

ŌTAKI TODAY

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MAEHE/MARCH 2025

Ngā Kōrero o Ōtaki



'Idiots in cars' block road
p7

Kites wow again
p11

DAYLIGHT TIME ENDS APRIL 7
Turn clocks back an hour

'Aunty Gabe' gone at 98



Gabrielle Rikihana with the Sir Kingi Ihaka Award from Creative New Zealand, recognising her contribution to strengthening the continuity of Māori culture. Photo supplied

■ Gabrielle Mary Rikihana – He Kōtuku Rerenga Tahī ■ b January 21, 1927 d March 2, 2025

By Mishy Rikihana-Vieira

Ōtaki lost one of its most remarkable citizens when Gabrielle Rikihana died peacefully aged 98 at her Waikanae home on March 2.

Gabrielle (Simply Aunty Gabe to many) was a beloved matriarch of Ngāti Korokī ki Ōtaki and stalwart of Ngāti Raukawa ki te Tonga. She was one of the first wāhine Māori to attend university and spent most of her working life as a teacher and schools inspector. During her life she met with Gabrielle was one of the first wāhine Māori to attend university and spent most of her working life as a teacher and schools inspector. She met with many prominent Māori leaders of the 1930s at home and abroad.

She was remembered for her charm, intellect, elegance, manaakitanga, joyful chuckle and trademark pearls. At her tangi, people spoke of her generosity and incredible memory, how she always spoke her truth, and was a staunch advocate for education, wāhine and kaupapa Māori. She provided a window to the past, sharing many stories of growing up with tūpuna from the three local iwi – Te Ātiawa, Ngāti Raukawa, Ngāti Toa Rangatira – and beyond.

Gabrielle is a descendent of Rikihana Te Tarure; her mother, Goldie, was a ballerina. In her early years, Gabrielle and sister Mary were raised by their grandparents Tiemi (Pukupakaru) and Bridget Rikihana.

"I grew up with my feet firmly planted in the soil of Makuratawhiti, where we lived on Carkeek Drive, near Raukawa Marae," she said. "The bigger part of me is Pākehā, especially through my birth father, but the father in my life was my grandfather, Tiemi, who I adored."

When her grandparents got older, Gabrielle went to live in Wellington with her mother's sister, Nancy Maraea (known as Peach) and her husband, Ehae Ropata of Te Ātiawa.

"I would take the train back to Ōtaki for the weekends and school holidays. The main trunk line was not far from our papakāinga at one end and our Wellington flat at the other. The track was my umbilical cord to home."

She described Ehae as loving, kind and responsible.

"He looked after us all until he was killed in action at Alamein in 1942. Peach was bereft for many years; but she had the fortitude to make her own living and to hold us all together."

Gabrielle trained as a teacher in Wellington,

taught throughout the central and lower North Island, and was widely recognised for her work. She was a member of Ngāti Poneke and a patron until she died. Her love for children and animals was another constant throughout her life.

She travelled to England for the coronation of Queen Elizabeth, and spent two years teaching in London schools. She attended the unveiling of a memorial to soldiers (including Ehae) who died at El Alamein but had no known graves. Before she returned to New Zealand in 1955, Gabrielle wrote a radio play for the BBC called *Life in a Maori Village*.

Gabrielle had a Massey University master of arts degree in education, which she completed with a thesis titled *Invariance: a study of some conserving behaviours in young children in 1972*.

On retiring in 1987, Gabrielle was drawn back into Ngāti Korokī and Ngāti Raukawa. She regularly attended tangi and hui, sharing her advice, wit and dynamic stories, until her health deteriorated at 96. She worked hard for her iwi, contributing to the Raukawa Marae Trustees, Ngāti Korokī Committee, Te Rūnanga o Raukawa, Te Wānanga o Raukawa, Te kura-a-iwi o Whakatupuranga Rua Mano and the Mandated Iwi Organisation for Raukawa fisheries. With Iwi Nicholson, Prof Whatarangi Winiata, Sir Taihākurei Durie and Wattie Kereama, she was appointed to review Te Rūnanga o Raukawa operations.

In 2020 Gabrielle received the Sir Kingi Ihaka Award by Creative New Zealand, to "kaumātua/kuia in recognition of their contribution to strengthening the continuity of Māori culture through their support of ngā Toi Māori."

Gabrielle was a crucial Waitangi Tribunal claimant for Ngāti Korokī. At last year's hearings, she described the three central Ōtaki hapū as some of the most landless of the inquiry district: "We hold only the shadow of the land."

At her Rangiatea Church service, Gabrielle was surrounded by children and *Joy to the World* was sung as she was carried by women pallbearers. A fitting tribute to a wāhine toa who lived 98 full years with joy, sparkle and laughter.

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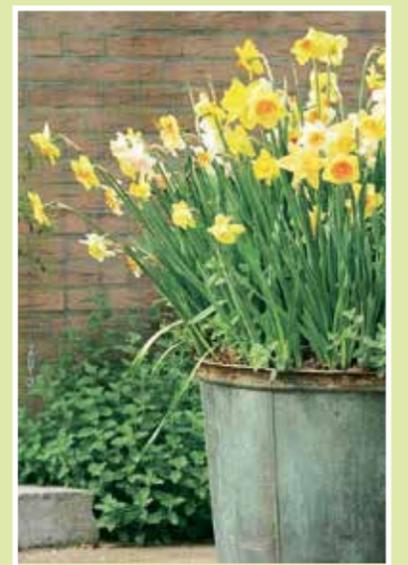
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WHAT'S ON

MĀORILAND FILM FESTIVAL Main St, Ōtaki.

March 26-30. maorilandfilm.co.nz

WEA TALKS The Kāpiti WEA has two talks coming up: **Ectoparasites and You**, with Dr Allen Heath and Dr Mary McIntyre, 9.30am-12.30pm, Saturday, March 22, Waikanae Presbyterian Church Hall, 43 Ngaio St, Waikanae (free for WEA season ticket holders, members \$20, casual \$30); and **Wine and Watercolour** with Alfred Memelink, 6.30-9pm, Thursday, April 3, at the Presbyterian hall as above (members \$50, non members \$55). See kapitiwea.org.nz

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: Maoriland Hub, Main St, Ōtaki. Open Monday to Saturday 11am-4pm. 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.

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

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.

COMMUNITY BOARDS The Ōtaki Community Board meets next at 7pm, Tuesday, March 11, in the Gertrude Atmore Lounge (attached to the Memorial Hall). The Waikanae Community Board meets next on Tuesday, April 29, at the Waikanae Community Hall, 28 Te Atautu St. The public is welcome at 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

POETRY IN ŌTAKI Third Friday of each month, 10.30-12pm. All welcome. Contact Poet in Ōtaki 021 050 1904 for further details.

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

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).

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@extra.co.nz

ŌTAKI STROKE SUPPORT GROUP & WELLNESS CENTRE: Meets for Sit and Be Fit classes, 10am Friday mornings at Senior Citizens' 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.

PROBUS CLUB OF WAIKANAĒ CENTRAL. Meet at 10 am on the fourth Thursday of every month at the Waikanae Community Centre, on Utauta Street behind the Waikanae Memorial Hall. New members are always welcome. If you would like to join us please contact Roger Faithfull: probuswaikanaecentral@gmail.com

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

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

Muldoon echo as 4-year term mulled

During one month late in 1983, Prime Minister and Minister of Finance Rob Muldoon, remembered as one of New Zealand's most feisty and verbally combative political figures, set off about 6pm from Parliament Buildings to meet with a group of the country's leading economists.

He was to speak to them at Wellington's Wellesley Club.

At the club, an assembled group of about 50 economic analysts and commentators discussed the tough questions they planned to put to this dominant political figure. Muldoon's declared wages and price freeze in place at the time was in the opinion of most of them a disastrous move with little upside for the country's economy.

On taking the speaker's rostrum Muldoon could sense the hostility of his audience. A diversion from economic issues seemed prudent. Most of you here, he began, would support a four-year term of government. "I don't."

Why? Because, he said, if they did not like what he was doing they could "kick me out after three years". He went on: "I could go back from here tonight and, if my caucus agreed with me, legally change every man into a woman and every woman into a man through legislation."

In his view, the absence of any protective mechanism against the dominance of the executive in the administration of the country meant a three-year term for parliament was reasonable. A four-year term might make administration easier and avoid undue time pressures for the passage of legislation, but without any protective processes, democracy would not be enhanced.

These Muldoon opinions are worth recanvassing at a time when Act, with National support, plans legislation to introduce a four-year parliamentary term. All parties support it. And you can safely assume that there will be plenty of support among MPs for it, especially as Act says provision will be made to increase the scrutiny of government by giving opposition MPs more power in select committees.

A test of what Act proposes will be whether the authority given opposition MPs could avoid the "man to woman" scenario referred to by Muldoon. Currently if the government of the day has a clear majority it can bypass the select committee process entirely, take urgency and pass legislation by midnight introduced after 5pm.

Prospective measures that could provide further "democratic safeguards" in the event of a four-year term include development of a written constitution – a move favoured by a number of eminent jurists, including former prime minister Sir Geoffrey Palmer.

At the time of the introduction of the MMP voting system, it was another former prime minister, Jim Bolger, who suggested that a senate, or upper chamber of parliament, might be a useful check on legislative initiatives by governments.

Arguments can be made for and against both suggestions. But there is sure to be a considerable body of opinion that supports a four-year term only if it offers better safeguards than a re-weighting of select committee powers in favour of opposition parties.

A personal view is that if parliament is to examine the term of government it should simultaneously review the voting system to

strengthen scrutiny of legislation and provide for better deliberation on policy measures taken by governments.

MMP was effectively advocated by the Greens' leadership of Rod Donald and Jeanette Fitzsimons. Donald was charismatic. He promised that as a system of democracy at work MMP would provide for more transparent government and reduce the back-room deals that he claimed were a feature of first past the post (FPP) government.

Effectively, two decades later, an argument that MMP has provided a more transparent form of government is at least questionable. It is doubtful that scrutiny of legislation is better. Is the executive of cabinet more hamstrung than before?

Unquestionably MMP has introduced wider representation of viewpoints in parliament from all sections of society than was common under FPP. But parliamentary procedures have become much more abrupt. The considered speech-making that under FPP was frequently a feature of debate and legislative and policy scrutiny has long been consigned to history. Similarly, the close tie that MPs once had with communities seems less of a feature of our parliamentary system than it did under FPP.

Might the time have come to revisit the Jim Bolger suggestion? How about a parliament of 80 MPs elected under FPP and a senate of 40 elected by MMP to contemplate and review what the parliament has produced?

A move to drop the three-year term of parliament in favour of a four-year term deserves more meaningful change to parliamentary procedures beyond a reworking of select committee powers.

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

POLITICS



BRUCE KOHN

CARTOON OF THE MONTH

By Jared Carson



ŌTAKI TODAY *Ngā Kōrero o Ōtaki*

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WRM vision celebrated after 50 years

By Ian Carson

Local kaumātua got a history lesson from one of their own when they attended a 50-year celebration of the vision that has had a big part in shaping what Ōtaki is today.

At Raukawa Marae on February 23, Rupene Waaka talked about how a programme of iwi development known Whakatupuranga Rua Mano Generation 2000 (WRM) came about. Its objective was to prepare the three iwi of the ART confederation – Te Ātiawa, Ngāti Raukwa and Ngāti Toa – for the 21st century, particularly through education.

Rupene outlined some of the history that led to the formation of WRM, including the role of the Raukawa Marae Trust. The trust had been established by the Māori Land Court in 1936, mainly to administer the marae in Ōtaki, which was opened in the same year.

However, with the adoption of WRM in 1975, the responsibilities of trustees expanded considerably.

In the early 1970s, achievement of Māori children in the education system was about half that of the general population. WRM aimed to close the gap and rejuvenate te reo Māori.

Alongside this was an objective of rejuvenating the confederation's marae.

Whatarangi Winiata, widely regarded as the architect of WRM, said in a paper to the NZ Planning Council in 1979:

“The threat of continuing disintegration of marae communities and their values is present and the existence of this is the reason for adopting as a sub-objective the rejuvenation of all marae associated with the trustees by the year 2000.

“This means making each marae the best



Rupene Waaka outlines the history that led to establishment of Whakatupuranga Rua Mano, at Raukawa Marae.

Photo Ōtaki Today

home in the iwi or hapū in physical terms with increasing numbers of kai-kōrero (speakers), kai karanga (women able to karanga), kai waiata (people able to waiata), kai karakia (able to take spiritual services), ringa wera (kitchen workers) and other active participants.”

About the same time, the Raukawa Marae Trust proposed that a centre of learning be established in Ōtaki. Te Wānanga o Raukawa – the first Māori tertiary institution in the country – was established in 1981 and began teaching in 1984.

Rupene said Joe Rennie had the vision for WRM in 1970, and called on the ART confederation to adopt a process in which knowledge and traditions could be passed on.

“A committee was formed on June 7, 1970, with Iwi Nicholson as chair, and it was called Te Kura Wānanga o Raukawa,” Rupene said.

He said in November 1975, Whatarangi Winiata wrote a letter to the Raukawa trustees. He reflected on the role of the trustees, saying: “. . . In my thinking had been the view that the concern of the trustees embraces the

development of our people, and is not limited to trusteeship over a few tangible assets (such as land and buildings).”

He also wrote: “The wealth and potential embodied in our people far exceed the tangible wealth controlled by the Raukawa trustees and the Ōtaki Porirua Trust Board. It is for the development of this human store of wealth that I am anxiously seeking avenues.”

Rupene said Whatarangi successfully continued the work that had been part of the vision of many people before him.

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Historic Te Horo kainga restored

An old kainga on Te Waka Road, Te Horo, has been restored and reopened for whānau of Ngāti Kauwhata.

It was estimated to have been built in the 1860s by Mere Kaumatua and her whaler husband, James Silberry (AKA Jimmy Smith).

Mere worked at the whaling stations on Kāpiti Island. Through land entitlements of Ngāti Kauwhata, she had several blocks of land in Ōtaki. The whenua at Te Waka Road, known as Ngākaroro Te Tarata, is all that remains.

Mere and James had seven children but only two survived – Makareta and George/Hori. Makareta married the son of prominent local settler Hector McDonald and Te Kopi, a niece of Te Rauparaha. Te Kopi died young, and her daughter, Ani, was raised by Mere. Te Kopi's son, Hugh Joseph, was raised with his father's second family. Hugh also spent time with Mere. Hugh's daughter, Agnes McDonald, was raised by Ani.

The original kainga was typical of its day – consisting of a sitting room with a big fireplace and two small bedrooms. A wharepuni (sleeping house) that was recently demolished was used to accommodate whanau and manuhiri. The kitchen/kauta, the washhouse, the bathroom and the wharepaku were all housed in separate buildings.

The old kainga has never been



Dave Marino sits at the doorway of the kāinga where he used to visit his grandparents. Photo Ōtaki Today

Painted and retains original tōtara boards and batten walls. Originally water was obtained from a well nearby, then from a water tank outside the kitchen area of the added-on building (possibly built in the late 1800s or early 1900s). Flowers,

including violets, daffodils and lilies were grown on the site and sold at markets. Large vegetables gardens fed the whānau and surplus produce was also sent to market. Chickens, ducks, turkeys and cows meant the whānau were largely self-sufficient. Watercress

was accessible from the creeks in the swamp area of the property.

It was a place for family gatherings and celebrations. Many mokopuna were raised with the old people or visited during school holidays. Connections to the whenua

were strong and extensive. The kainga nurtured enduring bonds between generations, especially grandparents and their mokopuna, intergenerational love and teaching.

Ngākaroro te Tarata Ahu Whenua Trust has been part of managing the whenua (land) – as the kainga is part of the land the trust took on the project to ensure it was restored. Work began in 2006 to repile. Dave Wi Pauro Marino, Barry McLennan and Tony Broughton, who have strong ancestral connections to the kainga, have seen through the completion of renovations.

Trust chair Phil Gibb says the vision is for the renovation to enable whānau to reconnect to the whenua and each other.

“As an expression of ūkaipōtanga, the kāinga is the essence of our belonging,” he says. “It is the basis upon which our cultural heritage stands, an unbreakable tie to the land that nurtured our ancestors and sustains us still.

“The kāinga will provide a base for wānanga on our whakapapa, history, and wider connections.

“Our trust invites input and development of our strategic plan to strengthen the ability of the Kāinga to nurture the holistic well-being of the whānau and exploit the potential of our papakainga to provide a foundation for identity and belonging.”



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Coral says it was a business venture she saw value in from the get-go, and throughout the years it has been a mix of challenges. Getting staffing just right, and learning all forms of social media to be proficient in, has enabled her to run the business well. Merchandising methods, developing business contacts both in New Zealand and overseas, fitting out her shop regularly to keep it looking current and relevant to prospective customers and consignees, have been other challenges she has met.

Coral completed a Certificate in Small Business at Porirua Waananga in 2015, and has been on a constant learning curve since. Coral says running a business isn't for everyone, and there are a lot of hidden challenges, but what you don't know you can learn if it's important to you.

Coral has a work background in a mix of retail, hospitality and media.

With husband Peter she has run two hotels – one in Picton, the other in Kaikōura – so they are no strangers to hard work and long hours. From 1983, Coral worked in radio and television, in Wellington and

Auckland, for more than 25 years. She has had an exceptional life meeting high-profile people, and has worked as a VIP driver to many overseas concert acts in Wellington (Joe Cocker, Bon Jovi, Rolling Stones, Suzi Q, Westlife, Kanye West), so considers she has had a very rewarding career.

