image by Monika Grafik, Pixabay

## MAHI MĀRA: Gardening

# Three simple ways to revive your soil

In a perfect world, our soils don't end up hungry and tired at the end of summer, but often they are. Hey, it happens, life happens!

Before planting out your next round of crops, check in with your soil. If it's under par, use one of the three revivers below.

Checking your soil is the first step. Scoop up a handful and give it a sniff – good soil smells earthy and yum. If it's sour and musty, it'll need a revive.

Squeeze the soil in your hand. Then open your hand out with a slight shake. Good growing soil will loosely stick together in a few clumps with a few crumbs that fall away.

Poor growing soil will either slip through your fingers with nothing much sticking together or will stay moulded, retaining the shape of your fingers. Rehydrate any beds that are dry and dusty before continuing. Hydration is an essential building block and is your go-to kick starter for soil restoration.

### Soil revivers

#### 1. Sow a greencrop, a rootcrop or a legume

Covering soil with plants is the best way to jazz it up and bring it back to life. Honour your tired soil by sowing a nourishing greencrop, or a light feeding rootcrop, or seasonally apt legumes (peas, broadbeans or beans). Spread a fine layer of compost, slightly thicker if soils are dry or wet. Vermicastings are a fabulous addition, either alone or mixed in to bulk up your compost.

- Sow a mixed greencrop. Its so reassuring having

greencrops on the grow. They lay a fertile foundation for the next round of crops.

- Carrots for winter eating can be sown now, as long as the soil is perfectly moist – not dusty or saturated.
- Legumes are perfect for a restoration, grabbing nitrogen from the air and fixing it at their roots. For max soil building power, add a few other greencrops like phacelia and mustard. Shadedcloth or hessian pegged on top of the seed protects from birds and improves germination no end.

#### 2. Plant a crop

Get another round of seedlings in the soil right away! Fertility goes backwards fast when soil is naked. Either

- spread a fine layer of home made compost over the bed entire, or
- create little mounds of compost and some vermicastings, if you have them, for each seedling. Spread mulch between each mound to contain the compost. Mounds are an awesome way to lift above wet soil, and perfect if compost supply is thin on the ground.

Plant a mixture of light feeding crops close together to completely cover the soil when grown and provide a diversity of root systems – such resilience! Then mulch generously with whatever brown crunchy stuff you have.

#### 3. Build a compost

This is the choice for those of you who cannot rehydrate your dry soil because you have no water to spare. It's also the way to go if soil is sodden. Build a compost pile direct, on top of the soil that needs reviving – a brilliant restoration move.

■ 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.



Top: Cabbage seedlings thrive in home-made compost; middle, perfectly moist soil holds together and smells great, and lupin seedlings pushing up the shadedcloth (time to take it off); above, building a compost to revive the soil.

Photos Kath Irvine



# Property sharing agreements

**Buying a house is expensive, everyone knows that. In a two-income household it's tough, and for a single person, it can seem impossible.**

Perhaps that's why more people are considering alternative property ownership options, such as buying with family or friends.

But while pooling funds between multiple people can make owning a home possible, it can be legally complicated if disagreements crop up or things go wrong. To make sure everyone is on the same page, a property sharing agreement is essential.

Property sharing agreements are a unique kind of contract becoming more and more common. If you buy property with your partner, the legal position of what happens if the relationship ends, or one party dies, is clearly set out in legislation. If you own property with anyone you are not in a relationship with, however, the legal position is less clear.

The purpose of a property sharing agreement is to clearly define that legal position by setting out everyone's rights and responsibilities in relation to the property and different scenarios that could come about.

First, the agreement sets out the context of the property purchase – who the parties are, how much money each put in, who the mortgage is with and how much it is, and who's going to be living at the property.

The agreement might then specify who is responsible for the mortgage (usually everyone, equally) and what happens if someone pays more. The terms of occupying the property

might then be set out, and are often similar to being a tenant – for example, everyone is entitled to quiet enjoyment of the property, everyone agrees not to cause damage and to make repairs if needed, everyone agrees to pay equal shares of outgoing such as power and water.

