

# ŌTAKI TODAY

otakitoday.com

TIHEMA/DECEMBER 2024

Ngā Kōrero o Ōtaki



Te Rā Whakapūmau p3



Barry's business burns p6

SUPPLEMENT INSIDE

## ŌTAKI STREET SCENE

## Moy/Sue residents celebrate

By Ian Carson

**The residents of Moy Place and Sue Avenue are celebrating a council decision that blocks access to a proposed new subdivision through their streets.**

However, the decision by a narrow 6-5 vote of Kāpiti Coast councillors on November 28 might still be subject to a judicial review brought by the developers, Wakefield Holdings.

Undeterred, a resident group spokesperson, Lyall Payne, hails the vote as “a victory for common sense and democratic process”. He believes there’s no case for a judicial review.

“Why would you go to court over a democratic outcome, which is also a popular community decision?” Lyall says. “It’s not as if they don’t have a viable and community-preferred option.”

That option is to have access via old State Highway 1, where the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) said construction traffic should be routed while the subdivision is being built.

The council vote was whether to approve a change of status for a parcel of land at the end of Moy Place from a Local Purpose Reserve (Road)

to a legal road. That would allow vehicle traffic to permanently access the Moy Estate subdivision via Moy Place. The agenda noted that was the recommendation of council staff.

The agenda also noted that to not change the status had potential for a judicial review, and that the developer “could walk away from developing land/building new houses (as a new consent would likely need to be progressed via the EPA)”

The two Ōtaki-based councillors, Rob Kofoed and Shelly Warwick, voted against the status change, as did deputy mayor Lawrence Kirby and councillors Nigel Wilson, Jocelyn Prvanov and Glen Cooper. Voting for the change were mayor Janet Holborow and councillors Martin Halliday, Sophie Handford, Liz Koh and Kathy Spiers.

Liz Koh told *Ōtaki Today* she understood the residents’ concerns about the access, but was worried

*continues page 6*



President of the Czech Republic Petr Pavel and his wife, Eva Pavlová, in front of Mirek Smíšek’s kilns at Te Horo during a visit on December 4.  
*Photo Ōtaki Today*

## Czech president visits kilns

By Ian Carson

**Te Horo potter Mirek Smíšek is held in such high regard by his native Czech people that his historic kilns warranted a visit by the Czech president.**

Petr Pavel and his wife, Eva Pavlová, visited the Kilns at Te Horo on December 4. It was a much less formal affair than the meeting earlier in the day with Governor-General Dame Cindy Kiro in Wellington, where the president received a pounamu pendant he

proudly wore at Te Horo.

Petr Pavel told *Ōtaki Today* that Mirek, who is the only Czech to have received an OBE, was “an important person” in Czech history.

Despite constant drizzle, a strong Czech media presence and a big contingent of security personnel, the European glamour couple enjoyed a relaxed chat with the few invited locals and had a casual cup of tea as they were shown around.

The president was invited to make a clay pot on a wheel Mirek had made himself, but preferred

to see Eva try her hand, which she gladly did while Petr took photos on his cellphone. The result impressed the potters present.

The president – a retired army general – was in New Zealand as part of a trade and diplomatic delegation.

Mirek Smíšek was born in Czechoslovakia in 1925 and spent most of the Second World War in labour camps for his anti-Nazi resistance stance. He came to New Zealand in 1951, eventually settling at Te Horo. He died in 2013.

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WHAT'S ON

See also the Ōtaki Street Scene supplement in this issue.

**RANGIĀTEA CHURCH** Commemoration of Anglican bishop and missionary Octavius Hadfield, December 11, 7pm. Great-great grandson David Hadfield will speak about Octavius's life, followed by a response and acknowledgment of his ministry by Rangiatea. Refreshments provided.

**POOL PARTY** Ōtaki VibeZ is putting on an end-of-year party at Ōtaki Pool, 1pm-4pm, Saturday, December 14. Free entry for sausage sizzle, DJ, ice-cream and prizes.

**CHRISTMAS WONDERLAND** Ōtaki College Hall, Mill Road. December 20-23, 6-8.30pm, Entry by koha. A Christmas delight for all ages. Brought to you by the Ōtaki Promotions Group.

**FESTIVAL OF POTS AND GARDEN ART 2025** Anam Cara Gardens, Rangiuu Rd, Ōtaki. January 16-20, coinciding with Wellington Anniversary weekend.