Coral is now based in Paraparaumu, where she has lived for almost 25 years. Her Dad's family are the Barretts of Ōtaki. Her Mum's family are in Motueka, where Coral grew up, and where she now visits her elderly Mum every few months.

I Love Labels is all about recycling and re-using. Coral uses paper bags and minimises use of plastic. *I Love Labels* is open seven days, and is accepting Autumn stock from March.

• Go to ilovelabels.nz for information on how to become a consignee.



Work on old Clifden Cottage under way

Clifden Cottage, one of the oldest houses in Ōtaki, is being restored.

The cottage was moved from its original site near the Ōtaki River to another site farther south to make way for expressway construction. It's now back, clothed in weatherproof wrapping while work continues.

In January Waka Kotahi appointed a contractor for the restoration work, which will conserve the building's exterior heritage features. This is to meet the conditions of the Peka to Peka to Ōtaki expressway designation.

Scaffolding was erected around the old building in mid-February, and the wrapping soon after. Restoration work began on March 3. Waka Kotahi says it will take about four months to complete.

The restored cottage and subdivided land will then be subject to review to see if Waka Kotahi has any further requirement for the land. The land was acquired by the Crown for the construction of the expressway.

Kāpiti Coast District Council has said it would like to use some of the land for public parking.

The building, sometimes erroneously called "Clifton" Cottage, was built about 1874 on the south bank of the Ōtaki River by the Small family, who were settlers from Scotland. It was known as their Clifden farmhouse for three generations.

In 1943 the house and part of the farm became a summer camp for deprived Wellington families, run by the Wellington City Mission. This was an important part of

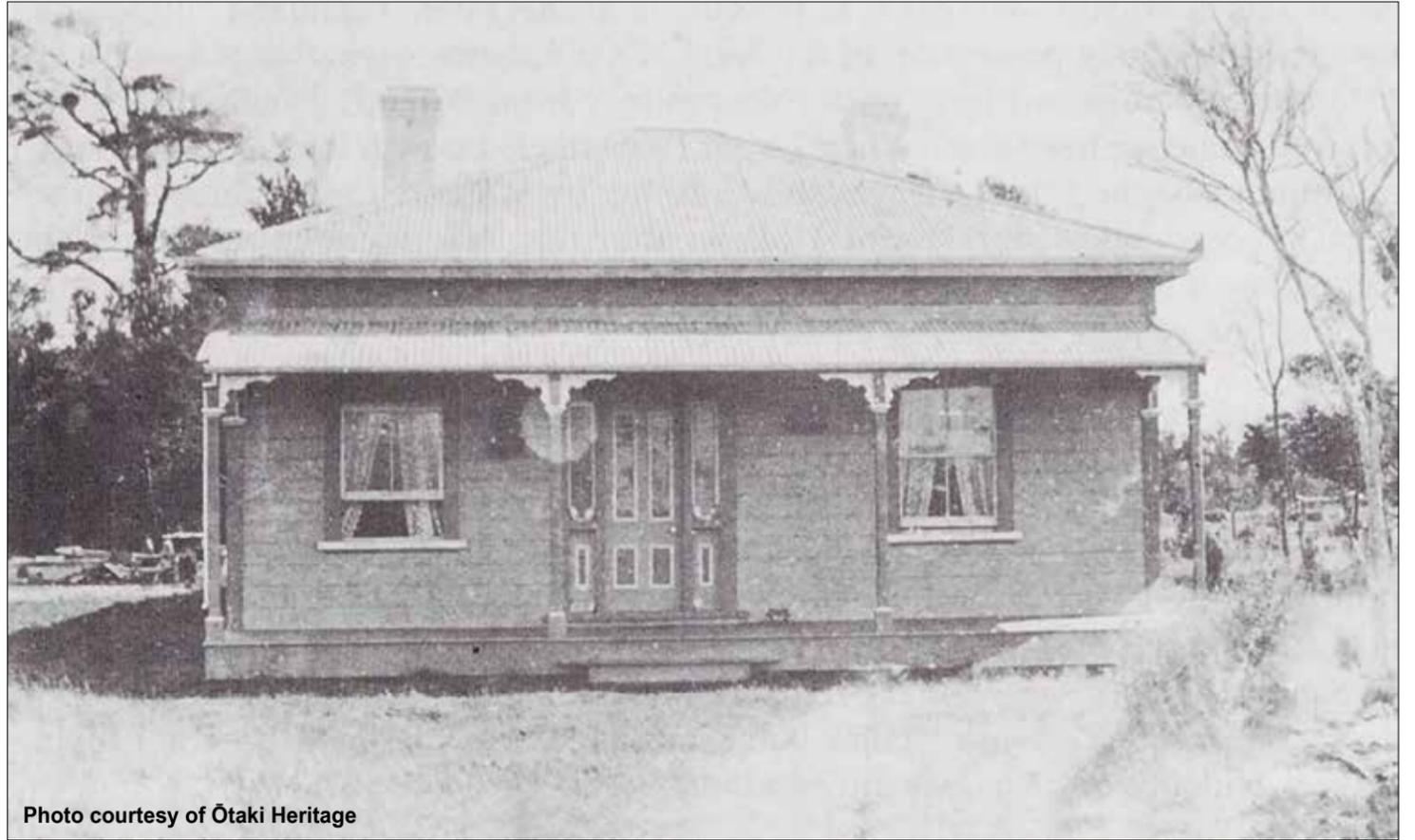


Photo courtesy of Ōtaki Heritage

the work of the Anglican Saint Peter's Church in Wellington city, working with the inner-city Te Aro communities. The house was renamed Riverslea and was used for four decades as a convalescent home as part of a summer camp. In the 1980s, the summer camp was sold

and became a privately owned holiday camp, conference, and events facility known as Bridge Lodge.

The property was bought by the Crown in 2010 for the adjacent expressway. The house has been relocated about 20 metres east from

its original location, with its orientation and outlook over the Ōtaki River retained.

It's not a Heritage NZ listed heritage building, but Waka Kotahi is required to repair and conserve the exterior heritage features – the work currently under way.

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Oiroa Kaihau – a disciplined and focused career soldier

■ Oiroa Kaihau ■ b Sept 8, 1966 – d Feb 8, 2025

By Ian Carson

An Ōtaki man described as a pillar of Ngāti Tūmataunga (NZ Army), and a dedicated soldier who served on seven assignments overseas, was farewelled at Linton Army Camp on February 13.

Lieutenant Colonel Oiroa Kaihau was 59 when he died suddenly on a bike ride at Kimbolton on February 28. His eulogy, written by Chief of Army Major General Rose King who was overseas at the time, was delivered by Brigadier (ret) Jon Broadley.

Oiroa – or Oods as he was universally known – was born in Ōtaki. His parents were Robert Oiroa Kaihau (Ngāti Raukawa) and Te Ao Te Uira Herangi (Waikato/Maniapoto). He was the eldest child, with sisters Hinetu, Maewa and Kotuku, and brother Watene.

He went to Ōtaki School and then St Stephens School in Auckland for several years before returning to Ōtaki College for his senior years. Sister Maewa says he was a popular college student: handsome, confident and articulate with a knack for churning out witty one-liners like a seasoned comedian.

He proved to be studious, bright and disciplined. He was head boy at Ōtaki College and captain of the first XV rugby team.

Oiroa had his eyes on a career in broadcasting, but finally chose the army. His first day as a recruit was January 8, 1986.

“I think it suited him well because he already had great leadership qualities, was disciplined and focused,” Maewa says.

She says in many respects Oiroa was the archetypal big brother, shouldering with confidence the responsibility of the oldest child in a family of five.

Last year, he decided to embark seriously on his reo journey, taking a year off work to study the heke reo (diploma) programme at Te Wānanga o Raukawa. It’s a total immersion te reo language course over 30 weeks.

“It was transformative,” Maewa says. “He dedicated himself to learning as much as he could during that time. Although he had to return to his army role at Defence House in Wellington, he had planned to come back to Te Wānanga o Raukawa to finish the poutuarongo reo degree programme once he had retired at 65.

“Sadly that wouldn’t come to pass, but I know that coming back to te reo and the journey of learning about his hapū and iwi had become quite important to him.”

Oiroa had 35 years in uniform. After he completed the commissioning course in Waiouru in 1985, he graduated as a second lieutenant into the Electrical and Mechanical Engineers, later the Army Logistic Regiment.

During his career Oiroa held many command and staff positions.

Brig Broadley said his operational experience was significant, and his record of service was “a mark of the deep respect and trust placed in him not only by the NZDF and his army colleagues, but also our international partners, with whom he worked closely on numerous occasions.”

Oiroa was deployed overseas seven times: to Bosnia in 1995 as a maintenance commander; to Laos in 1998 as a logistic technical advisor; to the National Support Element in Darwin supporting operations; in Timor Leste in 2001 as its commander; to the UN Assistance Mission to Iraq as a military advisor in 2005 and 2012; and two deployments to Afghanistan in 2008 and 2016, as the national support element commander and-as a battalion command mentor respectively.

The experiences not only shaped his own successful military career, but formed an integral part of the mentoring he provided for so many in the army and the wider Defence Force.

He spent several years out of active service, in the Army Standby Reserves, where he had roles at Massey University in its Defence and Security Studies Department. In two separate tenures he was a lecturer at the Royal Brunei Command and Staff College, and was responsible for managing key military relationships.

“But first and foremost, he was a soldier,” Brig Broadley said. “On both occasions while at Massey University, he answered the call to return to the regular force when his expertise was required for significant overseas postings to Iraq and Afghanistan.”

In his final deployment, to Afghanistan in 2018, he was at a battalion command level mentoring at the Afghan National Army Officer Academy. In 2005 Oiroa completed a masters degree in defence and strategic studies at Massey University. In June 2022, he was posted as chief of staff to Headquarters Defence Logistics Command.

He had only recently started in his latest position as senior Māori advisor within the Office of the Chief of Defence Force.

“His selfless leadership and his mana will never be forgotten, and his legacy within Ngāti Tūmataunga will always remain steadfast,” Brig Broadley said.

Oiroa is survived by his wife Linda (Bloor); and first wife Kirsty (MacKay), their two sons, Wiremu and Matiu, and grandson Kupa.



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No way through – an image obtained by Ōtaki Today shows there was no way traffic – including emergency services – could travel along Old SH1 during a burnout gathering.

'Idiots in cars' block highway

A recent Friday night burn-out closed Old State Highway 1 just north of Waikanae for more than half an hour, before some drivers headed into Ōtaki.

The "idiots with cars", as Ōtaki MP Tim Costley called them, burnt rubber into the roadway around the corner of Greenhill Road and the old highway, about halfway between Waikanae and Peka Peka. A teenage onlooker was injured after being hit by a car.

Michael Moore, chair of the Waikanae Community Board, was an eyewitness.

He was getting off the train from Wellington at 10.52pm on Friday, February 28, when he saw "a substantial number of vehicles" heading north through Waikanae. He called the police at 10.57pm as he got in his car to go home.

"Driving north it was impossible to pass along the Old SH1 road," he said. "At least 150 vehicles had congregated around the corner of Greenhill Road. At least one car arrived on a flatdeck trailer."

He estimated the gathering attracted more than 200 participants and bystanders.

He told Ōtaki Today he saw a young man being hit by a vehicle that was burning its tyres.

"He hit the bitumen with his head. People rushed to him, carrying him to the roadside. That's when I made a final call to police."

He said he decided to turn around and drive back to Waikanae, then go through Peka Peka.

"It was difficult to get out of the area given the huge number of vehicles and people parked all over the road."

Police confirmed an investigation was under way after they were called to the burn-out.

Ambulance services advised them a man had been struck by a vehicle. Police said emergency services were obstructed from attending to the teen, and the vehicle believed to be involved fled the scene. The teen was finally taken to hospital.

The vehicles however, dispersed to several other locations. There were unconfirmed reports they did burn-outs later at Ōtaki.

Police said staff worked throughout the region to further disperse those continuing to cause disruption, and were "working to find out what happened and to identify those responsible".

MP Tim Costley, who advocated for stronger police action after mass burn-outs last year, said

he was sorry to hear someone had been injured, but was not surprised.

"These people are being idiots with cars and I have no time for this behaviour," he said. "I'm glad police take it seriously, but it uses up their resources, which we don't need."

"To anyone thinking of going to watch this: don't. These people aren't professional drivers. They're riding on luck and it is the bystanders who get hurt. If no one watches them a lot of this will disappear."

Anyone with information that might help with enquiries is asked to call 105, quoting reference number P061770410. Information can also be shared anonymously through Crime Stoppers on 0800 555 111.

See also 'Addressing road racing culture', p20

Tim Costley MP for Ōtaki

Contact details for our offices in Levin and Paraparaumu are below.

Levin Office Hours

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horowhenua@parliament.govt.nz

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Mon: 10am - 3pm

Tues: Closed

Wed: 10am - 3pm

Thurs: 10am - 3pm

Fri: 10am - 3pm

Paraparaumu Office Hours

Corner of Te Roto Drive and Kāpiti Road

Phone: 021 851 206

kapiti@parliament.govt.nz

Opening Hours:

Mon: 10am - 3pm

Tues: 10am - 3pm

Wed: Closed

Thurs: 10am - 2pm

Fri: 10am - 3pm

*Outside these hours by appointment.

✉ Tim.CostleyMP@parliament.govt.nz

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Achievement awards for outstanding Scout leaders

Akela Annie Bythell and Geert van de Vorstenbosc have been honoured with Scout achievement awards.

At a ceremony at the Haruātai Park Scout Hall, Geert, the Ōtaki troop's Scout leader/kaiarahi, was presented with his Wood Badge (actually a pair of wooden beads on a leather thong) and made a member of the First Gilwell Scout Troop.

The presentations were made by Brent and Annie Bythell as Wood Badge holders

The Wood Badge is earned by adult leaders in Scouting through an advanced training programme originally developed by Lord Baden-Powell in 1919. It involves substantial time in theoretical and practical work culminating in a three-day residential course. It includes valuing people, team development, situational leadership, problem solving and conflict management.

Annie, a Cub leader/kaaiarahi known as Akela who leads the Cub pack, was awarded the Scouts Aotearoa Silver Tiki in recognition of her continued service to the movement. She has upheld the movement's values as reflected in the law and promise, taking a keen interest in the well-being and development of her Cub Pack members, looking out to help others and involving herself in fundraising – along with more menial tasks as well.

Meanwhile, the Scout troop (11-14 year-old boys and girls) has vacancies for new members. (See "Scouts Aotearoa – Join" for a four-week free trial.)

■ *Ōtaki Scout Group is holding a Garage Sale at the hall in Haruatai Park on Saturday, April 12. Contributions welcome. Contact Brent 364-8949 or email otaki@group.scouts.nz*

Scout leaders Annie Bythell and Geert van de Vorstenbosc with their awards. Photo Ōtaki Today

ŌTAKI COMMUNITY: SIMON BLACK

Keep speed to 80km/h

The government's decision to reverse many of the speed limits lowered in recent years has significant implications for our community.

Without sufficient public support, speed limits on several local stretches of State Highway 1 and SH57 between Ōtaki and Levin will revert from 80km/h to 100km/h by July 1.

As many Ōtaki residents are regular users of these roads, the Ōtaki Community Board is aligned with Kāpiti Mayor Janet Holborow and Horowhenua Mayor Bernie Wanden in their concern about the impact this could have on community safety.



These roads, including SH57 from SH1 to Heatherlea East Road, SH1 from Ōhau to Manakau, and Manakau to the Pukehou Overbridge, are known for their hazards. Since the speed limits were reduced in 2022, there have been no fatal crashes and a significant reduction in serious injuries, according to NZTA Waka Kotahi data.

As a firefighter, I've seen firsthand the devastation that high-speed crashes can cause. Keeping the limit at 80km/h would save lives.

With the new Ōtaki to North of Levin expressway just a few years away, maintaining lower speeds on these short stretches of local road will continue to protect our whānau in the meantime without greatly affecting travel times.

The Ōtaki Community Board will make a submission in support of maintaining the current speed limits. Add your voice to the cause, but hurry - public submissions close on March 13. Scan the QR code to have your say!



■ *Simon is deputy chair of the Ōtaki Community Board*

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College commemorates war end

By Ian Carson

‘The end of the Second World War 80 years ago was the theme for Ōtaki College’s annual SS Ōtaki commemorations on March 10.

The war ended officially on September 2, 1945, when Japan signed surrender terms on USS *Missouri* in Tokyo Bay.

College principal Andy Fraser told the gathering of dignitaries, service personnel, veterans and students that 194,000 New Zealand men and 2000 women served in the armed forces during the war. More than 12,000 died in the war.

Only 400 of them are still alive, notable among them three veterans of the Arctic convoys that transported war materiel to the

Soviet Union. Derek Whitwam, Stan Welch and Sid Wells attended the college event, as they have since the first commemoration in 2017.

Andy said about 160 New Zealanders died while serving in the merchant navy. However, accurate records of merchant service were never as exact as those in the military.

“It’s why these ceremonies are so important – to ensure that they are never forgotten,” he said.