## MATTERS OF LAW



BROOKE MCGOWAN

The agreement can then set out what happens if one party dies or wants to sell their share of the property. Often property sharing agreements will contain an "option to purchase". This means that the other person or persons who own the property have the first option to purchase the other party's share of the property.

If that option is not taken, the agreement will then often give the person or persons remaining at the property a certain period of time to remain there before the property must be sold. Everyone's wills would also need to be updated to reflect the terms of the agreement.

The agreement would then include a clause specifying how the property would be sold to a third party and how the sale proceeds would be used – to pay the mortgage, to pay a real estate agent, to pay legal fees and any other fees, and then to everyone in equal shares or otherwise.

There are many other matters that a property sharing agreement can address. The purpose is to agree on everyone's rights and responsibilities and provide guidelines for what will happen if there is a disagreement or everyone parts ways. Every property sharing situation is different, so every agreement will look different, too.

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

# Significant local initiatives, events coming up

**As we step into another promising year for Ōtaki, I want to share some initiatives and events coming up.**

The Ōtaki Community Board's goal of working for a vibrant and resilient Ōtaki remains unwavering, and your involvement continues to be the key to our shared success.

Vision Ōtaki takes centre stage as we compile survey feedback from you, our community, to shape our town's future for the next five to 10 years. We have been collaborating closely with Ngā Hapū o Ōtaki on this process with a common goal of ensuring Ōtaki's vibrancy and identity are preserved and celebrated.

We will be holding a community assembly where we will share this information and ask for your feedback. Your voice is instrumental in this process, as it will significantly influence KCDC's long-term plan.

Look out for an advertised time and date. The upcoming Food/Kai Symposium addresses a critical aspect of our lives: food security and sustainability.

With the rising cost of living and climate change challenges, this kaupapa, developed in collaboration with Ngā Hapū o Ōtaki, aims

## ŌTAKI COMMUNITY



SIMON BLACK

to bolster our community's ability to grow, swap and share food. This initiative is not just about ensuring a steady food supply; it's about nurturing our capacity to sustain ourselves, emphasising the importance of a local strategy around food resilience.

Finally, the formation of the Ōtaki Business Network marks a new chapter for our local

economy. Building on the success of Elevate Ōtaki, this network will serve as a vibrant ecosystem for businesses within the Ōtaki region to collaborate, share knowledge, and grow together.

This initiative is especially timely as we navigate the changes brought by the revocation process of the old SH1.

These projects reflect our collective goal of a thriving, cohesive, and resilient Ōtaki. We invite every member of our community to engage, contribute, and share in the shaping of our town's future.

Together, let's make this year a memorable one for Ōtaki, marked by growth, kotahitanga and kaitiakitanga.

■ Simon is deputy chair of the Ōtaki Community Board

## HELPLINES AND LOCAL MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES for support & information:

- |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| • Lifeline 0800 543 354                 | <b>For children and young people</b>   | • What's Up 0800 942 8787 (0800 WHATSUP) or webchat at <a href="#">whatsup.co.nz</a> from 5-10pm for ages 5-18. |
| • Samaritans 0800 726 666               | • Youthline 0800 376 633, free text 234, email <a href="#">talk@youthline.co.nz</a> or webchat at <a href="#">youthline.co.nz</a> (webchat avail 7-11pm) – for young people. | • Kidsline 0800 543 754 (0800 KIDSLINE) – up to 18 years.   |
| • Depression Helpline 0800 111 757      |  |   |
| • Healthline 0800 611 116               |  |   |
| • <a href="#">www.depression.org.nz</a> |  |   |

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# A year on and plenty to do!

FROM GRANT ROBERTSON

Most of you will be aware that I retired from real estate at the end of March 2023, not too long after selling the business to Property Brokers, and shortly after son Travis and Catherine's wedding.