**ŌTAKI KITE FESTIVAL** Ōtaki Beach. March 8-9. [otakipromogroup.nz/kite-festival](http://otakipromogroup.nz/kite-festival)

**MĀORILAND FILM FESTIVAL** Main St, Ōtaki. March 26-30. [mff.maorilandfilm.co.nz/about/](http://mff.maorilandfilm.co.nz/about/)

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

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

**ŌTAKI MUSEUM** The exhibition "From pā and kāinga to baches and seaside villas" tells the stories of the people and changing character of Ōtaki Beach. Visitors can also play the old theatre pianola while at the museum. The Anne Thorpe Reading Room is open at the same times as the museum. Museum open 10am-2pm Thursday to Saturday, except public holidays. 49 Main St. 06 364-6886.

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

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

**TOI MAHARA** Mahara Place, Waikanae. *Current exhibitions:* Toi MAHARA Young Artists Exhibition; Faces & Flowers: Patricia France and Dinah Hawken; Kei 'ea te Kōmako e kō?; and Selections from the Field Collection' *Event:* Origami Christmas Decoration Drop-In, Saturday 21 December, 10am-2pm. All welcome. *Upcoming Exhibitions:* Sue Soo, a tribute show; and A story of a lake through time, Gerda Leenards from 13 December. See [toimahara.nz](http://toimahara.nz)

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

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

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

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

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

**ŌTAKI STROKE SUPPORT GROUP & WELLNESS CENTRE** Meets for Sit and Be Fit classes, 10am Friday mornings at Senior Citizens' Hall, Rangitira Street. All welcome.

**ŌTAKI LIBRARY – ALL SESSIONS FREE:** JP service every Monday 10.30am-12.30pm; Age Concern every 2nd Thursday 10am-noon; Greypower 1st & 3rd Thursday 10.30am-1.30pm.

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

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

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

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

# Policy options eyed as 2025 draws near

**The 2024 year draws to a close with no clear indication of whether National and Labour are preparing for an all-out ideological political contest or a tepid scrap for middle ground voters in 2026.**

Shaping the prospective contest between the two main parties are the following policy options each could choose, to set up a clear delineation of what each stands for and provide voters with a choice of governance direction for the latter part of the decade.

From the National perspective, among policy options open to it under the umbrella of its traditional philosophies are: A multi-million dollar sale of state-owned assets to cut the nation's operating budget deficit; establishing a holding company to own and direct the state's shareholdings in income generating activities; the use of public-private partnerships or simple leasing arrangements for infrastructure such as hospitals and schools; an increase in the age of entitlement to superannuation; a rise in minimum KiwiSaver contributions from contributors and employers; a sale of, or opening of private shareholding in, Kiwi Bank; and membership of Aukus.

Labour is likely to vehemently oppose such moves, preferring to maintain its approach that public ownership of what it terms strategic assets is preferable. Open to it under Labour traditional philosophies remain argument that the country can afford more debt to increase social programmes; introduction of a capital gains or wealth tax; a capital injection into Kiwi Bank to give it better scope for influence in the market; opposition to membership of Aukus.

It is also likely to unwind current government initiatives aimed, in its words, at offering more freedom for negotiating employer-employee relationships.

National would certainly have support from its coalition partners for the policy options outlined as available to it. Labour, too, could count on the Greens and Te Pati Maori to back these possible policy offerings.

The two main parties are also likely to be split in their approach to Māori issues. Whether Labour would opt to reverse the coalition's current gutting of Māori-preference clauses in legislation might well be a caucus talking point over the next two years.

A key question that National must resolve in coming months is the extent to which it wants the 2026 election fought on strong ideological grounds. It has the initiative and can use some of these options to boost its case for being a strong economic manager, doing the right thing to get our ailing economy in better shape. Labour on the other hand can argue its policy options from a base of long-standing Kiwi inclination to support state ownership of public services, and the bricks and mortar that come with them.

Both parties end the year with their leaderships secure but subject to a good deal of critical scrutiny. Prime Minister Christopher Luxon is marked down for what critics term "corporate gobbledegook" in his speech making. His political instincts are also reckoned to be less than the position requires.

