

ŌTAKI TODAY

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ĀPERIRA/APRIL 2024

Ngā Kōrero o Ōtaki



Blazes 'worst I've seen'

By Ian Carson

A spate of big fires in late March was the worst Ōtaki fire chief Ian King had seen in his nearly 50 years with the local brigade.

"We've had bigger blazes, but three major fires and a couple of smaller ones in the space of a couple of weeks is highly unusual," Ian says. "They certainly kept our local firefighters on their toes."

About 20 years ago the brigade had about six Ōtaki fires within a matter of hours. While those were found to be the work of an arsonist, Ian says there is nothing to suggest the recent fires are related.

It started with a fire at Waikawa Beach on March 15, just as some of Ōtaki's brigade were returning from a national firefighter bowls tournament.

"I looked out the window of the van coming home and saw a plume of smoke," Ian says. "Sure enough, we got called out to assist."

The fire, believed to be a spark from a chainsaw, razed about 16ha of scrub.

Then just after 1pm the next Friday, March 22, a shed at the old chicken farm on Swamp Road, Te Horo, caught fire. Smoke was seen throughout the district.

The Ōtaki brigade was first on the scene, joined by the Te Horo Rural Fire team, and later trucks and tankers from Waikanae, Levin, Paraparaumu, Porirua, Upper Hutt and Wellington.

"It was a big, challenging fire because we didn't have access to a nearby water supply," Ian says. "We had to rely on tankers. It was also



Ōtaki firefighters at the scene of the fire on Swamp Road, Te Horo, on Friday, March 22.

Photo Ōtaki Today

difficult because the shed was full of vehicles, machinery, tyres and oil, and as we discovered, fireworks.

"There was no way we could save the building or the contents. Even vehicles parked next the shed were burnt out."

The next day, on Saturday, March 23, scrub near the old Ōtaki health camp caught fire about 6pm. Ōtaki firefighters found two teenagers trapped in dense blackberry, with flames rising around them. Police on



"They're an awesome crew with some genuinely talented people. They have to rush away from their jobs and their family to battle fires – often for hours at a time, in the middle of the night or at weekends . . . Ōtaki is lucky to have them."

the scene apprehended one 17-year-old; another of the same age was taken to hospital with moderate

injuries. Police say two youngsters have been referred to Youth Services. The health camp fire also required

Ōtaki's full brigade resources.

"All available firefighters were called out," Ian says. "It was another big fire that took a while to get under control."

About 4ha of scrub was burned, but efforts to keep the fire from nearby homes, the pine forest and the health camp buildings were successful. Staff and tankers were again required from neighbouring stations.

Early the following day, Ōtaki's two fire trucks were called to assist at a rest home fire in Levin.

Then on Friday, March 29, a factory in Titoki Street, Ōtaki, caught fire about 6.20am. The building was used by Matta Products to make rubber and PVC safety matting.

"As you can imagine, that was a pretty intense fire with all the flammable materials inside," Ian says.

Assistance from other brigades was again required, with personnel and tankers coming from as far away as Wellington and Palmerston North.

Ian has high praise for his team.

"They're an awesome crew with some genuinely talented people," he says. "They have to rush away from their jobs and their family to battle fires – often for hours at a time, in the middle of the night or at weekends. And they're volunteers.

"It's a huge commitment. Ōtaki is lucky to have them."

The Ōtaki Volunteer Fire Brigade has a team of 22 active firefighters, with two new recruits. It is one of the few volunteer brigades in New Zealand to have a waiting list.

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WHAT'S ON

TOTE MODERN: April exhibition – potters collective UYLP (Unearth Your Local Potter) including Paula Archibald, Pamela Annshouh, Jennifer Turnbull, Jenny Shearer, James Carter, Aimée McLeod, Michelle Retimana, Rebecca Neal, and Judy and Mike Page. At Ōtaki Pottery Club's gallery and workshop, Ōtaki-Māori Racing Club, Te Roto Rd. Open 10am-3pm Friday to Sunday.

FUNDRAISING CONCERT for Sir Jon Trimmer Kapiti Coast arts scholarships, 7pm Sunday, May 24, at Southwards Theatre, Paraparaumu. Features 1960s and 70s performers Ray Woolf, Steve McDonald, Wayne Mason and Neil Worboys. Tickets from Southwards, Coastlands, or online at eventfinda.co.nz

COMMUNITY BOARDS: The Ōtaki Community Board's next meeting is 7pm Tuesday, May 28, in the Gertrude Atmore Lounge (attached to the Memorial Hall). The Waikanae Community Board's next meeting is Tuesday, May 21, at Waikanae Community Centre, 28 Utauta St. The public is welcome at community board meetings. Search "meetings and agendas" at kapiticoast.govt.nz from two days before the meeting for the agenda, which is also at council libraries and service centres. To speak at a meeting, register by calling 04 296 4700 or 0800 486 486, or email democracy.services@kapiticoast.govt.nz

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

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

ŌTAKI MUSEUM: A new 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, 10am-2pm Thursday to Saturday, except public holidays. 49 Main St. Ōtaki. 06 364-6886.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

JP service every Monday 10.30am-12.30pm;

Age Concern every 2nd Thursday 10am-noon

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

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

PROBUS CLUB OF WAIKANAĒ CENTRAL.

We 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.

RESPIRATORY SUPPORT GROUP KĀPITI

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

KĀPITI FLY FISHING CLUB Kāpiti Sports Turf Pavilion, Scaife Drive, Paraparaumu. Club meetings: monthly 7:30 pm, 4th Monday of the month (excluding December). Visitors are welcome. Contact: kffsecretary@gmail.com or kapitiflyfishing.org

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

Clamour and noise over taxes

The decision of Chris Hipkins to announce that tax reform would be a key part of Labour policy at the next election is indicative of the influence the Greens and Te Pati Maori (TPM) now wield over the policy making of the Labour Party.

A declaration of intent to have a major discussion around the shape of tax reform would have been sufficient to quell the anti-Hipkins group within the party. A commitment to reform at this early stage of the electoral cycle, however, pre-empts prospects that the electorate will not want it by the time the election is held.

An answer to this might be that he has plenty of time to change tack in the light of circumstances. A response is that he need not have made the commitment this early unless he accepted that anything other than a full-throated response to demands to match the focus of the Greens and TPM on tax matters would not have been acceptable to his followers.

Now that he has played his hand, however, the National-led government has two prime advantages. The first is the opportunity to undercut him by popular reform of its own. The second is an opening for regular taunts of Labour MPs that they only know how to spend other people's money and want to get more to increase their prospective spend.

That there is a clamour for tax changes that include measures to cover capital gain is evident. But clamour and noise that talk up the merit and claimed "fairness" of taxing realised capital gains are not sure signs that an election result will swing because a party's policy seeks

to extract larger sums from sections of the country's population.

Policies on the general economy, health, education, and law and order remain the prime drivers of electoral success – or not. Previous political heavyweights on the left have steered away from a capital gains tax because of fears that their policies in the four main sectors of public concern would be swept aside by reaction to a declaration of intent to introduce a capital gains tax. Inclination to implement such a tax lost out to the realities of the ballot box.

Hipkins is now well blooded into the intrigue and pressures of political leadership. He knows well the inherent dangers of a capital gains tax to electoral prospects.

He is also aware that many voters who might support the idea of one when questioned by pollsters are far less positive when they enter the ballot box, frequently because self-interest trumps idealism.

But with party veterans Grant Robertson and David Parker backing a capital gains tax in some form, back-benchers in his caucus thinking it has merits and the Greens and TPM out front on the idea, necessity to meet today's internal need overcame prudence to at least await the outcome of the coalition government's budget.

National, Act and NZ First were handed a stick to wield over Labour's ambitions. The Greens and TPM can trumpet that Labour is now in "follow me" mode. Expect all five parties to make the most of the opportunity presented.

For the governing parties, the immediate priority is a reduction in the country's cost base. In household terminology, what spending can we cut to bring us better into line with our

income. Once that is achieved for the economy the next step will be close attention to the needs of the other three basic elector influencing sectors – health, education, and law and order.

That New Zealand with its population on the scale of a New York or Beijing borough has about 70 state agencies, including comprehensive global servicing of foreign and trade policy necessities, makes for enormous cost pressures.

The country is vulnerable to not only disasters of nature – earthquakes and cyclones – but also the vagaries of international developments that would barely cause a ripple in the economy of other larger democracies. A Chinese government directive to reduce dairy imports from New Zealand by half would plunge the country into an economic meltdown and barely be noticed within the middle kingdom.

So, while Labour, the Greens and TPM carry on with policies directed at growing the cash central government can extract from its citizens and increasing the scale of government spending, the Coalition is fixated on first of all balancing "the books" and then growing the economic pie without a need to extract more from the taxpayer purse.

This is a key difference in approach that got the Coalition elected. Christopher Luxon, Nicola Willis, David Seymour and Winston Peters know it. Budget '24 sets the stage for their efforts to achieve these aims.

What follows will determine whether the promise of tax reform is a potential election winner for Hipkins or a damp squib condemning his colleagues to another term in opposition.

■ 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

Healthy lunches for local kids. See page 3



ŌTAKI TODAY *Ngā Kōrero o Ōtaki*

Ōtaki Today is published monthly by ID Media Ltd, 13 Te Manuao Rd, Ōtaki.

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GENERAL MANAGER: Debbi Carson.

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DESIGN by ID Media Ltd.

PRINTED by Beacon Print, Whakatane.

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Ōtaki Today online: otakitoday.com

ISSUE 70: ISSN 2624-3067

ONLINE: ISSN 2744-354X

Next copy and advertising deadline:

April 30. Publication: May 8, 2024.

Delivery: If you don't receive your copy of

Ōtaki Today, please call us.

Ōtaki Today is a member of the NZ Community Newspapers Association



Local school lunches feed 1000

By Ian Carson

The kitchens at the old Ōtaki health camp are back serving children – this time not residents but children at schools throughout Ōtaki.

Te Puna Oranga o Ōtaki (TPOoŌ) has revived the old kitchens that now serve lunches to more than 700 children every school day, with another 300 produced at schools where commercial kitchens are available.

The meals are prepared by Te Puna Oranga staff, and provided fresh to students at Ōtaki College, Ōtaki School, St Peter Chanel, Te Kura Kaupapa Māori o Te Rito, and in term two, to Waitohu School.

Funding comes from the Ministry of Education's Ka Ora, Ka Ako (Healthy School Lunches) programme, under an iwi/hapū supplier model.

Lunches were previously supplied by a national, centralised provider.

Te Puna Oranga o Ōtaki kaiwhakahaere (general manager) Heniti Buick says the move to a local supplier has improved communication and delivery, allowing TPOoŌ to incorporate feedback and change almost immediately, boosting the uptake and popularity of the lunches.

She says TPOoŌ worked alongside Ngā Hapū o Ōtaki and others before starting the programme.



Spaghetti bolognese goes into school lunch boxes prepared by, from left, Trinity Cook, Livvy Murray and Te Wairere Hapeta-Millam. Photo Ōtaki Today

“For me, the job has been made a lot easier because I was talking to people I know – all my aunts. They’ve supported us all the way.”

Heniti’s first-hand knowledge of healthy foods has also been an advantage. She has a bachelor of science with a post-graduate degree in dietetics at Otago University, and has worked as a clinical dietitian.

Te Puna Oranga began making the school lunches, based on Ministry

of Education nutrition guidelines, in late 2022, firstly for St Peter Chanel School. From 20 lunches initially, the numbers grew as schools were added, to the point where there are now more than 1000 fresh lunches prepared every school day.

Establishing the local programme wasn’t a straight-forward task.

A commercial kitchen was required that could handle the huge volume.

The one at the health camp was

available, but all the equipment disappeared when the camp closed in 2018. A lease was arranged with tenant Kiwi Can Do, camp owner the Department of Conservation, and guardians Ngā Hapū o Ōtaki. Then a complete kitchen fitout was required, which was a huge job.

Next came staffing, which has grown to 10, including food manager Claudia Gray.

Deliveries are made using a truck

supplied by Chris Thomsen Motors, but purchase of a dedicated school lunch van is on the agenda. Some schools have their own kitchen, so meals can be prepared on-site.

Heniti has clearly enjoyed the journey.

“We’ve been able to put together nutritious meals that are delivered fresh – hot or cold – to our tamariki,” she says. “They taste good and they look good, not like something you’re going to feed to your cat.”

Special dietary requirements are also catered for, with about 50 meals prepared separately.

Feedback for the programme has been encouraging.

“Parents are telling us their children’s diet has changed,” Heniti says. “They’re trying new things at school, which means they’re prepared to try healthy foods at home.”

“Kids who ate a very limited range of foods that are usually bad for them are eating nutritious foods now.”

Anecdotaly, children have also been calmer and less agitated at school and at home.

With more food being consumed and not turned away, wastage is minimal. Even on the rare occasions when too many meals are delivered – for example when a class trip has not been advised – the meals go to local kaumātua in need who appreciate getting something they’ve not had to prepare themselves.

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Fredrick's short film a festival hit

By Ian Carson

Filmmaker Fredrick Pokai came to the 11th Māoriland Film Festival hoping for favourable reaction to his new short film, *Search for Hawaiki*.

He got it – it was a highlight of the festival. The script, the acting, the direction and subtle music were superb. They took viewers on a tear-jerking journey familiar to many, made more so because it was filmed not far away in Titahi Bay.

It was one of the stand-out films specially chosen for Māoriland viewing, but as with many of the festival screenings, appeal extends far beyond the indigenous. It's a film for everyone.

Fredrick (Ngāti Porou, Te Arawa) was born and raised in Gisborne, and now resides in upmarket Remuera, Auckland – “We've got the worst house in the street,” he says with a smile.

On leaving school, Fredrick did a one-year course in contemporary Māori art at Gisborne's Matapuna Training Centre. It led to an exhibition of Gisborne artists at Seatoun in Wellington, which in turn drew him to the capital city and another course, this time in multimedia at the National College of Art and Design.