Rear Admiral (ret) David Ledson, who presented the keynote address, reminded his audience of the sacrifice merchant seamen made. Speaking to the young students, he asked them to consider the experiences of many merchantmen, not much older than the students.

“Imagine you’re just 15, on a ship, it’s a dark night. Suddenly there’s a flash and a bang and

your ship sinks. You’re in a life raft, cold.”

The tragedy for families at home was not only that they might have no word about a loved one for days or weeks, but also the pay stopped. It would be reinstated only when – and if – the sailor was reassigned to another ship.

“Many of these young men never got to go out and have fun with their mates. They didn’t get to have the golden years of their life.”

David also alluded to current tensions in the world when he said that “for bad things to happen, good people watch and do nothing”.

“Governments declare war; the people go to war. They get hurt and killed.”

He said it was worth acknowledging that many people had in the past “stepped forward to stop bad things happening”.

Andy Fraser read a letter from the former president of the Arctic Convoy Club, Chris King. Chris has attended the commemorations regularly, but ill health has kept him at home in Nelson. Chris is 102.

Chris said in his letter: “I’m saddened that wars continue today when we should all be at peace with one another.”

The college commemorations acknowledge the courage of SS *Otaki* crewmen who fought a battle with the German raider SMS *Moewe* during the First World War, on March 10, 1917.

It led to the Ōtaki Scholar programme with Robert Gordon’s College in Aberdeen (the *Otaki*’s captain was a college old boy) and recognises the often unsung service of the merchant navy.



Rear Admiral (ret) David Ledson delivers the keynote address at the SS Ōtaki commemorations.



Arctic convoy veterans, from left, Derek Whitwam, 99, Stan Welch, 100, and Sid Wells, 99. Photos Ōtaki Today



Army, Navy and Air Force representatives laid wreaths at the SS Ōtaki memorial. Photos Ōtaki Today

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Kites wow crowds again

The 12th annual Ōtaki Kite Festival drew the crowds to yet another spectacular weekend on Ōtaki Beach.

Estimates had numbers near 20,000, not quite to the level of last year's event, but the beach and foreshore on March 8 and 9 were still packed with people who came from every part of the country.

Overcast conditions on Saturday – and gloomy weather in Wellington – was possibly a deterrent for some people, but once Sunday came clear and sunny, the crowds came.

Despite sometimes fickle winds, the kite flyers from Australia and throughout New Zealand were able to hoist a huge array of kites. There were giant dragons, dogs, teddy bears and lizards, plus many land-based kites that wriggled along the sand or fluttered and twirled from stakes.

Festival director Kirsty Doyle was pleased with the turnout and the general atmosphere.

“There were plenty of people from out of town, and everyone just seemed to be having a lot of fun,” she says. “That’s what we love to see – it’s what the kite festival is all about.”

Noticeable was the huge number of volunteers, many of whom turn up every year to ensure the smooth running of the festival.

Photos Ōtaki Today





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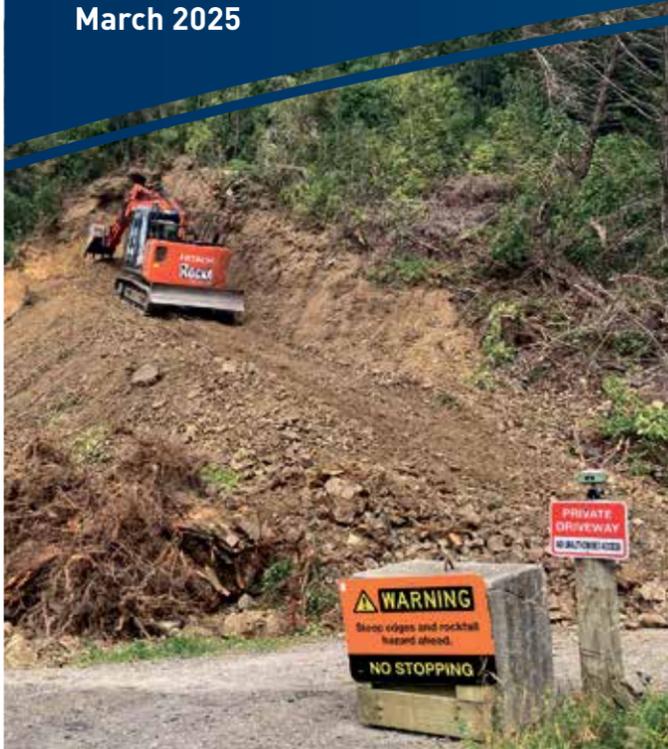
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Ōtaki Update

March 2025



Earthworks start at Blue Bluff

After a slight delay while the road was shored up to allow machinery to get through, earthworks are now underway to clear the two slips at Blue Bluff on Ōtaki Gorge Road.

Please remember you can no longer walk across the slip. The earth that the temporary steps were built on has gone (or soon will be).

The only way to reach Ōtaki Forks is via the Department of Conservation's alternate path. That will add an extra couple of hours to your walk, which is over steep terrain.

Our crews are working as quickly as they can to fix the slips and rebuild the road. At this stage, the road will reopen in May.

► [Find out more kapiticoast.govt.nz/OtakiGorgeRoad](https://www.kapiticoast.govt.nz/OtakiGorgeRoad)



New shared path to improve Riverbank Road

Construction of a new 650-metre shared pedestrian and cycling path on Riverbank Road will make the road safer for people and improve connectivity in your growing town.

Work on the new path, to run from Miro St to the Old SH1, is scheduled to kick off in mid-March and will take about three months to complete.

Traffic management will be in place during the project.

Thank you for your patience while we get this mahi done.



Māori Economic Development Fund applications open

The 2025 round of the Māori Economic Development Fund is open for applications until 30 March.

The Fund aims to support the wealth and prosperity of Kāpiti Māori and is open to pakihi (business) starting out or in growth mode. The Fund has supported some great Kāpiti businesses over the years and we're excited to see what applications we receive this year.

The Māori economy plays a massive part in driving Aotearoa New Zealand's economic success and has seen significant growth in recent years. We're proud to be able to play a small part in supporting our local Māori entrepreneurs.

► [Find out more and apply at kapiticoast.govt.nz/maori-ed-grant](https://www.kapiticoast.govt.nz/maori-ed-grant)



Creative Communities Scheme open for applications

Unleash your imagination with our Creative Communities Scheme! We have a total pool of \$30,000 to share across projects that enhance Kāpiti Coast's fabulous cultural scene. So, whether you're a drummer or a dancer, a filmmaker or fine artist, a weaver or a wordsmith, this is your chance to bring your vision to life.

The twice-yearly scheme is funded by Creative New Zealand to support local arts and cultural projects. It's open to Kāpiti-based creatives, and applications can be made by individuals or organisations. Applications close 5pm, Wednesday 26 March – we can't wait to see what you can create.

► [Find out more and apply at kapiticoast.govt.nz/CreativeCommunities](https://www.kapiticoast.govt.nz/CreativeCommunities)



Who should manage your water services?



The Government is requiring us to consult with you on who should manage your three waters services under its 'Local Water Done Well' policy and new legislative requirements. We're seeking your feedback on two options for how your water services (drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater) will be delivered in the future.

Option
1

'The One'

Keep our water services delivery in-house as we do now, but with additional effort and resourcing required to ensure we meet regulatory requirements.

Our preferred option

Option
2

'The Four'

A four council-owned water services organisation with Horowhenua, Palmerston North, and Manawatū. This option would require us to transfer our water assets to the new organisation of which Council would be a shareholder.

How do the costs for each option compare?

Modelled average cost to customer per year	Option 1 'The One' In-house	Option 2 'The Four' Jointly owned
2025	\$1,645	Not applicable
2034	*\$2,023	*\$2,656
2054	*\$2,749	*\$2,594

*including inflation

Note: A joint council-owned organisation might maintain each district's different water charges for a period or look to charge everyone the same amount either immediately, or in the future. Efficiencies of scale mean we expect water costs for all districts will equalise under both options by 2047.

It's a big decision

Please read our consultation document and supporting information available online and at our libraries and services centres and then let us know which option you think we should go with by midnight **Sunday 13 April** by doing any of the following:

Online

- Go to haveyoursay.kapiticoast.govt.nz/LocalWater and use the online submission form.
- Email us at haveyoursay@kapiticoast.govt.nz

On paper

Fill in the submission form and either:

- Drop it into one of our libraries or service centres
- Post it to:
**Local Water submissions,
Kāpiti Coast District Council,
Private Bag 60601,
Paraparaumu 5254**

In person

- Talk to us at our drop-in sessions in various locations across the district.
- See haveyoursay.kapiticoast.govt.nz/LocalWater for times and venues.

We need your feedback by
Sunday 13 April



haveyoursay.kapiticoast.govt.nz/LocalWater

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 ŌTAKI SCOUTS, CUBS AND KEAS Brent Bythell 364 8949
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 ŌTAKI RAILWAY BOWLING CLUB Maureen Beaver 364 0640
 ŌTAKI SPORTS CLUB: TENNIS, SQUASH & SOCCER Hannah 027 327 1179
 ŌTAKI SURF LIFE SAVING CLUB Kirsty Doyle 021 102 0058
 RĀHUI FOOTBALL AND SPORTS CLUB Slade Sturmey 021 191 4780.
 Rāhui Netball Kylie Gardner 0275 490 985. Junior Rugby Megan
 Qaranivalu 022 165 7649
 RAUKAWA BASKETBALL, raukawakitetongabasketball@gmail.com
 Contact person Ariana Reweti
 TAE KWON DO Jim Babbington 027 530 0443
 TAI CHI Gillian Sutherland 04 904 8190
 WHITI TE RA LEAGUE CLUB Kelly Anne Ngatai 027 256 7391
 WILD GOOSE QIGONG, CHEN STYLE TAIJIQUAN (TAI CHI) & CHUN
 YUEN (SHAOLIN) QUAN. Sifu Cynthia Shaw 021 613 081
 ZUMBA GOLD Te Horo and Ōtaki Anna Burns 02102430430
 To list your group, or update details, email debbi@idmedia.co.nz

MEDICAL

EMERGENCIES: Call 111.
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 Monday-Friday: 8.45am-5pm.
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 Coastlands Shopping Mall. 8am-10pm every day.
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 50 Ruahine Street, Palmerston North. 06 356 9169.
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St John Health Shuttle 0800 589 630

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 65a Main Street. otaki@cab.org.nz
AROHANUI HOSPICE SHOP 11 Main Street. 06 929-6603.
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 Street. 06 364-5524.
COBWEBS OPPORTUNITY SHOP TRUST 60 Main Street.
OCEAN VIEW RESIDENTIAL CARE Marine Parade 06 364-7399.

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Rangiātea 33 Te Rauparaha St. 06 364-6838. Sunday
 Eucharist 9am. Church viewing during school terms,
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St Mary's Pukekarakā 4 Convent Rd. Fr Alan Robert, 021 0822
 8926. Sunday mass: 10am. Miha Māori, first Sunday of the
 month. For other masses see pukekarakā1@gmail.com
Ōtaki Anglican All Saints Church, 47 Te Rauparaha St. 06 364-
 7099. Church service every Sunday at Hadfield Hall, 10am,
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 8540. Sunday service at 10am. otakibaptist.weebly.com
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 06 364-8759 or 021 207 9455. Sunday service at 11am. See
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Defibrillators, or AEDs (automated external defibrillators) can save lives in the event of a sudden cardiac arrest (heart attack). An AED is a lightweight, portable device that analyses the heart's rhythm and if necessary, delivers an electric shock, known as defibrillation, to help restore the heart's natural rhythm. They can be used by someone with little or no training. Through visual and voice prompts, AEDs guide users through an emergency by diagnosing the victim's heart rhythm. The following list is compiled from aedlocations.co.nz. Please let us know if any locations need updating.

ŌTAKI

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

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

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

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Messini Palace

ŌTAKI DISTRICT ARTS, ATTRACTIONS AND EVENTS

Autumn 2025

Planetary changes told on film

Māoriland, the largest Indigenous film festival in the world, has announced an incredible line-up for its 12th annual screen celebration with 130 films and digital works from 86 Indigenous nations.

The Māoriland Film Festival (MFF) is on from March 26-30 in Ōtaki.

Festival director Madeleine Hakaraia de Young says this year's festival theme, "Ko te mauri, he mea huna ki te Moana," is a whakatauki that speaks of the life force of the ocean and the life force within us all.

"From the winds, electrical storms, and floods of this summer to the fires and extreme snowfalls of winter in the north, our planet is changing rapidly," Maddie says.

"When we were programming this year's festival, we watched stories that evidence these profound changes all over the planet, told through an Indigenous lens.

"We also saw stories of resilience, ingenuity and courage informed by generations of knowledge. Indigenous communities have solutions and we hope visitors to Māoriland will leave this year's festival activated and inspired."

Ko te mauri, he mea huna ki te Moana is reflected across the 40 screening programmes in this year's festival – from short films to feature drama and documentaries.

Opening MFF2025 is a special screening of *Kōkā*, the debut feature film written and directed by Kath Akuhata Brown of Ngāti Porou.

Under the celestial guidance of Matariki, *Kōkā* tells the story of an unlikely bond between Māori elder Hamo (Hinetu Dell) and troubled teen Jo (Darneen Christian, *The Dead Lands*) as they embark on a transformative road trip. MFF audiences will be the first in Aotearoa to see this new film, a story of

healing, community, and reconciliation.

The closing night film, *Te Puna Ora*, is a documentary by Virginie Tetofoa intertwining mythology and reality on the lush island of Mo'orea. Inspired by the legend of the goddess Hina, the film follows three Tahitian women who unite to protect their beach from privatisation.

Several filmmakers are returning to MFF2025 with new work. *Singing Back the Buffalo*, from award-winning Cree filmmaker Tasha Hubbard (*nīpawistamāowin: We Will Stand Up*, MFF2020, *Birth of a Family*), is a deeply uplifting exploration of the reawakening of the buffalo and its profound significance to Indigenous peoples.

From James Ashcroft (*Coming Home in the Dark*, MFF2023), *The Rule of Jenny Pen* (winner of best director at Fantastic Fest, Texas, 2024) is a dark, boundary-pushing thriller that will leave audiences laughing and wincing in equal measure with award-winning performances by George Henare, John Lithgow and Geoffrey Rush (best actor Sitges Film Festival 2024).

Wilfred Buck could be described as the Cree Rangi Matamua, reclaiming the star teachings of his ancestors. Ojibway filmmaker Lisa Jackson (*Savage*, MFF2014, *Lichen*, MFF2021) brings his story to the screen in a way that mirrors his worldview – eschewing conventional narrative structures in favour of a cinematic experience that embodies his unique way of thinking and being in the world.

Māoriland 2025 will also host the world premiere of *The Stolen Children of Aotearoa*, directed by Julian Arahanga. This powerful documentary brings to light the harrowing experiences of survivors who endured abuse while in state care.

Through candid interviews and personal narratives, the film delves into the systemic failures that led to

the suffering of countless individuals, predominantly from Māori communities.

At MFF2020, Hawaiian filmmakers Alika Tengan and Jalena Keane-Lee shared their short films, *Moloka'i Bound* and *Standing Above The Clouds*. Both filmmakers and their teams are now excited to be travelling to Aotearoa for screenings of the feature film versions of e-films.

Set against the backdrop of Hawai'i's breathtaking landscapes, *Moloka'i Bound* delves into a young man's journey as he faces the complexities of fatherhood, cultural identity, and the temptations of his past. Through intimate storytelling, *Moloka'i Bound* presents a compelling narrative of redemption and the enduring bonds of family.

Standing Above the Clouds chronicles the largest political movement in modern Hawaiian history. This intimate film follows native Hawaiian mother-daughter activists, including Pua Case and her daughters, who led the decade-long fight to protect Mauna Kea, a sacred mountain, from construction of the Thirty Meter Telescope.

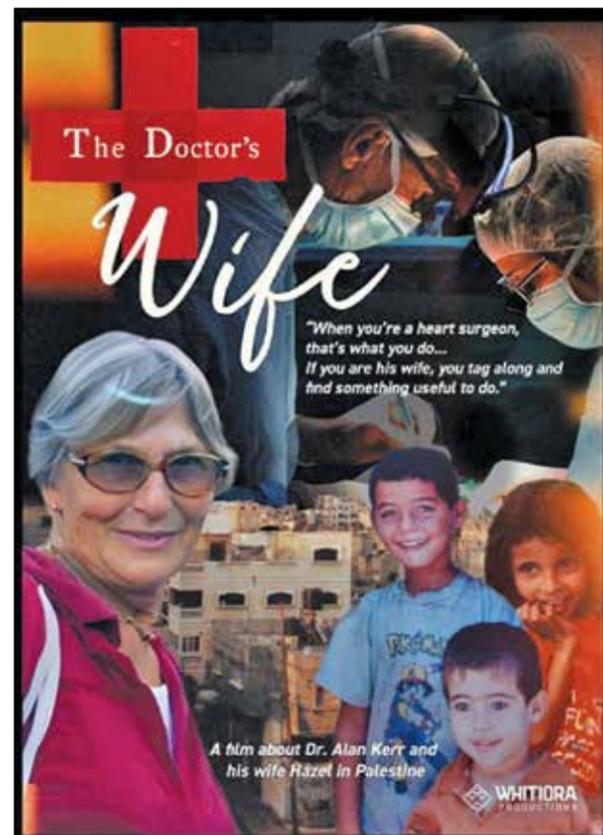
MFF2025 also includes the work of 37 rangatahi filmmakers, many of whom will be presenting at the festival for the first time.