A flip side is that his management of the coalition has been carried through with a minimum of public disruption. Kudos for this

might go to National's chief whip, Coromandel MP and former minister Scott Simpson, who throughout his career in the National Party has been known for his canny political instincts. But the prime minister is a beneficiary and can justifiably claim credit for the overall stability of governance under his watch.

While ministers Christopher Bishop and Simeon Brown eye each other carefully when considering future leadership prospects, neither can realistically be counted as early prospective challengers for the top position.

On the other side, Labour's Chris Hipkins has potential challengers abounding in his team. Long-serving MP and former minister David Parker is an unlikely potential choice for leader. But his championing of a capital gains tax and back-room manoeuvrings suggest his future influence will be significant to whether the current Labour leader holds on until 2026. Unseated MP Michael Wood is working his trade union base to advantageous effect in ensuring he remains as a Labour councillor influential in the party's activities. And Carmel Seppeloni has shown herself to be a trusted pair of hands as a minister with a potential for leadership.

The next 12 months will determine whether policies of ideology will prove marked points of difference in the '26 election. Austerity to clean up the economy or indulgence in social spending to ease household financial burdens should by this time next year no longer be the most pressing issue between the two main parties.

In the meantime, thank you to readers for your time and comments, happy Christmas, and every good wish for the New Year.

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



BRUCE KOHN

## CARTOON OF THE MONTH

By Jared Carson



WOW: Waitohu School's Fireworks Extravaganza does it again.

## ŌTAKI TODAY *Ngā Kōrero o Ōtaki*

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**EDITOR: Ian Carson.**  
For editorial enquiries or news tips, please contact Ian at 027 2411 090, or email [ian@idmedia.co.nz](mailto:ian@idmedia.co.nz)

**GENERAL MANAGER: Debbi Carson.**  
For advertising enquiries, call Debbi on 027 285 4720, or email [debbi@idmedia.co.nz](mailto:debbi@idmedia.co.nz)

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**CONTRIBUTORS:** SIMON BLACK (Ōtaki Community) • CAM BUTLER (Cam's Corner) • TIM COSTLEY (The Electorate) • DAVID LEDSON / NICKY TREADWELL (History) • FRASER CARSON (Just a Thought) • JARED CARSON (Cartoons) • CADE CARSON (Kids' puzzle) • STEVE HUMPHRIES (Health-science) • KATH IRVINE (Edible Backyards) • BRUCE KOHN (Politics) • MICHAEL MOORE (Te Horo)

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TE RĀ WHAKAPŪMAU: It was graduation day on Friday, December 6, as hundreds of people gathered at Ngā Purapura to receive their diplomas and degrees from Te Wānanga o Raukawa. Among them were: above left, Ariana Wakefield (Ngāti Raukawa, Kai Tahu, Ngāti Kahungunu) and daughter (green dress) Hina, with Paula Rowe (Ngāti Wehiwehi, Ngati Raukawa, Ngiti Tukorehe) and daughter Devon; top, Sasha Rees (Naniopoto, Te Aitanga Ahaouiti) and Alize Apera-Ngaha (Ngāti Rārua, Ngāti Mahuta); and above from left, Upokoina Rongokea-Papuni (Ngāpuhi), Wirangi Parata (Whakarongotai), Nikki Mihaere (Ngāti Kahungunu) and Rāwiri Newell (Ngati Tūwharetoa).

**IN BRIEF**

**Michael new board chair**  
Michael Moore has been appointed the new chair of the Waikanae Community Board. He assumed the position at the November board meeting after Richard Mansell stepped down as chair. Richard is still a board member.

**Plenty for foodbank**  
The recent appeal by the Friends of the Ōtaki Foodbank resulted in more than 180 bags of food and other items collected. This year the Ōtaki Scouts helped the Friends volunteers with the collection. The Foodbank will close on December 24 and reopen on January 20.

**Fletcher joins NZ sevens**  
Former Rāhui rugby player Fletcher Carpenter joined the NZ Sevens squad for the Cape Town tournament in South Africa on December 7-8. The tournament is part of the Sevens World Series.

**Grant helps Tū Roa**  
Tū Roa te Kōhanga Reo has recently received a \$120,732 Lottery grant to help it complete the final stage of a big restoration project on its historic building and surrounding natural spaces. The two-year project aims to preserve the wairua of the kōhanga while meeting the growing demand for kohanga reo services in Ōtaki.