He returned briefly to Gisborne



Fredrick Pokai relaxes in the garden of a friend during the 2024 Māoriland Film Festival – “The festival makes it feel like something amazing is happening.”

Photo Ōtaki Today

then went to Whitianga where he started writing scripts and making the films he'd always had a yearning to do. Meantime, he also had several roles as an actor in New Zealand movies, including in *The Haka* and *Births, Deaths and Marriages*. The showmanship was undoubtedly helped by two years competing on the pro wrestling circuit.

His first script to be filmed was *The Red President* in 2014. In 2019

he wrote, produced and starred in *Beneath the Mountains*. He won the best actor award at the 2023 Vision Feast Film Festival for his role in *Bringing Mere Home*, which he also wrote.

“I always loved the cinema and I always thought I could make my own films, as a writer and director,” he says.

Fredrick was one of hundreds of film industry stars who arrived for

the Māoriland Film Festival. He loved bringing *Search for Hawaiki* to an Ōtaki audience.

“I got a really warm reaction to the film, and it's great to be here,” he said as he relaxed in the sun at the house of a friend's where he was hosted. “Ōtaki is a small town, but the festival makes it feel like something amazing is happening.

“It's my first visit, but it won't be my last.”



A buzz

By Ian Carson

The 2024 Māoriland Film Festival (MFF) was by popular consensus, the best yet.

Having already organised 10 previous festivals, each growing in reputation and size, the Māoriland team had a challenge to live up to expectations. They didn't fail to deliver.

MFF 2024 was touted as the largest Indigenous film festival in the world. Anyone who was in Ōtaki from March 20-24 could not have missed the buzz about the town.

Art installations such as Tame Iti's powerful two-tier artwork in Memorial Park, and Regan Balzer's

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about Ōtaki for MFF

Toitū te Rongomau painted boldly on the front wall of Ōtaki Museum, were visual signs that something big was happening in Ōtaki.

The energy was palpable as locals mixed with international and New Zealand film stars, producers, directors, writers, videographers and other industry heavyweights who lapped up the vibe in town.

Tame Iti (Ngāi Tūhoe) sat comfortably in the sun in Memorial Park with anyone who cared to chat with him, soaking up the manaakitanga that has become a hallmark of Māoriland events and Ōtaki as a town.

In the Māoriland Hub, visitors relaxed and mingled with the MFF

crew, bought tickets to the multitude of films, and just relaxed if they felt the need. Others took in the Indigenous artwork at Toi Mataura within the hub, and bought as desires and wallet afforded.

Undoubtedly the superb weather throughout the five days of events enhanced the mood, punctuated by the drama of fire trucks racing through town to battle the blaze at the old health camp.

The festival this year boasted the largest programme so far. There were 168 films by filmmakers from more than 130 Indigenous nations, including 11 feature films, eight feature documentaries and 16 short film programmes.

There was plenty to choose from for movie buffs of whatever artistic persuasion.

The traditional keynote addresses to kick off the festival were as always enlightening and thought-provoking. Being held at Rangiatea Church adds an element of reflection to the addresses, though there were again plenty of lighter moments.

If anyone ever thought the festival was for high-brow adults, they'd be quite wrong. Māoriland has always strived to nurture rangatahi talent, and their achievements are celebrated as much at the biggest filmmakers.

This was a fantastic festival for which Ōtaki can be proud. Bring on MFF 2025.



Tame Iti with his installation, *Te Maungarōngo*, at Memorial Park in the heart of Ōtaki. Photos Ōtaki Today

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REALTY



Tahu Joyce, left, and Hine Raumati Iraia-Hawkins with the first prize trolley full of groceries. With them are raffle co-organiser Angela Park and New World Ōtaki owner Matt Mullins. Photo Ōtaki Today

Trolley grab for Waka Hoe

Three lucky raffle winners were able to grab trolleys full of groceries when they raced around the New World Ōtaki store early in the morning on Wednesday, April 3.

Ōtaki Waka Hoe organised the raffle to raise funds to send local paddlers to the Waka Ama World Sprint Championships in Hilo, Hawaii, in August.

First prize was up to \$1000 worth of groceries to be grabbed off the shelves in two minutes; second prize was \$500 worth of groceries in 90 seconds; third was \$350 worth in 60 seconds.

Winners Glenys Turu (1st), Rangipikia Beavan-Wilson (2nd) and Te Kōingo Acton (3rd) all had runners to grab groceries for them. A survey of the store before the trolley

grab was evident as the winners raced to select high value meat products and frozen foods. Tahu Joyce and Hine Raumati Iraia-Hawkins, shopping for Glenys Turu, however, also targeted protein powders and health foods. The event was held before New World opened at 7am.

Waka Hoe co-organiser (along with Roimata Baker) Angela Park says \$10,000 was raised from the raffle tickets. The target to send 21 paddlers to the world champs is \$135,000.

“It’s a big sum, but I’m confident we’ll get there,” she says.

New World owner Matt Mullins was pleased to help.

“We’ve never done anything like this before, but it was fun and we’ll always put our hand to support a good cause.”



Helping out at the Friends of the Ōtaki River potting shed are, from left, Ann Gregory, Maureen Jensen, Don Watson Jr, Don Watson Sr and Ayesha Baumgart. Photo Ōtaki Today

More pots for river work

The two Don Watsons (senior and junior) were on hand at a recent Friends of the Ōtaki River working bee to see their seedling pots being put to good use.

Watson’s Garden has been a long-time supporter of the Friends (Fotor), this year donating 1100 reusable seedling pots – on top of the 2000 pots they have supplied in the past couple of years. Fotor volunteers use them to grow native tree and shrub seedlings that end up beautifying and stabilising the riverbanks.

Meantime, a special planting has been added to the 2024 season that runs from April through August. Fotor is accommodating a request from the King family for a river planting. The family has a long history of voluntary service in Ōtaki.

Eric King will be 100 on August 24, so a token planting of 100-150 trees will mark the occasion. More trees will be planted on behalf of the Kings in winter next year.

Maurice King, Eric’s brother, had been an active member of the Fotor group until he retired with ill health two years ago.

In August the group plans to create a tōtara grove in the river corridor near the Waimanu Stream. Planting will be done by the Fotor Wednesday volunteers and Greater Wellington Regional Council staff. A grove of about 500 tōtara is planned, with all the plants sourced from seedlings gathered from trees along the river corridor.

A total of 8000 trees will be planted this year.

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Kāpiti Coast ANZAC Day Services 2024

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Please join us on Thursday 25 April and support our RSAs in remembering those New Zealand and Australian soldiers who bravely served together to defend Aotearoa New Zealand.

Ōtaki RSA Dawn Service – 6am
Fall in at 5.45am at Ōtaki RSA. March to Ōtaki War Memorial and Cenotaph for a 6am service.

Paraparaumu RSA Dawn Service – 6.30am
Assemble from 6am at the Hospital Gates, Tutanekei Street. Fall in at 6.20am and march off at 6.25am to the Memorial Gates for a 6.30am service.

Paraparaumu Citizens Service and Parade – 9.30am
Community groups and organisations and members of the public are warmly invited to show their respect on ANZAC Day and join the Citizens Service and Parade. Assemble from 9am at the Hospital Gates, Tutanekei Street. Fall in at 9.20am and march at 9.25am to the Memorial Gates for a 9.30am service.

Waikanae Community Service hosted by Ōtaki RSA – 11am
Fall in at 10.45am at the Waikanae Club on Elizabeth Street. March to the Waikanae Memorial Hall for an 11am service.

Ōtaki RSA Sunset Retreat – 5pm
Ōtaki Service Cemetery, ANZAC Road. Fall in at 4.45pm for a 5pm service.

For more information about ANZAC Day services and commemorative events visit www.rsa.org.nz or kapiticoast.govt.nz



Kāpiti Coast
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Swing bridge 'solution' for Blue Bluff

By Ian Carson

As Kāpiti Coast District Council grapples with the vexed question of how to reopen the road to Ōtaki Forks, Ōtaki councillor and architect Rob Kofoed says he has a solution.

Rob says the answer is to bypass Blue Bluff with two swing bridges across the Ōtaki River.

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.

“As a council, we’ve been talking about a solution for ages,” Rob says. “We’ve had lots of expert geotechnical reports that clearly indicate the area is unstable.

“The debate has been about whether possibly millions of dollars should be spent on stabilising the slip area, or saving money and closing the road altogether. What I’m suggesting is a cost-effective solution that will allow access and keep the great forest park tourist attraction open.”

Rob’s concept would mean land bought from current owners and the swing bridges would be only for walkers and cyclists. However, he suggests a 500-vehicle car park area before the slips from where visitors



A concept drawing by Cr Rob Kofoed showing his solution that would reopen access to Ōtaki Forks.

Image supplied

can walk or cycle, a hub further past the slips and a shuttle service at busy times could take people to the DoC camp ground and entry to Tararua Forest Park.

He says he submitted his proposal for a council briefing in June last year and is considering resubmitting it at a meeting on May 9, when councillors

are scheduled to again discuss the fate of the slip-prone road.

In March this year, councillors received updates from staff after further geotechnical and engineering investigations into options for re-establishing access through Blue Bluff.

In a statement to Ōtaki Today,

mayor Janet Holborow said: “We understand the importance of the area to our community and visitors alike and know there is a lot of interest in seeing this resolved.

“The area is unstable and extremely vulnerable to the effects of weather and other influences, and there are many factors to consider before a

decision about future access can be made.

“We hope to be able to make a decision when council meets in May, but will take time if necessary to ensure we’ve considered all of the options and issues.

“It’s a very difficult decision with no easy answers.”

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

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

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

Kind regards,



Rex Duckett

Managing Director & Financial Adviser
rex.duckett@futerisk.co.nz
027 444 2733

What you need to know

What does this mean for my insurance/mortgage?

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

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

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

Our new contact details

Rex Duckett
rex.duckett@futerisk.co.nz
027 444 2733

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

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

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Remembering the sacrifices – and the shattered lives

By Irene Mackle

He had stood here for many Anzac days. It was like tika that newer generations still paid tribute to the men and women who had fallen in wars to end all wars.

He could see family likenesses in those present today, to those of his mates who had died decades before. Sons, grandsons, great grandsons, cousins, whānau all, and the girls of today so pretty, just like their kuia, whaea and tipuna.

He loved Ōtaki. The whenua, the awa, moana and maunga had formed him. The kai from each had built his blood and bones. He was Ōtaki and Ōtaki was him. He could not leave. So his wairua kept a presence here, though his tinana had long since returned to Papatūānuku.

Few people ever saw him. An old soldier in uniform standing in Memorial Park.

The speeches today referred to battle sites and places that supposedly built our nation – Gallipoli, the Somme, Monte Cassino, Bourail. But there were other names burnt into the hinengaro of his mates. Places where the 28th Māori Battalion was sent to break the resistance of the enemy – Maleme, Takrouma, El Mreir, Tobruk, Faena, Taranto and camps such as Sollum.

His mates had gone to war full

of kata and waiata, many just 15 or 16 and using the names of brothers or uncles to enlist. But the blood and guts of the trenches and the brutality had broken them. Some drank too much, some beat their wives and loved ones. Many had been prisoners of war and they dealt out what they had received.

For years after they returned home many screamed and cried in the night as they dreamt. During the day they could raise a sweat and work their guts out, but when the dark came so did their nightmares. Many more came home to loved ones and lives of happiness and enjoyment, with memories of mateship and goodwill and a life not to be repeated.

The heroes not mentioned were the wāhine. They made huge efforts, alone bearing all the duties of parenting, feeding, loving, caring, making ends meet, disciplining, keeping alive the memories of absent fathers. In their spare time they knitted and baked for the men overseas.

When the war was over they showed the same caring aroha for their returning husbands and sons. For too many, they remained true to the promises made before the war of fidelity and true love, but their men never returned. They forced themselves through their heartache to speak of the dead so others down

the years could acknowledge the sacrifices. Men and women who had fought to keep their freedom.

Many could not bring themselves to speak the names of their beloved or to recall the good times. They lived in sadness end mourning. The war was over but the mamae remained.

As he stood there by the pillar that listed the names of all those from our district who never came home, he thought of those families who had sent two or more sons or brothers away, but not all returned. He recalled whānau waiting at the railway station after the First World War to see if their loved ones were coming home. Some waited day after day in the hope of seeing a beloved face alight from the train. No one ever arrived.

ANZAC DAY THURSDAY, APRIL 25

Ōtaki RSA Dawn Service

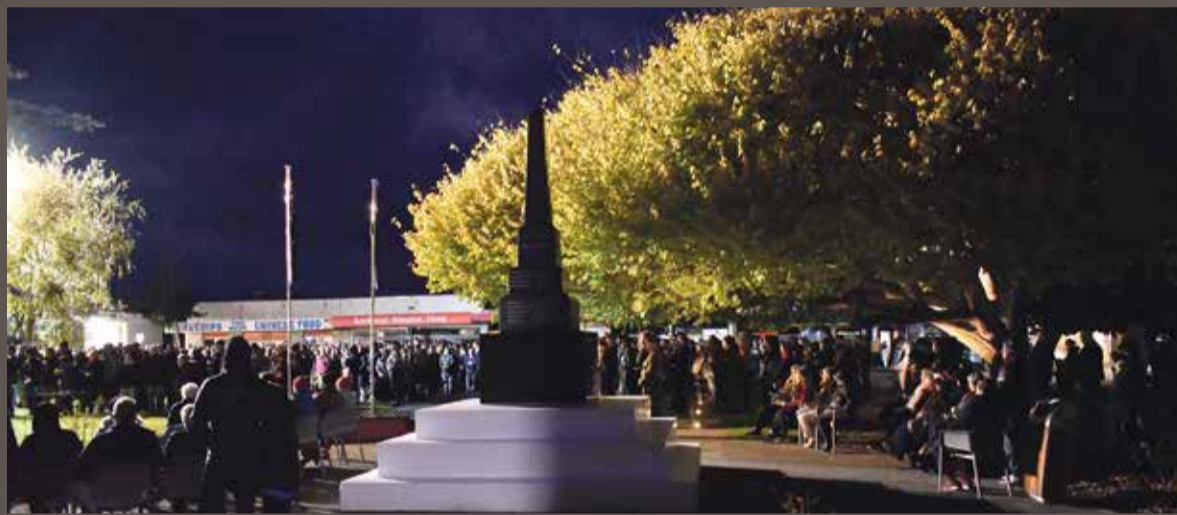
Fall in 5.45am, Ōtaki RSA. March to Ōtaki War Memorial and Cenotaph for 6am service.