After a month's holiday in Australia to attend two more weddings, I said to my wife, Jo: "It's silly to be free from real estate and still tied to the farm." So we promptly leased that out too!

After the whirlwind of selling stock and cleaning out sheds, it was up, up, and away to Europe, and a solid break from 36 years of the habit, routine and discipline that makes a successful real estate person.

This is a good time to say: "Thank you to each and every person who helped me along the way."

So here I am, refreshed and recharged, and ready for new challenges! I have been on the Te Horo Hall committee for a few years, and am now putting my limited skills and abundant contacts into fundraising for the earthquake strengthening and refurbishment of the hall, which is 110 years old this year!

Property Brokers have been fantastically supportive of this initiative, putting up a substantial sum to support marketing and publicity of the coming fundraising drive. So if you see me in my Property Brokers shirt, I am in my "Brand Ambassador" role, and working hard for Te Horo Hall.

I look forward to catching up with the so many good friends made through real estate and a lifetime of living in the Ōtaki and Te Horo Communities!

Thank you all. – Grant



Grant and Jo taking time out in the Italian mountains. Grant is now ready to put some work into fundraising for the Te Horo Hall.



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



# Long-time locals make success of auto business

**A “thoroughness” in their work, ongoing training for staff and the fact the owners have long connections in Ōtaki have helped Paul Branch Automotive (PBA) to be a local success story.**

The business is owned by Paul and Emma Branch, and employs two full-time and one part-time auto technicians. The technicians are fully qualified, but Paul ensures they all receive regular training to keep up with the complexities of modern vehicle repair and maintenance.

Diagnostics is ever changing, but PBA has a full kit of diagnostics equipment that can assess the health of just about any car.

Paul has seen many changes since he first trained in automotive engineering at Wellington Polytech. He did work experience at Ōtaki Motors (most recently where Sunran Spas was).

“Bruce Chambers owned it and Ray Hare was a mechanic”, Paul says. “I learned a lot there.”

**Paul Branch Automotive has a new, well-equipped workshop with plenty of space, a high roof, plenty of parking and a separate reception/office area. The high roof allows Paul to service larger vehicles on the hoists, such as campervans.**

Paul later had stints with Central Automotive in Levin, Firestone in Ōtaki, the Caltex Ōtaki workshop and then Eckersley’s Auto Repair on the Caltex site. He and a business partner bought out Eckersley’s and started All Things Automotive.

He finally went out on his own – with Emma as business partner – in 2016 when he started Paul Branch Automotive. The first premises were in Miro Street opposite Riverbank Engineering, then to the current purpose-built workshop just around the corner in Ake Ake Place.

The latest move became a bit scary for the couple when Covid hit in 2020.

“The workshop was under construction when the lockdown came,” Emma says. “We had to sweat out a few months before we knew we would be OK.”

The investment and the sweat have been worth it. PBA got well-equipped workshop with plenty of space, a high roof, plenty of parking and a separate



reception/office area. The high roof allows Paul to service larger vehicles on the hoists, such as campervans.

PBA covers the full range of mechanical repair and maintenance, including electrical work, tyres and a towing service covering the Kāpiti area.

Paul’s grandfather, Harry Branch came to Ōtaki after the Second World War to take up market gardening. He married local woman Maisie Wylie. Paul’s parents were Gary and Carol; his dad worked at Bright’s Hardware, now Hammer Hardware.

Emma was born and raised in Ōtaki, after her parents, Bev and Graham Evans, moved here from the Wellington area. The Evans family owned and operated Buckland & Evans Plimmerton Transport, where Graham and brother Ken worked alongside their father and uncle, Gordon Evans, and Tom Buckland.

Graham (also an automotive technician by trade) and Bev both saw out their careers separately in the transport industry until recent retirement.



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# HĪTŌRIA/History

## Oddities beneath the floorboards

**H**aving alterations to one's house can be challenging, for both the owner and the builder.

This is even more so if the house is more than 100 years old and has grown haphazardly from a simple hut to a bungalow over that period of time.

Nothing is plumb. Nothing is straight.



