

ŌTAKI TODAY

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HŪRAE/JULY 2024

Ngā Kōrero o Ōtaki



Pink pampas a pest p5



Key to old post office p20



Ōtaki tops table p24



MĀNAWATIA A MATARIKI! Troy Kingi entertains the huge crowd at one of Ōtaki's big long weekend celebrations – Matariki on Moana. More on page 7.

Photo Andy Snaps

Rod vows to stop the stop

By Ian Carson

A new permanent bus stop is planned for Te Horo, outside Rod Clifton Motors on the old main highway.

But the plans of Metlink – Greater Wellington's public transport arm – and NZTA/Waka Kotahi might have hit a snag. Rod Clifton, who has been running his transport and vehicle repair business on the Te Horo site for more than 50 years, is vehemently opposed.

"It ain't going to happen here, I'm

telling you that now," Rod told *Ōtaki Today*. "We're just too busy here, there are too many people coming in and out."

Seven businesses operate within 100m of the proposed bus stop. They include not only three operated by Rod Clifton – his motor repair, truck rentals and transport businesses – but also Fox Plumbing, Bec's Upholstery, Faith Farm Fresh Milk and a sand quarry.

Rod says there are large movements of traffic all day to and from these businesses

and no room for bus passengers to park their vehicles.

"The transporting company is busy all day coming and going, moving things like caravans, motor homes, boats, buses, trucks, tractors, farm machinery, and earthmoving equipment," he says.

The workshop also has many vehicles

continues page 4

RIGHT: Rod Clifton outside his business in Te Horo where a new bus stop is planned. Photo *Ōtaki Today*



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WHAT'S ON

TE HAEMATA Ōtaki's youth space has free fun activities for 12-18 year olds during the upcoming holidays, rain or shine (11am-2pm each day): Pizza party Thursday July 11; Disney Day Monday July 15; 2K tournament Tuesday July 16; Thursday July 18 Trade threads.

KILNS EXHIBITION The Kilns at Te Horo has an exhibition by resident artist Lyuba Zhilkina from 11am-3pm on Sunday July 21. Works are from her two-month residency. The Kilns at Te Horo, Jim Winiata Way (off School Rd).

KIDS POP UP MARKET 3-4.30pm Sunday July 21 at Ōtaki Memorial Hall. Running at the conclusion of the Ōtaki Markets' kids workshop, an initiative to empower young entrepreneurs.

COMMUNITY BOARDS The Ōtaki Community Board next meets at 7pm, Tuesday, July 23 in the Gertrude Atmore Lounge (attached to the Memorial Hall). 7pm, The Waikanae Community Board meets next on Tuesday, August 20, at the Waikanae Community Hall, Te Atautu St. The public is welcome at community board meetings. Search "meetings and agendas" at kapiticoast.govt.nz from two days before the meeting for the agenda, which is also at council libraries and service centres. To speak at a meeting, register by calling 04 296 4700 or 0800 486 486, or email democracy.services@kapiticoast.govt.nz

THE WEDDING SINGER The latest production by the Ōtaki Players, The Wedding Singer is at Southwards Theatre, August 8-24. Tickets \$45, meal and show \$90. Book at otakiplayers.nz

STATIONHOUSE SOCIAL CLUB The Salty Hearts host Hogsnot Rupert Goodtime Band featuring NZ music legends Dave Luther, Neil Worboys and Andrew London at Ōtaki Golf Club, Thursday August 8. Tickets \$50 including 2-course meal. Email: gregandanje@xtra.co.nz

TE HORO GARDEN TRAIL Back after a five-year hiatus. The trail is on Saturday and Sunday November 16 and 17. Co-ordinated by and in support of the Te Horo Hall fundraising for earthquake strengthening of the hall.

OPEN HOME Ōtaki Baptist Church hall, 4-8pm every Tuesday and Friday. A drop-in space for anyone to cook or share a meal, socialise and even take a shower. Everyone welcome, including volunteers.

OLD COURTHOUSE GALLERY 239 Main Highway, Ōtaki. Open Thurs-Sunday: 10am-4pm. Closed Public Holidays. 027 435 0408.

POETRY IN ŌTAKI Ōtaki Library Supper Room, 3rd Friday of each month, 10.30-12pm. All welcome. Contact Philip 021 977 834.

ŌTAKI MUSEUM: The exhibition "From pā and kāinga to baches and seaside villas" tells the stories of the people and changing character of Ōtaki Beach. 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. Museum open 10am-2pm Thursday to Saturday, except public holidays. 49 Main St. 06 364-6886.

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

TOTE MODERN: Ōtaki Pottery Club's 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

ŌTAKI MARKET: on every second Sunday 9am-2pm during winter, on old SH1, opposite New World. 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

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: 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.

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

When ideology, commonsense clash

Recent troubles of MPs with claimed breaches of either parliamentary custom or civil law throw a spotlight on the place that list MPs occupy in Parliament and the influence that political parties have over the positions they adopt on issues.

Currently there are 123 MPs and 51 of these are selected from party lists. The public has no say on the compilation of these lists. But the parties lay down the policies and opinions that these MPs will follow before and when in Parliament. A vote for the party becomes a vote for the individual if the party achieves enough votes to secure his or her entry into Parliament.

The benefits of the list system include diversity of representation, as each party can address in its list selection minority ethnicities or sections of the community whose views deserve representation in Parliament. The selections of individuals are, however, made by the party of which they are a member, not the ethnic group nor sectional interest they seemingly represent.

Their individual qualities, fitness for office and capabilities are party business up to the point they enter Parliament. From then on it is the public that "carries the can" for their behaviour, performance and quality as MPs. But responsibility for their conduct and performance continues to lie with their party.

While salaries and allowances usually continue to be paid when MPs are under party or special parliamentary scrutiny for claimed misdemeanours, the cost to the country of paying them when not present in Parliament for

a term might be significantly less troublesome to the country than the power the party wields over all its list members.

It is that aspect of today's Kiwi politics that is coming into question as the country seeks solutions to a wide range of economic, social and ethnic issues that will impact significantly on its development through this century.

The reason is that the requirement of adherence by list MPs to an ideological position adopted and frequently enforced by their party, contrasts markedly with the ability of individual elected MPs to give precedence to the opinion of their electorate constituents if commonsense or the realities of a situation dictate that a better outcome would be achieved for them.

It is fair to say that there is consensus in the Parliament across the ideological divide of all six parties that health, education, housing, infrastructure and the economy are in dire condition. Ethnic issues show up with hyperbole in parliamentary debates. The best solutions to lift performance will not all fit into the same ideological box.

And community angst at the breadth of problems showing up in these areas suggests all political parties might take this into account when considering proposals that come forward from the Coalition government.

Two examples of political ideology in play on issues of public ownership and commercial operations – one historical and the other current – illustrate ideological conflict with commonsense reality.

In the days of the Helen Clark government of

the 1990s, finance minister Michael Cullen took a pragmatist approach to proposed government purchase of the rail network. He advocated the government should follow the lead of countries abroad and simply buy the rail network. Passenger and freight services should, in his view, be open to commercial operators.

His colleagues over-ruled him.

Nationalisation of the whole rail package should be undertaken in line with party ideology. The result was the KiwiRail we have today with consistent demands from the public purse for more money to maintain operations of its freight and passenger services as well as the rail network.

Last month in Wellington local city councillors considered the sale of council shares in Wellington Airport. Hard-line Greens and Labour Party activists were appalled that enough in their ranks switched sides to approve the sale despite party ideological commitments to maintain a public stake in the facility.

Even with any dividends that might be paid by the commercially operated airport, the city cannot afford the prohibitive cost of civic insurance to cover against at least some of the ravages of a devastating earthquake on essential facilities. But the fund to be established with the sale money will provide the foundation of an insurance investment against the prospect of such an earthquake, which might well destroy the airport along with other service assets.

Party political ideology needs tempering with commonsense when logic suggests a solution contrary to its theories is the best way forward for the public good.

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

CARTOON OF THE MONTH

By Jared Carson

College kids to get reduced funding for lunches – full funding stays for younger students.

ŌTAKI TODAY

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School lunch funding cut ‘a huge step backwards’

By Ian Carson

A change to the free school lunch programme is going to be a “huge step backwards” for Ōtaki College, says principal Andy Fraser.

The government announced in the Budget on May 8 that from the end of the year, funding for year 7 students and above through the lunch programme Ka Ora, Ka Ako would reduce from \$8 a child to \$3. That affects secondary and intermediate schools; current funding would continue to apply to primary schools, at least to the end of 2026.

The college has in the past year been provided with school lunches through Te Puna Oranga o Ōtaki (TPOŌ), prepared at the old health camp and delivered fresh to the college. Next year it will have to go back to a centralised provider, and deal with the logistics of ordering, storing and serving food to students, or no lunches.

“Under a centralised system, the quality of food, the service and the ability to respond to local needs was totally inadequate,” Andy says. “When we went to Te Puna Oranga there was a significant leap in the uptake of food by the kids, there was very little wastage and it employed local people.

“It was just the ideal model for us. This move is a huge step backwards.”

He couldn’t see how students could be well fed for \$3.

“I think it’s just a political move to save money, rather than spend it on a really good initiative like Te Puna Oranga. It’s cutting costs



“Under a centralised system, the quality of food, the service and the ability to respond to local needs was totally inadequate.”

– Andy Fraser

and affecting families that actually need the support. Those families rely on their kids being fed at school so they can use what money they have for rent or kai on the table at night. They won’t be able to do that any more.

“And who will it impact the greatest – most likely Māori. It seems to me that this is just another policy designed by this government to try and put Māori on the back foot.”

Andy says when the government in Finland restructured its education system, it de-politicised education and introduced universal school lunches as a key initiative.

“They recognised that kids who were well fed, had good relationships in schools and were well

cared for, were more likely to learn than those who didn’t.”

The changes for New Zealand will not only locally affect Ōtaki College.

Te Puna Oranga o Ōtaki has geared up in the past couple of years to provide lunches to more than 1000 local students every school day. Losing the college – that has about 460 students – could mean the loss of four local jobs, but kaiwhakahaere (general manager) Heniti Buick says she’s also worried about the health and well-being of students and the community.

“Next year Ōtaki College will come out from Te Puna Oranga o Ōtaki and back into a system that failed them in the first instance,” she says. “The funding reduction for older children is going to have detrimental effects not only on the health and learning ability of our students, but also put further strain on our economically stretched community.”

She says schools that have both years 6 and 7 – especially the kura kaupapa Māori – will have to split their systems.

“A tikanga lens would mean everyone receives the same meal in the same setting,” Heniti says. “The new system would mean teina [young siblings] are fed on site, while their tuakana [older siblings] have to wait for a separate delivery, or get something heated out of the school freezer.”

She says TPOO has supported Ōtaki kura to let the government know how the changes will affect their students, and ask that the iwi/hapū model should be considered.

IN BRIEF

‘Open Home’ opens

Open Home, a drop-in at the Ōtaki Baptist hall, 2 Te Manuao Road, is now open from 4-8pm on Tuesdays and Fridays. Described as a “place for people to thrive”, it offers: social gatherings with shared kai, board games and a chat with others; a kitchen to cook a meal or get one with koha; and a shower. Everyone is welcome, including anyone who would like to help.

Grant for school hall upgrade

Ōtaki School has received \$7782.48 in the latest round of NZ Community Trust grants. It is the second grant from NZCT, which with funding from One Foundation will get the school hall lined, a mirror and doors installed to help with school and community kapa haka organised by Kahura Cameron, and after-school hip hop classes with assistance from Māoriland.

Calendar issued

Maramataka 2024-2025 is now available, the third in a series of calendars featuring local rongoā – traditional Māori healing and well-being practices. It is published by the Rongoā Collective of the ĀRT Confederation and is available at all Kāpiti Coast District Council service centres for \$20.

Thirteen incidents for firefighters

Local firefighters attended 13 incidents in June. Four were for private fire alarms; three were for investigations; two each for property and rubbish, grass or scrub fires; and one each for a motor vehicle accident and a medical emergency.



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Generations of Sims support acknowledged

Four generations of the Sims family helped plant out native trees they had donated for riverbank restoration on Wednesday, July 3.

The donation, and ongoing assistance and support for the Friends of the Ōtaki River project was acknowledged by Friends planting coordinator Trevor Wylie.

“Without the support of our planting partners like Robert Sims and Amber Tatham we would not be able to achieve what we see here today.”

Trevor said families such as the Sims had a long history in Ōtaki. Ted Sims, who attended the planting, had parents who came to Ōtaki and took up farming in 1951. For about 60 years Ted has been farming at Old Coach Road, near the golf course.

Ted and another attendee, Carl Lutz, both farmers and both in their 90s, are brothers-in-law. They both married Fogden sisters. Amber has links to the Templeys and Tathams. Ted’s great grandchildren, who also helped with the planting, are also Trevor’s great grandchildren. They are fifth generation Sims to reside in Ōtaki, and sixth generation Wylies.

Trevor also mentioned his own grandfather, John Wylie, who came to Ōtaki in 1904.