Sunset Retreat

Fall in 4.45pm for 5pm service at Ōtaki Service Cemetery, Anzac Road.

Manakau Memorial Service

Assemble 7.20am Manakau Hall. March to War Memorial in Honi Taipua Street



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Ōtaki Yesterday

Ōtaki's historical magazine is available now, featuring interesting stories about the people and places of old Ōtaki. Read about the remarkable gymnastics club Mari Housiaux created and took to the top of the New Zealand gymnastics scene; the outdoorsmen of the Chaney family; Peter McBeth, whose butcher family were a big part of Ōtaki life through the middle part of last century; and the irrepressible Elsie Morgan. Also the early life of Colin Bird, who grew up in Ōtaki, married a local, lived in Australia for more than 30 years, and returned to where it all began.

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

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

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2024 is well underway and CAB Ōtaki is open. We look forward to seeing or hearing from you.

Our office is open and our trained volunteers are there to assist with independent and confidential advice. In addition, Budget Advice and Community Law services are also available at our premises if you want to make an appointment. We welcome you to visit, phone or email us to discuss any query or issue you may have.

We are also looking for new volunteers. Have you thought about helping out in your community? If so come and see us. We would be keen to hear from you.

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CAB Office hours: Monday-Friday, 10am-1pm

Man with kids nabbed: 175km/h on expressway

By Ian Carson

As the Easter holiday break began – ending with seven deaths on New Zealand roads – a Levin man was clocked at 175km/h on the expressway.

He was not only driving at a potentially fatal speed, but also carrying four children aged under 8.

“If he had crashed at that speed the consequences would have been horrendous,” says the Ōtaki police chief, sergeant Phil Grimstone. “We might well have ended with five more fatalities and another family grieving.”

The 33-year-old man was driving south near Te Horo about 12.40pm on Good Friday. He has been charged with driving at a dangerous speed.

Meanwhile, Phil says his team, in conjunction with Wellington region police, continue to patrol the old main highway area around Peka Peka and Te Horo. It has become a favoured location for young drivers, mostly arriving from other out of town, to do burn-outs.

There were four significant arrests made in Ōtaki in the past month.

- Police went to a Manuka Street, Ōtaki Beach, address on March 21 and executed a search warrant. They found cannabis and methamphetamine. As

ON THE LOCAL BEAT

a result, a 35-year-old male has been charged with possession of cannabis for supply, and a 24-year-old female charged with possession of cannabis and methamphetamine. Several cannabis plants and meth were seized.

- On March 23 about 6pm police were called to a fire at the old Ōtaki children’s health camp. Two male teenagers had been found by local firefighters in scrub near the camp. The two were surrounded by fire and dense blackberry, and unable to find a way out. After being rescued by the firefighters, the two 17-year-olds were arrested by police. One required medical assistance. It’s alleged they were playing with a lighter in the scrub, resulting in several small fires that escalated to the extent that a large area of scrub was burnt, and the resources of several brigades from around the region being called on to quell the fire during the night and dampen hot spots throughout the next day. The two teenagers were referred to Youth Services.



Police and medics attend to two youths as fire burns behind them. Photo Ōtaki Today

- On March 24 a 54-year-old man was assaulted with an iron bar on Tasman Road. The victim sustained fractures and other injuries in the assault, and his vehicle was damaged. A 43-year-old male was arrested and has been charged with wounding with intent to cause grievous bodily harm (GBH), and intentional damage to a vehicle. The two men were known to each other.
- About midnight on April 1 a 34-year-old male was seen loitering on a private property at Ōtaki Beach. The property owner has a protection order filed against the man after family harm incidents. An associate of the owner saw the man and confronted him. In the ensuing altercation, the associate was stabbed in the head with a knife. The alleged offender was charged with grievous bodily harm. Police opposed bail and he remains in custody pending trial.

ŌTAKI COMMUNITY: SIMON BLACK

Reflection at half way point

Politics – it’s like sticking your head above the parapet and trying not to get it shot off!

You put yourself in the public eye and open yourself up to ridicule, dissent, and even abuse. We certainly don’t do it for the meagre pay; we do it for our community; for YOU.



The halfway point of our three-year term seems like a good time to reflect on the last 18 months.

As a newly formed community board our first decision was to start our term with a team-building session. Although this session was termed a “mediation” it allowed us to set our expectations of each other, how we would communicate with each other, and operate as a team. We learned healthy conflict should be embraced and have different points of view and robust discussions to get the best outcomes for our community. I also believe this has been instrumental in making us a cohesive and effective board.

It is also worth noting that the team building was paid for by a community board training fund, which all boards can access, and was money well spent!

The board works with each member’s strengths and passions. For example, Jackie Elliot has been focusing on community resilience with her work on emergency management. Shelley Warwick has been doing the mahi on shared walkways and bridle paths, while Chris Papps is a stalwart of the board with her experience and has taken the lead on the Ōtaki Museum. Cam Butler is co-leading the formation of a new Ōtaki-Te Horo business association while my focus has been on working with local police and other groups on crime prevention. And I feel privileged to work alongside these passionate, invested people.

It is fair to say we don’t always agree, and we don’t always get things right, but we turn up to represent and advocate for our community; for you.

■ Simon is deputy chair of the Ōtaki Community Board

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Join us in building a stronger and more resilient Kāpiti

Have your say on our proposed Long-term Plan 2024–34

Every three years, we review our Long-term Plan (LTP), which lays out the mahi (work) we plan to do over the next 10 years and how we'll pay for it.

It sets our direction, the activities, and priorities we plan to deliver, our financial and infrastructure strategies and other important policies, and our budget for the next 10 years, with a focus on the first three years. Importantly, the LTP sets out the likely impact on your rates.

Before we lock anything in for our Long-term Plan, we need your feedback.

Like many councils across the country, we're facing high inflation and increasing costs for delivering core services. We need to invest in our infrastructure, and plan for growth in the district, while also ensuring we can respond to natural disasters.

This has an impact on rates. While rates increases are never ideal, we believe we need to take bold action now to secure the district's future.

We know our communities are dealing with significant economic pressures in both their households and businesses. Council is facing those same pressures, plus high costs associated with our assets and infrastructure and high debt levels. We also need to find a way to fund the delivery of drinking water, stormwater, and wastewater services now that the previous government's three waters legislation has been repealed.

Our main objective in preparing this LTP is to actively reduce debt and remain financially sound so we can grow well and increase our resilience.



We encourage you to share your views so we can tackle these tough decisions together and ensure a bright future for everyone who calls – or will call – Kāpiti home.

Consultation is open until **28 April**. There are lots of ways to give feedback – online, on paper, or in person.



► Get the full picture and give feedback at haveyoursay.kapiticoast.govt.nz/LTP

What we've done to cut costs

We've already made some hard calls to reduce operating costs through a range of measures, but we need to take further action to reduce our debt so we can increase our resilience, and attract growth and economic development.

To further reduce operating costs without a rates increase, we would need to reduce levels of service, which is things like library or pool hours, mowing, or other maintenance and repairs. We don't plan on doing this right now, but it may become necessary in coming years. We'd have to consider how we do this without compromising the things that make Kāpiti such a great place to live.

Proposed rates

In 2024/25, which is the first year of this LTP, we're proposing an average rates increase of 17 percent. This will reduce to an average 7 percent a year for the following nine years of the ten year plan. Your actual percentage increase will vary depending on the capital value of your property.

Almost 10 percent of the proposed 17 percent rates increase is from unavoidable costs such as inflation, rising insurance costs, interest, depreciation, and personnel costs despite a cap on staff numbers already in place. A further two percent is for essential infrastructure and community facilities, with funding a \$4.7 million shortfall for three waters making up the remaining five percent now the legislation has been repealed.

This is more than anyone wants to see but is in-step with other councils' proposed rates rises.

Proposals for building a resilient future

We'd love your views on anything at all, but especially these three proposals that have big implications for ratepayers.



1

Tackle the funding shortfall for three waters

We now have to fund \$4.7m for our three waters operating costs in 2024/25, which we'd previously expected to be transferred to a regional entity. This accounts for five percent of the 17 percent average rates increase proposed in the first year of the LTP.

We're asking for feedback on whether we should fund this 2024/25 operating cost shortfall through rates or debt.

Our preferred option is to fund through rates, as we are seeking to actively reduce our debt, not add to it.



2

Proactively reduce Council's debt

We need to drastically reduce our debt so we have the ability to borrow enough to pay for the unexpected, such as a major natural disaster. If we don't start reducing our debt our interest repayments will be about \$400,000 a week within 10 years.

We're asking for your feedback on which rates rise we should opt for to strike a balance between affordability, building capacity to borrow, and keeping our core assets in good shape.

Our preferred option is to go with the middle ground, which means a seven percent average rates increase for years 2 to 10 of the LTP.



3

Sustainable housing for our older people

The cost of providing suitable council housing for older people in our district is increasing. As councils are unable to access government funding to help cover the cost, we've been looking at how to improve this service without ratepayers continuing to foot the bill.

We're asking for your feedback on whether we transfer our housing assets for older people to a new community housing provider, or to an existing one, or keep the portfolio within Council.

Our preferred option is to transfer it to a new provider, which we would set up to focus on the specific needs of Kāpiti residents. Tenants could potentially access government subsidies, lessening the burden on ratepayers.



Introducing a Climate Action Rate

A designated rate would make it easier to see what we are spending on specific climate change actions, such as reducing our carbon footprint, improving waste management practices, and protecting public assets from climate-related damage through work around seawalls and sand dune planting. The proposed new rate won't increase the amount we collect from rates next year, it will just be split out differently on the rates bill.

Have your say by 28 April

Online at haveyoursay@kapiticoast.govt.nz/LTP

Email submissions@kapiticoast.govt.nz

Drop your submission at a library or service centre or post to LTP Submissions, Kāpiti Coast District Council, Private Bag 60601, Paraparaumu 5254.

Speak at hearings on 2 May.

Drop-in to talk to elected members at:

Tuesday 9 April:

1.30–3pm Paraparaumu (Civic)
6–7pm Ōtaki Memorial Hall supper room

Friday 12 April:

10–11.30am Waikanae Library

Saturday 13 April:

10–11.30am Raumati South Memorial Hall
1–2pm Paekākāriki St Peter's Hall

Saturday 20 April:

10–11.30am Waikanae Library
10–11.30am Ōtaki Memorial Hall
supper room

Sunday 21 April (tbc):

10am–12pm Ōtaki Kids' Market



► Find everything you need at
haveyoursay@kapiticoast.govt.nz/LTP

HUATAU/Comment

PLAIN SPEAKING: IAN CARSON

Local news – if you're not there, you won't know what's going on

I've been asked if the recent demise of the *Kāpiti Observer* newspaper is good news for *Ōtaki Today*.

It's not. While there might be some benefits in a lessening of competition for advertising and the "scoop" on news stories, we at *Ōtaki Today* don't like to see newspapers disappearing. That's because newspapers still have a valuable role in giving people local news and ensuring accountability for those in power who might otherwise believe they can do what they like without a spotlight falling on their activities.

In the Spielberg movie, *The Post*, the owner of the *Washington Post*, Katherine Graham, was quoted as saying: "Newspapers are not for



the government, they are for the governed."

The Stuff-owned *Observer*, however, ended up being but a shadow of its former self. Once a robust teller of local news, it fell into a sad malaise, poorly resourced and almost bereft of anything that might interest its readers.

It had little content that was any different from its stable of other regional papers, such as the *Kāpiti-Mana News*, *Hutt News* and *Upper Hutt Leader*. In one issue recently, its one

"local" story on the front page referred to the effect of Wellington region water restrictions as an autumn drought continued. The problem was that in Kāpiti there were no water restrictions thanks to the foresight of the council in introducing water meters several years ago.

The decision to run the story in the *Kāpiti Observer* was a reflection of its lack of local knowledge and resourcing in terms of reporting and sub-editing. If you're not there, you won't know what's going on.

The story was a message to Kāpiti readers that they didn't actually matter, as long as there was some advertising to bring in the steadily dwindling income.

Of course, as a business, Stuff would have done the sums and surmised that

continuing to publish the *Observer* was not worth the effort. It's given the NZME-owned *Kāpiti News* a clear advantage – it has continued to support local news with an editor and staff "on the ground" in the region.

The *Kāpiti News*, however, also made a corporate decision earlier this year to cease letterbox deliveries in Ōtaki, preferring to boost the number of news stands where readers could pick up copies. It's likely to be the result of big increases in the cost of printing and distribution in the past year.

So where does it leave the people of Ōtaki who are still interested in local events, politics, the arts and all those things good newspapers should cover?

I can't talk for the other newspaper here, the *Ōtaki Mail*, but I can say that we at *Ōtaki Today* have a long-term

commitment to keep telling the stories of this town and district – honestly, fairly and "without fear or favour".

We've taken a hit with cost increases – a rise of close to 50 percent for print and distribution – but we have great support from our loyal advertisers, contributors and readers that keeps us motivated.

While the future for many newspapers around the world looks bleak, comparatively we are thriving. It's largely because we have had an unerring focus on what's been described as "hyperlocal" news, and not cutting corners by filling gaps with news releases.