Building techniques were ad hoc. The wallboards and floorboards are all different, the latter mimicking the contours of a golf course, and the roofline akin to a tangram puzzle.

It wasn't surprising then, when the builder told me we had encountered a problem after he

lifted a floorboard in the porch to fit the french doors.

"There are no piles," he said. "Just some bricks and a stack of sticks."

Sure enough, as more floorboards were lifted, there were no piles. Not one concrete pile, not a tōtara pile, rotten or not. Just some bricks and bits of timber.

As we both peered further it became clear that the bricks and sticks were not the only oddities under the floor.

There were lots of river stones, presumably dug out of the area to make a flat building platform for the original hut. There were animal bones. which I sincerely hoped were the remains of a sheep or goat and not a dog. There were some bits of an old boat, old rusty tools and many, many bottles.

As we removed the bottles – mostly intact – the amber coloured larger bottles could have come from a DB crate today. But it was the

smaller clear bottles with embossed writing on them that caught my eye. The words included the name A. E. Twist, presumably the name of the manufacturer, and the word Ōtaki. But what had these bottles contained?

This question necessitated a perusal of the *Ōtaki Historical Journal*. Edition No 39, 2017, contains an article written by Mark Pacey and Dave Smithson titled "History told through glass bottles", which states that Ōtaki had its own soft drink factory for 45 years.

Thomson Lewis and Co set up a factory in Wellington in 1887, then established a branch at Ōtaki in 1893. This was then sold to John Knox, who changed the name to the Ōtaki Cordial Company until it came under the ownership of Augustus Ernest Twist (known as Ernie) in 1924. The factory was in Matene Street, behind the Family Hotel, and produced cordials until 1940, two years after Ernie died.

Sadly, the increasing dominance of the overseas big brands of soft drinks and other goods saw the beginning of the demise of most of the small, locally made products in Aotearoa.

The final treasure to be unearthed from under the house was a woman's shoe; its design being that from the early 1920s, I guessed. The leather was still mainly intact, the size was small. I looked for its mate, but there was only one shoe.

To find a woman's shoe within the very masculine trove of beer bottles and old tools seemed strange to me. Who had worn it? Why was there only one? What was it doing under the house?

Some time later I was relating the find to a person who was polite enough to seem interested in the secrets my old house



Below, the woman's shoe found under floorboards, and at right, an A E Twist bottle from the old Ōtaki soft drink factory.

Photo Ōtaki Heritage

contained. To my astonishment she said that she had heard about old shoes being placed under the floors or in the walls of houses. Given no other choice and because it still mattered to at least me, I googled "Old shoes under houses".

According to the various sites that came up, I discovered that in the 18th and 19th centuries (and in one case, the 1300s) the "concealed shoe" was actually a thing.

The reasons given for such concealment were firstly to guard the inhabitants of the house against evil spirits, secondly as an offering to a household deity, and thirdly to bestow fertility on a female member of the household.

Who knows whether this was the case here in a hut in Ōtaki in the 1920s?

I had taken the shoe from its resting place to further admire it as I researched its possible reasons for being there. But the research had me thinking that maybe, apart from the fertility reasons, I should just put it back. This thought became a certainty when I discovered the dog

sneakily removing it from the table on which I had placed it.

So back under the house it went, to lie with the bones (which I hadn't touched) for hopefully further decades, keeping me (but maybe not the dog) from evil influences.

And these days, my glass bottles go to the transfer station to be recycled, though I can't help thinking that in 100 years time, perhaps someone might delight in finding a New Zealand 2024 pinot gris bottle or two as well as the other treasures.



## ŌTAKI SCHOOL 1942

Compiled by Debbi Carson



### ŌTAKI SCHOOL 1942:

Back row (from left): Aileen Cole, next eight unknown, Warwick Knox, Brian Hancock, Bob Seal and Jeune Stephenson.

Front row: Elaine McKinley, Melva Walsh, Jocelyn Mead, unknown, Pixie Windley, unknown, unknown, Beverley Edwards, June Bartosh, Aileen Taucher, Mary Cook, unknown, Joan Clark.