"Māoriland has always ensured that the stories and voices of rangatahi are uplifted and supported within the festival," says programmer and rangatahi Oriwa Hakaraia, "creating accessible pathways for rangatahi filmmakers to share their work with audiences and filmmakers around the world."

For younger and older audiences alike, the world premiere of *Shrek: Kātahi Te Korokē* on March 27 promises to entertain.

Starring accomplished actors and musicians Maaka Pohatu as Shrek and

continues next page



THE DOCTOR'S WIFE: After retiring from a distinguished career as a cardiac surgeon in New Zealand, Dr Alan Kerr led a Kiwi team to Gaza and Ramallah to operate on children with heart disease. *The Doctor's Wife*, showing at the Māoriland Film Festival, tells the story of a two-week mission that became an 20-year commitment to Palestine, involving 40 medical missions and hundreds of operations. Dr Kerr was instrumental in establishing an independent Palestinian cardiac unit.

He trained the first Palestinian female paediatric cardiac surgeon and has been recognised as the "father of paediatric cardiac surgery" in Palestine. However, he couldn't have achieved this on his own. His wife, Hazel Kerr, travelled with him, bringing a different kind of healing to the people in Palestine.

Sunday March 30, 2pm Memorial Hall, Main St, Ōtaki



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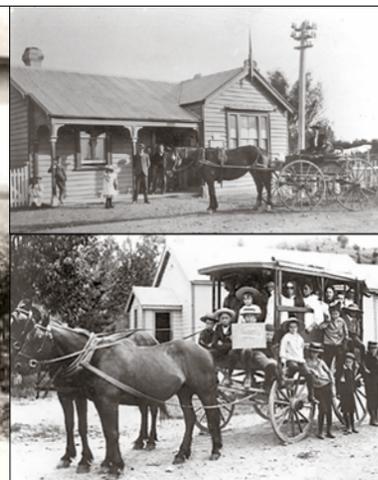
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Above left: Ōtaki post office before 1878.

Left: Children going to the Convent school early 1900s.



Planetary changes

from previous page

Tuakoi Ohia as Princess Fiona they are joined by Te Puaheiri Snowden, co-host of the popular reo Māori podcast *Taringa*, as Donkey and Māori language leader Jeremy Tātere McLeod as Lord Farquaad.

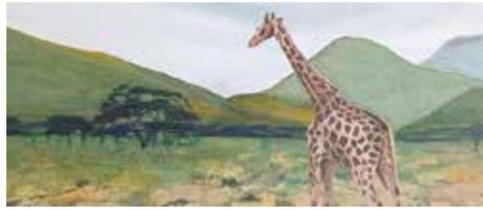
"It is a celebration of te reo Māori at Ngā Purapura, a venue operated by New Zealand's first Māori tertiary institute, Te Wānanga o Raukawa in a town where te reo Māori is heard everywhere," says *Shrek* producer and Maoriland head of content Libby Hakaraia.

Maoriland is also hosting the New Zealand premiere of the animated feature *The Lost Tiger* as this year's free whānau feature film. In *The Lost Tiger*, Chantelle Murray makes history as the first Indigenous Australian woman to write and direct an animated feature.

With an all-star voice cast including Thomas Weatherall, Rhys Darby, Celeste Barber, Jimi Bani, and Nakkiah Lui, this vibrant film is a joyful adventure for all ages. Seamlessly blending humour, heart, and adventure, *The Lost Tiger* is a groundbreaking children's film that celebrates identity and resilience while exploring Australia's past and present.

Now in its 12th year, the MFF has grown to be the largest Indigenous film festival in the world. It's known globally for its unique audience and filmmaker experience.

Alongside screenings, visitors to the festival can enjoy filmmaker talk series NATIVE Minds, Indigenous art showcased on the street and in Toi Matarau Gallery, food trucks, live music and more.



OUT OF AFRICA Old Courthouse Gallery, Ōtaki. From March 15, 10am- 4pm.

Maggie Allan and Jan Perkins are part of a small collective of local artists based at the Old Courthouse Gallery in Ōtaki. Maggie is a fabric artist using textiles to create a broad variety of forms, some functional and some more decorative. Jan is an artist working in acrylics who particularly enjoys painting animals, landscapes, and portraits. Jan is also a ceramic artist who creates figurative works. They have combined to produce an exhibition in an eclectic mix of different media with an African flavour. Their work is based on their experiences travelling on separate occasions through safari parks and rural parts of Africa. They were amazed by the abundance of wildlife under threat, yet still possible to encounter at close quarters in their natural habitats and the resilience of the people who live in such extreme environments and are so hospitable to visitors.

WAIKANAĒ EASTER FAIR Mahara Place, Waikanae. Saturday 19 April 9am- 2pm.

Quality craft and food stalls, Easter baskets, childrens rides pending weather. Live entertainment, brunch or a coffee at local eateries. Enquiries email :waikanaevillagemarkets@gmail.com.



QUEEN ELIZABETH PARK TREASURE HUNT Queen Elizabeth Park, Raumati. Saturday March 15, 1.30- 4pm.

Create memories with your team of two to four at Queen Elizabeth Park's treasure hunt! You'll need to work together to crack codes and unlock the boxes. You'll explore tracks through and dunes, alongside freshwater streams, and into regenerating bush. How many challenges can you complete? Wellington Tramway Museum will provide free trips on the heritage tram to help you hunt for clues. This treasure hunt is for all ages, including kids, teenagers and adults. Each team must include at least one participant over 14 years old. Book at gw.govt.nz/summerevents.

NOTE: bring snacks and water bottles for your team, as well as a pen or pencil to complete the treasure hunt. Dress in weather-appropriate clothing and sturdy footwear. Be prepared for a hot day with sun protection, or a wet day with waterproof and windproof layers.

TIMETABLE

1:30pm: Registration at the Whareroa Beach carpark of Queen Elizabeth Park. Drivers use the Mackay's Crossing entrance.

1:55pm: Your challenge briefing.

2pm: Start your treasure hunt!

4pm: Finish your hunt and sign out.

4:15pm: Prizegiving.

This event begins at the Whareroa Beach carpark of Queen Elizabeth Park.

Book your place by visiting gw.govt.nz/summerevents This event is rain or shine, but in the case of hazardous weather, check the Everyone Out Facebook page and the Everyone Out website for updates at 9am on the event day.



KĀPITI TATTOO & ARTS FESTIVAL 2025 Paraparamu Memorial Hall, Paraparamu. Saturday March 22, 10am-6pm.

The Kāpiti Tattoo & Arts Festival is a one-of-a-kind, celebration of creativity, expression, and local talent. Join us for a full day of artistic inspiration featuring more than 40 talented tattoo artists, painters, sculptors, retail and crafts people from across the region. Experience the thrill of live tattooing, explore art displays, and enjoy live performances on the main stage – all set to the beats of local musicians. Whether you're a passionate art enthusiast, an ink lover, or just looking for an exciting day out, this festival has something for everyone.



ŌTAKI EASTER MARKET Ōtaki Market. Sunday. April 13, 10am-2pm.

Discover a vibrant outdoor market nestled on old SH1 in Ōtaki, just across from New World. Food trucks and stalls: from waffles to hangi, seafood chowder to fry bread, sausage sizzles to pork buns, and a delectable assortment of rice, noodles, and home baking – a feast awaits. Art and craft, native trees, flowers and plants, candles, soaps and wax melts, antiques and collectables, produce, honey, pre-loved clothing, shoes and accessories, tools, toys and books, and lots more.



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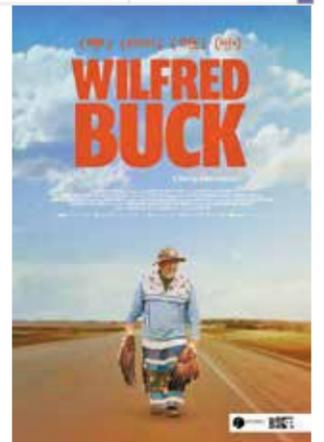
MĀORILAND FILM FESTIVAL PROGRAMME MARCH 26-30 ŌTAKI

- VENUES:**
- MĀORILAND HUB
 - RAUKAWA MARAE
 - RANGIĀTEA
 - MEMORIAL HALL
 - MEMORIAL HALL SUPPER ROOM
 - SENIOR CITIZENS' HALL
 - NGĀ PURAPURA

WENEREI / WEDNESDAY 26 POUTŪ-TE-RANGI		TĀITE / THURSDAY 27 POUTŪ TE RANGI		PĀRAIRE / FRIDAY 28 POUTŪ TE RANGI		HĀTAREI / SATURDAY 29 POUTŪ TE RANGI		RĀTAPU / SUNDAY 30 POUTŪ TE RANGI	
MFF Industry Programme starts. See mff.maorilandfilm.co.nz for details		10:00 AM - 4:00 PM	Toi Puni opens	10:00 AM - 4:00 PM	Toi Puni opens	10:00 AM - 4:00 PM	Toi Puni opens	10:00 AM - 4:00 PM	Toi Puni opens
		10:00 AM - 4:00 PM	MATCH opens	10:00 AM - 4:00 PM	MATCH opens	10:00 AM - 4:00 PM	MATCH opens	10:00 AM - 4:00 PM	MATCH opens
11:00 AM	PŌWHIRI	10:30 AM - 12:30 PM	Whānau Shorts	9:30 AM - 11:30 AM	Shrek - Kātahi Te Korokē (School Screening)	10:00 AM - 12:15 PM	Sugarcane	11:00 AM - 1:00 PM	Wai Nui Ātea
5:30 PM	Māoriland Keynote Address - Kath Akuhata Brown	12:30 PM - 2:30 PM	Rising Stories - Wai Tai Iti, Wai Tai Nui	10:00 AM - 12:00 PM	The Haka Party Incident	10:30 AM - 12:30 PM	Whenua Shorts	11:30 AM - 1:30 PM	Wai Tangi
8:00 PM - 10:30 PM	Opening Night: Kōkā	1:30 PM - 3:30 PM	Wairua Shorts	11:00 AM - 12:15 PM	Kohanga Shorts - Waiū	11:00 AM - 1:00 PM	Red Fever	2:00 PM - 3:30 PM	The Dr's Wife
		3:30 PM - 5:30 PM	Wilfred Buck	1:00 PM - 3:00 PM	The Stolen Children of Aotearoa	1:30 PM - 3:00 PM	Wai Pupū	2:30 PM - 4:30 PM	Standing Above The Clouds
		5:00 PM - 7:15 PM	The Falling Sky	1:30 PM - 2:45 PM	Ngā Kōtiro o Taranaki	2:00 PM - 3:30 PM	The Lost Tiger	4:30 PM - 6:30 PM	Whakapapa Shorts
		7:00 PM - 9:30 PM	Shrek - Kātahi Te Korokē! (World Premiere)	4:00 PM - 6:15 PM	Wai Āhuru	4:00 PM - 6:00 PM	Cosmografias	6:30 PM - 8:45 PM	Te Puna Ora
		8:00 PM - 10:30 PM	Aberdeen	5:00 PM - 7:15 PM	Kneecap	4:30 PM - 7:00 PM	Tinā	8:30 PM - LATE	Māoriland Red Carpet Party (R18)
				5:30 PM - 7:30 PM	Angela's Shadow	5:00 PM - 7:30 PM	Bingo Shorts		
				7:00 PM - 9:00 PM	Artists Night	7:00 PM - 9:30 PM	Moloka'i Bound		
				8:00 PM - 10:00 PM	Seeds	8:00 PM - 10:15 PM	Singing Back the Buffalo		
				8:30 PM - 10:30 PM	So Surreal: Behind the Masks	8:30 PM - 10:00 PM	Wai Hōhonu		
				8:30 PM - 10:30 PM	The Rule of Jenny Pen	Right: The story of charismatic and irreverent Wilfred Buck, who came through a harrowing history of displacement, racism, and addiction in 1960s Canada.			



Above: *The Ugliest Woman in the World* (Kath Akuhata Brown) is a poignant exploration of self-worth, identity, and societal expectations wrapped in a comedic and dramatic narrative. The story follows Adi, a Māori widow who is thrust into a bizarre legal battle after the death of her wealthy husband, Joseph.



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EXHIBITING AT TOI MATARAU See toi.maorilandfilm.co.nz



Kilns residency 'pivotal'

The resident artist at the Kilns at Te Horo, Thomas Baker (above), has been busy. His drying pots and recycled clay are obvious under the veranda of the Blumhardt Studio.

Tom's six month residency, which began in October 2024, finishes at the end of March. His exhibition at Toi Mahara in Waikanae from March 22 promises a unique opportunity to experience contemporary ceramics, with all pots produced at Te Horo and much of it fired in the salt/soda brick kiln.

Thomas's summer residency at The Kilns at Te Horo, has been pivotal for him.

"It's let me shake off the past, push myself more and ask my pots to take me further," he says.

The six months have given him time to "play", to experiment with new ideas and resolve a few ideas.

"I've been trying to find ways of letting the clay have its own voice and have its own form," he says.

To do so, he's been using locally sourced clays (though the source of Mirek Smisek's clay eludes him) as well as additives such as beach-combed pumice.

As the residency comes towards its end, Thomas is busy preparing for not only own end-of-residency exhibition opening at Toi Mahara, but also and a joint exhibition with Riccardo Scott and Scott Brough at Yuka O'Shannessy's Public Record Gallery on Ponsonby Road, Auckland.

He's also putting together the programme for a masterclass on March 22, where the emphasis will be on play and experimentation.

"Play is important," he says. "It creates the excitement in working with clay and working out new forms and ideas."

Meanwhile, Jenn Leov will be the next resident at The Kilns

Paekākāriki-based Jenn will take up the residency early in April through to June. She plans to create a cohesive body of work focusing on soda/salt firing continuing her past experience firing work in the Kilns trust's brick kiln – the Hautere Kiln. Jenn will run a workshop on June 1 (details yet to be finalised) and an exhibition at The Kilns at Te Horo toward the end of June.

Architecture award

The old Te Horo Railway Station restoration and siteworks has won a Wellington Architecture award for WSP Architecture.

The heritage project was "a good example of collaboration by all stakeholders on a complex project," the judges said. "With shared intent, the result preserves a slice of history and provides an events space and art studios."

The Kilns trust has also installed the collaborative work by past resident Adrienne Riseley and Wirihana Kiriona. *Re-construction Re-Birth* is made from original fence palings from potter Mirek Smisek's property. It looks at home settled on the edge of the lawn at the Kilns – just touched by the overhanging trees.

Contact thekilnsattehoro@gmail.co.nz



MESSINI PALACE

Messini Palace (Ngāpuhi, Ngāti Apakura, Waikato Tainui) is a self-taught experimental artist who works with resin and plaster.

She is a self-sustainable practitioner who works from her studio in central Auckland. After living overseas for many years, she has spent recent years reconnecting with her taha Māori and her art-practice has aided in her reclamation of identity as a wahine Māori. Messini's greatest influence is her whakapapa and many of her pieces represent important tūpuna or kaitiaki.

Some of her projects are collaborations with carver Mike Matchitt, who carves whakairo from which Messini casts moulds to cast her resin sculptures.

A selection of Messini's sculptures are

inspired by souvenir pieces such as the tiki. This is her way of counter-critiquing trinkets that are sold to tourists, reclaiming the narrative of taonga tuku iho.

Messini's gypsum-cast masks (above) are called Nehe, a name gifted to her by Ngāi Tūhoe artist Tame Iti. These masks are the koroua in her collection, endeared as tawhito, old and ancient.

Her Tiki Ora necklaces are a contemporary resin twist on the traditional Hei Tiki. Large in size and bold in colour, these necklaces can be worn by all genders and especially appeal to the extrovert, perfect for anyone seeking accessories to power-dress their wardrobe.

Messini's pieces make for great decorative pieces – some can be worn, some hung, some beautiful additions to a nightstand or cabinet.

ULUAKI & SONIA FONUA

"Koloa" is the Tongan kupu for "treasure" and it acknowledges the rich tradition of craftsmanship in Tonga.

This is the beautiful name given to the family business established by Uluaki & Sonia Fonua who are based in Tāmaki Makaurau.

These beautifully crafted earrings comprise "ngatu" (mulberry cloth) embedded in resin to be held in place and preserved for the wearer to appreciate.

Ngatu is also known across Te Moana nui a Kiwa as; Tapa, Kapa, Siapo and Hiapo and undergoes a time intensive process of harvesting, peeling, scraping, soaking, beating, and drying the bark (fibre). The cloth is then decorated with beautiful traditional patterns, significant flora and fauna of Tonga.

Every piece is unique depending on where



the cloth may have been cut so no two pair of earrings will be the same, another aspect of these earrings that make them the perfect gift or addition to your jewellery collection.



ERENA WYLIE

Erena Wylie (Ngāti Raukawa, Ngāti Kapumanawawhiti, Te Pou o Tainui) individually hand-cuts and paints every pair of earrings, made from recycled tyre tubing.

Her designs are inspired by the feathers of the kākā and takahē manu, two of our native manu. Erena has Williams Syndrome, a developmental disorder that affects the body and mind. Her practice as an artist aids in easing her intellectual disabilities, providing her with an outlet to relax and express herself. Erena is mentored by Rebecca Bond, Kapiti Arts Studio coordinator and jeweller, who has helped her to find her creative voice, establish herself as an artist and network with galleries.