We're here for the long haul, and we'll keep reporting the news that matters for the foreseeable future.

■ Ian is editor of *Ōtaki Today*

THE ELECTORATE: TIM COSTLEY, MP

Passing legislation, busy around town

I hope you all had a great Easter, and no doubt many are looking forward to school holidays.

I'm also looking forward to Anzac Day; always a special time of year for me, and as a member of the Ōtaki RSA I'm looking forward to services around the district, finishing with the Sunset Service here in Ōtaki. Please support the RSA on Poppy Day if you're able.

In Parliament I've been busy passing legislation to implement the Free Trade Agreement with the European Union, so fisheries and horticulture in particular (kiwifruit and onions locally)

can gain some of the more than \$100 million in savings this agreement brings.



I've also been busy in select committees completing annual reviews. It was eye-watering to see some of the wasteful spending, with the headcount of public servants going from 47,000 to 63,000 in the past few years, and an 80% increase in government spending. Saving just 6.5% of that 80% is (to quote Nicola Willis) a drop in the ocean. But we must save on our spending or we won't be able to afford the nurses and teachers and police officers we so desperately need.

Locally, I've enjoyed time with Te Puna Oranga o Ōtaki, visiting the local kindys, schools and the college here in Ōtaki; farmers like avocado growers in Te Horo; Lead the Way leadership training in Manakau; and a whole range of community groups and businesses from foodbanks to chocolate makers. These visits are really helpful: time with Heniti at Te Puna Oranga meant I could go to the minister of health and advocate to extend their funding so they can keep their contract for another year.

Finally, I'm inviting any local artists who would like to display art in my offices to submit a photo of their piece (any medium) and we'll organise a rotation of local art to be proudly displayed in Parliament and in my local offices. You can send photos to otakievents@parliament.govt.nz and we can provide more details, or look on my Facebook page.

Have a safe and enjoyable break this month if you get one, and I looking forward to seeing you at the Ōtaki Kids Market, or around town, over the coming weeks.

■ Tim is MP for the Ōtaki electorate

CAM'S CORNER: CAM BUTLER

ŌCB discussions useful, robust and fun

Ōtaki & Te Horo Business Association

The March 19 get-together was a great success with a room full of business people plus a smattering of elected members including the mayor, Kāpiti Chamber of Commerce and some KCDC staff to assist. Neil McKay ran the meeting and at the end of the night we were well over-subscribed for the working party volunteers. The working party will put together their thoughts on what the business association will be and present back to businesses at a later date.

Blue Bluff slips, Ōtaki Gorge Rd

The decision whether to open or close Ōtaki Gorge Rd at the Blue Bluff slip is on the cards for May 9. The Ōtaki Community Board (ŌCB) is still advocating for the road to be opened again.

18 months in. . . .

The ŌCB is now halfway through our current term with our team of community



advocates working away at a number of projects to better the Ōtaki community. Unlike national elections where the winner chooses its team, local government elections throw together the top polling candidates who are just expected to work together for the community.

The ŌCB was the first board to use a team building expert to set us on the right path. We have a great gender balance along with a huge amount of local body experience, enthusiasm and passion for Ōtaki. Do we agree absolutely all the time? Definitely not and I wouldn't expect that to happen, either.

Our regular discussions are useful, robust and fun.

Ōtaki River bridge lane closure

No news is good news? Still expecting the works to start in May.

Fires

ŌCB deputy chair Simon Black is also a member of the Ōtaki Volunteer Fire Brigade and has been run off his feet along with the rest of the brigade. We salute Simon and his fire mates who are keeping Ōtaki safe. A shout out also to community board member Jackie Elliott, who along with Barbara and myself activated the emergency hub at the Baptist Church just in case there were evacuations due to the brush fire at Ōtaki Beach.

Keep being sunny, Ōtaki.

Like *Ōtaki Community Board* on Facebook

■ Cam is chair of the Ōtaki Community Board

TE HORO OUTLOOK: MICHAEL MOORE

Hall helps to connect and build community

The Te Horo Hall is a taonga – a treasure – for our community.

The land it sits on was gifted by local farmers in 1914. They saw it as a meeting place for the growing area. The piles were built from local tōtara. Over the years various alterations and upgrades have occurred.

Now, 110 years on, the hall requires significant seismic strengthening to bring it up to earthquake code compliance, which will cost \$320,000. It is planned to undertake this work in the third quarter of 2024.

An extensive fundraising programme is under way. The impressive events include Sunday farm walks, quiz evenings, alfresco lunch, a Tour de Te Horo cycle ride, and a Kāpiti Brass Band concert. In November, it's hoped to run the popular country garden tour again, which last occurred in 2019.

One of the wonderful additional benefits to the fundraising, is how it is helping connect and build community. With the new State Highway 1 expressway cutting right through rural Te Horo, we now have a safe overbridge crossing between Hautere and the beach area. This is often a mental division and some



beach residents might not have ever visited the hall. I hope folks use this opportunity to meet locals they don't know and see some of the amazing experiences right here.

The hall is owned by the community, not Kāpiti Coast District Council. It is the only community facility in Te Horo and is included in the council's schedule of historic heritage buildings. The Hall Society is an incorporated society and a registered charity.

The hall hosts more than 200 events a year. It is also our emergency hub for a civil defence emergency. This is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to strengthen the hall, and I encourage everyone to get behind this wonderful project. Everything is on the website: TeHoroHall.org.nz

Electricity infrastructure upgrade

Te Horo Beach has had consistent

electricity supply incidents. Electra has installed a remotely controlled 11kV switch that allows for a high-voltage line to be reconfigured providing an alternate feed to supply the beach village.

The backup line would be used in the event of a fault in the network between Te Horo Beach Road and the zone substation in Ōtaki. The remote automation allows control centre operators to begin restoration while fault crews are travelling to the site, saving about 20 minutes in travelling time.

When the power goes off at Te Horo Beach, residents lose power to water pumps, meaning no power, no water, or even flush the loo! The village has been subjected to isolation from flooding on the Beach Road, with no public transport and numerous lengthy power outages.

It's great to see this investment into what the rest of the region has.

• Next Waikanae Community Board meeting 7pm Tuesday, May 21, Waikanae Community Centre, 28 Utauta St.

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

Can a disaster report finally lead to a better way?

Former police commissioner Mike Bush's recently released report on Cyclone Gabrielle in Ikaroa-Rāwhiti is as dry as old toast, but it should be essential reading for anyone interested in community safety and resilience.

Bush slammed much of the civil defence response and found the severity, speed and scale of the disaster of February 14, 2023, overwhelmed officials.

My interest was especially pricked by the report's scrutiny on how prepared Hawke's Bay Civil Defence officials were before Gabrielle, and in the emergency response.

I recall, in an RNZ report immediately after the floods, a Hawke's Bay Civil Defence official describing how certain areas had been devastated where they simply hadn't anticipated the risk. The explanation was that previous (recent) flooding didn't indicate a particular risk.

Oh, the rain seems to have fallen in a different place, this time. What a surprise!

To take a wider perspective on these issues, New Zealand is particularly prone to natural hazard disasters and, given the Christchurch massacre, we're not immune from unnatural emergencies as well.

These events put people's lives at risk and account for massive economic and financial

impact. In other words, it's a significant issue.

But the lessons seem difficult to learn. Each disaster is routinely accompanied by another disaster – an inability to be properly prepared and to provide a coherent emergency response. This cycle of Disaster; Disaster response; and Disaster report is now as enshrined as night following day. In fact, the Bush report will now be followed by yet another report by the National Emergency Management Agency.

In the wake of the Bush inquiry findings, Stuff reported West Coast Civil Defence Emergency Management group controller Te Arohanui Cook as saying: "We don't need more reports: we need action."

Well yes, but what action?

Let me declare an interest in all this. In my job as the owner of a web platform business I recognise, like most people, that the internet is a key to better preparedness and emergency communications. But the solutions require a fresh approach and a willingness for people in positions of power to work collaboratively on finding solutions. That, in my mind is more of a barrier than any technical considerations (see footnote*).

However, if there's an area the Bush report shines the torch on a better future, it's highlighted when he noted this:

"Any engagement with iwi Māori or Māori communities was because of ad hoc

* FOOTNOTE: Flightdec has developed a unique capability, using hyperconnected websites, to help address the perennial problems associated with emergency preparedness and responses – see flightdec.com/Emergency



relationships rather than systematic and formalised effort.

"Māori agencies and marae felt their proven ability to deliver welfare services at scale were either ignored or hampered by bureaucratic decision making."

In other words, while multi-million-dollar infrastructure and officials in offices were falling over themselves to fail, Māori and people in communities were getting on and saving the day, by working together on the ground – let's call that "cultural infrastructure" – something that seems to have been continually ignored in official thinking.

Then, on March 29, 2024, Te Ao Māori News ran a story headlined: "Marae and hapū want to be more involved in Hawke's Bay disaster response."

Let's just watch that space, because I doubt if there can be any meaningful improvement in emergency management while the processes are mired in closed thinking. Not only should we understand how marae and communities provide robust responses, we also need to appreciate the real depth and scope of local and environmental knowledge that rests most easily with people of the whenua.

That applies to Ikaroa-Rāwhiti and anywhere else in the world where emergency management is also an unresolved issue.

If you'd like to read the review, go to hbemergency.govt.nz and search for "cyclone gabrielle review".

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

JUST A THOUGHT

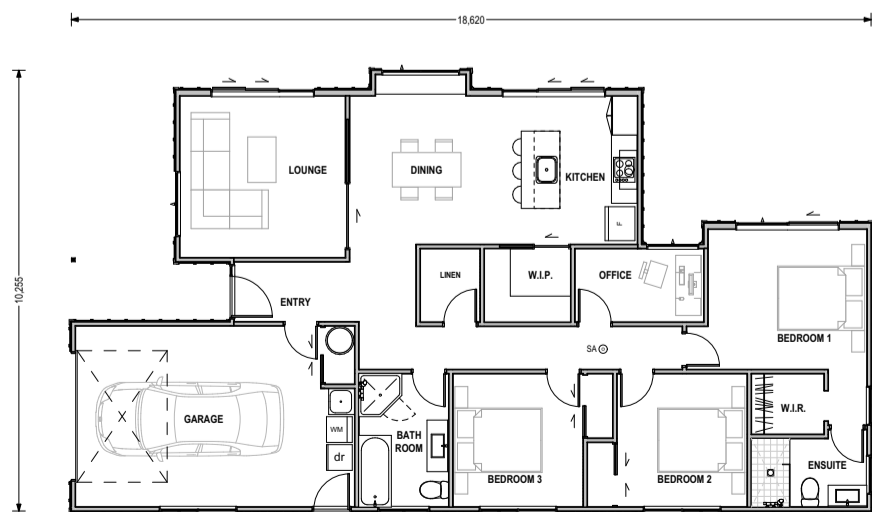


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HAUORA/Health

People really are attracted to magnets

Historically magnets were exceedingly rare, with the only naturally occurring magnet being the precious magnetised mineral magnetite – the north-seeking “lodestone” used by early mariners in their compasses.

Today, thanks to scientific and technological advancements, magnets can be hundreds of times more powerful than lodestone and are all around us as a vital part of modern society.

Magnets are in electric motors; from vacuum cleaners to electric cars. They are in wind turbines, where spinning magnets produce electricity. In microwave ovens the microwaves are produced by magnets – in a device appropriately called a magnetron.

Information is stored on our computer hard drives and credit card stripes by tiny magnetic particles. Magnets are used in microphones and speakers (from rock concert towers to earbuds), and magnets stick shopping lists to fridges.

Where would we be without magnets!

Because of their fascinating invisible force, and seemingly inexhaustible energy to attract and repel objects, people are tempted to use magnets to try and make perpetual motion machines, or create “free energy” through over-unity devices that produce more energy than they use.

YouTube has many sites purporting to show these machines (a mix of genuine enthusiasts, pranksters and scammers), and on the internet you can buy plans for them, or even financially invest in their development.

With rising power bills, the notion of free energy is certainly appealing, and, for aspiring inventors, there is the dream of the lone maverick proving the experts wrong and developing limitless energy.

HEALTH SCIENCE



DR STEVE HUMPHRIES

Unfortunately, getting in the way of all this is the law of conservation of energy: energy can neither be created nor destroyed – it can only be converted from one form to another.

You can't magically create energy out of nothing. When it comes to energy there's no such thing as a free lunch.

A magnet can do work by repelling another magnet and giving it kinetic energy, but you must do at least as much work to force the two magnets together to begin with – you're not getting any free energy to power your house.

No amount of tinkering with magnets can beat the system; no exception to the law of conservation of energy has ever been observed. It's the way the Universe is built, though none of this stops people from trying to build over-unity machines, or asking for money to develop them.

Using magnets to heal has a long history in

many cultures, and remains popular today as an alternative therapy.

There are magnetic bracelets, rings, shoe inserts, and magnetic mattresses and underlays, with proponents claiming that magnets can reduce pain and inflammation, improve circulation and wound healing, promote better sleep, enhance immune function, and reduce stress, anxiety, and depression. It's a long list.

But different health problems have different causes, and consequently require different cures. Cure-alls, such as magnet therapy, are quackery.

Molecules within the human body are subject to many forces (electrostatic, hydrophobic, chemical bonding, and thermal agitation) which are all orders of magnitude stronger than magnetic forces (magnetic fields just pass through the human body with minimal interaction), so it's not plausible that magnets could exert a therapeutic effect.

Even with the massive magnetic fields used in magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) there is no discernible effect on the physiological functioning or health of a person.

There is no credible theoretical reason to expect magnets to be therapeutic, and neither is there any credible empirical evidence from research studies. It's possible to cherry-pick supporting studies (and sellers of magnetic

healing products often do), but those studies are generally small, capitalise on chance effects, are methodologically weak with a high risk of bias, are not replicated, and ignore all the studies that find no effect at all.