**Meri Kirihimete from our whānau to yours.**

**Best wishes for the holiday season.**



**Brendon Heenan**  
027 479 2772  
brendon.heenan@tallpoppy.co.nz

**Jayden Matthews**  
021 053 7533  
jayden.matthews@tallpoppy.co.nz





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 <p><b>A TASTE OF VIETNAM</b> 15 Sept 2025 <b>14 DAYS</b></p>	 <p><b>AROUND JAPAN CRUISE</b> 12 Oct 2025 <b>19 DAYS</b></p>	 <p><b>ANCIENT CHINA &amp; JAPAN</b> 20 Oct 2025 <b>20 DAYS</b></p>
 <p><b>SOUTHERN INDIA (WOMEN'S ONLY)</b> 7 Nov 2025 <b>16 DAYS</b></p>	 <p><b>SE ASIA XMAS CRUISE WITH SEABOURN</b> 20 Dec 2025 <b>18 DAYS</b></p>	 <p><b>TURKISH DELIGHT</b> May 2026 <b>15 DAYS</b></p>
 <p><b>CROATIA &amp; DALMATION</b> May 2026 <b>14 DAYS</b></p>	 <p><b>ENGLAND &amp; SCOTLAND</b> June 2026 <b>17 DAYS</b></p>	 <p><b>EAST AFRICA</b> Sept 2026 <b>16 DAYS</b></p>

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- Paraparaumu College Prizegiving
- Mary Potter Hospice
- Te Omanga Hospice
- Kāpiti Probus Club

# Rotary winds up after 60 years

Members of the Ōtaki chapter of the Rotary Club of Mana Tangata gathered at the Rotary Hall on Thursday, December 5, for a Christmas dinner tinged with sadness – it was the last time the members would meet.

Although they have been serving Ōtaki for 60 years, membership has dwindled in recent times, resulting in the decision to wind up. The age of most members has also prohibited involvement in activities the club has traditionally undertaken.

“It has come to a time in our 60th year when we have reluctantly decided that Rotary in Ōtaki is no longer sustainable and we have to cease our long association with Ōtaki under the banner of Rotary, and the projects that we have supported to the benefit of our community,” president Derek Chishold said.

Known previously as the Rotary Club of Ōtaki, the club became Mana Tangata in January 2022.

While sad to be meeting for the last time, the evening was an opportunity for club members to celebrate their many achievements.

Among them were many local projects that would be impossible today, largely because of health and safety requirements, and the huge costs. In the early days of Rotary, members “just got on with it”.

Reminiscences at the final dinner included reference to some of the projects.

One was the laying of the footpath from town to the beach along Tasman Road. It was done with working bees at weekends, with locals, borough councillors and Rotary members setting to with wheelbarrows and shovels.

A “Peterloo” was installed by Rotary near the Ōtaki River bridge, but it had no water supply. Rotary members were delighted when almost overnight, a pipe had been connected quietly and unofficially to the water mains.

Ōtaki Rotary was a major contributor to the project to roof the new swimming pool at Haruātai Park. The steel frames were originally destined for the ill-fated BNZ building in Willis Street, Wellington.

Pohutukawa trees along Anzac were planted by Rotary.

Tasked with raising \$6000 by Rotary International for its polio eradication work, the local club offered labour to demolish the old Keri’s Restaurant building on the corner of the highway and Arthur Street, where Subway is now. There was much discussion about how this money could be raised when the workers revealed brick walls beneath the timber. The bricks were subsequently sold for \$1 each and the target achieved.

Mana Tangata president Adrian Gregory says the Ōtaki Rotary name continues to live on through the Nikau Trust, which has an annual Rotary Club of Ōtaki grant. It uses the interest from the sale of the Rotary Hall to benefit local youth and non-profit organisations.

The Douglas Walker Memorial Education Fund also remains with the Nikau Trust for Ōtaki student bursaries.