While Trevor had the opportunity to make the speech at this planting, he thanked Max Lutz for his dedication to the Friends over 25 years, the last 20 as chair.

“It’s been lots of enthusiasm, diligence and generosity,” Trevor said. “Thank you so much for what you have contributed.”



Four generations of the Sims family turned out at the Friends of Ōtaki River planting on Wednesday, July 3. From left they are: Niamh (aged 3) David, Briar (1) Leah, Robert, Ted, Kathy Gaskell (nee Sims), Brandan, and Amber Tatham. At front are Anna (7) and Ella (4).
Photo Ōtaki Today

Rod Clifton vows to stifle plans for Te Horo bus stop

from front page

coming in and out for repairs and warrants of fitness. Fox Plumbing also has vans, trucks and trailers with diggers, and customers collecting hire equipment; Faiths is busy all day, as is the sand quarry with truck movements.

Rod believes the roading engineers have chosen the site because it’s on a wide section of road. Plans brought in to him by someone recently – he doesn’t know who as he was out at the time and they left no contact number – show the site of the bus stop and a concrete barrier behind which the buses would pull in to stop.

Rod says he also has an issue with patronage

on the 290 route bus that has been stopping at Te Horo since the beginning of the year.

“The number of people on that bus wouldn’t pay the driver’s wages. So how can they spend \$100,000-plus on a bus stop?”

Rod believes the current temporary bus stop down the road is a better option.

“They just need to put some gravel on the grass area and build a fence on the railway side.”

People at Te Horo Beach successfully pushed for a bus to stop at Te Horo, but Rod says it should go down Te Hapua Road and Te Horo Beach Road and stop at the beach – “not here where no one uses it”.

Metlink told Ōtaki Today it had been working closely with the Te Horo community to understand their public transport needs, and as a result it was placing the permanent bus stop outside Rod’s business for the 290 route.

Metlink group manager Samantha Gain said that as Waka Kotahi still owned the road, it had chosen the location of the bus stop to accommodate a proposed cycleway and to ensure passengers could safely cross the road.

“Work is now under way with NZTA on the stop’s design, which needs to ensure there is sufficient room for buses to pull over and for passengers to disembark safely,” she said.

“A shelter for waiting passengers will also be considered.”

The design is yet to be finalised, but work is scheduled to begin in September.

NZTA/Waka Kotahi says it is working with Greater Wellington to deliver new bus stops within local state highway corridors, including that at Te Horo.

“All operational decisions rest with GWRC, but NZTA/Waka Kotahi is supporting its work,” a spokesperson said. “We provide safety inputs, design, and construction services for these projects This includes the proposed stop/shelter in Te Horo.”





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LETTERS

Thanks to Beryl for support of young mothers

Dear editor.

This open letter of thanks is to Beryl Rowe for the many years of love and protection that she offered to young people in Ōtaki. She served both kindergarten and the Brownie movement to our ongoing benefit. Beryl is still loved by those of us lucky enough to remember her. Her humour made a huge difference to my life! That quiet manner of encouragement was a great help to the young mothers she was also serving. We had peace of mind when our little ones were left in her care. It is with sadness that I read of her recent burglary (Ōtaki Today June 2024), but with joy that she remains her loving and forgiving self. She will remember referring to my little daughter Elizabeth as "Lizzie", which took me by surprise. Sadly, our Lizzie has passed away now, but of course remembered with so much love – like our Beryl.

Jo Murphy, Waikanae

Correction

In the June issue of Ōtaki Today we incorrectly spelled Ngāti Koroki as Ngāti Koriki. It appeared incorrectly in the page 1 panel and the caption of the story. These were added by the editor last-minute. The story as written by our correspondent, Whare Akuhata, included the correct spelling.

Pretty pink pampas a persistent pathway pest

It might look pretty in pink, but the Argentinian pampas growing along the Kāpiti expressway is a pest.

The reason motorists are seeing pink pampas along the Mackays to Peka Peka section of the expressway is because NTZA/Waka Kotahi contractors have been spraying it with weed-killer. Pink dye is added to indicate it's not to be touched by the public.

NZTA is required to manage pest plants across the highway corridor. When plants were put in as the expressway was being built, the aim was to achieve about 80 percent coverage. However some weed infestation inevitably occurs until the new plants are fully established.

Being an invasive species that needs to be controlled, NZTA received additional funding to carry out the work that's currently under way on the Mackays to Peka Peka section.

As the Peka Peka to Ōtaki section is newer, infestation is limited. However, pampas grass has been found and the planting contractor has sprayed some to kill it and prevent its spread.

The spray used is made by Kiwicare and is called Weed Weapon Extra Strength. It is used to control pampas in other areas by other contractors, such as Waikato Regional Council and New Zealand Biosecurity Services.

NZTA says proper care is taken to ensure spraying doesn't affect the public. Maintenance crews stop work when any shared path users are coming towards them, let them pass safely and then continue working. Spraying is done only in good weather. Any pest plant on the path's edge



Argentinian pampas, sprayed pink to warn people it's had weed-killer applied. *Photo Ōtaki Today*

is cut out first and then controlled afterwards.

"Because weed spray is toxic, we ask the public not to touch pampas grass after it has been sprayed," NZTA lower North Island/top of the south regional manager Mark Owen says. "It might look pretty, but it's a pest species."

"It's essential that path users do not remove it or take cuttings to plant elsewhere. Preventing the spread of this invasive weed is important."

Pampas is often mistaken for the native toetoe. The heads of pampas are thicker and fluffier than toetoe, and stick straight up. They can be white, cream, pink or purple in colour. Toetoe heads are a light golden colour and droop.

Pampas also start flowering in autumn, although old heads can last most of the year. Toetoe plants flower during spring and summer.

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Racing club ‘focused on mana and mauri’

By Ben Jamison
General manager, Ōtaki-Māori Racing Club

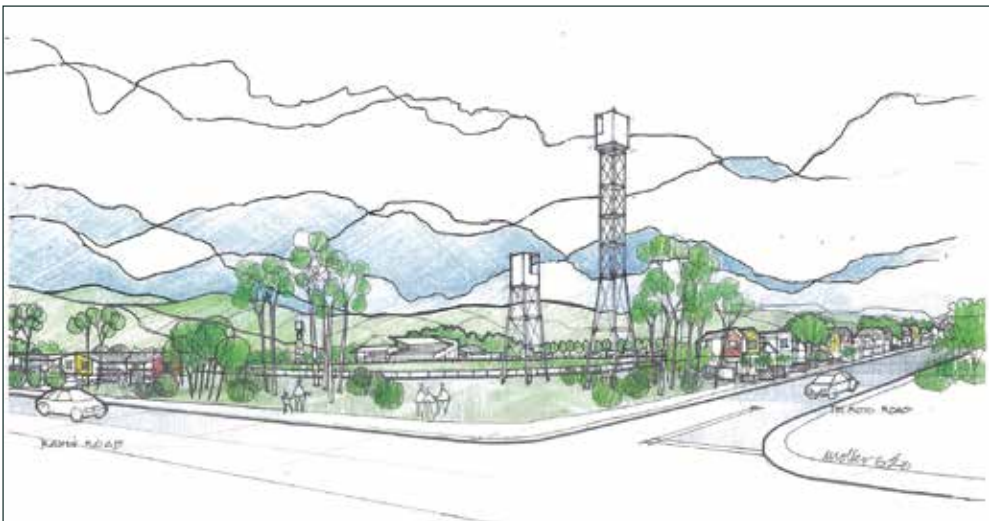
We are aware that there is a small group who object to the actions we at Ōtaki-Māori Racing Club are taking to secure our club’s future, and to contribute to our community and people. I’m taking an opportunity here to say this: we had to do something.

During extremely trying financial times for the whole racing sector, badly impacting our storied club as well as many others, we approached and partnered with Ian Cassels and The Wellington Company. At first we looked for local partners, but no one had the capital or capacity to move as quickly as we needed to.

We knew Ian and TWC could help us realise our vision. This meant first selling or leasing a small part of the whenua we have owned since the early 1900s, to build more than 500 new houses at our Te Roto Road property.

As mana whenua, as members of iwi of this rohe, and as a board who must hold that whakapapa in order to be in a position to make these decisions, we did not take this step lightly. If we hadn’t sold what amounts to just 12 percent of our land, then we might have been far worse off. Forced to sell under someone else’s direction the results could have been catastrophic for us. We would have had no say in what came next.

We aren’t the first racing club to use this land-sale mechanism during unfavourable winds, and we probably won’t be the last. There are plenty worse off than ŌMRC, including some who



A sketch by Moller Architects from the north at the intersection of Rāhui and Te Roto roads showing how the proposed development will fit in with the racing club. Image supplied

have had to close.

But, we are determined that the net outcome be a positive one for us and for Ōtaki.

This incredible development will include a mix of housing types, options for those connected to the club and iwi groups to buy-in first, and represents a tangible response to the worst housing affordability and outcomes for whānau anywhere in Kāpiti.

The development will include a café, cycling and walking tracks, various whenua and taiao improvements and a childcare centre. The application, including plenty of correspondence with stakeholders, various analysis and due diligence, currently sits before the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) in a consenting process – a transparent,

publicly available process that invites scrutiny. We continue to engage meaningfully with that process, and hope that those who seek to work against the future we are trying to secure for our club and our people will do the same.

We have been careful to ensure that what we have planned will enhance the racing club itself, contributing a close-knit village feel. But we are most focused on the mana and mauri of our operations and of the opportunities we are creating for uri, whether they are club whānau or mana whenua iwi.

Concerns about land-use, zoning, road safety, water and general amenity are all addressed in our application for consent. On the subject of infrastructure, although it hasn’t been widely publicised, the proposed development

“If we hadn’t sold what amounts to just 12 percent of our land, then we might have been far worse off. Forced to sell under someone else’s direction, the results could have been catastrophic for us.”

Ben Jamison

contributed to an application under the Infrastructure Acceleration Fund, securing almost \$30 million for Kāpiti Coast District Council to spend on upgrades benefiting the wider Ōtaki area.

But again, the housing development is an enabler for us; a way we have been able to create financial sustainability to ensure that the world’s only Māori-governed racing club can continue to operate. We’ve had regulators suggesting we might not be fit to do the mahi we had been doing for more than a century, but our leadership had the bravery to pursue mana motuhake through creative new solutions.

The implementation of the 2020 Racing Industry Act changed the power that regulators had to manage clubs that stopped racing or were “dissolved”, essentially taking control of assets. We couldn’t let that happen to ŌMRC.

We are not turning a blind eye or deaf ear to any mamae or riri that emerges as we work through this process, but likewise, we won’t apologise for doing what we needed to do to keep our lights on and ensure that Ōtaki-Māori Racing Club remains in charge of its own direction and future.

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Ian MacMillan buys a fairy wand from Shelley Stanton at one of the many stalls that drew hundreds of families out for the Ōtaki College night market.

Photo Ōtaki Today



A Matariki sign leading the way to the Memorial Hall, where bouncy castles were just part of the Main Street entertainment at the Matariki Ramaroa street party.

Photo Ōtaki Today

Mānawatia a Matariki!

There was something for everyone as Ōtaki put on spectacular events to celebrate Matariki from June 28-30.

Mid-winter seemed no deterrent judging by the crowds that turned out, sometimes on the chilly evenings.

It was not evident on the public holiday Friday when Hori's beach gallery celebrated Matariki on Moana. Moana Street was closed and packed with big crowds under brilliant sunshine to see Ōtaki hapori kapahaka and big-name artists Anika Moa and Troy Kingi.

Ōtaki College had their own Matariki night market with entertainment and stalls on Saturday night that drew hundreds of families out from 5pm until 8pm.

The Matariki Ramaroa party in Main Street is now a regular feature of the weekend after celebrating its third year on Sunday from 3pm until 8pm. There was plenty of local entertainment, kai and market stalls.

The popular Star Glaze mid-winter ceramics festival organised by the Ōtaki Pottery Club ran throughout the long weekend at the racecourse and was as popular as ever. As with the other Matariki events, it attracted locals and visitors alike.

The events list puts Ōtaki firmly on the must-attend Matariki calendar.



Aotearoad music icon Anika Moa entertains at Matariki on Moana.

Photo Andy Snaps



Pottery by Sonia Savage at the Star Glaze festival.

Photo supplied

Tim Costley MP for Ōtaki



Our offices in Levin and Paraparaumu are up and running. Details below.

Levin Office

Corner of Bath and Oxford Street

Phone: 020 438 8462
horowhenua@parliament.govt.nz

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Wed: Closed
Thurs: 10am – 4pm
Fri: 10am – 3pm

Paraparaumu Office

Corner of Te Roto Drive and Kapiti Road

Phone: 021 851 206
kapiti@parliament.govt.nz

Opening Hours:

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Tues: Closed
Wed: 10am – 3pm
Thurs: 10am – 3pm
Fri: 10am – 3pm

✉ Tim.CostleyMP@parliament.govt.nz
I look forward to meeting with you soon.



Fundraising allows hall strengthening start

Fundraising targets achieved ahead of schedule mean work on earthquake strengthening Te Horo Hall can begin as soon as the contractor is available.