Even after decades of research no dose-response relationship has been found, there's not even any agreement if it should be the north or south pole of the magnet that should face the body.

Belief in the healing power of magnets is pseudoscience, which is why medical centres and hospitals don't prescribe magnets as a treatment.

Despite the lack of scientific support, the multibillion-dollar magnet therapy industry is booming. People are attracted to magnets.

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

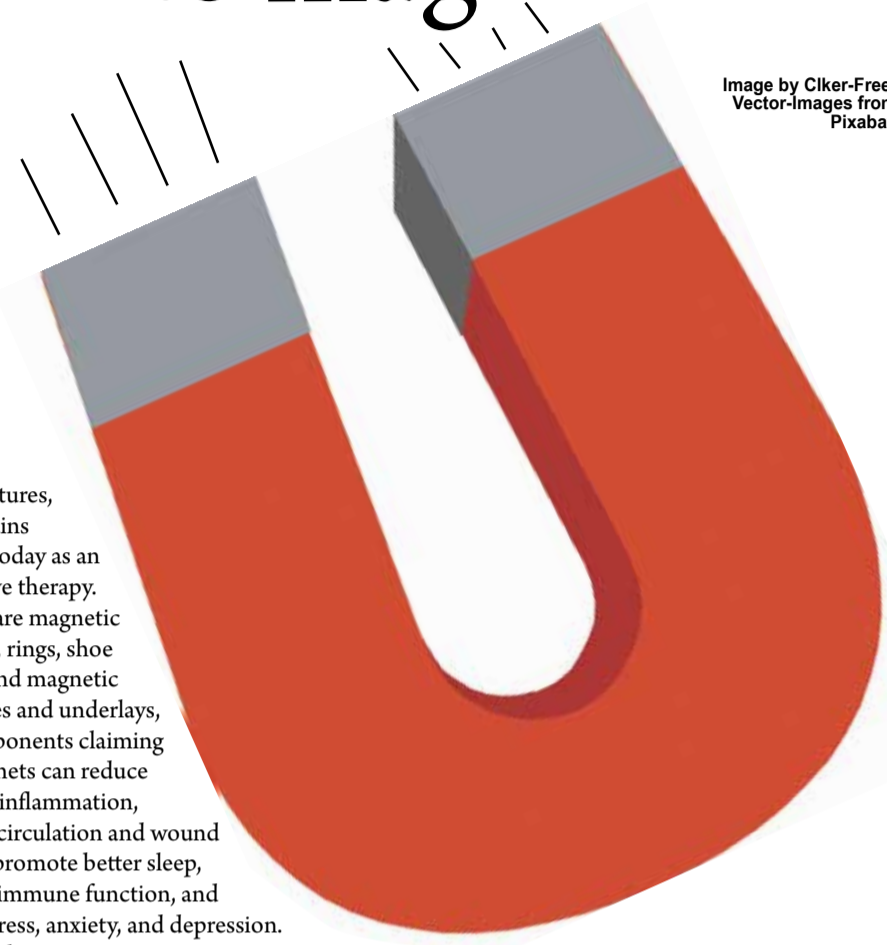


Image by Ciker-Free-Vector-Images from Pixabay



Bowel screening is easy

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

You've got this!

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

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

Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Government

Health New Zealand
Te Whatu Ora



HELPLINES AND LOCAL MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

It's OK to seek help. Never hesitate if you're worried about you or someone else.

If someone has attempted suicide or you're worried about their immediate safety:

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

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

trying.

Services for support & information:

- Lifeline 0800 543 354
- Samaritans 0800 726 666 – confidential support if lonely or in emotional distress
- Depression Helpline 0800 111 757 or text 4202 – talk to a counsellor about how you're feeling or to ask questions
- Healthline 0800 611 116 – advice from trained registered nurses
- www.depression.org.nz
- Local counselling: Bill Logan, Te Horo Beach. 027 243 1098. bl.co.nz
- For children and young people
- Youthline 0800 376 633, free text 234, email talk@youthline.co.nz or webchat at youthline.co.nz (webchat avail 7-11pm) – for young people, whānau and friends.
- What's Up 0800 942 8787 (0800 WHATSUP) or webchat at www.whatsapp.co.nz from 5-10pm for ages 5-18.
- Kidsline 0800 543 754 (0800 KIDSLINE) – up to 18 years.

MAHI MĀRA/Gardening



Photos Kath Irvine

A little April love in the greenhouse

The greenhouse soil has worked hard in the summer heat and needs a bit of love before planting the next lot of crops out.

Leave productive plants in situ, but give them a big tidy-up so they aren't taking up as much space. Remove as much ratty, old, yellow, pesty or diseased foliage as you can and pluck any foliage that's shading flowers and fruits – they need the extra light and airflow on these shorter, cooler days.

- If space is at a premium, you can cut tomatoes off at the base, leaving the nourishing roots behind in the soil. Hang the plants upside down in the greenhouse or on a porch where they'll continue to ripen.
- Or use the unripe fruits in green tomato pickles, hot sauce or my fav – fried green tomatoes.

If soil is dry (and chances are that it is) you

must rehydrate it. Without moisture there are no microbes. Without microbes there is no plant health.

Next it needs a feed. Nothing beats a fresh layer of compost. Spread it on as thickly as possible – at least 2cm in a greenhouse and ideally over the whole bed.

If you don't have enough, no worries, here's some ideas:

- Use compost for each seedling and on the uncomposted bits sow crimson clover and/or phacelia.
- Use compost for each seedling and trench bokashi between plants.
- Extend your homemade compost with any other well decomposed organic matter you have to hand – well rotted manure, worm castings, the wormy soil beneath the firewood pile. Mix it together and spread it on. I call this



cheat's compost, and it's served me very well over the years.

The icing on the cake is to saturate the prepared soil with something to stir the soil life. This little pre-plant booster is so very good, especially if your soil has dried out. Use

- EM
- worm juice
- activated compost tea
- liquid comfrey or seaweed.

That's it! You're ready to grow, and there are heaps of cool things you can plant in the autumn greenhouse. It depends, of course, on what you want to eat, and what the temperature is at yours.

- quick leafys, such as salads, bok choy, gai lan or spinach
- dwarf beans
- beetroot

- spuds in buckets for a cheeky winter crop
 - celery, because going under cover prevents rust
 - Basil, a punt worth taking – if it suddenly gets too cold and comes to nothing, ah well!
- Sow a mixed greencrop in remaining space – theres a great opportunity beneath taller crops and finishing crops. These greencrops will keep your soils alive and active and nourished, and are an important diversification from solanaceae (toms/ pepper/ aubergine) crops.

My go-to mix is mustard and daikon to cleanse, lupin for nitrogen, and phacelia and buckwheat for all-round soil building and food for beneficial insects. Such easy, high value fertility.

■ *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.*

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PAKIHI/Business

Navigating our ships through the stormy waters ahead

As business leaders, we're no strangers to the ebb and flow of economic tides. But recently, these waters have been particularly choppy, leaving many of us to navigate through uncharted territories.

The global events of the past year, government policy shifts and supply chain disruptions have reshaped the business landscape in profound ways. From the Middle East crises to the Russia-Ukraine situation, these events have impacted businesses big and small, affecting profitability, cash flow and staff retention.

So, how do we steer our ships through these stormy seas? Here are five strategic steps to fortify your business against the unpredictable economic fluctuations we might face over the next 18 to 24 months.

1. Diversify your revenue streams

Relying on a single source of income is a risky business strategy, especially in today's volatile market. To safeguard your business, it's crucial to diversify your revenue streams. This could mean expanding your product line, exploring

new markets, or finding innovative ways to monetise your services. Diversification isn't just a safety net – it's an opportunity to grow.

2. Focus on customer retention

In times of uncertainty, your existing customers are your most valuable asset. It's essential to focus on customer retention by adding value and enhancing their experience. Consider loyalty programmes, personalised marketing, and other strategies to deepen relationships. Remember, it's not just about maintaining revenue – it's about building a community that supports your business through thick and thin.

3. Optimise operational efficiency

Efficiency is the name of the game when it comes to weathering economic storms. Streamline your operations by honing in on systems and processes that can be improved. Embrace technology that can help you operate faster and more cost-effectively. Involve your team in this

YOUR BUSINESS



CHRIS WHELAN

process to foster a sense of unity and purpose, which can lead to increased productivity and morale.

4. Build strong cash reserves

A robust cash reserve can be the difference between sinking and swimming. Many small businesses falter not because they aren't profitable, but because they lack the cash flow to stay afloat during tough times. Prioritise building and maintaining a healthy cash reserve to ensure you can handle

unexpected expenses or slow periods without panic.

5. Stay agile and responsive

Adaptability is a critical survival skill in the business world. Keep a close eye on market trends and customer feedback, and be prepared to pivot when necessary. Agility allows your business to remain competitive and relevant, even as the economic landscape shifts.

Bonus tip: Seek professional advice

Sometimes, the smartest move is to call in

the experts. Whether it's a business coach, an accountant or another professional, don't hesitate to seek advice. They can offer valuable insights and strategies to help your business not just survive but thrive in challenging times.

If any of these steps resonate with you, I encourage you to take action. Consider booking a complimentary strategy session to dive deeper into your business challenges and explore tailored solutions. This isn't a sales pitch; it's an opportunity to put your business on the path to resilience and success.

Navigating through uncertainty isn't easy, but with the right strategies and mindset, it's possible to come out stronger on the other side. Remember, now is not the time to retreat – it's the time to double down on your efforts, innovate, and connect with your customers and community. Let's embrace the challenge and turn it into an opportunity for growth.

Wishing you a prosperous journey ahead.

■ *If you're looking to improve your team's performance, contact the Centre of Business Excellence: (chris@wcbce.co.nz or +64 222 332 669). Let's work together to unlock your business's full potential.*

Opportunity for wāhine Māori in tech

Te Taumata, representing Māori interests in global trade, in partnership with Callaghan Innovation, is giving 10 wāhine Māori in tech leadership an opportunity to explore trade opportunities in Ireland, France and the UK, culminating in London Tech Week in June this year.

"We are committed to supporting the growth of wāhine Māori in tech and fostering international connections," says Te Taumata trustee Naomi Manu. "This knowledge exchange also includes a six-month post-exchange programme of support to build an ecosystem of wāhine Māori in tech who are trade ready and export enabled."

Francis Davy, head of Māori and government engagement at Callaghan Innovation, says Māori businesses are nearly twice as likely to be involved in R&D as others.

"This partnership will help support the long-term growth aspirations of Māori businesses."

Women comprise only 26.7 percent of the tech industry in New Zealand and Māori make up only 4.1 percent. Te Taumata and Callaghan Innovation hope to not only open new markets for Māori-led tech businesses, but also inspire young wāhine Māori to pursue careers in innovation, sciences, technology, and research and development.

■ *For details and application forms, see <https://rb.gy/83729t>. Applications close at 5pm on Friday, April 26.*

What happens if you die without a will?

If you die and you don't have a will, this is called an "intestacy" or "dying intestate".

Without a will to guide what you want to happen with your assets, and who you want to be responsible for making those arrangements, there can be many complications for your family in dealing with your estate, as opposed to what happens when you die with a will.

The basic "order of priority" for distributing an intestate estate is:

1. spouse, civil union partner or de facto partner
2. children
3. parents
4. brothers and sisters
5. grandparents
6. uncles and aunts.

If you own no property and have no financial assets worth more than \$15,000, then your closest living relative over the age of 18 (based on the order of priority) would de facto become the administrator of your estate. If they don't want that job, the next person down the list who does might need to apply to the court to be made the administrator.

If you own property that doesn't automatically pass to a surviving partner, and/or you have financial assets over \$15,000, then someone will need to apply for what's called "Letters of Administration" (usually done with the help of a lawyer). Letters of Administration is the permission of the court to administer the deceased person's estate – that will usually be the closest living relative over the age of 18, again, based on the order of priority.

Letters of Administration are more work than applying for Probate (what you apply for when the deceased person dies with a will). Consent needs to be granted by certain family members, depending on the exact situation. For example, if someone dies without a spouse, without children, with no surviving parents, but several siblings, one sibling could apply for Letters of Administration, but consent would need to be sought from all of them.

If all siblings didn't consent, this would

MATTERS OF LAW



BROOKE MCGOWAN

create complications and delays that could need to be dealt with by the court.

Dying intestate can make the estate more open to disputes and claims that the deceased person might not have wanted to happen. For example, if you die intestate and have a surviving spouse from whom you have separated, they could receive from your estate as if you had not separated.

There can, of course, still be disputes, claims, and other complications when dealing with an estate where there is a will. But the easiest way to lessen the risk of any such dispute or claim being successful is to make sure you have a will.

You should think about what you want to happen with your assets after you die, who you want to be in charge of dealing with your estate, and then seek legal advice to execute a will. While not necessarily a pleasant thing to think about, having a will can save the people you care about a lot of stress in the long run.

■ *Brooke works mostly in Wakefields Lawyers at Levin, and occasionally at Ōtaki and Foxton.*

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



Civil Works Scaffolding in use on a Paraparaumu site. CWS has scaffold solutions for large building sites such as this, and for small local home owners.

Photo supplied

Diversity key component of CWS success

“If you’d said 10 years ago we’d be this busy have this many people working here, I would have laughed. It was never our intention – the business has grown pretty well organically.”

Gary Porter is not the archetypal brash tradie.

Quietly spoken, Gary projects a thoughtful demeanor that has no doubt helped him and wife Zara build a successful scaffolding business in Ōtaki. He says that as a local he cares about his family, his staff, and his business – pretty well in that order, no matter the economic or social pressures prevailing at the time.

Civil Works Scaffolding (CWS) has been operating for about 10 years, starting initially with just Gary doing the physical work, and Zara handling the paperwork and administration.