**KOHA FOR GOOD:** When brothers Kaycee (above right) and Arlo Jago decided to have a clean-out of things they didn’t want any more, they did what a lot of kids do – they had their own garage sale. But they went a step further by using some of their koha takings to give to good causes. After a few days outside their home on Moana Street, Kaycee, 11, and Arlo, 8, had sold most of their table of items. They ended up using \$52 to give Women’s Refuge some books from Books & Co, and got Christmas kai from New World Ōtaki to go to the Ōtaki Foodbank. *Photo Ōtaki Today*

Meri Kirihimete



**Thank you Ōtaki - we are incredibly grateful for another epic year filled with your support. Wishing you and your whānau much love for the holiday season!**



**Kelly & Co**  
REALTY

LETTERS

**Column disrespectful of Prebble, tribunal and government**

I read Bruce Kohn's comments ("Politics", November 2024) on the appointment of Richard Prebble to the Waitangi Tribunal with increasing concern. I knew Richard Prebble professionally during 1984-1990 when he served as a senior minister in the Labour government. I remember him as a very competent and hard-working minister, but do not recall him showing any particular interest in Maori Affairs. However, if as Bruce writes Mr Prebble "has strong personal connections among Māori", he does seem to be well-qualified for appointment to the tribunal. My concern is that Bruce welcomes that appointment not so much because of Mr Prebble's qualifications, but for the role Bruce sees him playing on the tribunal "of a tough-minded political policeman". I'm not sure exactly what that expression is intended to mean, but it sounds to me like a cross between a stooge and a snitch. To say the least, that is disrespectful of Mr Prebble, the tribunal and the government. Bruce's approving reference to Donald Trump's 'seeking to have a Republican slant reflected on the Supreme court' is particularly alarming. It is well-known that

some judicial decisions, particularly from our higher courts, have not always been welcomed by the government of the day. Fortunately, in this country we have very clear legislation governing the appointment of judges that would prevent the appointment of a political policeman, tough-minded or otherwise.

**Roger Barker, Ōtaki**  
**No laws broken**

I am writing this email about the complaint of Shelly Warwick in your paper. I must state that Shelly was involved in the community a long time before becoming a councillor. The article in the paper looks like "let's bash the councillor", when she actually does more for the community than others. From the article details there were no laws broken, Shelly was well within her rights to celebrate her birthday with family and friends, which is on Guy Fawkes Day. I don't think anyone would appreciate a neighbour coming up to their gate ranting and raving and pointing a finger in your face. This article is not a true reflection of Shelly or her family.

**Don Watson Jr, Ōtaki**

**Go back to study journalism**

Regarding your article (November edition) about Shelly Warwick and the fireworks dispute. What a pathetic article, obviously targeting a particular person which is extremely poor journalism and a bullying tactic. Did you talk to any other people in the area who were letting off fireworks? Or any other stock owners on what they thought? A person doing a legal activity on their own property while enjoying their birthday is not anyone else's business. Animal owners know that this is the time of the year when fireworks are going off and should make provisions for their animals like I as a responsible animal owner do. Maybe you should go back and study journalism.

**Maggie Braddock, Ōtaki**

**Manakau bridge repairs**

**Motorists are in for more traffic delays on State Highway 1 north of Ōtaki as Waka Kotahi begins critical repair work on the rail overbridge near Manakau.**

Work is due to start on Boxing Day (Thursday, December 26) and will continue through until mid-March.

Waka Kotahi Wellington alliance manager Roxanne Hilliard says the Manakau North rail bridge needs to be repaired soon.

"While the overbridge is safe to drive over and will remain so while it is being fixed, it does carry, on average, 20,000 vehicles daily and is a vital infrastructure link. It must be kept in a state of good repair."

She says the overbridge needs concrete repairs, some of which can be done only when no trains are running during the holiday break. The rest of the repairs can be completed when the trains return to service.

"It is critical we get in and get this job done as quickly as possible."

The repairs are significant and will be completed in stages.

"The bridge will have defective concrete removed, reinforcement bars treated, and concrete reinstated. The result will be a stronger, safer bridge," Roxanne says.

Traffic management will be in place 24/7 with a 30km/h temporary speed limit.

**Residents celebrate**

from front page

that a judicial review could cost ratepayers dearly. She said advice from KCDC chief executive Darren Edwards was that there was a high risk a review would succeed in favour of the developer and that the council would have to pay "hundreds of thousands of dollars" in legal fees and a possible finding for the developer's costs.

"I take a logical and pragmatic view," she said. "My perspective is from all the interested stakeholders in this decision. I feel really sorry for the residents, but they're not the only stakeholders in this."

She said employment during the subdivision build had to be considered, and council staff had advised that access

from old State Highway 1 could not be consented because it was considered unsafe for users of the highway.