The hall committee recently unanimously agreed to proceed as soon as possible to strengthen and upgrade the hall. Work is expected to begin in August.

The total raised so far is now more than \$466,000, with the Te Horo community contributing more than \$95,000.

The Waikanae Community Board has granted \$15,000 and mayor Janet Holborow has committed to contributing \$5000 from the mayoral fund to help offset consent costs.

A second grant of \$125,000 is to come from the Lotteries Commission (adding to an earlier \$90,000 grant), plus there have

been hall savings from past fundraising and other donations, pushing the total towards the \$500,000 target.

Hall chair Andrew Annakin says the fundraising result is “a huge milestone for Te Horo and Te Horo Hall”. He praised how the Te Horo community responded to the RoadRai\$e campaign with so many excellent fundraising events and activities.

“There were many leaders and even more supporters, all generating ideas and keen to take on the challenge,” he says. “The magic was in the energy and commitment of everyone involved. There was a real buzz around the community, the likes of which few could remember before.”

“Thank you, Te Horo!”

The hall committee's top priority was to earthquake-strengthen the building, which was originally budgeted at \$335,000 but is now \$350,000 due to additional regulatory costs.

Being close to the target already means upgrade work can also be done. It will include improvements to the kitchen, exterior cladding, and outside facilities.

The last RoadRai\$e event was a movie night at Te Horo School organised by pupil Isaac Bridge of Room 11. Two movies were shown for different age groups and together with a sausage sizzle (thanks to Ōtaki New World) and sales of bags of lollies, Isaac raise more than \$1000.

■ For information about the hall and for future events and updates see tehorohall.org.nz



Te Horo Hall Committee member Jenny Askwith receives a donation from the fundraising efforts of Te Horo School's Isaac Bridge. Photo supplied



Ōtaki Playcentre members enjoy their new deck, 1990.

Photo supplied

Playcentre celebrates 70 years

July marks 70 years since Ōtaki Playcentre was established.

The playcentre is celebrating on Saturday, July 27, at the playcentre on Mill Road. There will be speeches from members over the decades since 1954, music and poetry, singing of the national playcentre waiata, displays, shared kai and reminiscing. Local Hira Royal was a founding member.

The parent-led centre has been described as a lifeline for parents, supporting many young families and surviving myriad changes. It has had to keep pace with reforms and regulations since government restructuring of early childhood education in 1989. It also had to be self-funded in its earlier years, and largely run,

voluntarily, by women.

The celebration is aimed at acknowledging the parents who kept the centre going financially before bulk government funding in 1993. In the early years, centre whānau had to pack in and out of a shared facility before moving in 1975 to its current premises on Mill Road.

The first playcentre in New Zealand opened in the Wellington suburb of Karori in 1941. The Playcentre Federation was established in 1948 with the aim of providing “leisure for mothers and opportunities for the social development of the preschool child”. In 2019, the 32 playcentre associations in New Zealand merged with the federation to create a single charitable trust – Playcentre Aotearoa.

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Stanley ‘very happy’ to be home

By Ian Carson

Stanley Curtis is a happy man – he’s back at the Ōtaki he loves and in a brand spanking new home.

He’s one of the tenants who’s been able to live in the seven new Kāinga Ora houses that have so far been built in Ōtaki. His is one of three on the corner of Mill Road and Dunstan Street. The other four are at the southern end of Matene Street.

Another 14 homes are in the pipeline: six will be tenanted soon at the northern end of Matene Street, six are in Kirk Street and two more in Tōtara Street.

When Stanley (Ngāti Hine) arrived back in Ōtaki earlier this year, it was a homecoming of sorts. Although brought up in the small Northland town of Ōtiria, he was in a relationship with Ōtaki woman Anita Rikihana-Barriball and came to Ōtaki to live.

He stayed on in a Kāinga Ora house in Aotaki Street after Anita died six years ago, but the site is earmarked for possible redevelopment. He was provided with another house in Paraparaumu.

It was a wrench for him, but it was tempered by a Kāinga Ora commitment to allow him to return when a new home was available.

That happened in February this year, with Stanley more than happy



With Stanley Curtis (second left) are, from left: Kāinga Ora senior communications advisor Fiona Lewis; project manager, construction and innovation, Daniel Eason; and senior housing support manager Kelly Giles. Photo Ōtaki Today

to be in a brand new home – and knowing the land was once part of the Rikihana whānau’s ancestral block that ran from Dunstan Street west to the township.

“I’m very happy to come back,” he says.

“I’m used to it [in Ōtaki] and there

are good people here. It’s not far to the shops and close to all the things I need. It’s a beautiful home – I’m proud to have a home like this.”

Now retired, Stanley has worked as a freezing worker, but spent most of his life driving long-haul trucks out of Auckland and working as a courier.

His home is one of the two 2-bedroom stand-alone houses on a property most recently occupied by Ray White real estate. Another is a 3-bedroom home.

The section at 22-26 Kirk Street will have five 3-bedroom and one 4-bedroom houses; 5-9 Matene Street

will have three 2-bedroom homes and three with 3 bedrooms; and at 12 Tōtara Steet, there will be one 2-bedroom and one 1-bedroom home.

All new Kāinga Ora houses meet Healthy Homes standards, and include double glazing, a heat pump full insulation, adequate ventilation and moisture control.

The homes are all constructed from a modular house pack fabricated in Upper Hutt by EasyBuild. The “flat packs” are then transported to Ōtaki for installation and connection to services. Once in place, Kāinga Ora building contractors add a deck, timber fencing and landscaping for good outdoor living.

“For these specific projects we were able to resource local labour and contracting for services such as landscaping,” says Kāinga Ora project manager Daniel Eason.

“These single-storey homes, which vary in size from one to four bedrooms, are not your traditional build – we have included the use of sustainable products, as well as smart design to make the homes look and feel more spacious.”

As of March 2024, there were 171 people in the Kāpiti Coast district on the Housing Register of the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) waiting for homes. Kāinga Ora uses the register to prioritise those who go to new homes.

Kia ora

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Council adopts Long-term Plan

Our Long-term Plan 2024–34 (LTP) was adopted and rates for 2024/25 were set at a Council meeting on 27 June.

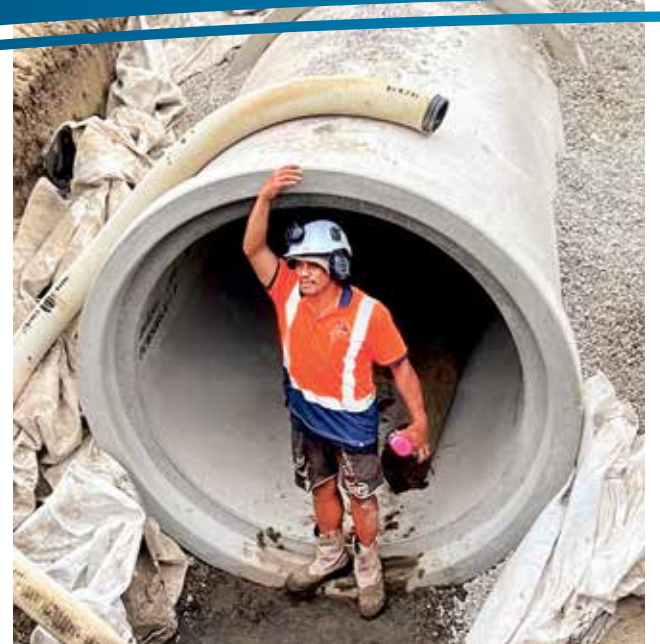
The work that we're required to do is far-reaching – and costly. While we worked hard to get operating costs down without compromising service levels, councillors acknowledge the 17.19 percent average rates rise for this year will be harder for some households than others.

We have a rates remission policy for homeowners facing extreme hardship. Eligible households may get a reduction in their rates or be able to postpone payments. There's also a government rates rebate scheme for low-income homeowners.

Council is committed to building a resilient future for Kāpiti. Reducing our debt, creating a climate change strategy and being bold in our emissions reduction goals, and balancing growth with housing needs and the environment, are just some of our LTP's priorities.

We'll also continue to deliver major infrastructure projects such as water, wastewater, and stormwater upgrades, the Raumati and Paekākāriki seawalls, and Te Ara Whetū (the Waikanae Library), and provide inclusive spaces like our pools, parks, and libraries for all to enjoy.

► **For information about help with rates visit:** kapiticoast.govt.nz/ratesrebates



Keep up-to-date with all of Council's activities, upcoming events and opportunities to get involved and give feedback.



Sign-up for Everything Kāpiti, our weekly update for Kāpiti residents:

kapiticoast.govt.nz/SignUp



Kaumātua Day to connect and celebrate

Keep the Matariki celebrations moving next Saturday 13 July at Tākiri o te ata Kaumātua Whakangāhau, an annual Kaumātua Day we're proud to support.

Kaumātua Day is a celebration of our kaumātua, with the community coming together to connect, sing, dance, perform and showcase the best cultural entertainment.

Head along to Te Raukura ki Kāpiti on 13 July from 8am when this free event starts with a pōwhiri, followed by entertainment, kai (food) stalls, hauora (health) checks, tamariki (kids) activities and more.

Nau mai, haere mai!

► **For more information visit:** kapiticoast.govt.nz/KaumatuadDay



Driver training available for eligible rangatahi

Our Mayors Taskforce for Jobs coordinator is looking for more youngsters keen to start the journey towards gaining their driver's licence.

Our free learner driver's licence course is for Kāpiti rangatahi aged 16–24 who are not in education or employment and needing to learn to drive.

Most entry-level jobs require a driver licence. Not having one can be a barrier for young people looking to get into the workforce.

The next five-day course runs from 27 July – 2 August at the Kāpiti Impact Hub in Paraparaumu. Registration is essential. Is there someone in your life this would be good for? Let them know!

► **Learn more or register at:** kapiticoast.govt.nz/MTFJ



Infrastructure upgrades making Ōtaki more resilient

The fire loop water pipe installation started recently along Riverbank Road. Over the next six months the new pipe will be laid along Riverbank Road, Old SH1, Waerenga Road and Dunstan Street. The fire loop will ensure there's enough water for firefighting and improve resilience of our water network.

We expect the pipeline connecting the new reservoir to the County Road pump station will be completed by the end of July. The last step is to chlorinate and pressure test the pipes.

The reservoir tank's concrete slab will be poured in one day in mid-to-late July, depending on weather conditions. At 200mm thick covering the 35-metre diameter reservoir it's a big job. It will take approximately 50 trucks of concrete with two concrete pumps working all day to pour the slab.

► **For more information visit:** kapiticoast.govt.nz/otaki-reservoir

Arthur saw nature with eyes of imagination

ARTHUR ALEXANDER BILLS
b. June 17, 1937, d. June 13, 2024
By son Lance Bills

A piece of Harrisons history ended when my dad, Arthur Bills, passed away on June 13.

Without Dad, Harrisons wouldn't be quite the same.

Mum (Judy) and Dad bought Harrisons Gardenworld at Peka Peka nearly 40 years ago. They both loved growing and supplying the many plants that graced the gardens of the Kāpiti Coast and surrounding districts. They built a close relationship with their customers and their many suppliers from throughout New Zealand. Many of those relationships endure today.

They were not only great growers of flowers, vegetables, fruits, and trees and shrubs – but also they grew a family, several successful businesses, and a great group of lifelong friends. They renovated eight houses and established eight quite unique gardens through their married years.

The last garden they developed together was at 149 Old Hautere Road, Te Horo, which after Mum died Dad renamed as Judy's Garden. There were many open garden weekends to raise funds for cancer-related charities and Arohanui Hospice. The garden was their pride and joy.

Some Ōtaki people may remember their first business, the Ōtaki Vegetable Market, at the highway shops where Property Brokers and Web2Print are now. It was initially run in partnership with Dad's younger sister Juanita and her husband Robert Eales.

It one of the first of many fruit and vegetable



Arthur Bills, above, and at right, the Ōtaki Vegetable Market in the 1960s, run by the Bills/Eales family. Next to the OVM is the Rāhui service station (Europa, now BP).
Photos supplied



stores that populated the highway from the early 1960s. I spent many hours of my childhood years at the Ōtaki Vegetable Market.

After that venture, Mum and Dad moved down the highway to Flavour Field Orchard at Te Horo (which is now a part of Penray Gardens). Those years were frantically busy and coincided with my college years – I would have been a stropgy teenager.

Flavour Field was in full production with about 10 acres (4ha) of crops, eventually supported by another 20 or so acres in Te Horo and Ōtaki. The strawberries were legendary (and still are at Penray) and Dad was a strong advocate for foliar feeding (applying liquid fertiliser directly to the leaves).

Then a garden centre called Harrisons came

onto the market. Dad was smitten. Here was the best of both worlds: customers he loved dealing with, and new plants he could grow (if they didn't sell he didn't have to rotary hoe them back into the ground like a paddock of cabbages).

Dad loved the many friends he made over many years. His 12 years hosting the garden show on Radio 2XX every Sunday morning deepened those relationships.