Soon, a few part-time staff became full time, and as demand grew more people were taken on. After acquiring a block of land and a building at the southern end of Aotaki Street in 2018, CWS began a growth spurt.

The growth has resulted in the company now employing 16 scaffolders and four office staff.

Gary was born and raised in Waikanae, but he and Zara have lived for many years at Te Horo.

After leaving school at the age of 15, he did a building apprenticeship and became a qualified carpenter. In a change of tack, he later worked as a diver on oil rigs around New Zealand and in the Pacific Islands. Wanting to start a family back home, he and Zara returned to Ōtaki and established CWS.

The period since has been a remarkable journey that Gary never dreamed would happen.

“If you’d said 10 years ago we’d be this busy have this many people working here, I would have laughed,” Gary says. “It was never our intention – the business has grown pretty well organically.”

CWS is now one of the biggest scaffolding companies on the Kāpiti Coast, servicing clients from Wellington to Palmerston North. The client list is deliberately diverse – from large developers and corporates to small-home owners.

“Every client is different,” Gary says. “They all have their own requirements, but of course they all want a job done well at a decent price.”

“That’s why I try to talk to every one of them,

to make sure they’re happy with our service and they’re getting what they pay for – and some.”

It means Gary doesn’t get on the tools much any more, but his hands-on approach still has him at work early in the morning to help load trucks for the day’s work and ensure everyone knows what to do, and that they’re happy.

Not long after the business started, Gary and Zara took on a business advisor, who set them on a track that helped them diversify their client base – not too many eggs in one basket – and establish business values that aligned with their own outlook on life. Their four priorities were:

1. Family first.
2. Good health.
3. Staff who enjoy being part of a family-based company.
4. A profitable business.

It seems to have served them well as they work through the current tougher economic environment.

■ CWS, 89 Aotaki St, Ōtaki. 021 440 526.
www.civilworksscaffolding.co.nz



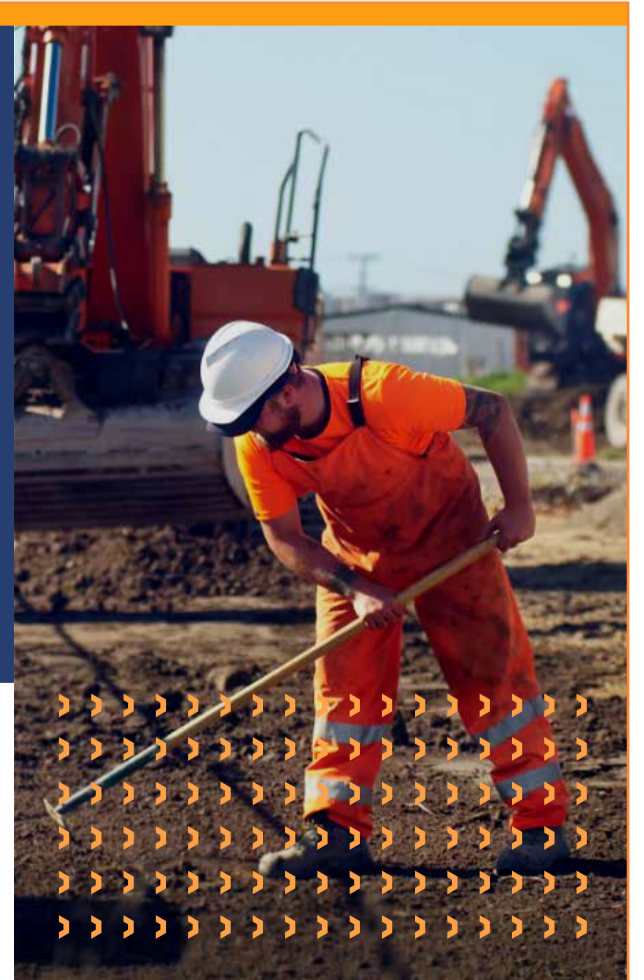
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HĪTŌRIA/History



From whaler cottages to Airbnbs

In the early 1800s Ōtaki Beach was one of the places of rest and recreation for the whalers who returned to the mainland from Kāpiti Island in the off season.

Some of these men married into the local iwi and were then able to build huts on what was their wives' land. Others were housed in rudimentary dwellings only with the blessings of the local mana whenua of the time.

Whaling began in the early 1820s, with the boom period in the 1830s, continuing until about 1850 when stocks became depleted. By this stage, some of the most well known descendants of Ōtaki had settled here and took up pastoral farming and other land-based occupations instead.

The arrival of Te Rauparaha in 1822 and his subsequent land occupations meant that, unless the whalers had married into land-owning families, the purchase of other land was difficult. Much of that used for farming was leased, rather than bought.

After his death and with the creation of the Māori Land Court, much of the land around the southern end of Marine Parade and what is still known legally as the Taumanuka Block was sold, mainly to lawyers working for the court. Many of the original whaling families remained living in the area, although the ownership of much of the land was no longer in Māori hands.

Some of the new titles created through the subdivision of the land were used as the earliest beach accommodation in the area. Robert Jones Staveley, himself a lawyer with the Māori Land Court, built cottages on land he and his family owned on the corner of Marine Parade and Rangiuuru Road. The titles and boundaries within the wider area were often chopped and changed to suit the new owners' needs, resulting in the patchwork of properties today.



The two remaining small cottages built by Robert on Marine Parade, known by locals as the Fishermen's Cottages (shown above), are believed to have originally been built to accommodate holiday makers to the area. Later owners of the cottages also occasionally rented these out. The cottages remain today, and are still rented, though a recent change in ownership might see their eventual demolition to allow a larger building to be built across both sites, which are under one title.

Another later dwelling, built next door on the land of Robert's daughter, is still in use five generations later. A remnant of one whaler cottage remains – now part of a bungalow on a small property on Rangiuuru Road, subdivided from the Taumanuka Block in the original land sales.

This example of change in dwelling types along the beachfront comes at a time when the nature of housing use along Marine Parade has already morphed from fishing shacks and simple baches to either upgraded permanent residences for those fleeing Wellington's rapid rise in real estate costs or for the generation of wealth through the likes of Airbnb and Bookabach.

The completion of the Peka Peka to Ōtaki expressway and Transmission Gully mean these options are more attractive to either residents or holiday makers.

The concept of enticing well-heeled out-of-towners to Ōtaki Beach isn't new. Some of the first constructions after the acquisition of land were for accommodation. Large multi-roomed buildings were erected for those travelling on the coach roads to the town or further north. Few, if any of these buildings remain, mainly due to destruction by fire. Edmund Tudor Atkinson (Tudor) built one in the Rangiuuru area that was later reduced to ashes.

But Tudor had other, bigger ideas. He proposed a development entitled "Rangiuuru-by-the Sea" that involved the subdivision of a large tract of land he owned that he envisaged as providing holiday housing for "wealthy Wellingtonians", as it says on the marketing material.

An advertisement in *The Evening Post* on the April 11, 1895, enthuses: "No marine township in the colony has excited more

interest in its inception than Rangiuuru-by-the-Sea. Situated within 50 miles of the City of Wellington, its accessibility is a first feature, and the climate, freedom from strong winds, the expanse of its beach, and the facilities offered for enjoyment in its surroundings render Rangiuuru-by-the-Sea wonderfully attractive alike for invalids and holiday-seekers." To cover all bases, the land was also available for grazing leases.

Sadly for him, Tudor's dream was not realised. A plan of the subdivision and further information about it can be seen at the exhibition "Te Whakaaturanga o Te Tahamoana o Ōtaki – Ōtaki Beach Exhibition" at the Ōtaki Museum in Main Street.

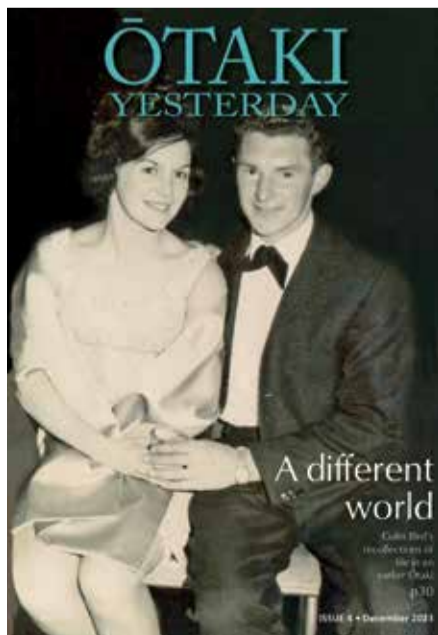
The demise of the well-known camping grounds, now sold and subdivided, has meant further difficulties for those not wanting to spend what they can't afford; the pleasures of holidaying at Ōtaki Beach so enticingly depicted by Tudor are no longer available to them. And, unless they own a fully self-contained motor home, "freedom camping" at the river mouth is also out of reach.

However, "wealthy Wellingtonians" (or reasonably well-off people from anywhere) do not need to despair. At a quick glance, there are more than 35 Airbnb properties available in the Ōtaki Beach area and more than 20 on Bookabach. It should be noted, however, that some of the property owners have maximised their chances of attracting would-be renters by listing on both sites.

So, while there is plenty of choice in holiday accommodation in Ōtaki Beach, the chances that the accommodation will be an original whaler's or fisherman's cottage, or a cheap campsite, are unlikely. Most of the current listings are newly renovated or newly built houses, apartments, tiny homes and the odd spare room in a house way tidier than most.

And, if you're not so well-heeled and are simply looking for affordable rental accommodation close to your children's school or your whānau, in the town you grew up in, good luck. You're going to need it, even if you are descended from one of Ōtaki's founding families.

* <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/EP18950411.2.10>



Ōtaki Yesterday

The 2023 issue of *Ōtaki Yesterday* has stories about the remarkable gymnastics club Mari Housiaux created and took to the top of the New Zealand gymnastics scene; the outdoorsmen of the Chaney family; Peter McBeth, whose butcher family were a big part of Ōtaki life through the middle part of last century; and the irrepressible Elsie Morgan. Also the early life of Colin Bird, who grew up in Ōtaki, married a local, lived in Australia and returned to where it all began.

Copies from 2020 through to 2023 are available for \$25 each + p&p.

The historical magazine *Ōtaki Yesterday* features fascinating stories about the people and places of old Ōtaki.

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



OLD ŌTAKI PHOTOS: ROYDON TEXTILES



The Roydon Textile factory on Aotaki Street (where Sander Ties is now) was once one of Ōtaki's biggest employers. The staff photo above is from the early 1980s.

FROM LEFT, BACK ROW: Rhyna Connolly, Karen Cornelius, Anne Smith (nee Henderson), unknown, unknown, unknown, unknown, Daphne Adam (nee Goodyear), unknown, Donna Hall, Stephanie Jones, Jean Enoka, Robert Kaihau.

ROW 3: Fred Lendorf, unknown, Gin Henderson, unknown, unknown, unknown, Sylvia Wilton, unknown, Pahi Edwards, unknown, ? Dal Din, Barbara Wiseman, unknown, unknown, unknown, unknown, Teresa Barone, unknown, unknown, Neta Wilson.

ROW 2: Doreen Spencer, Joanne Goninon, Margaret Grant, unknown, Lila McCall, Nahlene ?, Lee Moy, Marie Hakaraia, unknown, Zeta Dal Din, Heather Watson.

FRONT ROW: unknown, Brenda Christison, Ruth Hakaraia, unknown, Richard Taratoa, unknown, unknown.

Photo courtesy of Adale Higgs.

Palaeontology on show at Te Papa

By Una Cruickshank

Ngā Taonga Sound & Vision

The Te Papa exhibition Ngā Taniwha o Rūpapa – Dinosaurs of Patagonia is coming to an end this month.

It might be surprising that an audiovisual archive would be involved in an exhibition about prehistory. Obviously there are no recordings of dinosaurs, but there are plenty of recordings of palaeontologists in the Ngā Taonga collections. We supplied an extract from *Prehistoric Life in New Zealand* (1989) for the museum to play in the exhibition space.

Prehistoric Life in New Zealand walks viewers through the processes of fossilisation, explaining what fossils reveal about the geography of the country and the ancient life that once walked its forests. It's also a tribute to amateur palaeontologist Joan Wiffen, who was the first person to find verified dinosaur fossils in New Zealand.

Most experts once assumed that New Zealand could not have supported dinosaurs because of its small size and isolation from other landmasses. Joan and her husband, Pont, went looking for them anyway in their spare time. Neither had any formal training as palaeontologists, but had caught the fossil hunting bug from attending night classes.

They carefully identified Mangahouanga Stream, Hawke's Bay, as a likely spot to search. Finally, in 1975, they found a bone from a theropod. This find was followed by many others over the years, which proved that New Zealand once had similar dinosaurs to South America.

In the video we learn about the plesiosaurs and mosasaurs discovered at Mangahouanga Stream, and the types of rock their remains are found in. Among the other types of dinosaurs found at the stream was the enormous titanosaur.



Joan Wiffen on screen as visitors view *Prehistoric Life in New Zealand* playing in the exhibition Ngā Taniwha o Rūpapa | Dinosaurs of Patagonia, at Te Papa.

Photo supplied



A cast of a Patagotitan skeleton, on loan from Argentina's Museo Paleontológico Egidio Ferugli, is included in the Te Papa exhibition.

Later on, in *Prehistoric Life in New Zealand*, we also get to watch as Joan demonstrates how she prepares fossils. She uses a rock-cutting saw to reduce the concretion around the fossil, then a chisel to slowly chip more of the rock away. The bone surface is coated with an acrylic resin and placed in a bucket of acetic acid for reduction.

Notably, Joan is working in her backyard at home in this sequence, which illustrates

what humble materials she had to work with as a palaeontologist. In contrast, a little later on we also see a laboratory (the New Zealand Geological Survey in Lower Hutt), where similar fossil extraction processes are followed with professional tools such as an air scribe.

The video is both a good introduction to fossils for young viewers, and a nice tribute to the hard work that led to New Zealand's first identified dinosaurs.