New Riverbank path

Work is to start this month on a new shared pedestrian and cycling path on Riverbank Road.

Kāpiti Coast District Council infrastructure and asset management group manager Sean Mallon says the path will make the road safer for people, and improve connectivity in the town. He says as Ōtaki continues to grow, areas like Riverbank Road are changing, and the work reflects those changes.

“Once a mostly industrial area, today Riverbank Road is home to a childcare centre, there are housing subdivisions under way and there are generally more people moving around the area on foot, by bike and in vehicles,” Sean says.

“The new shared pathway will make it safer for everyone passing through the area, no matter how they’re travelling, and increase connectivity in an area of high growth.”

The path will be on the northern side of the road and will extend from Miro Street to Old State Highway 1, a total length of 650 meters. It will be 3m wide and surfaced with

asphalt.

Work is due to start in mid-March, and is expected to take about three months. Traffic management will be in place during construction.

Sean says Ōtaki is in the midst of a significant infrastructure upgrade.

“Whether building new water reservoirs or upgrading wastewater systems, we’ve really turned Ōtaki orange [with road cones] in the last year.

“We know this work can be disruptive, and thank the community for their patience. It’s all about preparing and building resilience for the future.”

A KCDC diagram showing where the new path will connect with an existing path on Riverbank Road.



Expert to talk about forestry

MPI forestry expert Ben Disney is guest speaker at an Ōtaki Carbon Forests public talk on April 1.

Ben Disney (at left) is the MPI-Te Ūru Rākau forestry advisor for the Greater Wellington area with 15 years of experience in New Zealand and the United States.

He will discuss why, how and which native tree species to grow – whether for harvest, income, or boosting biodiversity. His extensive knowledge also covers time-scales, pest control, and legal considerations for planting natives.

“I love speaking with land managers and owners to share information and resources about trees,” Ben says. “My current role allows me to help people and organisations achieve their forestry goals.”

Ōtaki Carbon Forests supports landowners and kaitiaki in planting mainly native trees for biodiversity and carbon sequestration. Each year its series of public talks helps share practical information to get more native trees in the ground.

Project leader Di Buchan says Ben will not only be sharing key insights for growing natives well, but after the talk people can arrange a visit with him to their land, for his expert advice about their own tree needs. It’s free of charge.

“This is a great way to hone in on how to look after our trees so they look after us,” she says.

The talk will cover:

- The potential environmental and economic benefits of growing native trees.
 - Ōtaki Carbon Forests Why one might consider growing native trees for harvest: different species and their uses, diversification of NZ’s forestry resource, providing an income while enhancing indigenous biodiversity.
 - Establishment and silviculture if harvest is intended.
 - Timescales involved, uses for production thinnings, pests and diseases, selective logging vs clear felling, market value of native timbers and economic returns.
 - Legal matters: compliance with relevant legislation, difference between planted native forests and self-seeded native forests if harvest is intended.
- Ōtaki Carbon Forests is a project of the charitable trust Energise Ōtaki.

■ 7pm, Tuesday, April 1, Rotary Lounge, 25 Aotaki St., Ōtaki

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HUATAU/Comment

PLAIN SPEAKING: IAN CARSON

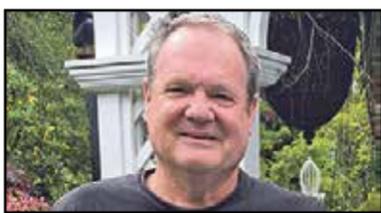
I'm standing for mayor at this year's local body elections

Occasionally I like to have a bit of a joke with Debbi, my wife.

The latest was that I would stand for the Kāpiti mayoralty at this year's local body elections, scheduled for October. I thought it was funny; she obviously didn't.

In fact, it was probably about as humorous as the bucket of water over a doorway that empties as soon as she opens the door.

I heard, "you've got to be #@ing joking", or words to that effect as I scuttled down the hallway, avoiding the slipper missiles that followed me, fortunately as misguided as her attempts at throwing a cricket ball. I was joking, of course.



Sitting outside – alone in the cold on the porch – I had time to reflect not only on my poor attempt at humour, but also the demands on time that any public office requires.

I love politics, and local politics especially because of its grass-roots effect on communities. However, those who put their hand up to serve – whether it's as a community board member,

councillor or mayor, is not signing up for a cushy job. The reality is that it's demanding of time and energy, and it's largely thankless.

So why do people stand for positions such as these? Don't for a minute think it's for the money. There are generally easier ways to make a buck, involving less of a time commitment.

The answer is two-fold, and can sometimes be a bit of both.

One is ego. Some people think being in public office makes them important. It's what drives them – perhaps there's an element of insecurity about themselves. But from what I've seen, the opposite turns out to be true. The public either doesn't know who they are, or they don't care. So the egotists are actually wasting their time.

The other, more benevolent motivation is the desire to make a difference. This can be a two-edged sword, because what you might think will make a difference is not what other people think. Pushing through change is never an easy task, no matter how important it might be.

In all of this, I want to be clear that I don't want to put people off standing for a council position. If you genuinely care about your community and you want to be part of things that make it better, go for it.

You'll need to be pretty thick-skinned because colleagues and the media – myself included – can be tough on you if you mess up. The plan? Don't mess up.

■ Ian is editor of Ōtaki Today

THE ELECTORATE: TIM COSTLEY, MP

Locals making it all happen

Recently I met with the Ōtaki and Te Horo Business Association (ŌTHBA).

They are fantastic! They held an after-work evening for local businesses and I went along to support. ŌTHBA is a relatively new association but they have already shown their effectiveness.

One great achievement was advocating for local businesses about what the changes to the old SH1 should look like. They approached me last year with concerns about removing lots of carparks, adding a second cycle lane, and some other changes.

Fewer carparks means less access, fewer customers, and we would all hate to see it become a ghost town. Encouraging cyclists into town is great, but there is already a dedicated shared path that runs from the bridge along the railway track. Removing lots of carparks to add a second cyclelane made no sense.

I supported their great efforts, contacting NZTA and working with them and council from November to January. A great compromise was reached, keeping carparks and

painting a cyclelane that doesn't impact parking or stop motorists. Well done to ŌTHBA for their work in this.

We also heard during the meeting from Deb Shannon, the chairperson of the group, and three amazing locals.

Harry Gibb is the ops manager at Stanmore Farm, a grapevine nursery in Te Horo with some of the most beautiful B&B spots in the country. You might have seen them on *Country Calendar*. They've been here since 1968 and a real asset to our community. They don't just grow and sell, but when I visited them they showed me their amazing innovation.

Carmen runs Elemental Cider, another example of our amazing food and beverage sector that I'm really working hard to boost. Among all their other awards, Elemental have taken out New Zealand's best cider two years running with the only pōhutukawa-infused cider in the world. How cool is that!

Ben Jamison runs Ōtaki-Māori Racing Club, the only Māori-governed racecourse in the world. They've been part of Ōtaki in different forms since 1886. I've been doing lots of work recently on the Racing Industry Act, working to grow support for our racing industries (thoroughbred and harness). I've spoken with the minister of racing about building up the local racing scene in our region too and it's something I'll keep working on.

When I or our government talk about growth, this is the local face of it. We have an important role, but we must always remember that growth only happens because we have great people in our region like Harry, Carmen and Ben. They're the ones to take risks, create new jobs, and bring growth to local businesses. Thank you.

■ Tim is MP for the Ōtaki electorate

CAM'S CORNER: CAM BUTLER

Chrystalls Bend vandalism beyond me

Tēnā koutou whanau o Ōtaki.

Please note that our first Ōtaki Community Board meeting is on March 11, 7pm at the supper room, Ōtaki Library.

Vandalism

The Chrystall's Bend BRAND NEW toilets are currently out of action due to mindless vandalism. What makes low-lives want to break in and destroy the pipework and controls for such a great public asset is beyond me. This is just a massive waste of time and ratepayers' money! If you have any information about this stupid act please let the police know ASAP.

Road works

Aotaki Street and Mill Road wastewater pipe works are back and going full steam ahead. And yes, these works will be ongoing for the rest of the year.

The shared path on the old SH1 bridge is so



close! They were wiring up the lights recently so it will be great to see the area lit up.

Old SH1 revocation works

Revocation works are already undergoing at Te Horo plus some work has started on Old SH1 with some resurfacing and kerb works between Waeranga Road and Sue Avenue. Expect more work in that area, plus in coming months the revocation work through the Old SH1 shopping area. This will be done in smaller lengths as to try and lessen the disruption. However, there will be disruption and the contractors are chatting with shop owners.

Boy racers in Waikanae

A large gathering of cars took over the intersection of Greenhill Road and Old SH1 just north of Waikanae where they proceeded to block the road and do burnouts on the intersection. You will have seen the videos on social media if you are on Facebook. The Ōtaki Community Board is working on some on-the-ground solutions, particularly with CCTV, and pushing KCDC to update their traffic bylaw to give police more powers to stop cruising and anti-social behaviour in vehicles.

Our term is running out

While it felt that three years was going to be a long time, we are now in the last six months of operation for the current Ōtaki Community Board. Who will we see putting their hand up for the next term?

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

TE HORO OUTLOOK: MICHAEL MOORE

Addressing dangerous road racing culture

On the last day of February around 11pm, about 150 vehicles and more than 200 young people descended on a rural section of Old SH1 just north of Waikanae.

Videos were quickly shared on social media showing the frightening display of illegal street burnouts that resulted in at least one young man taken to hospital. Emergency services and police were initially unable to get near due to the large numbers and the risk of violence.

Police had no prior knowledge of Friday night's incident. During a similar Levin incident in June last year, several police were injured after intervention. There have now been multiple similar burnouts in Otaki, Te Horo and Waikanae.

They're not going away and appear to be increasing in size. Our community's frustration is understandable. It's dangerous, destroys our roads, puts people in danger and locals on edge.

As we have seen from the comments across many social media community groups in recent days, this is a difficult subject and solutions are complex, as are the social behaviours driving these now regular incidents.

The police briefing to the Waikanae Community Board meeting in Reikorangi on March 4 by Kāpiti-Mana area commander Inspector Renée Perkins and Sergeant Josh was helpful. Cam Butler, chair of the Ōtaki Community Board, and I have already



reached out to some rangatahi who came along. They are car enthusiasts, but don't endorse the behaviour and are being proactive in wanting to talk.

Inspector Perkins is sharing research about antisocial road users and contributing to this community discussion. Cam and his community board have done a lot of work on this issue and have made a series of recommendations to the council.

We are aiming to hold different forums that will better inform and help us all understand and see what role our council can have in this ongoing and escalating problem.

We all acknowledge the serious consequences these events have, not least to the young people involved, but also local residents who have a right to travel on our roads uninhibited and safely without intimidation or restrictions, which is not what happened on this Friday night north of Waikanae.

We hope to announce soon a community meeting for anyone who would like to positively contribute to this dialogue. We also plan to hold a separate forum for our rangatahi.

Some might be interested to know that 15 years ago, the council and a local roading contractor partnered to provide a burnout pad along Rimu Road, Paraparaumu. With the current risk-averse civic environment of 2025, I doubt such a facility would be endorsed.

However, that said, there are examples of how we might support or encourage existing places like Manfeild Racetrack in Feilding. We should also note that there's an element of the racer community who sees the thrill of illegal and dangerous activity on public roads a core part of this.

It's complex to find a solution as there's a deeper social issue of why this behaviour is entrenched and systemic. The best that public elected folks like Cam and I can do besides advocate for preventative measures, is to facilitate community dialogue, and we're undertaking that.

Should you want to be part of this conversation or have input, I encourage you to reach out, like those young men and women did after Tuesday evening's meeting.

Email us:
 Michael.Moore@kapiticoast.govt.nz
 or
 Cam.Butler@kapiticoast.govt.nz
 • The next meeting of the Waikanae Community Board is Tuesday, April 29, Waikanae Community Centre, 28 Utauta St.
 ■ Michael is chair of Waikanae Community Board and a Te Horo resident.

The Russian bully who occupies the White House

There was something deeply troubling about the February 28 White House meeting between Donald Trump and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky.

What shocked many was rude evidence that the world order, which the United States largely built after the Second World War, had seismically shifted from one that had been a fixture for some 80 years.

For a moment, let's be clear about the issues behind the meeting.

Russia had invaded Ukraine, an innocent neighbour in 2022, expecting to take over the country within days. As it happened Ukraine defended itself gamely with financial and hardware support from the US, Europe and others. Nevertheless, Russia, with support from North Korea, illegally took about 20 percent of Ukraine territory, killing millions, destroying schools, hospitals and entire cities while kidnapping thousands of children to Russia for conversion to Russian citizenship.

From a population of 41 million, about 8 million Ukrainians had been internally displaced and more than 8 million have fled the country, creating Europe's largest refugee crisis since the Second World War.

So Trump decided that he could be the peacemaker by largely excluding Ukraine and Europe from negotiations, while embracing Putin, the murderous aggressor, starting with massive concessions to Russia while parroting all the Kremlin's talking points. Oh, and the US wants to help the peace by taking a big chunk of Ukraine's mineral wealth for itself.

Small wonder that longtime allies now view the US not just as unreliable but also as a possible threat to their own security.

While all this is politically gobsmacking, it should hardly be a surprise given that Trump has more or less campaigned on this very thing for years – put America first and treat everyone else like crap.

But what stuns me most is the spectacle of thuggish and bullying behaviour from the president and vice president of the United States, in what was clearly staged for maximum public humiliation of the Ukraine president.

Anyone who has seen bullying behaviour or been through an abusive relationship would have recognised all the traits on display with Trump and Vance.

The most obvious is aggressively shouting over the top of a victim, hardly allowing them to speak and

sometimes doing it in front of people for public humiliation. Bullies are highly manipulative and like to have support, as Trump had with J D Vance, with the victim isolated and alone in a stage-managed situation full of Trump acolytes and TV cameras for extended public humiliation.

This mode of bullying is a way to dominate or control others, often targeting those they perceive as weaker or more vulnerable. It serves to create an environment of fear and intimidation that speaks to a desire for power and control where they have to feel a sense of superiority and accomplishment.

Trump often portrays himself as a victim if things don't go his way. That's even when he's making a victim of others, as he was with Zelensky. But it's classically how a bully operates with a lack of empathy towards actual victims and a way to never admit losing. However it indicates deep-seated insecurities where their bullying is a coping mechanism to mask their own inadequacy.

Naturally enough but also bewilderingly, there are plenty who didn't see it that way and that Zelensky, the relentlessly courageous leader of an invaded country, either brought the situation upon himself or was in fact the one at fault.

It all goes to show that when something's black, just says it's white, so it is white.

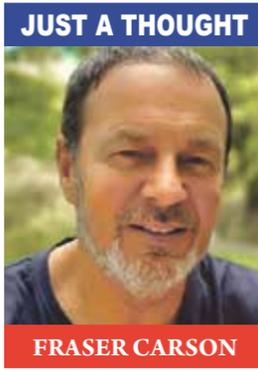
But, imagine this. If Trump ran the local secondary school, the parents

T R U M P Z K I



Illustration by my good friend, Mike Peebles.

■ Fraser is founder of the community development websites flightdec.com, knowthis.nz and inhub.org.nz



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ŌTAKI



A digitally rendered impression of the new FreshChoice store. Image supplied

FreshChoice, fresh face for downtown store

What was Countdown in downtown Ōtaki is to become a FreshChoice supermarket.

In a statement to *Ōtaki Today*, Woolworths NZ said its Ōtaki store (officially Woolworths but never rebranded to Woolworths) said the conversion to a FreshChoice store followed a review of how the store could “best meet the needs of locals now, and into the future”.

It said Woolworths focused on larger stores

and a broader customer segment, while the FreshChoice franchise model was the best fit for stores tailored for local customers.

“In line with this, Woolworths Ōtaki is becoming FreshChoice Ōtaki.”

A Woolworths spokesperson said an agreement had been signed with new owners for the store, and team members had been consulted on the proposal.

The new owners will be hiring for several

roles at FreshChoice Ōtaki, which team members were able to apply for.

“Additionally, all current vacancies at Woolworths Levin, Waikanae and Paraparaumu are being held for Ōtaki team members should they want to consider that as an option,” the spokesperson said.

The new owner operators of FreshChoice Ōtaki, Brad and Rochelle Meikle, are moving to Ōtaki.

“We’re really looking forward to settling into the area and getting to know all the locals,” they said in a statement. “We’ll be giving the store a refresh, and encourage everyone to come along and check it out”

Woolworths Ōtaki will close on Sunday, March 23, for the refresh.

FreshChoice Ōtaki says it expects to officially open its doors as FreshChoice on Tuesday, April 1.

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Work to clear Blue Bluff slips begins

Two slips that have closed the Ōtaki Gorge Road access to Tararua Forest Park are finally being cleared.

Construction work began earlier this month, a little later than planned after the road had to be shored up to cope with the heavy machinery required.

The area – known as Blue Bluff – has been closed to walkers and vehicles since September 2020 after a serious slip, the latest in a series since 2016. The resulting unstable hillside has made access along the road to Ōtaki Forks and Tararua Forest Park dangerous.

At the site of an underslip, the bank will be cut into and the road realigned farther from the river.

About 15,000 cubic metres of debris needs to be removed from the site. The road will then be rebuilt along its original alignment near an overslip. Some of the debris will be shifted nearby, but the remainder will be trucked away out of the area.