Front: unknown, Colin Bird.

Thanks to Aileen Lumley (nee Cole) for providing the photo.

### 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 if you can. Contact [debbi@idmedia.co.nz](mailto:debbi@idmedia.co.nz) especially if you have additions or corrections to captions.

## Waitangi Day in the archive

By Daniel White, Ngā Taonga Sound & Vision

### The Kāpiti Coast has long hosted gatherings for Waitangi Day across the region, both official and informal.

In the Ngā Taonga online collection, a Radio New Zealand (RNZ) Māori radio programme from 1965 provides an eloquent tribute to the legacy of Waitangi Day.

While the start of the programme reflects on Waitangi Day celebrations in 1963 when Queen Elizabeth II visited Aotearoa, a significant portion is dedicated to a particular Waitangi event that was held at Otaihangā in 1965. The event was at a local marae with about 300 Māori and Pākehā attending. After a mihi to guests, Sir Guy Powles delivered a speech. Powles was born in Ōtaki and, at the time, was serving as New Zealand's first Ombudsman. In his speech, Powles offers a perspective around the significance of Waitangi Day and the context in which the Treaty was signed in 1840. He goes on to quote some of Queen Elizabeth's words of unity from her royal visit to New Zealand two years before.

Jock McEwen, then secretary of Māori Affairs, follows Powles with a reply on behalf of the visitors in English and presents a koha. In his own words, McEwen stresses his belief that, in terms of colonial history, the signing of the Te Tiriti o Waitangi was "a most important thing in the history of mankind".

The programme includes audio of waiata which followed the speeches, as is tradition. It's nice to have this particular audio taonga of Waitangi Day 1965 in Otaihangā preserved and available to listen to in the Ngā Taonga online collection. To listen now, visit [ngataonga.org.nz](http://ngataonga.org.nz) and search for collection reference number 46315.

Ngā Taonga has its own tradition of marking Waitangi Day each year with a curated programme. This year, the audiovisual programme is titled *From Pageant to Hikoi*. From an extravagant pageant for Queen Elizabeth II in 1974 (her second visit since 1963), to a several thousand strong hikoi led by Eva Rickard a decade later in 1984 – two very different events at Waitangi's treaty grounds are presented.

This special programme is free to watch and can be found via the Ngā Taonga website homepage. It is also playing in selected libraries, including The National Library of New Zealand Te Puna Mātauranga o Aotearoa.

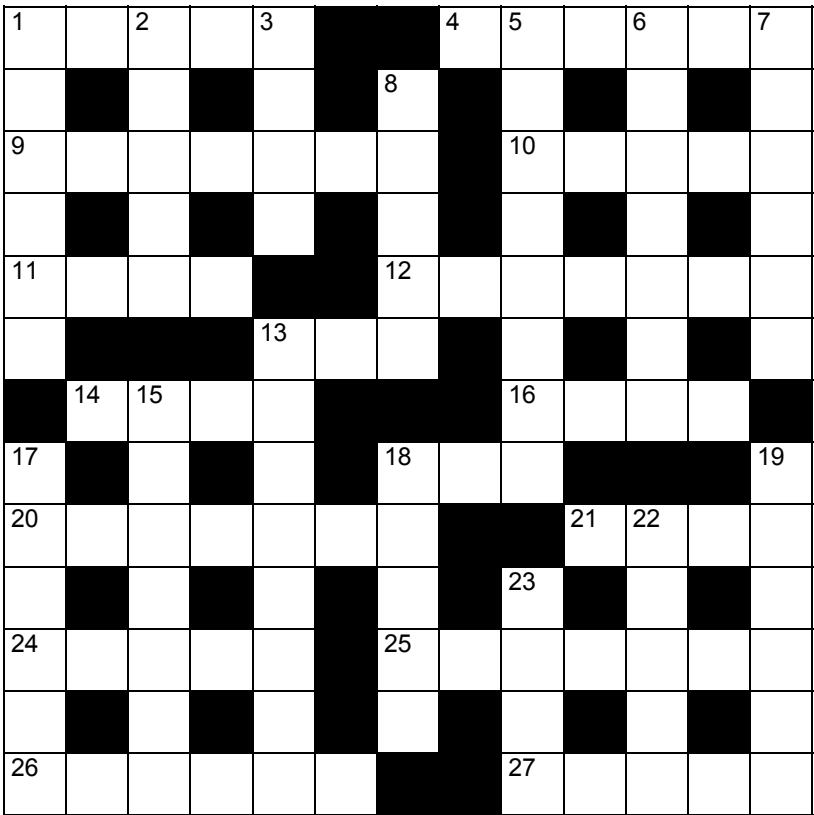
■ Ngā Taonga has many recordings capturing New Zealand life. They can be explored online at [ngataonga.org.nz](http://ngataonga.org.nz). Get the Ngā Taonga newsletter using the Sign Up button at the top of the page.