You can watch *Prehistoric Life in New Zealand* at the Te Papa exhibition Dinosaurs of Patagonia in Wellington until April 28, or online at www.ngataonga.org.nz.

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

NEWS BRIEFS

Brigade busy

It was almost a call a day during March for the Ōtaki Volunteer Fire Brigade. It attended 28 calls in total, 11 of them being rubbish, grass or scrub fires, and five property fires. The brigade attended three vehicle crashes and three calls were "good intent". There were two each for private fire alarms and medical emergencies, and one each to deal with hazardous materials and to assist the Levin brigade.

Pool numbers jump

Ōtaki Pool reports a 43 percent jump in visitor numbers in 2023.

Kite dates set

The 2025 Ōtaki Kite Festival will be on the weekend of March 8-9.



New bike stands

KCDC has installed two new sets of bike stands in Ōtaki – one outside the park by RiverStone Café on the old highway (above), and another by the amenity block at Ōtaki Beach. It's expected that the stands will encourage more use of cycling and bring more cyclists to Ōtaki.

Community grants

KCDC's community grants fund is open, supporting community projects, programmes and events that have positive social outcomes. Applications close 5pm, May 3. See kapiticoast.govt.nz/CommunityGrants

TAMARIKI FUN

Drop your coloured picture in to **Riverstone Café** by **MAY 5** to win a \$20 book voucher or an *Animals in Vehicles* book.

OT KIDS' NEWS

SMART PHONES SOCIAL MEDIA BAN FOR UNDER 16 YEAR OLDS?



Banning under 16-year-olds from using smart phones and social media is being explored overseas. Florida lawmakers are looking at passing a bill to ban under 16s from accessing social media, and in New York, social media has been declared an "environmental toxin". In the UK, a public poll has found two thirds of people want shops to be banned from selling smart phones to under 16-year-olds. Auckland University senior researcher Dr Samantha Marsh told Newsable why New Zealand should do the same. Dr Marsh, whose expertise is in public health, said she believed social media posed a 10 out of 10 risk for young Kiwis, and that social media use resulted in "hours" of childhood being lost. She said young people would be better spending that time outside or with family and friends. Research by Facebook and Instagram owner Meta has shown kids risk mental and physical health problems when they are allowed to use platforms such as Instagram and Facebook as much or as often as they like. Some of the biggest health problems kids were facing included sleep deprivation, addiction, anxiety and poor mental health.

BBQ SNAKE ANYONE?



Would you eat a portion of poached python? How about some sautéed serpent or a nice slice of snake steak? We already farm animals such as chickens and cows to eat. Researchers from Macquarie University in Australia are suggesting that we should add pythons to that list, too, as it would be better for the environment. They argue that farming pythons uses less water, less animal feed and produces fewer greenhouse gases than farming many other animals. They argue that farmed pythons are less likely to transmit viruses such as bird flu, swine flu or Covid-19 and are a good source of protein. Dr Daniel Natusch led the study. He told the *Guardian* he'd had python barbecued, in satay skewers and in curries. He says python meat tastes like chicken!

Farming pythons for food is already common in Southeast Asia and China. For the study, the researchers spent time at reticulated and burmese python farms in Thailand and Vietnam. Burmese pythons are among the longest snakes in the world, growing up to five metres long and weighing 90kg. According to Guinness World Records, the longest-ever snake in captivity is a reticulated python called Medusa who measures 7.67 metres long.

NEW SPECIES FOUND IN OUR OCEANS



An underwater expedition off the coast of Chile has discovered more than 100 new marine species. Explorers working for the Schmidt Ocean Institute were investigating seamounts. Using an underwater robot, they spotted deep-sea corals, sea urchins, squat lobsters and other marine life that they thought was new to science. Dr Javier Sellanes, who led the expedition said: "We far exceeded our hopes on this expedition. You always expect to find new species in these remote and poorly explored areas, but the amount we found is mind-blowing."

Scientists searching the deep sea near New Zealand think they have uncovered more than 100 new species, too! It just goes to show how much more there is still to discover.

COLOURING COMPETITION



NAME:

AGE:

PHONE:

WORD MAKER



Snakes are found on every continent and country except Antarctica, Ireland, Iceland, Greenland, the Hawaiian archipelago and New Zealand.



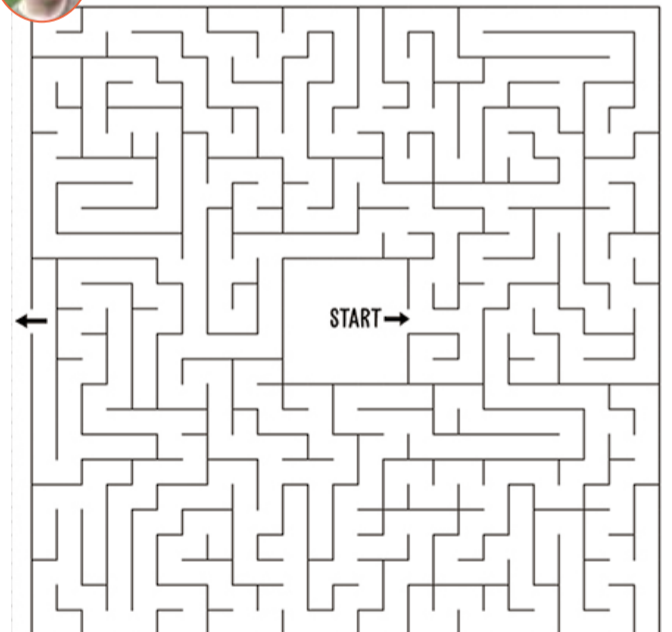
You can make **33** words from **SNAKE!** And if you don't know the meanings look them up.

Answers are on page 23. Good luck, have fun.



KYUSS'S APRIL MAZE

SEE PAGE 23 FOR THE CORRECT ROUTE.



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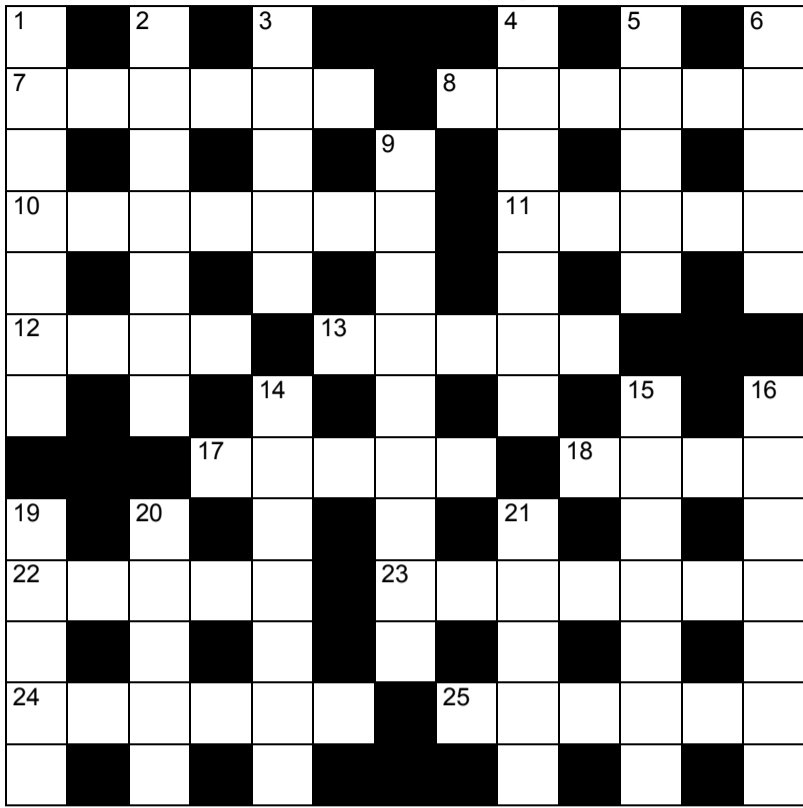


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THE CROSSWORD #NZNZ1924D (answers page 23)

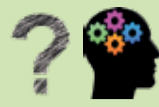
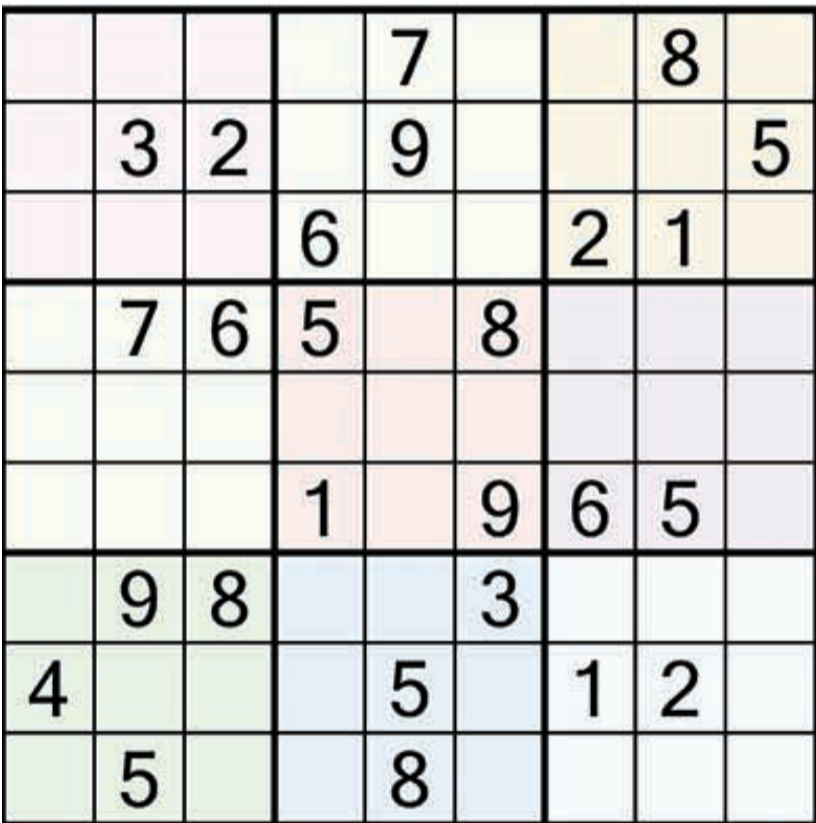


ACROSS

- 7/8. Wellington-based List MP who became deputy leader of the National Party in 2021 (6,6)
- 10. Organise (7)
- 11. Māori word for rat (5)
- 12. Always (4)
- 13. ___ Day: unhealthy alcoholic event in December (5)
- 17. Ethnicity chosen by almost 5000 people in the 2018 census (5)
- 18. Rimu or matai (4)
- 22. Sailing class in which Tauranga's Tom Saunders became world champion in 2021 (5)
- 23. A sum of money saved for future use (4,3)

- 24. Effect of a minor earthquake (6)
 - 25. Dwarf tree art (6)
- DOWN**
- 1. Theoretically (2,5)
 - 2. Bright red (7)
 - 3. Long piece of wood (5)
 - 4. Unsafe, unsteady (7)
 - 5. Despondency (5)
 - 6. Valuable possession (5)
 - 9. Symbolise (9)
 - 14. A long time ago (colloq) (4,3)
 - 15. Varied (7)
 - 16. Bird with three species in New Zealand, one of which appears on a bank note (7)
 - 19. Fabric (5)
 - 20. Pale with shock or fear (5)
 - 21. ___ Park, most southerly of NZ's 52 racetracks (5)

SUDOKU PUZZLES thepuzzlecompany.co.nz
EASY #67E Use logic and process of elimination to fill in the blank cells using the numbers 1 through 9. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and 3x3 block. Puzzle solution page 23.



APRIL TRIVIA QUIZ

It's April already and daylight saving has kicked in for winter. At least the weather is gorgeous at the moment. Enjoy it while we can. Answers below.

1. "It was a bright cold day in April, and the clocks were striking thirteen", is a quote from which book?
2. What is April's birthstone?
3. April's birth flower is often listed as Bellis perennis – this is the Latin name of which flower?
4. What happened in the North Atlantic on April 14, 1912?
5. What famous car did Ford Motor Co unveil in April of 1964?
6. What happened in the Soviet Union on April 26, 1986?
7. What significant event in world history occurred on April 6, 1917?
8. Argentinian troops invaded what British colony on April 2, 1982?
9. Who was elected president of South Africa in April of 1994?
10. What was the name of the ship on which, on April 28, 1789, the crew committed mutiny against Captain William Bligh?
11. Which fast food outlet opened its doors for the first time on April 15, 1955?
12. Which famous painter and sculpture was born in April 1452?
13. April's full moon is traditionally known as what?
14. After a 1500-year break, what took place on April 6, 1896?
15. Which classic board game is honoured on April 13?
16. What spaceship was launched on April 11, 1970?
17. How many jellybeans do Americans consume each Easter?

APRIL TRIVIA QUIZ ANSWERS:
 1. Nineteen Eighty-Four (by George Orwell). 2. Diamond. 3. Daisy. 4. The sinking of the Titanic. 5. The Mustang. 6. The Chernobyl nuclear explosion. 7. The US entered the First World War in Europe. 8. The Falkland Islands. 9. Nelson Mandela. 10. The Bounty. 11. McDonald's. 12. Leonardo Da Vinci. 13. The Pink Moon. 14. The first Olympics of the modern era. 15. Scrabble. 16. Apollo. 17. 16 million.