He remained active in the garden centre years after "retiring", continuing to propagate hydrangeas even when he needed two walking sticks for mobility. He'd just prop himself up to get the job done.

At his last home, in Levin, before moving to Parkwood Lodge in Waikanae, Dad continued to grow a variety of fruit and vegetables in his

small garden, and he rekindled a fondness for canaries, as he used to have them when he was much younger and had a pair or two for several periods during his life. He got serious about them when he discovered he could show them. He built several large cages for breeding, and surprised the canary world when he won repeated national prizes for his singing birds.

At Dad's service I quoted William Blake:
"The tree which moves some to tears of joy is in the eyes of others only a green thing that stands in the way.

Some see Nature all ridicule and deformity . . . and some scarce see Nature at all.

But to the eyes of the man of imagination, Nature is Imagination itself."

Dad saw nature with eyes of imagination.

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Kumara never need to tell us how sweet they are

Recently I was in a room celebrating some of the few Māori in the technology industry.

At the Hapori Matihiko Awards, we acknowledged amazing leaders such as Antony Royal and others who have worked in the industry, building and developing, supporting, or clearing the way for others. It would have been easy to think there are so many amazing Māori-led technology leaders, but in that room was a big chunk of our little population.

Māori make up less than 5 percent of the technology workforce and it’s a self-generating challenge. The fewer of those from home who travel a particular path means fewer footsteps from there that others can follow.

It’s the same challenge for women in tech, tangata moana in tech, and a whole bunch of others who are under-represented in industries where the opposite of the “if I can see it I can be it” kōrero comes from.

We’re not all visionaries like Antony who can see what’s not there yet and bring that vision to life.

Given the rant I had on stage and what I’m talking about now, it would be hypocritical to not mention I also received an award for working alongside some very cool rangatahi and grown-up mates to create Koha Tree, a tech platform to support kaupapa like Shoebox Christmas, stationery starter packs, and other community-led projects.

Throughout the night this whakataukī came up a couple of times: “Kāore te kumara e kōrero mō tōna ake reka – the kumara doesn’t speak of its sweetness.”

It’s one we often hear and associate with



humility, not bragging. Too often though, we take it to the extreme, and not celebrate and share the work we’ve done. Ahakoa te reka – regardless of how sweet.

Our tūpuna knew how important kumara was for our survival. They brought it with them from Hawaiiki because they knew its energy, fibre and vitamins would ensure we would thrive and not go hungry.

But making up 5 percent of the technology industry isn’t thriving, and our rangatahi are hungry. They tell us again and again that they need to see more Māori leaders in tech and hear their stories, so they know what’s possible, so they can follow those footsteps of possibility and plant their potential to grow into living icons like Antony.

Speaking of our sweetness was the whole point of these awards and is the reason I’m finger-punching my keyboard right now. If we don’t talk about the work we’re doing, about the options our young people have, who will? The current government?

Some of our politicians believe population

“We can’t leave it up to luck for our rangatahi to know they can thrive. We can’t leave it up to luck for them to be the next visionary seeing themselves and their values alive somewhere they don’t exist yet. Talk about your success. Tell our young people. Not for you or your kaupapa, job, or industry. But so our rangatahi and tamariki know what’s possible. Don’t put your humility in front of our success.”

and system-level numbers like 5 percent (or any of the other numbers we could talk about), happen through some huge coincidence of personal choices from Māori individuals. They’ll tell you what works for them should work for everyone, and different treatment addressing those numbers is racist, similar to apartheid or the KKK, or anything else that helps get clicks on their pics.

You can only make statements like: “When a New Zealander turns up at the emergency room, or when a child starts school, they don’t turn up thinking about their ethnic identity”, while cutting funds to address health inequities for Māori, when you’ve never had to think about your race because everyone else in the room or industry looks like you.

Or maybe you have, but you care more about votes than outcomes.

Scroll through the socials of our rangatahi and you’ll see what the rest of the world is telling them about possibilities, what normal looks like, and what footsteps are theirs for the following.

If we don’t show them the paths we’ve

stumbled on, tested and know work well, how many will find them by luck alone?

Five percent is the answer. The other 95 percent? They really don’t turn up thinking about their ethnicity, because in the tech industry, they don’t need to, they’re “normal” (not in a bad way, by the numbers). They have a 95 percent chance of finding footsteps to follow to that job, team, or industry. Speaking of sweetness is within our control, at least for us in that room, the lucky 5 percent.

Writing “I was there receiving an award” felt gross. That’s how ingrained is the call to be humble. But if I didn’t say that, would you know about it? Would you know we used that tech and our kaupapa to create 188,000 acts of aroha and kotahitanga?

If you’re reading this, I want you to thrive and know all the possibilities open to you. I want you to know that making things in tech to share the values you care about is a possibility and there are footsteps to follow. I have to talk about myself to do that, otherwise it’s just theoretical.

We can’t leave it up to luck for our rangatahi to know they can thrive. We can’t leave it up to luck for them to be the next visionary seeing themselves and their values alive somewhere they don’t exist yet.

Talk about your success. Tell our young people. Not for you or your kaupapa, job, or industry. But so our rangatahi and tamariki know what’s possible.

Don’t put your humility in front of our success.

Please.

■ Pera is a rap singer, writer, and founder of Shoebox Christmas. He received the Local Hero award at the New Zealander of the Year awards in 2019.

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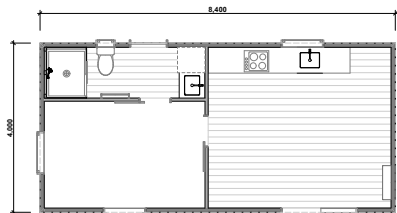
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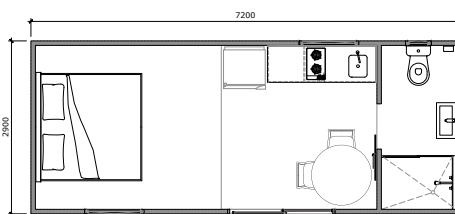
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- Corrugate + Timber (COLORSTEEL®)

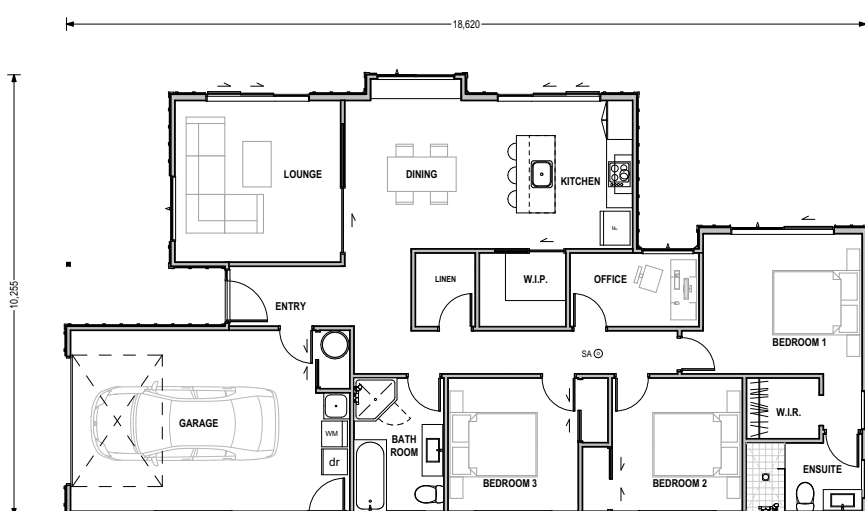
Features:

- Ranchslider door
- Window
- Trickle air vents to reduce condensation and increase airflow
- Bathroom with shower, toilet, vanity, and basin
- Kitchenette with cooktop, rangehood, sink, and cupboard space
- Vinyl plank flooring
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MAYOR'S VIEW: JANET HOLBOROW

Grateful to be able to celebrate and recharge with Matariki

As we pass through the coldest months of the year, I'm grateful that we have the opportunity to celebrate and recharge through our Matariki celebrations across the district.

It was particularly appreciated to have the chance to recharge after a huge week at council when we passed the Long-term Plan. The culmination of months of work, the plan focused on resilient infrastructure, creating a financial strategy that reduces debt, and prioritising projects over the coming years.

This includes a new library and community hub for Ōtaki in future years. Councillor Shelly Warwick is



pushing hard to start working on the project next financial year to make sure the project is everything it can be, and to start working on finding external funding. The Long-term Plan also allocates funding for the repair of Ōtaki Gorge Road.

As in previous years, Ōtaki hosted a number of incredible events for Matariki to mark this important time of the year, when we embrace

the opportunity to be guided by and respond to the environment around us.

The Maramataka Calendar is an important resource that enables us to do that. Launched on June 24 at Haruātai Park, it has once again been created by the Rongoā Collective and is the work of the collective's three pou (founders and leaders): Sharlene Maoate-Davis, Hemaima Wiremu and Pania Solomon.

The calendar has been a tradition of many years, and is published with the assistance of Te Whakaminenga o Kāpiti, a unique 30-year partnership between Kāpiti Coast District Council and the district's iwi.

The Rongoā Collective have again

created a beautiful and valuable resource, and this year's edition features recipes for well-being as well as information about the lunar cycles, and guidance around using these cycles not just for harvesting and growing, but for guiding our lives.

The calendar is the third in recent years to feature local rongoā, traditional Māori healing and well-being practices, and it makes so much sense for a calendar to feature this sort of guidance. As life continues to throw new challenges at us, having resources available to us that focus on individual and community well-being are vital.

The calendar launch was the perfect way to kick off Matariki

celebrations, which were in full swing over Matariki weekend.

From Troy Kingi and Anika Moa rocking Matariki on Moana, the Ōtaki College and Ramaroa night markets to the wonderful artworks created by the potters at the Star Glaze Mid Winter Festival there was something for everyone.

For many it was also an opportunity for some family time, and for remembering those who have left us. However we choose to celebrate Matariki, it's certainly a much needed recharge in the colder months of the year, and a valuable opportunity for connection and reflection.

■ Janet is Kāpiti's mayor

THE ELECTORATE: TIM COSTLEY, MP

Cancer – we all have a story to tell

Cancer has affected my family, and probably yours, too. I lost my dad to leukaemia. Some of my family have overcome cancer, others have lost their battle. We all have a story to share.

Last year the National Party promised to deliver more cancer treatments. I know how important this issue is for our region. I'm proud that we have now delivered on our



promise.

Healthcare has always been one of our biggest local issues. This announcement means that Pharmac will receive a \$604 million funding boost to ensure more Kiwis are able to access life-changing medicines. It is estimated that up to 26 cancer treatments and 28 other treatments will be funded due to this announcement.

About 175,000 people will benefit from the additional treatments in just the first year alone.

In 2023 we listed 13 cancer treatments. Up to seven of those will be included in this package, the remaining six will be replaced by alternatives that are as or more effective than those originally listed. Treatments for all cancer types in the pre-election manifesto list will be covered, but also several extra treatments, including blood cancers and other tumours.

I have received lots of feedback that this will make a big impact for people in our community. One constituent sent me this. "Tim. A big thanks for the cancer drug funding. I personally know a couple of people who will be big beneficiaries from this funding. One was paying \$10,000 a month, which clearly wasn't sustainable. A dream come true for them." Some of the newly funded cancer treatments will be available from October/November, with more phased in over the next year.

We are committed to delivering better treatment outcomes for individuals with cancer. We have increased breast screening eligibility to 74-year-olds, funded PET scanning accessibility for prostate cancer, expanded infusion services in Whanganui, invested in a new radiotherapy machine at Whangārei Hospital and provided an extra \$18 million a year to help people who need to travel for treatments like cancer. Importantly, we've set a target of 90% of patients receiving cancer management within 31 days of the decision to treat by 2030.

Healthcare in our region is something I am passionate about continuing to fight for and I am proud to be a part of a government that is prioritising healthcare for people in need. Our government is committed to delivering better outcomes for those with cancer.

■ Tim is MP for the Ōtaki electorate

CAM'S CORNER: CAM BUTLER

Is Ōtaki the Matariki capital of Aotearoa?

After being wiped out by a near-death bout of man flu for nearly three weeks of the past month it did take me a bit of time to work through what to write.

Boy racer meet ups

Meetings-a-plenty with business owners, KCDC staff and in particular Horowhenua police led to a decision that there was little the council could do. However, it was very positive to hear that the police were working on cracking down on anti-social car meet-ups, though hard to reassure Ōtaki business owners of this when I was not allowed to divulge details of the police operation to ensure that the news didn't get to the wrong people.

And it was a quiet Mātāriki in regards to car meet-ups in the end as they went elsewhere, which was fantastic!

Ōtaki rocks Mātāriki

And speaking of Mātāriki, OMG Ōtaki



you are awesome! So many events, so much energy and such a great feeling in our community. Ōtaki has to be the Mātāriki capital of Aotearoa. I can't wait to see what is dished up next year. Ka rawe!

Ōtaki & Te Horo Business Association

The working group presented back to local businesses on Wednesday, June 26, at Anam Cara and the work put in by the working group was plain to see. A plan for the association formation is now set, members are signing up and a committee is being cajoled, "voluntold" and encouraged to form.