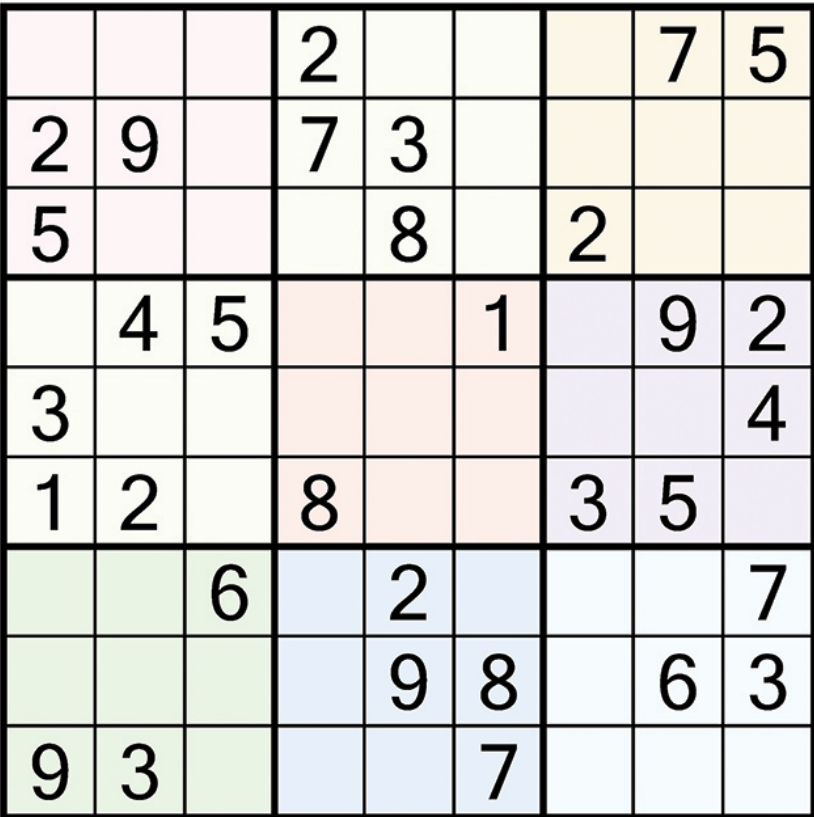
The Audiovisual Archive for Aotearoa



THE CROSSWORD #NZ1921E (answers below right)



**SUDOKU PUZZLES** thepuzzlecompany.co.nz  
EASY #65M 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 page 27.



ACROSS

1. Fashion label of New Zealand designer Denise L'Estrange Corbet (5)  
4. Youth organisation with about 16,000 members in NZ (6)  
9. Legendary maiden who lived on the shores of Lake Rotorua (7)  
10. Coiled around (5)  
11. NZ school qualification (4)  
12. Bishop's territory (7)  
13. In rugby, a five-pointer (3)  
14/19. Former governor-general and mayor of Auckland who died in 2021 (4,6)  
16. Enthusiastic (4)  
18. Mown grass (3)  
20. Popular Christmas dessert (7)