Kāpiti Coast District Council says there will be no pedestrian access through the work site. Walkers will need to use the 4.5km Department of Conservation track to access Tararua Forest Park. That will add about two hours to a walk over steep terrain.

The road is expected to reopen in May.

The estimated cost in May 2024, when the council agreed to reopen the road, was \$7.5 million. It is to be funded jointly by the council and Waka Kotahi, with the council’s share about a third of that.

At that time, council group manager infrastructure and asset management Sean Mallon said alternative routes for providing long-term access, like swing bridges, would continue to be investigated.

Heavy machinery at Blue Bluff clearing the slips.
Photo Cam Butler

The power of kohekohe to shake up life forces

I have spent years immersed in the mauri (life-force) of kohekohe, and each experience provides a profound shake-up, physically and emotionally.

Kohekohe is a rongoā for the whare tangata. It clears pathways and restores balance, physically and spiritually.

Kohekohe has a distinctly bitter flavour. Yet, as you cultivate a connection with the plant and feel the mana of its rongoā, that bitterness becomes a friend.

It's important to immerse yourself in the mauri of the plant as the rongoā flows through your being. Tune in to the wiri (shudder) in the tinana as it revitalises your cells.

The bitterness has a profound effect, cleansing impurities. Although the taste might make your body shudder, it is precisely this reaction that stimulates cellular activity.

We have grown used to sweetened foods and beverages, which can diminish our appreciation for the natural flavours of plants.

Many of us find it challenging to enjoy a plant's true taste without enhancing it with additional ingredients.

I encourage you to take the time to relish the plant's inherent flavour, as this is where the journey of cellular rebalancing truly starts.

Kohekohe creates a warm and nurturing environment for conception and growth. She has a powerful bite that brings stagnant energy to the surface.



The rongoā will guide you on what actions to take in daily life. This is the time to observe your body and make the necessary adjustments to what your body needs.

Eliminate the clutter that restricts your space. This area is for creativity, and when it's cluttered with "stuff", your creative energy will get stifled. Allow the energy to flow freely. Kohekohe can help you in letting go of any build-up.

A truly stunning rākau with large green glossy leaves. She will blossom soon. Her blooms stem from the trunk of the tree.

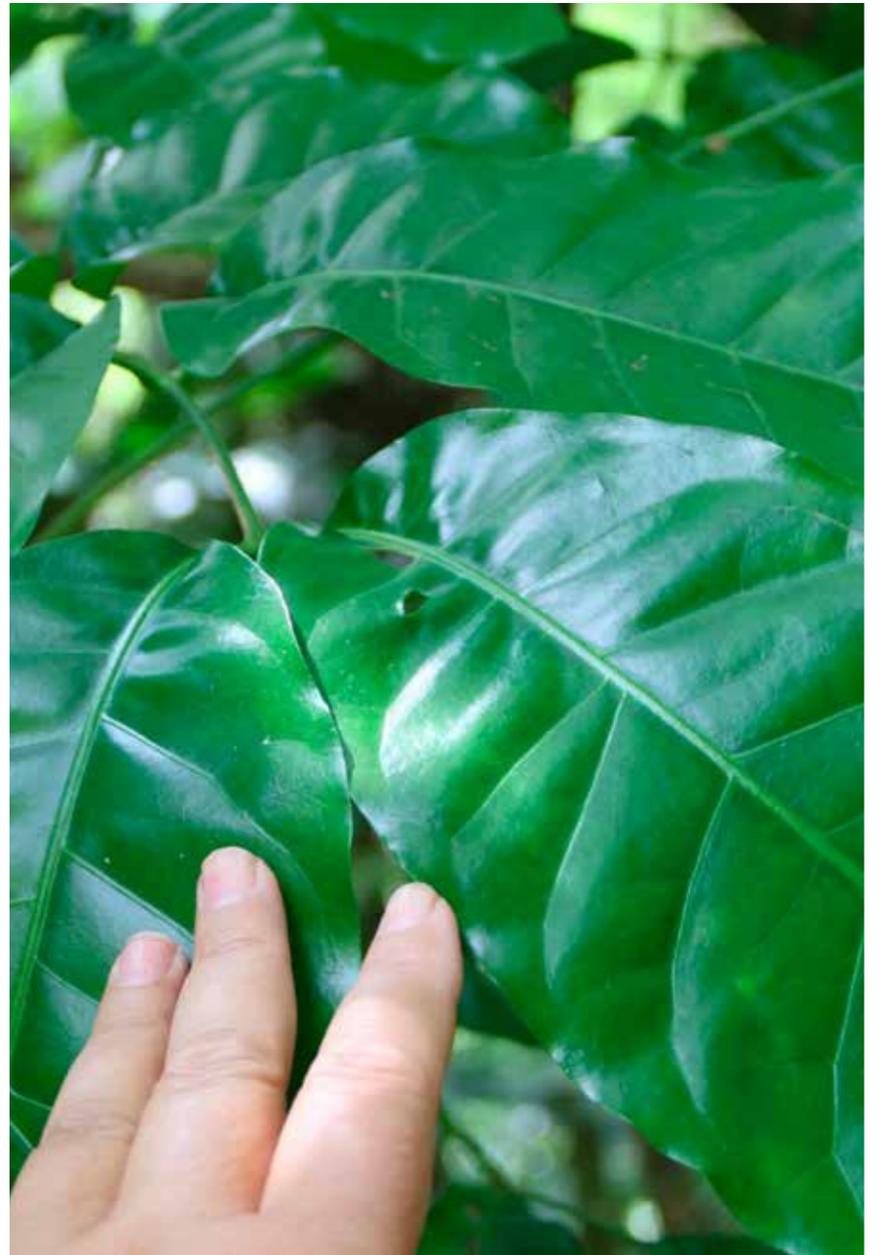
It is crucial to accurately and confidently identify plants before harvesting them.

Adhering to tikanga during the harvesting process and while preparing rongoā is equally important.

If you are unfamiliar with tikanga, I encourage you to learn. Numerous workshops are available to help you learn about this traditional practice.

We offer a rongoā for the whare tangata called Wa Hine, which is accessible in our online dispensary or at Māoriland. If you believe this rongoā could be beneficial for you, I am available for online consultations.

■ Joanne is a certified rongoā practitioner and registered with ACC. Email jo@rongoamauri.com





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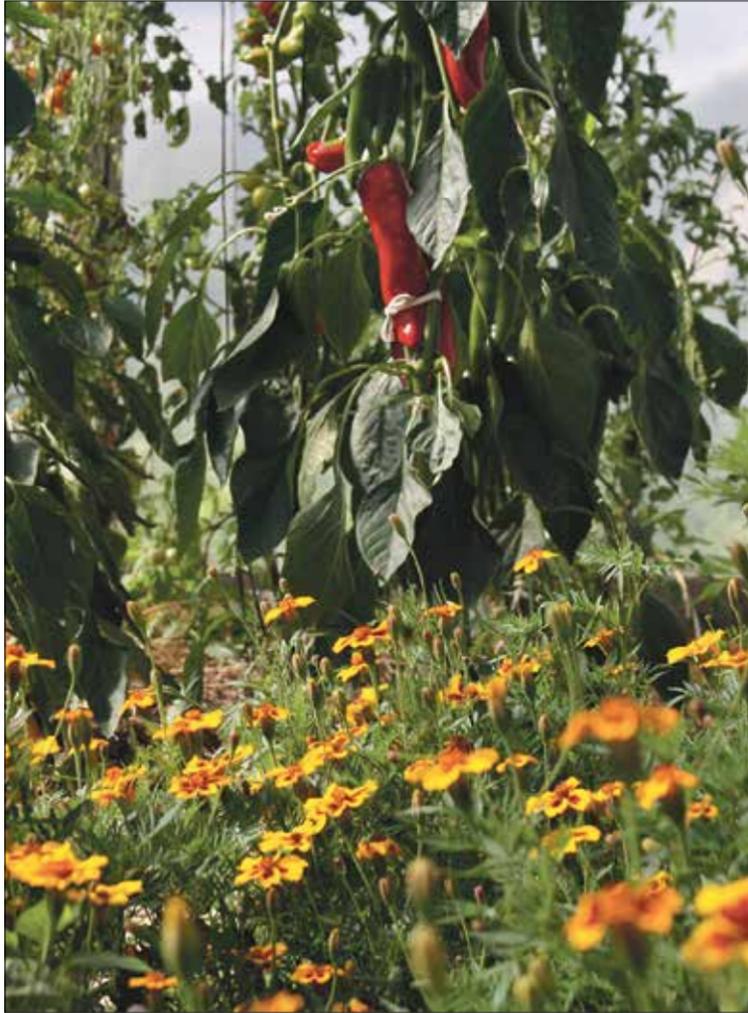
Growth slows as cooler weather kicks in

RIGHT: Greenhouse sweet peppers and african marigold groundcover.

FAR RIGHT, TOP: Loads of flowers for beneficial insects.

FAR RIGHT BELOW: Carrots and chamomile companion planting.

Photos Kath Irvine



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SOAPBOX | Monday-Thursday: 9am-4pm
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Clear starry nights, cool, dewy mornings and that special golden hue in the evening sky are all signs that autumn is moving in.

The cooler mornings and nights slowly begin to cool the soil, which in turn slows soil life and slower growth rates follow.

Make the most of the warmer days to get autumn/winter crops planted. Though you can still plant during the colder months, it's the stuff you plant now that will keep fresh veggies coming into your kitchen.

- If you haven't sown carrots and parsnips, get them in. If they're up and germinated in three weeks, you should get a crop to enjoy for winter. Leeks need to go in now as well.
- Plant a mixture of brassicas. Broccolis the best bang for your buck – all the shoots that come after the main head is cut make it so.
- Plant loads of leafy greens – kale, perpetual spinach, parsley, chard, cavalo nero, mizuna – so healthy and easy! They'll plug the gaps in brassica harvest.
- Get peas and beetroot going in plug trays – that way they get a head start on the slugs. Fresh peas are the best - I jam them in on every vertical surface!
- Get garlic growing strongly now to avoid rust in spring.
- And don't forget companion flowers – calendula, cosmos, cornflower, bishops flower, honesty and poppy to keep the nectar flowing.

Finding space to sow and plant winter crops takes lateral thinking when all the beds are full. Plant the new among the nearly finished, or at the very least right after harvest.

- Prune old foliage off older crops to let light in, and create usable space.
- Use the space beneath or around finishing crops like tomatoes, cucumbers, courgettes and squash for leafy greens and flowers, or to direct sow root crops, rocket or coriander.
- Plant hungry brassicas going among existing greencrops. Make light-filled pockets at 30-40cm spacings by cutting greencrop back, add a few big handfuls of compost and plant. Continue to cut back the greencrop as the brassicas fill the space. Lay the trimmings down as mulch.

In the greenhouse

Every autumn I sow a mixed greencrop that includes cleansing mustard beneath the still growing tomatoes and peppers.

The potential for problems when growing under plastic is high, so even if the season has been trouble-free I still clean up with mustard. This, combined with crop rotation, weekly biological feeds and a fresh layer of compost after the chickens leave late in winter, will keep the soil hearty and well.

As things start to cool off, be mindful of not overwatering. Cooler days means there's less evaporation. Water in the morning so soil dries by nightfall to prevent fungal disease. Prune old foliage and cut back weeds for good airflow.

Milk and molasses poured on foliage and soil will slow any fungal problems if caught early enough. Dilute milk 1:10 into your watering can and add 1 tablespoon of molasses (dissolved beforehand in a bit of hot water.)

■ 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

HAUORA-PŪTAIO /Health-science

Stevia in and out of flavour with authorities

One of the most popular products we have at Hebe Botanicals is Betta Sweet, a zero-calorie natural sweetener.

We use stevia to make Betta Sweet. The stevia story is a fascinating one.

For hundreds of years Paraguayans have sweetened their herbal teas with the leaves of a native perennial shrub called ka'a he'e ("sweet herb") – a plant now given the botanical name *Stevia rebaudiana* Bertoni or, simply, stevia.

In 1905 the Italian-Swiss botanist Dr Moisés Bertoni formally identified stevia and its sweet properties, but it was not until 1931 that two French chemists identified the various steviol glycosides in the plant that were responsible for its sweet taste.

That discovery, and the ability to isolate those sweet components, paved the way for turning stevia into a commercially viable, and readily available, sweetener.

Initially, it was Japan that developed large-scale commercial production. In the 1960s, the Japanese government banned artificial sweeteners, such as saccharin, because of safety concerns, leading to the widespread use of natural stevia as a food sweetener; for a variety of products, from ice-cream, candies and soft drinks to bread, pickles and yoghurt. The use of stevia spread through Asia.

It was a different story in the United States, where, in the early 1990s, the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) banned the import and sale of stevia. It even went as far as directing a US company to destroy the stevia books they were selling as the stevia recipes in them signalled that stevia had food sweetening ability.

This was at a time when agricultural and chemicals company Monsanto was heavily promoting the sales of its aspartame artificial sweeteners NutraSweet and Equal. Some people believe the FDA decision to ban stevia was influenced by lobbying efforts from artificial sweetener manufacturers who wanted to protect their market share.

However, in 1994 the US Dietary Supplement Health and Education Act allowed stevia to be used as a dietary supplement, although still not as a food additive.

New Zealand was essentially following the US legislation, so when, more than 20 years ago, Hebe Botanicals started making a stevia-based sweetener, stevia was not approved here as a food additive. We had to sell it as a dietary supplement.

Of course, people could take their "dietary supplement" home and sweeten their food and beverages with it as much as they liked!

About this time the increasing consumer demand for natural sweeteners got the attention of the multinational food corporations and, in 2008, Coca Cola and Pepsi applied to the FDA to approve steviol glycosides as food additives so they could be used in their diet soft drinks.

After years of banning stevia, the FDA now gave approval, and steviol glycosides were given GRAS (Generally Recognised as Safe) status.

The same year, New Zealand also approved steviol glycosides as an approved food and beverage additive; after all, we weren't going to be the only country to ban Diet Coke or Diet Pepsi. When added to food, stevia is declared in the ingredient list as "sweetener (960)" or "sweetener (steviol glycosides)".

Of the 11 sweet-tasting steviol glycosides in stevia, the sweetest one and the one with the least aftertaste is Rebaudioside A. Often referred to as "Reb A", it is about 240 times sweeter than sugar.

The industry standard for steviol glycosides in food requires 95 percent purity, but the Hebe Botanical process of repeated crystallisations and filtrations produces a purity of more than 99 percent Reb A, making it the purest, and therefore sweetest tasting, stevia Reb A commercially available.

Many people have been put off using stevia as they have had lower purity stevia with a pronounced aftertaste.

Steviol glycosides don't change blood sugar levels or insulin levels (zero Glycemic Index and zero Glycemic Loading) and so are ideal for diabetics. Harmful oral bacteria can't use steviol glycosides as an energy source, consequently stevia doesn't promote tooth decay or cavity formation.

Of course, zero-calorie sweeteners are primarily used to reduce calorie intake, though this works only if combined with sensible eating habits. Sweet-tasting food, whether sweetened with sugar or a zero-calorie sweetener, can encourage larger serving sizes; a stevia-sweetened muffin is a great idea, but not if you eat two of them!

■ 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.

HEALTH SCIENCE



DR STEVE HUMPHRIES





TE PUNA ORANGA O ŌTAKI

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Childhood Immunisation
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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 go to the nearest hospital emergency dept.
- 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 (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 – up to 18 years.

PAKIHI/Business

Poor marketing can lead to costly mistakes

In today's fast-paced business world, marketing isn't optional, it's essential.

Yet many SME business owners fall into the trap of insufficient marketing efforts, either due to budget constraints, lack of strategy, or underestimating its impact.

Without an effective marketing strategy, businesses struggle to attract leads, grow revenue, and remain competitive. This article explores the costly mistakes of insufficient marketing and provides actionable strategies to ensure your business thrives.

The cost of poor marketing

Many business owners assume that a great product or service sells itself. The truth is, visibility is key – if potential customers don't know you exist, they can't buy from you.

Here's what happens when marketing efforts fall short:

- **Low brand awareness:** If people don't recognize your brand, they won't consider your business.
- **Inconsistent lead generation:** Without steady marketing, new customer acquisition becomes unpredictable.
- **Customer retention struggles:** Marketing isn't just about gaining new customers – it keeps existing ones engaged.
- **Losing to competitors:** Even if your product is better, competitors who market consistently will steal your market share.

The good news? Marketing is an investment, not an expense. When executed well, it delivers measurable returns and fuels business growth.

Common marketing mistakes that kill business growth

Understanding what NOT to do is just as important as learning the right strategies.

1. No clear marketing strategy

Many businesses rely on random, inconsistent marketing efforts, hoping for the best. Without a structured marketing plan, success is unpredictable.

Fix: Create a marketing plan that defines your goals, target audience, and key marketing channels.

2. Inconsistent marketing efforts

Many businesses stop marketing when sales are good and restart only when things slow down. This creates a boom-and-bust cycle that hurts long-term growth.

Fix: Marketing must be consistent – even in busy times – to ensure a steady flow of leads.

3. Ignoring digital marketing

Relying only on word-of-mouth or traditional ads is no longer enough. Without a strong digital presence, your business is missing out on massive growth opportunities.