"There's also been a robust consenting process with the EPA where they've looked at safety issues and decided that was fine," Liz said. "The other stakeholders are the 137 households that are waiting to have a house to live in."

"It's not just about a few people in Moy Place who don't want to have their peace and quiet disturbed."

Liz said she brought all the stakeholder groups into her decision.

"All we're doing in the meantime is causing massive delays and costs for probably no change in the outcome."

**LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**

*Ōtaki Today* welcomes letters to the editor. Write or email including your full name, address and contact phone number. Please keep the word count to a maximum of 200 words. Anonymous letters will not be published. Note the editor reserves the right to reject or edit any letter. Please write to *Ōtaki Today*, 13 Te Manuao Rd, Ōtaki, or email [ian@idmedia.co.nz](mailto:ian@idmedia.co.nz)

**OPINION:** The views and opinions of our contributors are not necessarily those of *Ōtaki Today*.

**Merry Christmas**

Happy Holidays

from all of us at Futurisk to all of you

<b>Rex Duckett</b> rex.duckett@futurisk.co.nz 027 444 2733	<b>Monique Duckett</b> monique.duckett@futurisk.co.nz 0800 367 467 (ext 11)
<b>Becky Spiller</b> becky.spiller@futurisk.co.nz info@futurisk.co.nz 0800 367 467 (ext 2)	<b>Marzena Pacan</b> reception@futurisk.co.nz 0800 367 467 (ext 5)

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**MERRY Christmas**

From Travis Robertson

Thank you for your support through the year. Have a lovely Christmas break and see you all in the new year. All the best wishes for a happy and prosperous 2025.

**Travis Robertson**  
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## Pā Reo wins design award

**The embodiment of Māoritanga and kaitiakitanga has won the Pā Reo campus at Te Wānanga o Raukawa the education section of the 2024 Te Kāhui Whaihanga Institute of Architects awards.**

Pā Reo was designed by Tennent Brown Architects.

As a suite of four living buildings, Pā Reo “speaks beautifully of collaboration between client and architect”, the institute said.

“The whare live and breathe Māoritanga – hikoia te kōrero (walk the talk). With no need for applied cultural narrative, Pā Reo expresses kaitiakitanga in an elegant, functional, quiet way.”

The institute said the buildings were crisply put together . . . “the technical skill and exhaustive research bring the vision of a committed client group to an outcome that can be a kāpehu whetū (star compass) for us all as we wrestle to bring architecture and building into line with respect for Papatūānuku.

“It is heartening to experience a warm, comfortable, open building that feels good to be in and restores ecological wellness to its immediate environment.”

Ewan Brown, who led the Pā Reo project on-site, told Waatea News the campus was now aiming for Living Building Challenge certification, which would place it among only 34 other projects in the world.

# Rescuers seek funds

**The recent rescue of a man and his dog at Ōtaki Forks has again highlighted the important work of the local search and rescue organisation.**

Horowhenua Land Search and Rescue (Landsar) includes many Ōtaki-based volunteers. They are regularly called out to look for people in some of New Zealand’s most treacherous terrain.

But the organisation needs a building to call their own – not only one where they can meet, train and store gear, but also serve as a base from which to conduct search operations. So it’s seeking funds through donations and grants.

A site has been secured after the Horowhenua AP&I Association granted a long-term lease on a block at the Levin Showgrounds. The showgrounds are often used for landing helicopters during search operations and training exercises.

Project coordinator and Landsar volunteer Chris Maher says \$800,000 will be needed for a new building.

“This is an opportunity for community-minded individuals, businesses or groups to get behind a very important local organisation that provides a vital service,” Chris says. “It’s not only vital for our keen outdoor enthusiasts, but also some of our more vulnerable folk.”

A big part of Landsar’s work is to locate mainly elderly people with dementia who have wandered from their home or retirement facility. “Wandersearch” operations are generally in urban areas. Under the programme, at-risk people are issued with pendants they wear at all times.

“If they wander off, we find them using a locator that homes in on the pendant,” Chris says. “We can then return them safely to their carers and loved ones.”

Horowhenua Search and Rescue has about 60 civilian



From left, Denis Mark, Frits van Geldorp (both of Levin) and Ōtaki’s Rob Bigwood at Arete Hut on a search for a missing tramper. Photo Chris Maher

volunteers, who cover the western side of the Tararua Range from Ōtaki to Shannon and to the coast. It often assists Palmerston North, Wellington and Wairarapa search and rescue groups with operations in their areas, including the Ruahine, Eastern Tararua and Orongaronga ranges.