The signs are looking good.

River bridge lane closure

No news again from Waka Kotahi and contractors, suspiciously quiet. . .

Vision Ōtaki

We had a number of sessions in the Ōtaki Library during the month and one evening where we wanted the Ōtaki community to come in and review the feedback. To be honest the number of people who came in was a bit underwhelming, even with being in the paper and all over Facebook. Consultation overload/fatigue? There has been a lot of consultation recently to be fair, but maybe there are better ways to get out to the community? I am keen to know your thoughts.

Keep being Sunny, Ōtaki.

- Like Ōtaki Community Board on Facebook

■ Cam is chair of the Ōtaki Community Board

TE HORO OUTLOOK: MICHAEL MOORE

The benefits of engaging with young and old

I recently spoke at the Waimea Women's Institute monthly Waikanae lunch meeting. Soon after, I spoke with some of our Kāpiti Youth Council members after a regular forum our mayor had created.

These two, often disparate groups, give me great optimism for our future.

Community involvement and civic participation are vital in shaping the places where we live and ensuring that local issues are addressed effectively, without the anger and hyperbole that often permeates online.

Both our senior population and younger rangitahai view community more positively, in most part. There's always work to do, but shouting online rarely achieves a better outcome, or any outcome. I often say, we're more connected than we've ever been, yet we're less connected as humans.

Community involvement is particularly crucial at the local level, where the impacts of decisions are most directly felt and where we can all see tangible results. I see one of the primary benefits of community involvement is the fostering of social cohesion. When we together address local issues, we build stronger relationships and a sense of belonging.

There's been no better example of this than the achievements of the Te Horo Hall



committee and all those who have supported that last six months of intensive fundraising. This committee was committed, focused and determined to achieve their goals. They put their community at the heart of an extraordinarily ambitious half-million-dollar goal that has almost been achieved (see p8).

Our Waikanae Community Board was pleased to contribute \$15,000 towards this project, noting that the hall is a community-owned facility and it was a once-in-a-generation opportunity to support this taonga.

I also successfully advocated for funds to upgrade the Friends of Te Horo Beach community safety cameras and an upgrade to the beachside defibrillator.

When there's a collective effort it helps create a supportive network where residents can rely on each other in times of need. Additionally, it encourages the sharing of diverse perspectives, leading to more comprehensive and innovative solutions to local problems. This certainly occurred for

the hall's fundraising project.

Furthermore, civic participation also enhances accountability and transparency in local government. When community members are engaged, they are more likely to hold elected officials accountable and ensure that decisions are made in the best interest of the community. This oversight is essential for preventing corruption and ensuring that public resources are used effectively. A well-informed and engaged electorate is more likely to participate in elections, leading to representatives who better reflect the community's values and priorities.

I'm a firm advocate of getting younger people involved in decision-making. They bring fresh perspectives, energy and a willingness to challenge the status quo. They are often more attuned to contemporary issues such as climate change, digital privacy and social justice, which can significantly affect communities. Encouraging their participation ensures these concerns are addressed and solutions are forward-thinking and sustainable.

- Next Waikanae Community Board meeting 7pm, Tuesday August 20, at Waikanae Community Hall, 28 Utauta St.

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

What the hell happened in that debate?

There are few more age-confronting spectacles than Joe Biden’s floundering efforts before 50 million US viewers in the recent CNN Presidential Debate.

Given that many, in the worldwide audience, see Biden as the only thing standing between civilisation and yet another Trump presidency, his performance was gut-wrenchingly grotesque and confounding.

Biden is a man with more than 50 years in politics, whose whole adult life has been spent in pursuit of the US presidency. In the debate, he entered into what he and his army of advisors knew was a pivotal point in the long campaign to hold office and keep the twice impeached and criminally convicted felon Trump from wreaking havoc on the world.

Keep in mind, too, that despite Trump’s own advancing age and clear signs of cognitive collapse, Biden had been roundly attacked for months as “Sleepy Joe” the guy who is not up to being president due to the trudge of time.

In a sense, Biden’s job was simple. Dispel all the talk of his decrepitness and make a bold statement for competency. Stand tall like a president and Trump will do the rest, looking like a crook, which is what he is.

Instead, what we got was a version of Joe Biden that shuffled to the podium and droned on in dreary and stammering monologues. At

a certain point, even that broke down as he seemed to wrestle with his own train of thought or remember why he was there – 50 million looked on with one hand over their mouth.

My personal reaction was one of shock and disbelief, but also sadness that someone with Biden’s history of service and robust debate appeared so diminished and humiliated at a moment that was massively important to so many.

I too am in that generation that is beginning to talk more about hip replacements and downsizing the house, than much else. So, there are many who felt empathy for Biden’s moment.

But part of growing old is recognising and accepting that, among many things, we have to slow down and get old with dignity and good grace. As Rolling Stone Keith Richards has inversely said, “getting old disgracefully”.

Part of the issue is that in our modern western world we celebrate youth and vitality, while relegating older people – just check out who gets to the front of the queue at a public hospital. But for indigenous people and in all our histories, older people are the celebrated ones, while younger people mark their time with respect.

Consider too that the opposition in the debate was one Donald J Trump, who lied and blustered through it by offering a view of America and the world that is full-frontal 1930s dystopia. Yet all of the attention has been on Biden’s tired performance, as if that’s of greater moment than the evil ways of a wannabe dictator who might well be sentenced to prison some time soon.

It does seem to add up to yet another sad commentary on the state of the world and



leadership. Few in the US wanted either candidate. Most would probably prefer a choice between, say, a Gavin Newsom (57-year-old California governor) and Niki Haley (52-year-old former UN ambassador), but democracy in the US doesn’t quite work that way.

As it is, both candidates were either an incumbent (Biden) or a past president (Trump), and break all the records for venerability, yet this is the binary choice American’s faced.

Polling showed voters had an unfavourable opinion of Joe Biden, thought he was too old for the job and wanted someone else leading the Democratic ticket in November.

As at the time of writing this, Biden is still in the race for president in 2025. But the black crows are circling, and a Kamala Harris (59 years old) substitution is the most likely

outcome. Polling shows voters now more than ever say they have an unfavourable opinion of the president, think he’s too old for the job and want someone else leading the Democratic ticket in November.

Biden is fond of telling people not to compare him with the almighty, but to the alternative. That’s exactly what’s happening right now.

ASIDE: I recently saw *Ka Whawhai Tonu – Struggle Without End* at the movies. Set in 1864 Aotearoa, it tells the story of a pivotal battle in the first land wars. It must be one of the best and most ambitious productions undertaken in Aotearoa and I highly recommend seeing it.

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

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■ For more information, visit www.practiceplus.nz

‘Shoddy and unsubstantiated conjecture’ in journal article

In my previous article (June) I looked at so-called turbo cancer and how anti-vax groups are spreading misinformation about the safety of the Covid vaccines.

In response, a reader emailed Ōtaki Today and referred to an article in British newspaper *The Telegraph*, with the headline: “Covid vaccines may have helped fuel rise in excess deaths. Experts call for more research into side effects and possible links to mortality rates.”

Here we have commentary not by some extreme anti-vax group, but one of Britain’s most popular

daily papers reporting on a scientific article by Sarah Mostert et al in the prestigious *British Medical Journal: Public Health*.

The headline was seized upon by anti-vaxxers as vindicating their long-held belief that Covid vaccines cause excess deaths, and that, at last, there was mainstream media acknowledgement – “The dam has broken” posted one antivax crusader.

As the anti-vaxers say, time to do some research. That means going to the primary source, Mostert’s journal article.

Three of the four authors are paediatric oncologists, which raises the question of why they would be writing a research report on pandemic excess mortality, a

topic outside their area of expertise. The fourth author is an “independent researcher” with no declared science qualifications or affiliations.

All a bit of a red flag, but let’s not judge a book by its cover – what is important is the information in the article.

And here we run into numerous problems. Their article looked at excess mortality across 47 countries during the pandemic, but they had simply cut-and-pasted publicly available data and methodology from an article by Karlinsky and Kobak and their World Mortality Dataset. So, this part of the article – showing that there were excess deaths – was not original research and added nothing to the existing literature.

It is hardly surprising that during a pandemic in which millions of people died that there will be excess mortality.

Datasets and studies consistently show that most of those deaths were caused by the Covid-19 virus, and that vaccination deaths were very rare and did not contribute noticeably; indeed, the vaccines saved millions of lives globally and overall, extensively reduced excess mortality.

But ignoring, and going completely against, an abundant literature, Mostert insinuates without any credible evidence that it was the Covid-19 vaccines that might have caused excess mortality.

Her article hypes up the seriousness of vaccine problems – for example, myocarditis – but fails to quantify the rarity of myocarditis deaths, or that myocarditis is more likely with Covid-19 infection. The article mentions possible vaccine autoimmune problems, but then, curiously, references it with a comprehensive review that describes all the autoimmune problems that might be caused by Covid-19 infection, and which emphasises that the best defence is vaccination.

While playing up the harms of vaccines, the article also tries to downplay the seriousness of Covid-19 infection, and, by implication, that it wasn’t that big a contributor to excess mortality. For example, by using biased low estimates of infection fatality rate (IFR) based on young populations, whereas the Western countries used in Mostert’s study all had ageing populations where Covid-19 was far more serious.

For a scientific paper it inexplicably refers to the Covid-19 vaccine as a “gene therapy”, for which there is no credible evidence. For this claim Mostert references a retired pharmacist, who also promotes the totally unsubstantiated notion of mRNA “vaccine shedding”, where people vaccinated with mRNA vaccines (that contain no live virus) can shed the vaccine and harm other people.

HEALTH SCIENCE



DR STEVE HUMPHRIES



Image by Gerd Altmann from Pixabay

Researchers have denounced the Mostert article as shoddy and unsubstantiated conjecture that uses “conspiracy-friendly language” to say something negative about the vaccines.

There is general agreement that the article provides no new findings, or any credible evidence linking excess deaths to vaccination.

Karlinsky, whose data and methodology Mostert used, has called for a retraction of the paper and an investigation into the peer review process. The Princess Máxima Center, where the three oncologist authors work, “distances itself from the publication”, stating that the oncologists are not experts in epidemiology and that “the study in no way demonstrates a link between vaccinations and excess mortality”.

In response to widespread academic criticisms of the paper, the *British Medical Journal* has published an “Expression of Concern” attached to the paper, clarifying the paper is under investigation and that it does not establish a credible causal relationship between vaccination and excess deaths.

The paper should have remained a trivial and deeply flawed study dismissed by the scientific community, but unfortunately it was picked up by *The Telegraph* and promoted without critical appraisal.

The science editor at *The Telegraph*, Sarah Knapton, has no listed science credentials and has previously been accused by the science community of cherry-picking information, using inappropriate and misleading sources, creating a false sense of debate, and elevating inaccurate claims that are not supported by evidence. *The Telegraph* has a tendency to lean towards catchy headlines.

There is plenty of blame to go around: from journal article authors to peer reviewers, to journal and newspaper editors, to anti-vax groups that weaponise the misinformation to proclaim that the Covid-19 vaccines have killed millions.

Public health misinformation is dangerous. Unfortunately, as the proverb says: “A lie can travel halfway around the world before the truth can get its boots on.”

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



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MAHI MĀRA/Gardening

How to prune a grape

Pruning your grapes every year to sidestep a heavy tangle of shoots. Grapevines have a ton of vigour and left to their own devices take over the garden.

The good news is grapes can handle a hard prune! So, if yours has left its trellis for dust and is a jumble of shoots, get stuck into it. You really don't need to worry about pruning too much off a grape!

A sound structure

Grapes are wonderfully malleable, easily trained over a variety of structures. No matter which way you frame it, be sure of these three things:

- **Strength:** There's a lot of weight in all those bunches of grapes, not to mention the vine itself. Put some effort into something solid and lasting.
- **Bird protection:** Can you easily throw a birdnet over?
- **Airflow and light:** Air keeps your grape healthy and light keeps it productive. Be sure of both with generous gaps (40-50cm) between each row of your structure, and between the ground and first wire. If you're training the grape above a covered deck, be sure of a generous gap between the roof and the grape.

Pruning the leader

The leader is the main stem that goes from the ground to the top of your structure. From the leader springs the cordons – the side arms that carry the fruit. You want only one leader. Choose the strongest, best placed one and remove all other competing shoots.

Pruning the cordons

Grape wood dries back after cutting, so wherever you cut, leave about a centimetre of wood above the bud to allow for this.

In the same way you want only one leader, you want only one cordon (side arm) per wire. Start by removing extra cordons, then go along each cordon and:

- remove all the dead wood
- remove thin, spindly shoots and long, fat, thumb-size shoots, keeping those that are pencil-size diameter – these are the most productive.
- create about a 10cm gap between each shoot by removing the weak ones and keeping the best.
- cut back your chosen shoots to 2-5 good buds, which turns the shoot into a spur. Where the shoot gets spindly and weak is your deciding moment. Cut it there. You're in the business of keeping healthy, pencil-size wood only.
- trim the ends of the cordon, to fit your frame. There's no advantage in letting it scramble and tangle.