Image by Pexels from Pixabay

Fix: Use a combination of SEO, social media, content marketing, and paid advertising to expand reach.

4. No unique selling proposition (USP)

If you can't clearly explain why customers should choose you over competitors, you'll blend into the market.

Fix: Define your USP and communicate it in every marketing message.

5. Not measuring marketing performance

Throwing money at marketing without tracking results is like driving blindfolded.

Fix: Use analytics tools to track what's working and adjust your strategy accordingly.

The ActionCOACH approach to smart marketing

At ActionCOACH, we teach business owners structured marketing strategies that deliver results. Here's a simple yet powerful approach:

1. The five ways formula

To drive business growth, focus on five key areas:

- **Leads:** Attract more potential customers.
- **Conversion rate:** Improve how many leads become paying clients.
- **Average dollar sale:** Increase the amount customers spend per transaction.
- **Number of transactions:** Encourage repeat business.
- **Profit margins:** Keep more profit from each sale.

Even a 10 percent increase in each of these areas can lead to exponential revenue growth.

2. The marketing multiplication strategy

Rather than relying on a single tactic, use multiple marketing strategies simultaneously for maximum impact:

- **Referral marketing** – Turn happy customers into brand ambassadors.
- **Partnership marketing** – Collaborate with complementary businesses.
- **Social media marketing** – Engage with customers where they spend time.
- **Content marketing** – Provide value and build trust.

3. Test and measure everything

A good marketing strategy is never static, it's continuously refined based on real data.

- Run a campaign.
- Measure results (leads, conversions, engagement).
- Adjust and optimise for better performance.

Actionable steps to improve your marketing today

Not sure where to start? Follow these five steps to strengthen your marketing:

1. Set a marketing budget and stick to it

Decide how much to allocate to marketing each month. Marketing should be a priority, not an afterthought.

2. Implement a 90-day marketing plan

Create a rolling three-month plan that includes:

- Weekly social media content

- Monthly email newsletters
- Quarterly promotional campaigns
- 3. **Strengthen your online presence**
- Optimize your website for speed and SEO.
- Use Google My Business for local visibility.
- Engage actively on social media platforms.

4. Automate and streamline marketing tasks

Save time and improve efficiency with tools like:

- Email automation (Mailchimp, ActiveCampaign)
- Social media scheduling (Hootsuite, Buffer)
- CRM systems for customer tracking

5. Focus on relationship marketing

Keeping existing customers engaged and loyal is just as important as acquiring new ones.

- Send personalized follow-ups.
- Offer exclusive loyalty rewards.
- Deliver valuable, educational content.

Final thoughts – make marketing a priority

Ignoring marketing is one of the most expensive mistakes a business can make. Without a consistent marketing strategy, you risk:

- Inconsistent cash flow
- Losing market share to competitors
- Struggling to attract and retain customers
- But when marketing is strategic and consistent, it leads to:
- More leads, more sales, and higher profits
- Stronger brand recognition
- Sustainable long-term business growth

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

YOUR BUSINESS



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BUSINESS PROFILE

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



Ben Carson, left, and Hunter Knott working on aluminium drain covers at Carson Engineering.

Photo Ōtaki Today

‘Hard yards’ led to Ben’s own business

Ben Carson did the hard yards before starting Carson Contracting 26 years ago.

But he never did an apprenticeship, instead learning as he went. It’s not held him back, rather it’s helped him build a reputation as a local expert in a variety of engineering work.

The work includes making lightweight aluminium drain covers, repairing damaged or rusted trucks and other vehicles, graffiti removal and sand-blasting. But there’s a variety of other engineering work – from garden furniture to diggers – that comes through the gate.

When *Ōtaki Today* visited, Ben and his worker, Hunter Knott, had a tractor from the Ōtaki Boating Club that was getting a spruce-

up after taking a battering from the salt air and water of the beach.

Ben was raised and went to school in Ōtaki after his parents, Jim and Joan, moved here from the Hutt Valley in the early 1970s. The family moved to a house on the Lutz farm on Rāhui Road. Jim drove a front-end loader for John McLaughlin Contracting, digging gravel out of the Ōtaki River. Mum Joan worked for a while at Trucking company Coastal Freighters on Mill Road, at the BNZ and the old Chronicle newspaper office.

Ben went to Ōtaki College, but wanted to get into work as soon as he could.

A career advisor said one day when he was

just 15: “You don’t want to be here, do you?”

“He was right,” Ben says. “So he went to drive me to an interview at a local supermarket. He must have seen the look on my face, so we turned around and went to Midway Auto Centre, where Caltex used to be on the highway.”

He got work doing basic jobs in the workshop, carrying on for several more years at some of Ōtaki’s well established engineering businesses, where he got plenty of guidance from smart people. They included John McMurchie at Mac Engineering, Pete Housiaux at Concrete Doctors, and Nigel Pritchard at Riverbank Engineering (twice).

“I have to say a big thank you to those guys. They taught me so much.”

It was when he was doing specialist work on his own at weekends that he realised he should have his own business. It was the beginning of Carson Engineering.

Ben has been through highs and lows in the business, none more so than the past year.

“Yeah, it’s been tough at times,” he says. “We haven’t got any big contracts at the moment, but the phone’s still ringing.”

With plenty of work while the Peka Peka to Ōtaki expressway was being built, Ben is hoping construction of the Ōtaki to Levin stretch will bring work back in the door.



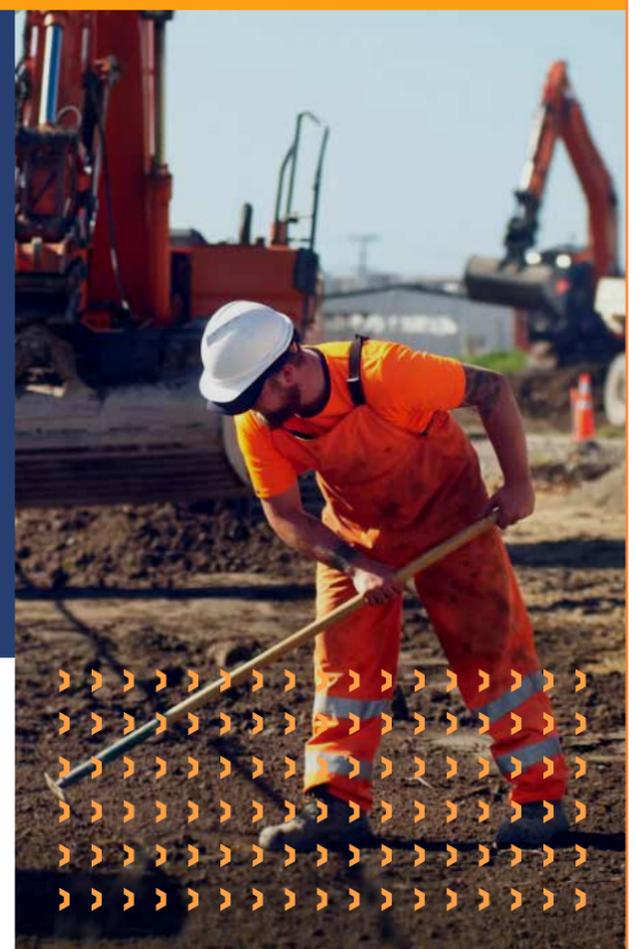
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HĪTŌRIA/History

Sirens' song summons brigade

Barely a week goes by where the sound of the Ōtaki Fire Brigade's siren isn't heard at least once throughout the town.

The wailing calls members of the brigade – all volunteers – to drop whatever they are doing and get to the Mill Road station as fast as they can.

For the townsfolk it's a sound that can raise feelings from vague interest to full-on dread, until the grapevine offers up the reason. Call-outs range from responding to residential alarms, house and scrub fires, car accidents and worse.



OUR HERITAGE

NICKY TREADWELL

Ōtaki has had a siren since 1918, not long after the fire brigade was established. Ōtaki fire chief Ian King says evidence suggests that before the brigade, church bells were rung to alert the town of a fire.

The *Ōtaki Historical Journal* (vol. 10, 1987) notes: "A hand syren [sic] was obtained for £11 and modified to be belt driven. A system of clear codes was established to guide brigade members – one long blast signalled an Ōtaki fire, two blasts a fire at Rangiuru and three blasts a fire at the Railway area. Audible over

two miles, the effect of the siren was spread by the Post Master contacting those members with telephones."

An excerpt from the *Ōtaki Mail* in October 1919 regarding a fire at Brights' Theatre (now the Civic Theatre) praises the quick response of the brigade: "In the meantime the fire alarm (the syren) had been sounded, and with commendable promptness the fire brigade mustered in good time with the chemical engine. The flames were at this time leaping high, and it looked as though the big building would be destroyed. However, in a very short time the brigade and willing workers had the flames extinguished."

The use of the word "syren" was not a typo. The word is the archaic and now obsolete form of "siren". In Greek mythology, a syren was a woman who lured mariners to their deaths. In slightly more modern parlance it has expanded to describe "a dangerously seductive woman" (*Wikipedia*).

Certainly, when the siren goes off in this town, the firefighters' response is not so much "doomed", but potentially as dangerous as that of the ancient sailor or unsuspecting admirer. The sound is not musical or seductive; it is the typical rise/fall sound of an air raid signal.

The original fire station was where the park next to the Memorial Hall now is. Ian King says the original siren was replaced by a louder one in 1928, about the time the new station was erected in its existing location, in Mill Road.

After the demolition of the old station in 1985 the siren was located on top of the old Ōtaki Borough Council building, now the Ōtaki Heritage Museum.

These days there are two sirens – the one on top of the museum building remains, and a second (installed in 1973) on a pole



Photo Ōtaki Today

at the Old State Highway 1 near the courthouse building, to increase coverage.

The decibels emanating from these two are more than enough to alert the entire township and beyond.

Standing anywhere near either of these locations can result in a pretty serious auditory experience when the sirens are activated.

A long-time local resident, Nehu Te Wiata, recalls being woken by the siren when staying on Raukawa Marae. A small child at the time, he was startled by the noise, he says.

Nehu also remembers that there was a blackboard in the station where the address of the emergency was written so any late-arriving volunteer could chase after the engine they had missed, or take the second fire truck (after 1962 when the brigade acquired a second fire engine) to the scene.

In 1979, pocket pagers were issued to the firefighters, and recently a computer system was installed that contacts them through their mobile phones. The siren itself is activated by the Wellington Fire communication centre, which take the 111 call.

The continued use of the siren not only alerts those whose job it is to attend a fire, but also it tells locals to be aware of the firefighters travelling to the station and to the engine exiting the station, and more importantly that those calling in the emergency know help is on its way.

The increased efficiency also means the siren operates now only for 15 seconds, in two blasts, "whereas in the earlier days the siren sounded until the first firefighter arrived on station and shut it down" Ian says.

Incredibly, the fire station was itself the victim of crime at one stage. Ian recalls:

"When the fire station was getting broken into in the 70s the

siren was wired up to domestic appliances in the station. Imagine the intruders' dismay when they opened the fridge and activated the siren! That stopped the burglaries for some time. Handy having a fire chief at the time who was an electrician."

Less outrageous, but still surprising, is the fact that there have been complaints about the sound of the siren. Ōtaki is not alone in having small-town residents who whine about the noise of fire sirens, but it seems the complaints here have been dealt with diplomatically. The result is that the cycle of sounding has reduced right down.

While the original siren was operated under a code that indicated to firefighters which area in Ōtaki the fire was located, this is no longer the case. Local firefighter Kieran Bloxham confirmed the number of times the siren goes off doesn't signify anything more than a callout to the brigade – there isn't a specific number of wails denoting the type of emergency or where it is. This means the firefighters won't know what they are up for until they receive further communication.

Ōtakians can be comforted by the existence of our fire brigade and the brave volunteers who have fought some pretty gnarly fires – in the past year especially. And we can be grateful to the sirens that call for them and fervently hope the firefighters will be safe, and protect us and themselves from doom.

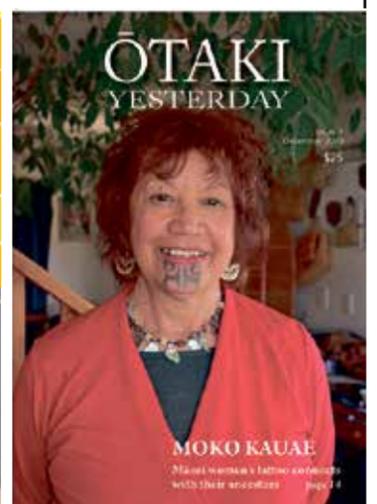
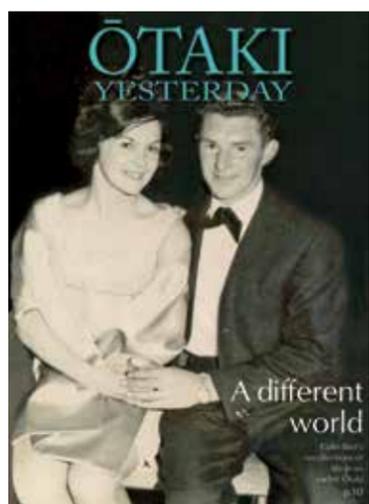
Here's a loud shout-out to our "syrens", and to those who respond to them. May they continue to keep the town safe for another century or more.

■ Nicky is a former journalist and landscape architect. Having been in Ōtaki for only 17 years, she says she barely rates as a local, but sees it as home.



The 2024 issue of *Ōtaki Yesterday*, featuring more stories about the people and places of old Ōtaki, is another historical publication produced by Ōtaki's ID Media. To buy a copy as a special gift, or just for yourself, contact Debbi debbi@idmedia.co.nz or text **027 285 4720**.

Copies (including previous issues as below) \$25 each.



ŌTAKI SCHOOL 1962

Compiled by Debbi Carson



ŌTAKI SCHOOL, 1962 (another huge class of the times – 36 six-year-olds).

Back row, from left: Fraser Carson, Martin Ferretti, unknown, Lewis Meyer, William Wong, Gary Traveller, (next two unknown), Mark Taylor, unknown, Paul Bartosh.

Row 3: (first four unknown), Heather Cudby, unknown, unknown, Eleanor Kearton, unknown, unknown, David Martin.

Row 2: Unknown, Petrina Field, unknown, Lorraine Black, Judith Taylor, unknown, Lynette Parsons, unknown, Robyn Young, Patricia Royal.

Front sitting: First two unknown, David Lumley, unknown.

Photo courtesy of Kevin McBeth

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, including names and other information if you can. Contact debbi@idmedia.co.nz with additions or corrections to captions.



Ōtaki Gorge – 24 December 1928, by Leslie Adkin. Gift of G L Adkin family estate, 1964.

Te Papa (B.020728)



Ōtaki-Māori Racing Club stewards, circa 1909. Back row, from left: (first two unknown), Maui Pomare, Mark Ayre, Pitiera Taipua. Front row: Rere Nicholson, Cooper Hawea, Ben Ling, Hema Te Ao, Rod McDonald, unknown.

Photo: Ōtaki-Māori Racing Club collection

Ōtaki in Tiki Towns series

Among the most popular collection items for young viewers at Ngā Taonga is the *Tiki Towns* series, made by Te Amokura productions for Sky TV.

The one-minute lessons, hosted by Sonny Ngatai and young co-hosts Bobbie Millar and Te Ataakura Kupenga, teach the pronunciation of Māori place names all over the country, as well as the local history or mythology behind them.

While aimed at tamariki, the accessible format means parents can also quickly and easily improve their knowledge of place names.

Season 2, episode 1 (F298850 in Ngā Taonga's collection) brought the crew to Ōtaki to learn the exciting story of how the river and the town got their shared name.

You can watch 50 episodes of *Tiki Towns* on at www.ngataonga.org.nz and search 'Tiki Towns'.



Ben Ling – 'a cheery man'

NZ Truth November 3, 1923

At the Levin Racing Club's meeting held at Trentham the other day there was Ben Ling, president of the next door Ōtaki Club, as large as life, and doing the welcome hand work among old friends of the two clubs, visitors, and owners.

Ben is one of the cheeriest meri in the world and a great racing man to boot. A man of independent means, and plenty of them say he is the most eligible bachelor in all of Horowhenua, for although he has travelled much and afar he has yet escaped matrimony.

Ben's father and the original Gear started the Gear Meat Co between them and from that source the son has inherited many ducats, as well as from a farm at Te Horo. He is an old Wellington College boy and though he has probably passed the 50th milestone, looks years younger. As all his earlier years were spent in the vicinity of Ōtaki, Ben still sticks to the place with an affectionate regard, and lives there now in a suite of rooms, his fine home near the racecourse having been destroyed by fire about three and a half years ago. He plays bowls and did play golf, and is a member of both clubs.

He is a sketch artist of no mean ability and a wide reader. Indeed, it was he who started

the library in Ōtaki and did the secretarial work of the institution for a long time. Recently he went for a trip to America and it was an indication of the regard in which he is held in the town that he was given a big send-off and an equally big reception when he returned. He has had many trips to England and the Continent also, and it was he who some years ago took a team of lady tennis players to Australia.

• In 1925, Ben Ling, who occupied an upstairs suite at the Jubilee Hotel in Waerenga Road, was watching an auction of the hotel when he leaned on a balcony that collapsed and fell to his death. Ben was an early president and secretary of the Ōtaki-Māori Racing Club.