The local group started in the mid 1950s and has since been providing vital assistance to the police to help people lost, missing and injured. It’s affiliated to NZ Landsar, which has an agreement with the police to provide search and rescue personnel and expertise.

During the past six years, Horowhenua Search and Rescue has conducted 65 search operations comprising 3180 volunteer hours. Four lives would have been lost if not for their efforts. The group typically spends up to 1500 volunteer hours a year in training.

However, the work has been done without the group having a base of their own. For the past 40 years, the group has met, had their gear stored at, and conducted search operations from the Levin police station.

■ To donate, see [horowhenualandsar.org.nz](http://horowhenualandsar.org.nz). For large donations, call 027 492 1072 or email [chris.maher@horowhenualandsar.org.nz](mailto:chris.maher@horowhenualandsar.org.nz)

# Tim Costley MP for Ōtaki



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

## Levin Office

Corner of Bath and Oxford Street

Phone: 020 438 8462

[horowhenua@parliament.govt.nz](mailto:horowhenua@parliament.govt.nz)

Opening Hours:

Mon: 10am – 3pm

Tues: 10am – 3pm

Wed: Closed

Thurs: 10am – 4pm

Fri: 10am – 3pm

## Paraparaumu Office

Corner of Te Roto Drive and Kapiti Road

Phone: 021 851 206

[kapiti@parliament.govt.nz](mailto:kapiti@parliament.govt.nz)

Opening Hours:

Mon: 12pm – 5pm

Tues: Closed

Wed: 10am – 3pm

Thurs: 10am – 3pm

Fri: 10am – 3pm

✉ [Tim.CostleyMP@parliament.govt.nz](mailto:Tim.CostleyMP@parliament.govt.nz)

*I look forward to meeting with you soon.*



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# Pete back in town with Professionals

Real estate agent Pete Heald is confident the market is turning for the better as he returns to Ōtaki.

After working in commercial real estate in Wellington for a couple of years, Pete is back as an agent with the Professionals brand under Palmerston North-based Unique Realty. He was previously in Ōtaki working with Professionals Double Winkel Real Estate.

“It’s great to be back in the area I love,” Pete says. “It’s a town and district that’s still small



Pete Heald on his Professionals scooter.

enough for people to care about each other. That’s part of what makes it so attractive to people looking to move here. There’s great potential.

“Some of that potential has been realised with the opening of the Kāpiti expressway, but there are a lot of other exciting things going on that make Ōtaki great.”

Pete cites the relaxed and friendly lifestyle evident in Ōtaki, the opportunities to still buy a solid house on a quarter-acre section, and the events that attract so many people into the area every summer.

“The kite festival is huge, the Māoriland Film Festival is now one of the biggest Indigenous film festivals in the world, we’ve got the Festival of Pots and Garden Art, and the Kāpiti Coast Art Trail every November. If you’re living here, you get to be part of the buzz.”

Professionally, Pete sees positive signs in the real estate market already.

“It’s been quiet for at least a year, but as the economy begins to improve, there’s more confidence in real estate,” he says. “House prices are still pretty good in Ōtaki – you get a lot of bang for your buck.

“Certainly people who have been holding off making a decision to either buy or sell are coming back. There’s definitely more interest, which bodes well for the local economy, not only next year but also for years to come.

“Ōtaki is simply a great place to be.”



Students of Waitohu School watch construction of the Ōtaki reservoir at the top of Te Manuao Road. Photo Ōtaki Today

## Students get peek at reservoir

**Year 4 students at Waitohu School got a morning out of class when they visited the under-construction Ōtaki reservoir on November 27.**

The visit was organised by Kāpiti Coast District Council, with project manager Aaron Flitcroft telling the students all about the work and offering lots of intriguing statistics.

There were plenty of wide eyes when Aaron told the students the wall consisted

of 36 concrete panels built in Ōtaki by local company Pre Co, and each of them weighed 10 tonnes. The reservoir is designed to hold 5.5 million litres of water, which will take a week to fill. It’s seven metres high and 108 metres in circumference.

KCDC senior communications advisor Philippa Ross-James also told the children that hundreds of columns had been driven into the ground to strengthen the structure.