Renewal

When a cordon loses its mojo, cut it off. A new shoot (or two) will come the next spring. If possible, choose one that comes off the leader, about 10cm below the wire so that when you train it onto the wire it comes at an easy angle.

Restoring old vines


If you've inherited a grape that's super tangled and seriously out of control, choose the strongest shoot coming from the base to be your replacement leader and cut the rest down. Grapes can take it. Sometimes it's simpler to begin again.

■ *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.*

EDIBLE GARDEN

KATH IRVINE

Go along the cordons and prune shoots back to 2-5 buds.
Photos Kath Irvine



HELPLINES AND LOCAL MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

It's OK to seek help. Never hesitate if you're worried about you or someone else. If someone has attempted suicide or you're worried about their immediate safety:

- call your local mental health crisis assessment team 0800 745 477 or take them to the emergency department of your nearest hospital
- if they are in immediate physical danger to themselves or others, call 111
- stay with them until support arrives
- remove any obvious means of suicide they might use (eg ropes, pills, guns, car keys, knives)
- stay calm, take deep breaths
- let them know you care
- keep them talking – listen and ask questions without judging
- make sure you're safe.

For more information, talk to your local doctor, medical centre, hauora, community mental health team, school counsellor or counselling service. If you don't get the help you need, keep trying.

Services for support & information:

- Lifeline 0800 543 354
- Samaritans 0800 726 666 – confidential support if lonely or in emotional distress
- Depression Helpline 0800 111 757 or text 4202 – talk to a counsellor about how you're feeling or to ask questions
- Healthline 0800 611 116 – advice from trained registered nurses
- www.depression.org.nz
- Local counselling: Bill Logan, Te Horo Beach. 027 243 1098. bl.co.nz

For children and young people

- Youthline 0800 376 633, free text 234, email talk@youthline.co.nz or webchat at youthline.co.nz (webchat avail 7-11pm) – for young people, whānau and friends.
- What's Up 0800 942 8787 (0800 WHATSUP) or webchat at www.whatsup.co.nz from 5-10pm for ages 5-18.
- Kidsline 0800 543 754 (0800 KIDSLINE) – up to 18 years.



Bowel screening is easy

In MidCentral (Ōtaki to Norsewood), free bowel screening is now available to Māori and Pacific people from the age of 50 to 74. The screening age is 60 to 74 for everyone else.

You've got this!

Free - Do it at home

A bowel screening test kit will be sent to your home every two years. This simple test can help find bowel cancer early when it can often be successfully treated. It could save your life.

To find out more go to timetobowelscreen.nz or talk to your doctor.

Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Government

Health New Zealand
Te Whatu Ora



National Bowel Screening Programme

Build organisational muscle with organic growth

In this column, I want to share six strategies rooted in my experience that can catalyse organic growth and transform your business vision into reality.

Organic growth involves scaling your business using internal resources and capabilities. Unlike inorganic methods – relying on acquisitions or mergers for quick gains – organic growth focuses on sustainability and long-term viability, essential for enduring success. And here is the thing – growing organically builds stronger “organisational muscle” and positions you to keep getting stronger, no matter what the economic circumstances might throw at you.

Organic vs inorganic growth

Experience has taught me that while inorganic growth might offer rapid expansion, it often lacks the stability and integration offered by organic methods. Organic growth, grounded in genuine development efforts, fosters robust customer relationships and a strong company culture. The two aren’t mutually exclusive,

though. Start with getting stronger muscles so the rest of the work you do also benefits.

There are several benefits to growing your business organically – it’s cost-effective, sustainable, and gives you control over your business trajectory. It strengthens customer loyalty and enhances your ability to adapt to market dynamics – crucial for lasting success.

So, how should you do it?

- 1. Improve customer experience:** Prioritising customer experience is fundamental. Exceptional service turns customers into advocates, driving word-of-mouth and repeat business – key elements of organic growth.
- 2. Foster continuous innovation:** In a landscape that rewards agility, continuous innovation in products, services and processes keeps your business ahead. For example, integrating executive and management

YOUR BUSINESS



CHRIS WHELAN

development programmes can instill a culture of creativity and problem-solving, as well as demonstrating a strong commitment to your team.

- 3. Broaden market reach:** Expanding into new markets diversifies your customer base and opens new revenue streams. Effective marketing growth strategies can accelerate this expansion. In changing and challenging economic times,

looking for new ways to serve will stand you in good stead.

- 4. Invest in team development:** Your team’s growth fuels your business’s growth. Investing in effective team coaching strategies enhances skills and morale, driving productivity and innovation.

- 5. Optimise operational efficiency:** Streamlining operations maximises resources and

reduces waste, setting a solid foundation for growth. Consider adopting lean principles and automation to enhance efficiency. The best businesses are run by great processes and systems, with well-trained and motivated teams running those systems. When done right, you get consistency, time back and higher productivity.

- 6. Cultivate strategic partnerships:** Strategic alliances extend your reach and resources. Partnerships can be pivotal, offering new avenues for business strategy planning and market penetration. Two heads typically are better than one and the counsel and insights to be had are ignored at your peril.

Implementing Your Growth Strategy
Implementing these strategies requires a blend of patience, persistence, and adaptability. By focusing on organic growth, your business can achieve substantial and sustainable success.

■ If you’re looking to improve your team’s performance, contact us at the Centre of Business Excellence (chris@wcbe.co.nz or 022 2332 669).



Image by Pixabay

Making sense of changes to the brightline test

As of July 1, the “brightline test” is down from a 10-year period, to a two-year period. What does this mean for you?

What is the brightline test?

The brightline test is essentially New Zealand’s version of a capital gains tax on residential property. If you buy a residential property and then sell it within the brightline period, any profit – or “capital gain” – on that sale is taxed.

The profit is taxed the same as income. Whatever profit is made is treated as income and then taxed at whatever tax rate that would mean – for example, if your annual income was \$70,000 and you made a profit of \$50,000 on top of that from selling a residential property within the brightline period, that \$50,000 would be taxed at 33 percent, the same as if you had made that money from your usual income.

Don’t freak out though!

Your “main home” is exempt from brightline rules. Your main home is generally defined as:

1. Where you spend more than 50 percent of your time during the brightline period, or
2. Where you use more than 50 percent of the property’s area as your main home during the brightline period.

For example, if you live in part of your home that makes up 25 percent of the property area, and rent out the other 75 percent, and then sell within the brightline period, you would likely

MATTERS OF LAW



BROOKE MCGOWAN

be taxed on any profit.

Or, if you sell your property within the brightline period but had only been living at the property for 30 percent of that period of time, you would likely be taxed on any profit.

Why was the brightline test introduced?

The brightline test was introduced at a time when the property market was a bit out of control. The idea was to start

taxing profits that were being made from property speculation and hasty buying and selling of residential property – with the effect being a slowed down and more affordable property market.

There were some looser rules in place before the brightline test, but the brightline test really tightened these up.

In summary...

The brightline test changes will make little to no difference to most people who own one property that is their “main home”. The changes do mean, however, that if you own multiple properties and have been thinking about selling, you might now be able to do so without having to worry about being taxed on any profit made.

There are intricacies and rules for different situations that have not been covered here, so if you are thinking of selling, you should consult with an accountant to be sure where you stand.

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

Nominations called for new business committee

A new Ōtaki and Te Horo business association took a step closer with an establishment working group meeting at Anam Cara on June 28.

The meeting, attended by about 60 local business people and some elected members of council, provided an update on progress and called for membership registrations from businesses.

One attendee suggested that only IRD registered businesses should be able to apply for membership, ensuring only legitimate business people would have a say in the operations of the association.

Nomination forms for positions on the

establishment committee were also available. Registered members are invited to the next meeting, at Anam Cara on July 24. This meeting will vote in a chair, treasurer, secretary and a committee of 3-4 members.

The working group would then hand over operations to the new committee, which would establish a legal entity and provide Kāpiti Coast District Council with a business plan allowing it to access about \$100,000 of funding transferred from Elevate Ōtaki.

The money was originally part of a larger funding package provided by KCDC and NZTA Waka Kotahi to Elevate for promotional work during and after the expressway construction.

End of an era for Penray Gardens

The last fruit and vegetable store on what was the “Golden Mile” of stores south of Ōtaki is closing.

Penray Gardens is closing the retail store on Friday, July 12, with the Bertelsen family saying it’s a decision made “with a heavy heart”. The pick-your-own (PYO) business at the gardens will continue after the annual shutdown for Penrays over the winter.



Penray Gardens is owned and operated by Brent and Jane Bertelsen. Brent is a fourth-generation gardener.

His grandfather, Fredrick Bertelsen, came to New Zealand from Denmark in the early 1900s. He lived in Lower Hutt and grew tomatoes, a tradition carried on by the next three generations of Bertelsens, who established gardens in Ōtaki.

Fredrick’s son, Victor (Vic) Bertelsen, moved to Dunstan Street, Ōtaki, to also grow tomatoes (the Bertelsen Court subdivision is named after the family).

Fredrick’s grandson, Raymond (Ray), and wife Penny Bertelsen moved to SH1, south of Ōtaki, in 1960 and built the shop selling tomatoes, naming it Penray Gardens (after Penny and Ray).

Meantime, the Salut store in the Ōtaki township is also closing.

Noted for its gourmet pies, the store will close by July 20, according to a post by store owners Joe and Carey Player.

The couple say they are opening again at a Wellington location. They “looked at all the options to keep the current store open at the same time as the Wellington location, but it just isn’t viable”.

BUSINESS PROFILE

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

“I get real satisfaction out of helping people, whether they’re commercial operators or just the average home gardener.”

Dave Eastwood, Matai Mower Repairs



Dave Eastwood with a new weed-eater at his workshop in Riverbank Road. Photo Ōtaki Today

Dave morphs into Ōtaki’s expert mower man

Dave Eastwood has an interesting history for a man who’s an expert in fixing small machinery.

He now operates Matai Mower Repairs on Riverbank Road servicing and selling lawn mowers, trimmers, chainsaws and the like, but he started his working life as an telecommunications engineer. He was for several years a telecommunications engineer for the New Zealand Post Office in the days before exchanges became digital.

About 1987, he moved to Australia and was soon appointed to project manage several highly technical telecom jobs. He also took his OE to Europe, and when not travelling, had a job with the British Post Office.

Later he had an assignment to Fiji, where he successfully established the first telecoms IP network for Fiji Electricity. It was there he met his future wife, Sala, and they had their first of

what was to be three children. Sala now works as a nurse.

Back in New Zealand, Dave worked for a while as a project manager for Geni, the successor to Telecom, and Fujitsu, before becoming a telecommunications and IT contractor for several government departments.

However, about 10 years ago, he had a life-changing cancer diagnosis.

“I knew something was badly wrong, but my doctor told me I needed to stop smoking and that I had celiac disease,” Dave says. “My wife convinced me I needed a second opinion and eventually I found out what it was.”

Dave was told it was stage 4, so he wasn’t sure what his future might be. He remained positive but his recovery was both debilitating and slow. It took five years before he felt well enough to return to work.

He worked for a couple of years for the

Aviation Security Service, during which time the Covid pandemic struck. He was assigned to help out with security at the managed isolation and quarantine hotels for repatriated Kiwis.

Then he met Dave O’Callaghan, who was operating a mechanics business in Riverbank Road. Dave Eastwood was to help the mechanic with business advice, but the other Dave realised he had some nous tinkering with the mowers and chainsaws that needed repairing. The business mentoring was forgotten as Dave became busy fixing the machines.

When Dave O’Callaghan sold to Elliot Parkinson, the business was split. Elliot’s Mototech took on the servicing of motorcycles, quad bikes and ride-on mowers, and Dave Eastwood set up Matai Mower Repairs to service and sell the smaller gear.

Three years down the track, Dave is loving it. “I’m not making the money I’m used to,

but I’m my own boss – I can make my own decisions, and I get to talk to people about all sorts of things, not just repairs or a new mower.

“I get real satisfaction out of helping people, whether they’re commercial operators or just the average home gardener.”

In his short time in business, Dave has built a local reputation for fair prices and quality workmanship. He will do only the work required and give an honest opinion about whether customers might be wasting their money.

Dave services and repairs mowers, chainsaws (including chainsaw sharpening), trimmers, water blasters, blowers and generators. He also sells quality machinery made by Briggs & Stratton, Masport, Echo, Shindaiwa and Ego.

His advice for winter? Get your gear serviced now so everything works when spring comes.

■ Matai Mower Repairs, 36 Riverbank Rd. 06 262 9007 or 0204 6282 46. www.mataimowers.co.nz



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HĪTŌRIA/History

The key that opened the post office

The grey box was sitting neatly in Storeroom 1, in Bay 1 and on Shelf 3 – its identifier was Box 4. Opening the lid I saw, enclosed in bubble wrap, an object that turned out to be a sterling silver key about 14cm long.