21. Popular NZ shellfish (4)  
24. Gold measurement (5)  
25. Sailing event (7)  
26. Cricket side (6)  
27. Rip into pieces (5)  
**DOWN**  
1. Ship that ran aground in Wellington Harbour in 1968 (6)  
2. Scope (5)  
3. Title awarded to 14 Across 19 Down (4)  
5. Dairy farmer (colloq) (3,5)  
6. Guitar-like instrument (7)  
7. Saturated (6)  
8. Useful (5)  
13. Fuel control device (8)  
15. Unfavourable (7)  
17. Native American tribe who fought US forces from 1849-1886 (6)  
18. Lynley Dodd's



SUDOKU SOLUTION #65M

- Maclary character (5)  
19. See 14 Across  
22. Bury (5)  
23. A long time (colloq) (4)



FEBRUARY TRIVIA QUIZ

Test your general knowledge here for a bit of fun. Answers below.

- What occasion corresponds to the longest day of the year?
- Which country is the largest in the world?
- According to Guinness World Records, what's the best-selling book of all time?
- What is the only food that can never go bad?
- Edie Falco and James Gandolfini star in what series about the life of a New Jersey mob boss?
- Nearly all fossils are preserved in what type of rock?
- What guitarist notably performed on the Michael Jackson song *Beat It*?
- What is February's birthstone?
- What is Prince Harry's official first name?
- What is an eight-sided shape called?
- What year was Earth Day first celebrated?
- Who is Barbie's little sister?
- What name is singer-actor Stefani Germanotta better known by?
- What Andrew Lloyd Webber Broadway show features the characters Mistoffelees and Old Deuteronomy?
- The unicorn is the national animal of which country?
- Which soft drink once contained cocaine as one of its original ingredients?
- What breed of cat doesn't have fur?
- What country uses about six billion kilometres of toilet paper each year?
- The women in Amy Tan's *Joy Luck Club* meet to play what game?
- Which mystery writer holds the Guinness World Record for the most translated works?

FEBRUARY TRIVIA QUIZ ANSWERS: 1. The summer solstice. 2. Russia. 3. The Bible. 4. Honey. 5. The Sopranos. 6. Sedimentary. 7. Eddie Van Halen. 8. Amethyst. 9. Henry. 10. Octagon. 11. 1970. 12. Skipper. 13. Lady Gaga. 14. Cats. 15. Scotland. 16. Coca Cola. 17. Sphynx. 18. China. 19. Mahjong. 20. Agatha Christie.



Ōtaki River entrance tides  
February 16 – March 15

<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
FRI 16 FEB	02:57	09:10	15:21	21:40	-
SAT 17 FEB	03:54	10:11	16:21	22:40	-
SUN 18 FEB	05:03	11:24	17:32	23:54	-
MON 19 FEB	06:27	12:45	18:52	-	-
TUE 20 FEB	-	01:15	07:45	13:56	20:05
WED 21 FEB	-	02:21	08:43	14:51	21:01
THU 22 FEB	-	03:12	09:27	15:36	21:44
FRI 23 FEB	-	03:53	10:04	16:14	22:21
SAT 24 FEB	-	04:28	10:37	16:48	22:54
SUN 25 FEB	-	05:01	11:08	17:21	23:24
MON 26 FEB	-	05:31	11:37	17:52	23:54
TUE 27 FEB	-	06:01	12:07	18:23	-
WED 28 FEB	00:23	06:30	12:36	18:53	-
THU 29 FEB	00:53	07:01	13:07	19:26	-
FRI 1 MAR	01:25	07:34	13:41	20:01	-
SAT 2 MAR	02:01	08:12	14:21	20:42	-
SUN 3 MAR	02:45	09:01	15:12	21:33	-
MON 4 MAR	03:44	10:07	16:18	22:41	-
TUE 5 MAR	05:03	11:30	17:39	-	-
WED 6 MAR	-	00:03	06:30	12:53	19:01
THU 7 MAR	-	01:23	07:44	14:02	20:12
FRI 8 MAR	-	02:27	08:41	14:58	21:09
SAT 9 MAR	-	03:20	09:31	15:48	21:59
SUN 10 MAR	-	04:08	10:17	16:34	22:45
MON 11 MAR	-	04:53	11:02	17:19	23:29
TUE 12 MAR	-	05:37	11:46	18:04	-
WED 13 MAR	00:13	06:21	12:30	18:48	-
THU 14 MAR	00:56	07:06	13:15	19:32	-
FRI 15 MAR	01:41	07:53	14:01	20:19	-