TAMARIKI FUN

Waka discovery could change history

Archaeologists in New Zealand have discovered parts of an ancient carved waka in the Chatham Islands. More than 450 artefacts from the waka are expected to reveal new insights into Polynesian voyaging, boat building, and trade. The waka's age is still unknown, but experts believe it could be one of the most significant finds in Polynesian history. Parts of the waka (photo left) include carved obsidian, offering hints at the craft's age. Unlike past waka discoveries, where only small fragments were found, this canoe includes hundreds of components, from large wooden planks to decorative shells and woven materials. The find could help researchers understand how Polynesians travelled across the Pacific.



JUST JOKING!

1. How do you get a tissue to dance?
2. Who did the zombie take to the prom?
3. How does the ocean say hello?
4. Why did the student eat his homework?

See answers below.

A23a runs aground

The world's largest iceberg, called A23a, has run aground near the remote island of South Georgia, home to millions of penguins and seals. The massive iceberg, which is bigger than five times the size of Lake Taupō, became stuck in shallow waters and is beginning to break apart. Scientists and fishers are closely watching the situation, as the melting ice could both disrupt wildlife and bring nutrients that boost ocean life. The iceberg, which originally broke off in 1986, has been trapped in ocean currents for decades. Now, as it sits lodged on the ocean floor, it is steadily shrinking due to warmer waters.



102 snakes in one backyard

A reptile wrangler in Sydney, Australia, was called to a home to handle a snake problem and ended up removing 102 venomous red-bellied black snakes from the property. The surprising discovery took place in Horsley Park, a Sydney suburb, after homeowner David Stein spotted several snakes in a mulch pile. Reptile Relocation Sydney's snake catcher Dylan Cooper arrived to find four of the five adult snakes carrying eggs had started hatching. Stein described the experience as both fascinating and overwhelming. The total number of snakes grew to 102. Red-bellied black snakes are venomous, but do avoid humans. All the snakes have been safely relocated to the wild.



POP-TASTIC PALETAS



Summer might have left but it's still warm enough to enjoy making your own iceblocks!

Try these Pop-tastic Paletas

Fruits or juices in the colors of your chosen country's flag.

- 1 tbsp sugar, or Not Sugar, per fruit
- 1 tbsp liquid: water, milk or plain yogurt
- 1 tsp extra flavor (optional): lime or lemon juice, honey
- 10 small paper cups or ice pop molds
- ice pop sticks or craft sticks

1. Choose your fruit. The top colour of your flag goes in the cup first. To make the NZ flag, as an example, you'll need BLUE, use blueberries, RED strawberries, WHITE yogurt.
2. Blend fruit with sugar and liquid of your choice until it's smooth and sweet. Add extra flavour with fruit zest, juice or honey.



3. Pour mixture into bottom third of your cups. Freeze until mostly frozen, about 2-3 hours. Don't add next layer until the previous one is mostly frozen.
4. Repeat process for the rest of your flag's colours. For NZ, blend 1 tbsp lime juice, 2 tbsp sugar and 1 cup plain yogurt to make WHITE. Blend 1 cup strawberries, ½ cup sugar and 1 cup water to make RED. Pour white mixture into each cup on top of blue layer, Freeze before adding red layer and a stick.
5. Insert stick between the final layer and the one before it. After you add the final layer and stick, freeze the paletas for four hours.



JUST JOKING ANSWERS
 1. You put a little boogie into it.
 2. His ghoul-friend!
 3. It waves.
 4. Because his teacher told him it was a piece of cake!

WORD MAKER Can you make 44 words from

I C E B E R G

Iceberg A23a is a large tabular iceberg that calved from the Filchner-Ronne Ice Shelf in 1986. It was stuck on the sea bed for many years but started moving in 2020. Its area is about 3500 square kilometres, making it the largest iceberg in the world. As of March 2025, it is aground off South Georgia.

Never help a child with a task at which he feels he can SUCCEED
 {MARIA MONTESSORI}

But why shouldn't we? At times we do things for our child without thinking or because we think we are helping them. Sometimes we do it for them because we are in a hurry.

Every time we give unnecessary help to a child, we take away a little bit of their independence and we send them a message which says we can do it better and faster than they can.

So next time, wait! Just watch for a while before you jump in and see if your help is actually needed. You will be surprised just how much a small child can do, even if it takes them a long time. The satisfaction they will get from achieving a seemingly very small task will be immense.

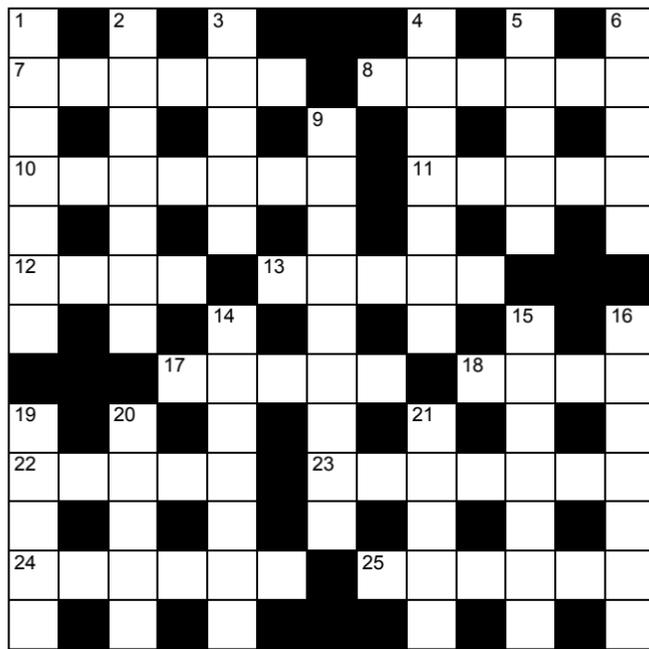


CADE'S INTO AUTUMN CRYPTOGRAM

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
26	2	16	8	18	9	4	10	7	22	5	21	17	20	14	24	11	6	15	1	12	13	23	25	3	19

L H L V S F L L
 21 18 1 1 10 18 21 18 26 13 18 15 9 26 21 21

THE CROSSWORD #NZNZ1935D (answers below)



ACROSS

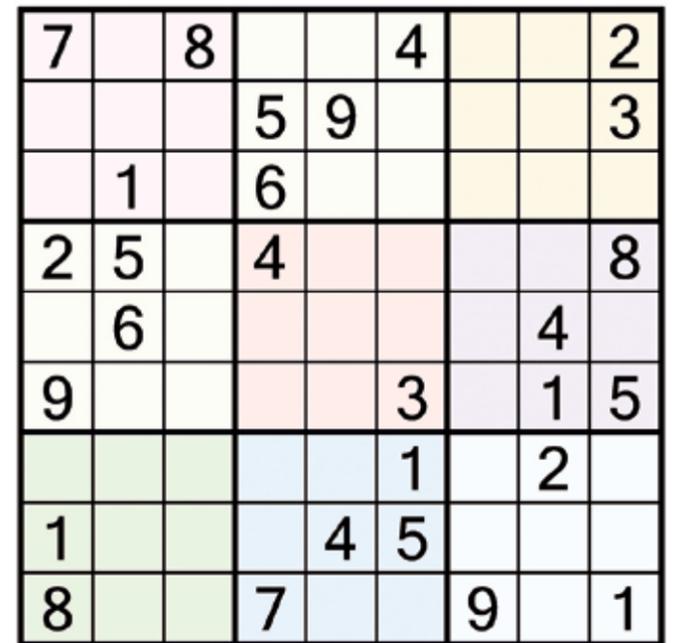
- 7. The title of three New Zealand daily newspapers (6)
- 8. North Island river crossed by NZ's highest railway bridge (6)
- 10. North Island volcanic area, the Central ____ (7)
- 11. Ocean-going passenger vessel (5)
- 12. Quality brand mark for New Zealand apples and pears (4)
- 13. Daring skilful act (5)
- 17. Church table (5)
- 18. Holiday house (4)
- 22. Temporary retail outlet (3,2)
- 23. Racing series won six times by New Zealander Scott Dixon (7)
- 24. Curler (6)
- 25. Insult (6)

DOWN

- 1. NZ's first female Prime Minister (7)
- 2. Stiff silk fabric (7)
- 3. Narrow lane (5)
- 4. Former National Party leader who is currently Defence Minister and Attorney General (7)
- 5. Outing (5)
- 6. Neighbourhood shop (5)
- 9. NZ's largest investment partner, ahead of China (9)
- 14. Applauded (7)
- 15. Lines and numbers printed on wrappings, packages, etc. (7)
- 16. Unit for powering a device (7)
- 19. New Zealand's largest telecommunications company (5)
- 20. Put in for (5)
- 21. Curiously (5)

SUDOKU PUZZLES thepuzzlecompany.co.nz

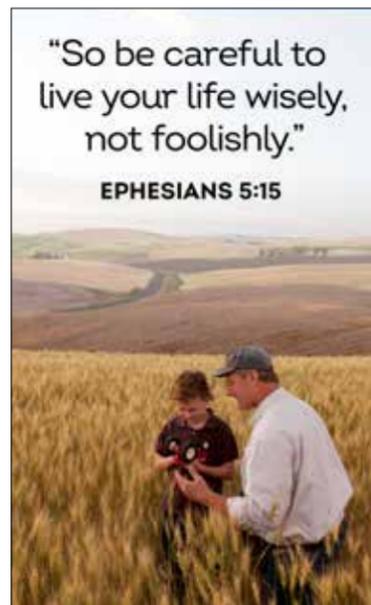
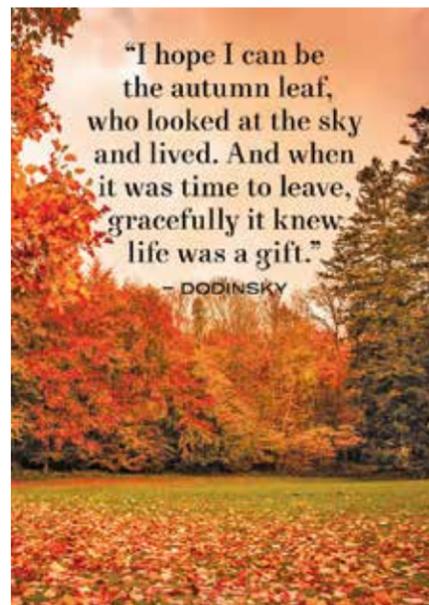
HARD #78H Use logic and process of elimination to fill in the blank cells using the numbers 1 through 9. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and 3x3 block. Puzzle solution below.



ŌTAKI LITERARY QUIZ?

Answers below.

1. *Manawa Hine: Women Who Swam Against the Tide* was written by which Ōtaki author?
2. Di Buchan wrote the book *Aiming High* in 2024. Who was the book about?
3. *Ōtaki, the town and district* was written by whom?
4. Author Eirlys Hunter wrote *The Uprising: The Mapmakers in Cruxcia* during the 2020 Covid lockdown. Where was "the glorious place" she wrote this?
5. What is the name of Te Horo author Patricia Donovan's novel set in a dystopic future?
6. What was Tihema Baker's debut novel called?
7. What is Tihema's book called which explores the trauma of Māori public servants and the deeply conflicted role they are expected to fill within the machinery of government?
8. Redmer Yska wrote the Kiwi king of crude in 2015. Who was the story about?
9. Māori writing in the 19th Century was prolific. Name one Ōtaki tupuna who was actively involved in issues of local, tribal and national significance.
10. Ōtaki writer Robin Peace is a retired geographer, teacher and academic. Her first collection of poetry, was published in 2018. What was it called?



SUDOKU SOLUTION #75H

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

MARCH QUIZ ANSWERS: 1. Queenie Rikihana-Hyland 2. Byron Brown and his granddaughter Mary-Annette Hay. 3. Francis Selwyn Simcox. 4. Ōtaki Beach. 5. The Collections. 6. Watched 7. Turncoat. 8. Otaki-born accountant William Walkley, who went on to become a trans-Tasman oil mogul, founding Australia's journalism awards along the way. Tells of his amazing life and achievements. 9. Tamihana Te Rauparaha, Matene Te Whiwhi, Rakapa Kahoki. 10. A Passage of Yellow Red Birds.

ICEBERG: WORD MAKER ANSWERS from page 30:

- 6-letter words: 1. beiger. 5-letter words: 2. rebec 3. beige 4. giber 5. grebe 6. regie. 4-letter words: 7. bice 8. crib 9. berg 10. brig 11. gibe 12. beer 13. bier 14. bree 15. brie 16. cere 17. cire 18. rice 19. eger 20. gree. 3-letter words: 21. beg 22. big 23. cig 24. gib 25. bee 26. cee 27. ice 28. reb 29. rec 30. rib 31. erg 32. gee 33. gie 34. reg 35. rig 36. ere 37. ire 38. ree 39. rei. 2-letter words: 40. be 41. bi 42. gi 43. er 44. ri.



Ōtaki River entrance tides March 12 – April 11

<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 12 MAR -	03:45	10:01	16:06	22:22	
THU 13 MAR -	04:25	10:38	16:44	22:57	
FRI 14 MAR -	05:00	11:11	17:18	23:28	
SAT 15 MAR -	05:32	11:41	17:50	23:58	
SUN 16 MAR -	06:03	12:11	18:21		
MON 17 MAR 00:27	06:33	12:40	18:52		
TUE 18 MAR 00:57	07:03	13:11	19:23		
WED 19 MAR 01:27	07:35	13:43	19:56		
THU 20 MAR 02:01	08:10	14:20	20:33		
FRI 21 MAR 02:40	08:54	15:05	21:17		
SAT 22 MAR 03:31	09:51	16:05	22:16		
SUN 23 MAR 04:41	11:07	17:20	23:32		
MON 24 MAR 06:08	12:29	18:41			
TUE 25 MAR -	00:55	07:25	13:40	19:53	
WED 26 MAR -	02:05	08:24	14:36	20:51	
THU 27 MAR -	02:59	09:13	15:25	21:39	
FRI 28 MAR -	03:46	09:57	16:10	22:24	
SAT 29 MAR -	04:30	10:40	16:54	23:08	
SUN 30 MAR -	05:13	11:23	17:37	23:51	
MON 31 MAR -	05:57	12:07	18:21		
TUE 1 APR 00:34	06:42	12:53	19:06		
WED 2 APR 01:19	07:29	13:40	19:53		
THU 3 APR 02:07	08:21	14:32	20:44		
FRI 4 APR 03:01	09:19	15:31	21:41		
SAT 5 APR 04:06	10:27	16:41	22:50		
SUN 6 APR 04:26	10:46	17:01	23:12		
MON 7 APR 05:51	12:03	18:21			
TUE 8 APR -	00:32	06:59	13:06	19:25	
WED 9 APR -	01:32	07:50	13:55	20:13	
THU 10 APR -	02:17	08:30	14:36	20:52	
FRI 11 APR -	02:56	09:06	15:13	21:26	

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PETLEY, Marion Denise (née Rogers), passed away peacefully after a short illness in Wellington on 23 February 2025, in her 80th year. Beloved wife of the late Harold; special and dearly loved mum and mother-in-law of Andrea and Glenn, and Raewyn and Scott; Grandma of Alysha, Hayley, Brooke, Zachary and Daniel. Devoted British Blue cat breeder/owner ("Petals"). In accordance with Marion's wishes, a private family service has been held.

A memorial service will be held on Saturday 22 March at 1pm at her home in Ōtaki. Thanks to Bupa Crofton Downs Ōtaki staff and to Dr Sharon Pattison for their care. Messages for the family can be sent care of Lychgate Funerals, 306 Willis Street, Aro Valley, Wellington 6011.

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TAKĀRO/Sport

Successful juniors move up

A team of junior Ōtaki Sports Club tennis players has moved up to adult tennis this term after winning the Kapi-Mana junior A grade undefeated in the spring.

Angus Mecoy, 14, Kanato Uchida 15, Max Beauchamp, 11, Xavier Nikora, 14, and Yuran Shen, 15, are this term playing in the Wellington men's 5th grade competition, and each week have been facing off against teams with men more than twice their age.

After five rounds the team has won three and lost two, and with three rounds to go is comfortably in the top half of the table.

Having the boys in senior tennis is part of a move by Ōtaki Sports Club to have capable junior tennis players playing in senior tennis to help boost their playing levels.

Elsie O'Sullivan, 15, and Pearl Glanville Hall, 16, this year joined a senior Ōtaki Sports Club team playing in the Tuesday evening Wellington women's doubles C grade competition.

The club currently has about 80 junior members playing competitive tennis at all levels, from the pre-interclub Orange League for younger players played on smaller courts with softer balls, through all grades of the Kapi-Mana junior competition, up to

the junior players in the senior competitions.

Tennis club captain Adam Shelton says the development of large numbers of junior Ōtaki tennis players over the past few years has been a success story for the club.

He says it has been exciting to see so many children enjoying tennis, and having aspirations to do well and move up through the grades.

Meanwhile, on the back of a successful tennis season, the Ōtaki Sports Club annual tennis club champs kicked off recently with a bumper number of entries.

Men's singles, doubles and mixed doubles champion Callan Nikora is back to defend his three titles, as is women's singles and doubles champion Jackie Gould.

Preliminary rounds run through to finals day on April 6 for senior tennis and April 5 for junior tennis.

Junior players, from left, Yuran Shen, Angus Mecoy, Xavier Nikora and Max Beauchamp. Absent Kanato Uchida.

Photo supplied



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