In 1902, Ōtaki's post office, the town's second, was destroyed in a fire. It took about two years before substantial progress was made on building its replacement. As *The Evening Post* of March 28, 1904, reported: "It is two years since Ōtaki's Post Office was destroyed by fire, and during that time the public have had to put up with the greatest inconvenience by having to do all their business in an evil smelling little lobby about 7ft by 9ft [2m x 2.5m]. Tenders have at last been called for a new building, and

DAVID LEDSON



ŌTAKI HERITAGE
Te Whare Pūhure Taonga o Ōtaki

we are to have a fine brick Post Office larger than the one recently erected at Levin. . . ."

After what was referred to at the opening of the building as "battle of the sites that had raged at Ōtaki", it was decided that the new post office would be built on what was known as the "clock site" at the then end of Mill Road. A clock tower that had been placed there in memory of Emily McWilliam, who had died in May 1899 and was the wife of Rev James McWilliam, was to be demolished and

the clock placed in the gable of the new building. (James McWilliam had taken charge of the Māori Mission at Ōtaki after Bishop Hadfield's retirement, serving in that role from 1868 until 1906.)

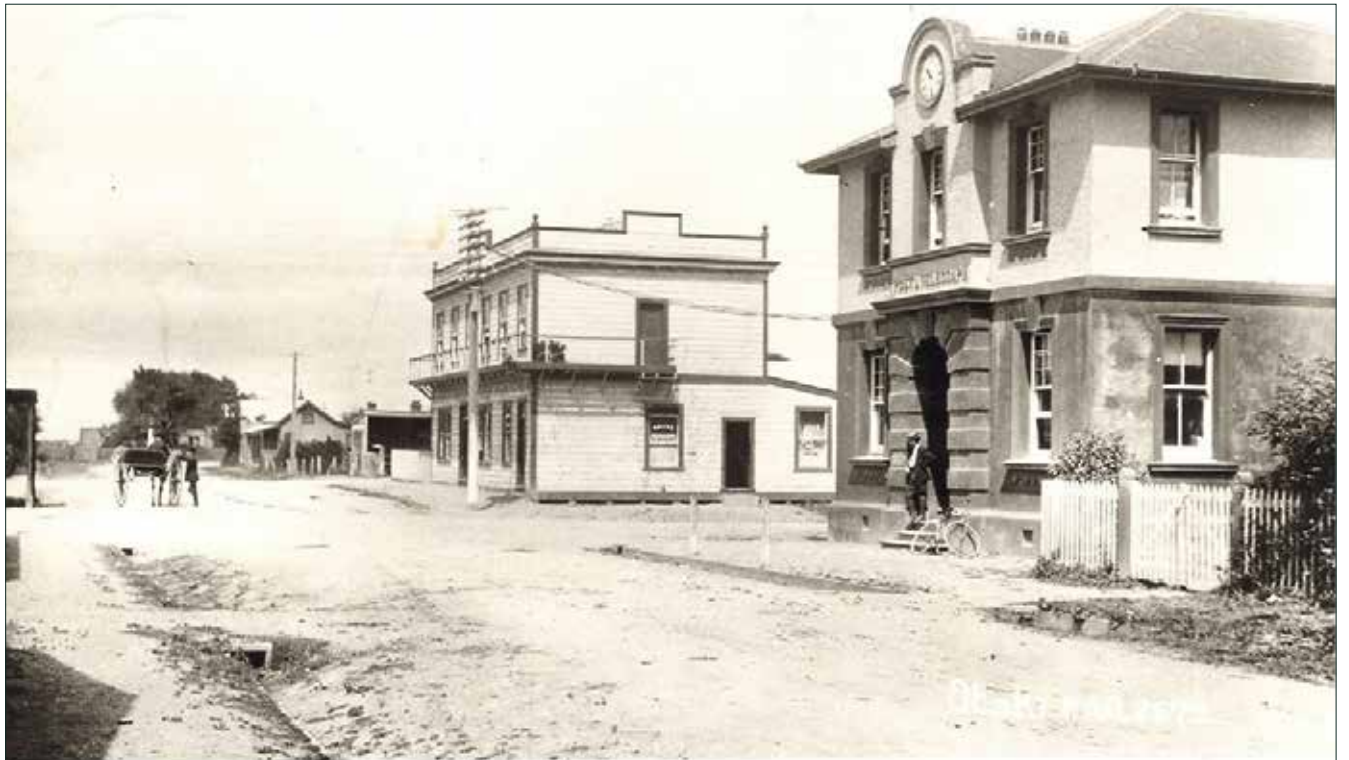
The post office was designed by John Campbell, who from 1899 was in charge of the architectural design of government buildings in New Zealand. It was based on one of his two standard designs for small post offices.

On the ground floor were a public office, mail room, postmaster's room, public telephone bureau and private telephone room. Also on the ground floor in a single-story annex at the rear, were a dining room and kitchen. A sitting-room and four bedrooms filled the first floor.

The new post office was opened on May 11, 1905, during which the chair of the local committee, Herbert Freeman, welcomed New Zealand's Postmaster General, Sir Joseph Ward, on behalf of the citizens of Ōtaki.

He presented Sir Joseph with a silver key to open the building; a key that references the opening to a day earlier on May 10, 1905.

The key was made by well-known Wellington silversmith Frank Grady, who on his arrival in New Zealand in 1886 set himself up as a jeweller and "fancy goods importer" in Willis Street. It appears that engraving was one his company's specialties, and this is reflected in the key's workmanship and design.



The Post Office and Telegraph Hotel in 1914, looking down Rangiora Road.

Photo Ōtaki Heritage



The silver key used to open Ōtaki's second post office in 1902, and at right, the intricate bow of the key.

Photos supplied

On that part of the key which is held in the hand, and which is known as the bow, there is considerable detail. Some items of national significance reflecting the status of the occasion are evident – several ferns (at that time European settlers saw native ferns as being a national symbol and "Fernland" was evidently one of the first nicknames for New Zealand), and, at the bottom of the bow, a kiwi. Then there are items reflecting the building purpose – at the top of the bow a steam train – a principal means of moving mail – and on either side, two envelopes. Straddling it are telegraph wires.

Having got this far with interpreting the design, I hit an obstacle when it came to the plaque in the centre of the bow. While, it seems clear that the "W" is a link to Sir Joseph Ward, I struggled to interpret the other two shapes.

A breakthrough was realising that Joseph Ward's full name was

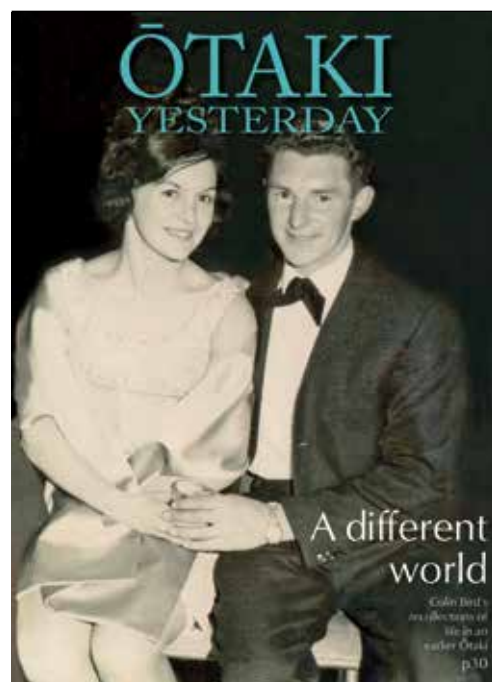
Joseph George Ward

and so the two shapes represent the "J" and "G".

Then I realised that while it is commonly referred to as the "post office", the building is actually a "post" and "telegraph" building. And

while the telegraph lines acknowledge the second role, just as envelopes and trains go together, so do telegraph lines and telegraph(morse) keys. Consequently, it is likely that the telegraph key is represented in the "J" and "G" shapes.

The silver key was not the last silver object presented to Sir Joseph Ward during his political career. Just over a year after his visit to Ōtaki, he became prime minister. It was in this role that on November 6, 1908, he drove the last spike into the North Island main trunk railway, and was presented with the silver spike to commemorate the event. While the key remains in Ōtaki, with Ōtaki Heritage, the spike is in Te Papa, Wellington.



Ōtāki Yesterday

The most recent issue of Ōtāki Yesterday is available now. Read about the remarkable gymnastics club Mari Housiaux created and took to the top of the New Zealand gymnastics scene; the outdoorsmen of the Chaney family; Peter McBeth, whose butcher family were a big part of Ōtāki life through the middle part of last century; and the irrepressible Elsie Morgan. Also the early life of Colin Bird, who grew up in Ōtāki, married a local, lived in Australia for more than 30 years, and returned to where it all began.

Available for \$25 a copy. 2022, 2021 and 2020 editions also available for \$25 each + p&p.

Ōtāki's historical magazine is available now, featuring fascinating stories about the people and places of old Ōtāki.

Contact debby@idmedia.co.nz or text 027 285 4720



OLD ŌTAKI PHOTO: Haruātai Park, 1982

Compiled by Debbi Carson



The photo at left, taken in 1982, shows new tennis courts and the uncovered Ōtaki Pool in the foreground at the undeveloped Haruātai Park. In 1982 the pool was still a year away from being heated, and it would be eight more years before it was permanently covered. The Montessori school was yet to be built and the Scout hall still to be moved on site. The house with the green roof on the town side of the pool was a doctor's residence; the red-roofed buildings at the centre of the photo housed the maternity hospital. In 1982 market gardens dominated the Ōtaki landscape, as evidenced by the rows of gardens seen to the left of the pool, on both sides of Mill Road. The Domain is shown before the new grandstand was built. Away to the top left (south) of the photo are the sewage ponds at Riverbank Road for the newly laid Ōtaki sewerage system.

– Photo courtesy of Ōtaki Heritage

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 especially if you have additions or corrections to captions.



ŌTAKI SCHOOL 1954.
We now have names for the children in the 1954 photo of Form 2 at Ōtaki School.
Back row: Mervyn Page, Trevor Martin, David Fulford, Leonard Cootes, Alistair Rhodes, Keith Dellar, Peter Denzel, Peter Selwood, David Leslie.
Row 3: Kevin Gower, Robert Knox, Sam Chung, Gordon Fraser, Ray Gibbard, Jim Joe, Pat/Gavin Kendrick, Peter Jensen, Gavin Bevan, John Gunderson.
Row 2: Heather Tilbury, Jennifer Chung, Janice Brown, unknown, Pam Taylor, Honor/On Chung, Georgia Johnson, Kathleen Gowan.
Front row: Shirley Raika, Heather Bird, Fay Mather, Jennifer Mears, Ann Harper, Bronwen Pearson, Raema Dinnison, Audrey Baker, Joyce Sue, Janice Robinson, Anne Young.
Teacher: Howard Townrow
Thanks to Sam Chung for the photo and names, and Janice King (nee Robinson).



Winter viewing

With the shortest day of the year just behind us, here are a pair of wintry archival viewing suggestions from Ngā Taonga Sound & Vision.

These two 1929 short films were made by the New Zealand Government Publicity Office. Both promote Tongariro National Park as a winter holiday destination, and both are silent films that use title cards to wax poetic about the attractions on offer.

To watch these items, visit www.ngataonga.org.nz and search for the title or the reference number.

Reference number F20526: *Snowdrift in the Winter Resort of the North.* Snowdrift accompanies a climbing party as they take in spectacular views of mountains Ngauruhoe and Ruapehu.

Reference number F1696: *Tongariro: In New Zealand's National Park.* Tongariro opens with shots of the now-closed Chateau Tongariro, then moves on to light-hearted footage of thrill-seekers playing in the snow.

■ Ngā Taonga cares for a collection spanning over 120 years of Aotearoa New Zealand's sound and moving image history. Get the Ngā Taonga newsletter using the Sign Up button at the bottom of the home page.



Snowball fight near the Whakapapa Hut, Tongariro National Park, 1929. Auckland Libraries Heritage Collections AWNS-19210901-31-03

TAMARIKI FUN

Drop your coloured picture in to **Riverstone Café** by August 1 to win a \$20 book voucher or an *Animals in Vehicles* book.

OT KIDS' NEWS



CRABS USE RUBBISH FOR THEIR HOMES

A recent study by Polish scientists has found that Hermit crabs, which usually live inside sea shells or old snail shells, are turning to rubbish instead. After looking at 100s of hermit crab images on social media the scientists found 386 crabs living inside artificial shells. Of these, 85 percent were using plastic caps, others used metal or glass rubbish. Researchers are unsure why they are choosing artificial shells, but they do have their theories. Some believe the crabs are struggling to find natural shells and are using whatever they can find. Others think plastic may be more attractive because it is lighter and easier to carry. It may also provide better camouflage in an environment filled with trash. While this study didn't look at what harm artificial shells might be doing to the hermit crabs, a 2019 study found that more than half a million hermit crabs on a remote Indian Ocean island die each year after getting trapped inside plastic items like bottles. The study was published in the journal *Science of the Total Environment* on February 25, 2024.