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"Life is 10% what happens to you and 90% how you react to it."

CHARLES R. SWINDOLL

**CROSSWORD #NZ1921E**  
**ACROSS:** 1. WORLD, 4. Scouts, 9. Hinemoa, 10. Wound, 11. NCEA, 12. Diocese, 13. Try, 14/19. Cath Tizard, 16. Keen, 18. Hay, 20. Pavlova, 21. Pipi, 24. Carat, 25. Regatta, 26. Eleven, 27. Shred. **DOWN:** 1. Wahine, 2. Range, 3. Dame, 5. Cow cocky, 6. Ukulele, 7. Sodden, 8. Handy, 13. Throttle, 15. Adverse, 17. Apache, 18. Hairy, 22. Inter, 23. Ages.



# TAKĀRO/Sport



Toby Robson and mother Marjorie formed a team with Sam's father, Bill Doyle, (on right).  
All photos  
Te Rina Marsh



From left, Tracey Doyle with sister-in-law Tania Doyle and sister Cheryl Hirini.

## Memorial tournament raises \$7576

Leukaemia & Blood Cancer New Zealand has been gifted \$7576 after the Sam Doyle Memorial Golf Tournament at Ōtaki Golf Club on Saturday, February 3.

A total of 108 people participated. The funds were raised from business sponsorship, team registrations, donations, raffles and an auction. Rāhui Sportclub juniors also raised \$1300 on the day to help their teams this rugby season.

Sam Doyle was a talented rugby player whose heart was always at Rāhui, despite playing for the inaugural Hurricanes team, the Māori All Blacks,

Wellington, Manawātū and Horowhenua-Kāpiti. He died on October 1, 2022, after more than two years battling leukaemia.

Wife Tracey says the golf tournament was a great way to honour Sam, and to support Leukaemia & Blood Cancer NZ.

“These people supported Sam, the girls and I for 2½ years with parking passes, food vouchers, petrol vouchers, counselling, and numerous phone calls to ensure we were coping as best we could and had everything we needed, to navigate the journey we as a family were on.”



From left, James Gardner, Rimu Prime, tournament organiser Makaore Wilson, Hadley Gardner, Te Uhi Marsh-Williams and Joel Winterburn pause for a photo shoot.



A pensive Bill Doyle considers a shot at the memorial golf tournament.

LETTERS

Thank you for getting Kokoro to Doha

Dear editor.

It is with great delight and gratitude I'm writing about the response to my article in last month's Ōtaki Today, headlined "Doha beckons, but Kokoro needs funding". The full amount of \$8000 was raised. Kokoro left for the World Swimming Championships on Wednesday, February 8, and is now one step closer to the Oylmpics. A huge thank you to Derek Kelly, Don Watson Snr, Wellington High Performance Swimming, parishioners of St Mary's Catholic Church in Ōtaki, and the people who want to remain anonymous. You all have the excitement and privilege of knowing you are part of making dreams happen. Investing in our youth is the future.

Annie Bythell, Ōtaki



Chris Mark, Darrell Manville,  
Denis & Kathryn Mark, Maureen Mackie





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0800 426275 ~ (06) 368-8108

545 - 547 Queen Street East, Levin  
The Avenue Crematorium, Levin

We are currently between premises in Ōtaki but we are happy to visit you at your home to discuss any funeral or memorial services.