Ōtaki River entrance tides
April 10 - May 10

<https://tides4fishing.com/nz/wellington/otaki-river-entrance>

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

	HIGH	LOW	HIGH	LOW	HIGH
WED 10 APR	-	04:15	10:20	16:39	22:48
THU 11 APR	-	04:59	11:04	17:23	23:31
FRI 12 APR	-	05:45	11:50	18:07	-
SAT 13 APR	00:16	06:32	12:37	18:53	-
SUN 14 APR	01:04	07:24	13:29	19:43	-
MON 15 APR	01:59	08:24	14:29	20:42	-
TUE 16 APR	03:07	09:34	15:40	21:55	-
WED 17 APR	04:26	10:49	16:57	23:14	-
THU 18 APR	05:38	11:55	18:06	-	-
FRI 19 APR	-	00:21	06:34	12:48	18:59
SAT 20 APR	-	01:11	07:18	13:31	19:41
SUN 21 APR	-	01:52	07:55	14:09	20:17
MON 22 APR	-	02:27	08:29	14:44	20:51
TUE 23 APR	-	03:00	09:01	15:17	21:23
WED 24 APR	-	03:32	09:32	15:50	21:54
THU 25 APR	-	04:04	10:05	16:23	22:26
FRI 26 APR	-	04:38	10:38	16:57	23:00
SAT 27 APR	-	05:14	11:15	17:35	23:37
SUN 28 APR	-	05:55	11:57	18:16	-
MON 29 APR	00:20	18:43	12:46	19:04	-
TUE 30 APR	01:12	07:40	13:46	20:01	-
WED 1 MAY	02:17	08:47	14:55	21:08	-
THU 2 MAY	03:30	09:58	16:08	22:22	-
FRI 3 MAY	04:43	11:06	17:19	23:33	-
SAT 4 MAY	05:47	12:09	18:22	-	-
SUN 5 MAY	-	00:35	06:44	13:05	19:18
MON 6 MAY	-	01:30	07:35	13:56	20:09
TUE 7 MAY	-	02:20	08:24	14:44	20:56
WED 8 MAY	-	03:08	09:11	15:31	21:42
THU 9 MAY	-	03:54	09:57	16:16	22:26
FRI 10 MAY	-	04:40	10:44	17:01	23:11

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 to register for the event.

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ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
 first publication

Notice is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting of the Association will be held in the clubrooms, Raukawa Street, Ōtaki on **Sunday May 19, 2024, at 10am.**

Nomination forms for Executive and Committee are available from the office and bar.

Nominations will close on May 10, 2024 at 5pm.

Notices of motion to be in the hand of the Secretary by May 10, 2024.

Sheryll Ridley, Secretary/Manager

PO Box 84, Ōtaki • 06 364 6221 • fax 06 364 6223
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Retail strategy first task for association

By Ian Carson

The first priority for a new Ōtaki-Te Horo business association will be to implement a retail strategy, which has been a long time coming.

In late 2022, Elevate Ōtaki received the strategy it had commissioned from First Retail Group. It was aimed at supporting continuity and growth in Ōtaki's retail sector in the short term, immediately after the opening of the expressway, and in the longer term, too. The business association will use funding from Elevate Ōtaki as Elevate winds up its activities.

More than two years ago, Elevate saw the need for a strategy to support retail businesses, particularly – but not solely – in the former main highway shops. The strategy was created by First Retail after analysing customer needs and trends, and consulting with local businesses. Recommendations included a range of low-cost initiatives and collaboration opportunities that could be implemented easily to build resilience and performance.

After the expressway opened, Ōtaki saw encouraging increases in local and regional trade. Implementing the retail strategy would have been a

bonus for retailers.

However, after the local body elections in 2022, the Ōtaki Community Board asked questions of Kāpiti Coast District Council (a co-funder of Elevate along with Waka Kotahi) about Elevate's transparency and accountability. It took more than a year for those issues to be resolved.

"The council could find no basis for any allegations, but it meant Elevate could not implement the strategy, nor spend any of its residual funds, before its tenure was to expire," Elevate chair Adrian Gregory says.

First Retail director Chris Wilkinson says now, however, economic challenges have intensified as inflation bites into consumer spending, particularly in discretionary retail categories.

"There is increasing urgency in ensuring businesses and the [old highway] precinct are as best they can be in what is a challenging marketplace," he says.

During the past 12 months, the shopping area has seen some encouraging property investment by local retailers and new traders establishing to capitalise on the area's advantages and potential.

"There is long-term confidence,

but while some new businesses have opened, others have closed, leading to concerns about vacancies and reduced operating hours for anchor brands," Chris says. "Maintaining a diverse mix of retailers is crucial for Ōtaki's economic viability, especially with upcoming infrastructure works that might impact accessibility and customer experience."

He says the effects of construction work on nearby areas such as Waikanae highlight the importance of implementing a comprehensive impact mitigation strategy for Ōtaki to support traders during revocation works.

"The broader recommendations and timetable remain relevant, but have increased priority now as businesses head into a traditionally quieter winter period, which will likely be exacerbated by current economic headwinds."

First Retail Group came well qualified to draft the strategy. It specialises in commercial strategies for consumer-facing sectors and destinations, particularly in town and city centres changing due to factors such as consumer demand, competition, and infrastructure projects.



APRIL EXHIBITION: Potter Rebecca Neal with some of her artworks in the April exhibition at the Ōtaki Pottery Club's Tote Modern Gallery at the Ōtaki racecourse. Rebecca is joined in the exhibition by other potters in a collective known as Unearth Your Local Potter (UYLP). They include Paula Archibald, Pamella Annshouth, Jennifer Turnbull, Jenny Shearer, James Carter, Aimée McLeod, Michelle Retimana, and Judy and Mike Page.

Photo Ōtaki Today

McGrath plays at Ōhau

Folk singer and yarn spinner Adam McGrath has an acoustic solo concert on Friday, April 19, at the Ōhau Hall.

Described by RNZ as a "national treasure" and the *Herald* as "New Zealand's toughest minded songwriter", Adam is more widely known as lead singer and songwriter with roots-country band The Eastern.

He spends eight months a year on the road between New Zealand, Australia, Europe and parts beyond. With The Eastern and solo, he has shared stages with and opened for Fleetwood Mac, Steve Earle, Old Crow Medicine Show, Paul Kelly, Jimmy Barnes and many more.

His song, *Hope and Wire*, was the inspiration behind Gaylene Preston's TV series of the same name and he is known for his service orientated approach to music.

■ Tickets through adammcgrath.net or bookings to ohaufolk@gmail.com
Admission \$25. Doors open 7pm, Ōhau Hall, 14 Muhunua West Rd, Ōhau.



Hall fundraising continues apace

The Te Horo Hall committee is into its second month of intense fundraising to save and upgrade the local taonga.

About \$30,000 has already been raised through the Roadrai\$e campaign. Along with past fundraising, saving and income, almost \$150,000 is in the kitty – 45 percent of the way towards possible earthquake strengthening later this year.

"The community response continues to amaze us," says committee chair Andrew Annakin. "We've had a great turnout to our events and while we are all about raising money, people are having so much fun along the way, which was very much our intention."

As well as money raised at events and an increasing number of private donations, Te Horo Hall has received strong support from local businesses who have contributed prizes for events and food for barbecues, as well



as support for a raffle drawn in June.

"This has made our events even more appealing and it's great to see local businesses getting in behind us and actively supporting this worthwhile cause," Andrew says.

Kelly and Co Realty has also pledged \$20,000 as a contribution from sales over the next few months. It is the largest sponsorship commitment for the hall so far.

Andrew says the hall committee was grateful for the initial publicity support of Property Brokers Ōtaki, which enabled the development of professional signage as well as advertising and other promotional material to launch and maintain the Roadrai\$e campaign.

Mayor Janet Holborow has personally endorsed the committee's efforts to save the hall.

At a recent Waikanae Community Board meeting the hall committee said it would be applying for a substantial "once in the generation" grant for the hall.

The Roadrai\$e campaign continues apace with upcoming events including Tour de Te Horo cycle events and a Rock the Night Away dance spectacular with Greg Christiansen.

Then there's a unique series of walks supported by seven Te Horo farmers who are giving unprecedented access across their land. Hall committee Roadrai\$e champion Grant Robertson says farmers were instant and unanimous in their support when approached by walk organisers. There's a different walk every Sunday until May 5.

■ For more information about events, see tehorohall.org.nz

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ŌTAKI TODAY

TAKĀRO/Sport

Callan, Jackie win big at tennis champs



The third annual Ōtaki Sports Club senior tennis club championship finals on the weekend of April 6-7 saw Callan Nikora take home all three men's titles and Jackie Gould win two of the three women's titles.

Callan beat Tom Caines in the men's singles. Callan and Pātaka Moore took out the men's doubles in a tight three-setter against Tom Caines and Craig Eves at the club's Haruātai Park courts.

Their victory gave them their third men's doubles title in as many years.

In the mixed doubles, Callan Nikora and Emma Whiterod took home the Whiterod Whānau mixed doubles trophy with a straight-sets win over Craig Eves and

Leonie Campbell.

Jackie Gould and Hannah Grimmert won the women's doubles title against Leonie Campbell and Jodie Lawson. Jackie then beat Hannah in the women's singles.

In the plate events: Terri Grimmert beat Jessica Wilkinson in the women's singles; Isaac Cant and Travis Robertson beat Andrew Martin and Anthony Bazalo in the men's doubles; Meredith Evans and Mike Lean won the mixed doubles by default. Terri Grimmert and Jo Nikora won the women's doubles by default.

There was no result in the men's singles plate.

Club captain Adam Shelton said since the inaugural event in 2022 the tournament had become a cornerstone event of the local tennis season, and this year had the largest number of entries yet across the five events.

LEFT: Callan Nikora and Emma Whiterod on their way to victory in the Ōtaki Sports Club 2024 mixed doubles tennis final at the Haruātai Park courts.

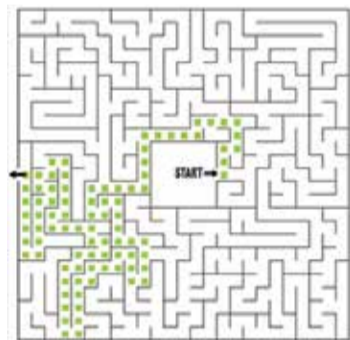
Two swimmers to Gold Coast

Ōtaki Titans club swimmers Kokoro Frost and Phoebe Nelson have been selected for teams in the Oceania Swimming Championships on the Gold Coast, Australia.

The championships from April 21-24 are held every two years.

Although in the same club and both training under swim coach Jon Winter, they will be in different national teams – Kokoro will swim for Samoa and Phoebe for New Zealand.

SNAKE WORD MAKER ANSWERS from page 20: 5-letter words: 1. kanes 2. skean 3. sneak. 4-letter words: 4. kaes 5. kane 6. keas 7. kens 8. sake 9. sank 10. anes 11. naes 12. sane. 3-letter words: 13. ask 14. kae 15. kas 16. kea 17. ken 18. ska 19. ane 20. ens 21. nae 22. sae 23. san 24. sea 25. sen. 2-letter words: 26. ae 27. an 28. as 29. en 31. es 32. na 33. ne.



CROSSWORD #NZ1924D ACROSS: 7/8. Nicola Willis, 10. Arrange, 11. Kiore, 12. Ever, 13. Crate, 17. Welsh, 18. Pine, 22. Laser, 23. Nest egg, 24. Tremor, 25. Bonsai. **DOWN:** 1. On paper, 2. Scarlet, 3. Plank, 4. Rickety, 5. Gloom, 6. Asset, 9. Represent, 14. Year dot, 15. Diverse, 16. Penguin, 19. Cloth, 20. Ashen, 21. Ascot.

SUDOKU SOLUTION #67E

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

'No end date' for Crombie memorial golf

The Kevin Crombie Memorial golf tournament, which was to run for only four years, will keep going for the foreseeable future.

Katie Agar of Agar Accounting, which sponsors the charity tournament along with Tall Poppy Real Estate, says it will carry on as long as there continues to be support.

"It's a great tournament that was over-subscribed with teams again this year," Katie says. "It's become amazingly popular – we don't see any end date for it."

Jayden Matthews of Tall Poppy echoed Katie's sentiments. "People have a lot of fun and it's for a great cause," he says. "We'll keep supporting it as long as people want it to continue."

This year's tournament – the sixth – was on Friday, March 15, at the Ōtaki Golf Club. Money raised from local businesses sponsoring holes, entry fees and donations on the day resulted in a donation of more than \$3000 to the local St John ambulance service, and \$3000 to the Ōtaki Golf Club.

More than \$33,000 has been raised since the tournament began, in honour of Kevin Crombie, who was a partner in what was Agar Crombie Accounting. Known for his generosity, he was at one time both chair and treasurer of the local St John committee. He died suddenly at Ōtaki Golf Club on March 15, 2015.



WINNERS: Back row from left, Jayden Matthews (sponsoring with Tall Poppy Real Estate and part of the winning men's team), Regan McMurchie and Tiakina Manga with Ōtaki Golf Club president Graeme Baumgart; winning women's team Linda Watkins, Carol Skipworth and Coline Diver with Katie Agar of sponsors Agar Accounting. *Photo Ōtaki Today*



AIRJOCKEY: Craig Grylls flew into the Te Horo Aerodrome with his Mustang aeroplane on Monday, April 1, to ride at Ōtaki-Māori Racing Club's Easter meeting. The Matamata jockey had seven races, picking up a first, second and third. He flew back to Matamata the same day, taking about an hour and a quarter for each leg of the trip flying at 150 knots.

Photo courtesy of Rob Kofoed, Te Horo Aerodrome



Schools in padder tennis comp

Students from 10 local schools, including Year 7 and 8s from Ōtaki College, participated in an inter-school padder tennis tournament at the Ōtaki Beach courts on March 21.

Organised by Padder Tennis New Zealand, the tournament was the first in what Ōtaki-based PTNZ director Paul Grubi says will be many.

"We've brought the Padder Tennis in Schools programme to Ōtaki and it's taken off," Paul says. "We now have hundreds of kids excited about the sport, which can lead on to them playing tennis as they become more skilled."

A Kāpiti regional padder tennis festival is being planned for March 2025 – an application is being made for support with KCDC's Major Events Fund.

Padder tennis has become a major user of the newly resurfaced beach courts.



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