Photo: Invercargill City Council

FIVE BABY TUATARA FOUND

The chances of discovering baby tuatara in an abandoned enclosure recently has been described as similar to "finding a needle in a haystack". Five baby tuatara have been found at the Invercargill Museum demolition site, surprising experts who thought the tuatara there could not breed. Demolition was paused when the first four baby tuatara were found in their old enclosure, and after extensive monitoring a fifth was found. The juvenile tuatara are less than a year old, and range in size from 110-120mm, and weighing 5-9g. The baby tuatara have been moved to a temporary home in Queens Park's new tuatara facility and are now on display for the public. The discovery came from an area where Brothers Island tuatara were housed, a species previously believed unable to breed at the museum.



MOON ROCKS AND SOIL FOR STUDY

China's unmanned spacecraft Chang'e-6 has successfully returned to Earth after a two-month journey to the far side of the Moon. It landed in the Inner Mongolia desert, carrying rare rock and soil samples from the unexplored far side of the Moon. Scientists are hoping to learn more about how planets are formed. Landing on the Moon's "dark side" is risky, and a computer system was used to navigate and avoid obstacles, landing in the South Pole-Aitken Basin. This crater is always facing away from Earth and is difficult to reach due to its distance and rough terrain. A drill and robotic arm were used to gather lunar soil and rocks.

COLOURING COMPETITION



NAME:

AGE:

PHONE:

WORD MAKER



Tuatara are a rare reptile found only in Aotearoa New Zealand. They are the last survivors of an order of reptiles that thrived in the age of the dinosaurs. If you want to find out more go to: doc.govt.nz

How many words can you make from the word TUATARA? Answers on page 23. Good luck, have fun.

You can make 19 words from TUATARA!
And if you don't know the meanings look them up.

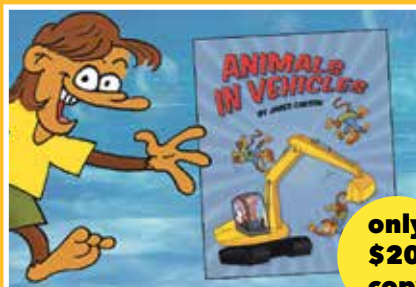


CADÉ'S WORD PUZZLE

SCHOOL HOLIDAYS



Find the following words in the puzzle. Words are hidden. You can go across → down ↓ or diagonally ↘
BOUNCING GAMING RUNNING CRAFTING
KIDS SWIMMING DRAWING PARK WEEKEND
FAMILY RELAXING YOUTUBE



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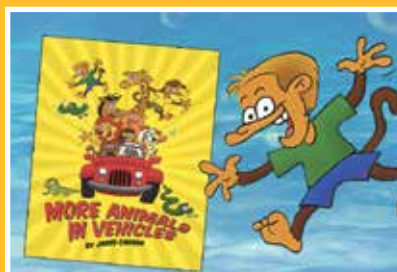
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THE CROSSWORD #NZNZ1927C (answers below right)

1	2		3		4		5	6		7		8
9							10					
11					12		13					
14		15					16		17		18	
19				20					21			
22							23					
24							25					

SUDOKU PUZZLES thepuzzlecompany.co.nz
HARD #70E 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 at right..

			4			2	3	6
			2			1		
4				5			9	
	5	6						
8		3	6		4	5		2
						6	1	
	4			7				5
		1			2			
6	2	5			9			

- ACROSS
1. Overact (3,2,2)

4. Shoes with no heels (5)

7. Tiny amount (4)

8. Wisely (8)

10. Acoustic performance venue in Oamaru, Wellington and Whanganui (5,5)

12. Annual pay (6)

13. Compassionate (6)

15. Respond impudently (6,4)

18. Type of curable cancer diagnosed in 4000 NZ men annually (8)

19. Pacific island vegetable (4)

20. Mature (5)

21. Not done properly (colloq)
- (4,3)

DOWN

1. Bird on the \$5 note (5)

2. Maternal (8)

3/9. Two elite NZ sportswomen who became dames in 2022 (6,10)

4. Neighbourhood grocery store chain that began in NZ in the 1920s (4,6)

5. Territory (4)

6. Silhouette of a city (7)

9. See 3

11. Decorative light, popular in the 1970s (4,4)

12. Person in charge on a boat (7)

14. Spasm, tic (6)

16. Rat (Māori) (5)

17. Henhouse (4)



SUDOKU SOLUTION #70E

5	1	7	4	9	8	2	3	6
3	8	9	2	6	7	1	5	4
4	6	2	3	5	1	8	9	7
1	5	6	7	2	3	4	8	9
8	9	3	6	1	4	5	7	2
2	7	4	9	8	5	6	1	3
9	4	8	1	7	6	3	2	5
7	3	1	5	4	2	9	6	8
6	2	5	8	3	9	7	4	1

- TUATARA WORD MAKER
- ANSWERS from page 22:
- 5-letter words: 1. attar
2. tatar. 4-letter words:
3. aura 4. tart 5. taut.
- 3-letter words: 6. art 7. att
8. rat 9. rut 10. tar 11. tat
12. tau 13. tut 14. uta.
- 2-letter words: 15. aa
16. ar 17. at 18. ta 19. ut.

NZ MUSIC TRIVIA QUIZ

Think you know a bit about kiwi music? Answers below.

- What was the top NZ song voted by Australasian Performing Right Association (APRA) in 2001?
- Who was our first pop superstar of the TV age – she was the swinging, groovy face of youth on pop show C’Mon?
- What was the name of the awards that were the forerunner of today’s New Zealand Music Awards?
- Who sang ‘God Defend New Zealand’ only in te reo Māori (‘Aotearoa’) before the All Blacks versus England match at the 1999 Rugby World Cup in England?
- In February 1949 a 78 rpm disc featuring what song was written by Ruru Karaitiana and sung by Pixie Williams. It became the first record wholly produced in NZ from composition to pressing. It provided a debut hit-seller for the New Zealand-owned TANZA (To Assist New Zealand Artists) record label.
- Ella Marija Lani Yelich-O’Connor is a singer-songwriter professionally known as who?
- In the late 1970s, Dave Dobbin’s band, Th’ Dudes, shot to success with the song Bliss. What was the song about?
- Musician Keith Urban is known for his work in country music. Was he born in NZ or Australia?
- Is singer, actor, and television personality Stan Walker NZ or Australian-born?
- In 1980 which band put NZ music firmly on the international scene with their album True Colours? They were the first NZ act to break into the highly lucrative British and US markets.



Ōtaki River entrance tides
July 12 – August 16
<https://www.metservice.com/marine/regions/kapiti-wellington/tides/locations/otaki-river-entrance>
Please note: The actual timing of high and low tide might differ from that provided here. Times are extrapolated from the nearest primary port for this location, so please take care.

		HIGH	LOW	HIGH	LOW	HIGH
WED	10 JUL	00:26	06:41	12:47	18:49	-
THU	11 JUL	01:04	07:20	13:26	19:28	-
FRI	12 JUL	01:44	08:00	14:06	20:09	-
SAT	13 JUL	02:27	08:42	14:51	20:54	-
SUN	14 JUL	03:14	09:29	15:41	21:47	-
MON	15 JUL	04:06	10:20	16:38	22:48	-
TUE	16 JUL	05:02	11:18	17:42	23:53	-
WED	17 JUL	06:01	12:20	18:45	-	-
THU	18 JUL	-	00:56	07:01	13:20	19:43
FRI	19 JUL	-	01:52	07:58	14:15	20:34
SAT	20 JUL	-	02:43	08:51	15:05	21:21
SUN	21 JUL	-	03:31	09:41	15:51	22:05
MON	22 JUL	-	04:17	10:29	16:36	22:49
TUE	23 JUL	-	05:03	11:15	17:20	23:34
WED	24 JUL	-	05:49	12:02	18:05	-
THU	25 JUL	00:19	06:36	12:49	18:52	-
FRI	26 JUL	01:07	07:24	13:37	19:41	-
SAT	27 JUL	01:57	08:14	14:28	20:34	-
SUN	28 JUL	02:50	09:07	15:24	21:33	-
MON	29 JUL	03:48	10:05	16:29	22:40	-
TUE	30 JUL	04:53	11:11	17:41	23:53	-
WED	31 JUL	06:03	12:23	18:55	-	-
THU	1 AUG	-	01:03	07:13	13:31	19:58
FRI	2 AUG	-	02:04	08:15	14:28	20:50
SAT	3 AUG	-	02:56	09:08	15:16	21:34
SUN	4 AUG	-	03:40	09:52	15:58	22:12
MON	5 AUG	-	04:21	10:31	16:35	22:48
TUE	6 AUG	-	04:58	11:06	17:10	23:21
WED	7 AUG	-	05:33	11:40	17:43	23:54
THU	8 AUG	-	06:07	12:13	18:16	-
FRI	9 AUG	00:27	06:41	12:46	18:49	-
SAT	10 AUG	01:01	07:16	13:21	19:25	-
SUN	11 AUG	01:38	07:53	14:00	20:05	-
MON	12 AUG	02:20	08:35	14:46	20:54	-
TUE	13 AUG	03:10	09:25	15:43	21:56	-
WED	14 AUG	04:11	10:26	16:54	23:10	-
THU	15 AUG	05:20	11:39	18:11	-	-
FRI	16 AUG	-	00:25	06:32	12:51	19:18

CROSSWORD #NZ1927C

ACROSS: 1. Ham it up, 4. Flats, 7. Iota, 8. Astutely, 10. Opera house, 12. Salary, 13. Humane, 15. Answer back, 18. Prostate, 19. Taro, 20. Ripen, 21. Half pie. DOWN: 1. Hoiho, 2. Motherly, 3/9. Pascoe, Carrington, 4. Four Square, 5. Area, 6. Skyline, 11. Lava lamp, 12. Skipper, 14. Twitch, 16. Kiore, 17. Coop.

NZ MUSIC QUIZ ANSWERS:

- Nature, Wayne Mason (Fourmyula, 1969).
- Sandy Edmonds.
- The Loxene Golden Disc Awards.
- Hinewehi Mohi.
- Blue Smoke.
- Lorde.
- A song about the pleasure of drinking beer.
- NZ.
- Australia.
- Split Enz.

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Playcentre

Seven Decades Strong!

Ōtaki Playcentre's 70th Birthday Celebration

2pm, Saturday 27 July, 2024

Whānau are invited to register for the 70-year Anniversary of Ōtaki Playcentre.

Contact Sue Barrett
susan@kapitiisland.com to register for the event.

Pass this notice on to others who you think may be interested in attending.

Whānau tupu ngātahi – families growing together

Local footballers top table

The Puru Master Blasters football team is dominating the B division of the 2024 Horowhenua-Kāpiti football competition.

While the Ōtaki Sports Club team lost away 4-7 to the Paekākāriki Central Cosmic Unicorns on July 6, it is streets ahead on the table with 36 points, having scored 61 goals with only 20 against. Its nemesis this season, Paekākāriki, to which Ōtaki has suffered its only two losses, is second on the table at 30 points with 50 goals and 30 against.

Typical of the Blasters' stand-out performances this season was a game on June 24 against Manakau United Football Club's Tuakana Teina at the Manakau Domain.

With their premier team, Hui Mai, having a bye, a good local crowd turned out for the derby. They were not disappointed, with the game being described on the Manakau club's Facebook page as "an absolute belter".

Tuakana Teina were keen to get their first win of the season. Fired up, they surprised their Ōtaki visitors in the first half, playing some hard physical football.

It was only at the 40-minute mark that the Master Blasters managed to break the deadlock to make it 1-0 at the break. There was some niggles to keep the referee occupied as the pressure grew, but ultimately the Ōtaki team's fitness up to the final whistle got the better of Manakau, winning 4-0.



Ōtaki's Cullen Tiwiata (No 10) challenges Manakau's Ray Lenaghan and TJ Sanazzarro (No 00) in their game on June 24.

Photo Chris Porthouse

Fifty years for Ōtaki club

The football arm of the Ōtaki Sports Club celebrated its 50th anniversary in June.

The original organisation – the Ōtaki Soccer Club – was established in 1974. Players turned out for that club over the next 18 years.

Then in 1992 it joined forces with the Ōtaki Tennis and Squash Club, which had courts at the Haruātai Park grounds. The courts, now upgraded, are still there.

The merger brought about the creation of the current Ōtaki Sports Club.

Free touch rugby workshops

Te Puna Oranga o Ōtaki is running free touch rugby workshops for year 7 and 8 students on the two Fridays of the school holidays – July 12 and 19.

The two-hour sessions will be at the Ōtaki Domain – or at the Ōtaki College gymnasium if the weather is bad and run by experienced rugby player Morehu Connor-Phillips.

The first of the sessions will start at 9am sharp. Whānau will be notified of their time, depending on numbers and whether it will be a mixed age or age-specific session.


Included will be fitness, ball skills, attack and defence, and there will be mini games.

Morehu says participants should bring boots and running shoes, hat, a water bottle, a light lunch and any medical needs (inhalers, medications etc) – "and a good attitude".

Anyone who would like to register their tamaiti can access an online form through the QR code below.

■ For more information, contact: morehu@tepunaoranga-otaki.nz





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