The reservoir is due to be completed in March 2025.

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**ŌTAKI  
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## Message from the Mayor

It's been a year of steady progress on some big projects to improve resilience for our Ōtaki residents.

We acknowledge we've turned your town orange with road cones, but it's for good reason! We're completing major upgrades to our water and wastewater networks, and the first of two new reservoirs is set to be completed in March 2025. Work to deliver social and affordable housing in Kāpiti has also progressed as we look to the future of our district.

It's also been a big year of consulting with our communities on a wide range of topics from our Long-term Plan and how you would like to be represented, through to your aspirations for the future. Your contributions have been invaluable.

And ngā mihi to our volunteers and community organisations who help those in need and make Kāpiti a great place to live.

Thanks to Ngā Hapu o Ōtaki, the Ōtaki Community Board and everyone else who has worked hard this year for Ōtaki.

Please be safe in the sun and on the roads. I wish you an enjoyable holiday period in this beautiful place we call home – your Kāpiti: where summer stays local.

Kia pai nga hararei – have a great holiday!

**Kāpiti Coast District Mayor, Janet Holborow**



### Blue Bluff access on track to reopen in 2025

After a series of detailed geotechnical, environmental and engineering investigations, we've finalised the plan to reopen Blue Bluff on Ōtaki Gorge Road.

There are two slips that need to be fixed; the overslip where material has fallen onto the road from the hill above, and the underslip where the road is undermined by a collapse beneath it.

To fix the overslip we'll clear the debris and rebuild the road along its original alignment. At the site of the underslip we'll cut back into the bank and realign the road further from the river.

NZTA Waka Kotahi funding has been approved and we've lodged resource consent applications with our Council and Greater Wellington Regional Council. We plan to begin earthworks early next year. All going well the road will reopen around May 2025, restoring our community's much-valued access to Ōtaki Forks and the Tararua Forest Park.



### Pipes galore – we're making good progress

Our two big pipe-laying jobs have made the most of recent good weather to get lots of pipes in the ground.

On Mill Road, a new water main has been laid past Ōtaki Primary School. Also on Mill Road, installation of the new and bigger wastewater pipe is underway, heading towards the old highway. We expect it'll take another 10 months to complete. The wastewater upgrade is partly funded by Government's Infrastructure Acceleration Fund.

Our other 'pipe job' in the area is the installation of a new fire loop water main (a water source for firefighting). This work is nearly complete on Anzac Road and has almost reached the old State Highway 1 on Mill Road. Our crew will return after Christmas to finish this work, which will see the pipe cross the roundabout on the old highway and run a short distance along Rahui Road. This project is now due to be finished by the end of January.



### Huge log gets second chance to shine

Workers recently unearthed and carefully removed an 8-metre-long log from under Aōtaki Street while they were digging a trench for the new wastewater pipe.

Specialist carvers from Te Wānanga O Raukawa identified the log as rātā. The beautiful log has been returned to Ngā Hapu o Ōtaki, who will clean it and allow it to dry out. It'll then be milled and its wood will be made available for projects around the rohe.

After being lost and buried for a prolonged period, it's heartwarming to think about the log giving new life and expression to future projects. We look forward to seeing how it's used in future years.



## Experience our events

We're supporting a range of events this summer with fun for the whole whānau.

The Ōtaki Tarai | Ōtaki Try is on Saturday 1 February 2025, so there's plenty of time to get training! This annual run/swim event is held at Ōtaki Pool and Haruātai Park and is fun whatever your fitness level or goals. In the afternoon we'll have a fun-filled whānau day with free entertainment.

Family favourite Movies in the (Waikanae) Park is back on 22 February. Keep an eye out on our social media channels for your chance to vote for which movie features.

You can also let your spirits soar at the spectacular Ōtaki Kite Festival 8–9 March at Ōtaki Beach. It's a wonderful weekend of colourful and creative fun, plus stalls and entertainment.

And on Saturday 22 March the Kāpiti Classic brings classic Kiwi bands Dragon, Hello Sailor, and the Jordan Luck Band to Southward Car Museum's outdoor amphitheatre from 1–7pm. Tickets are selling fast so don't delay.

► [Keep an eye on our website and social channels for information about upcoming events: kapiticoast.govt.nz/summer](https://kapiticoast.govt.nz/summer)



## Visit our pools and libraries and explore our open spaces

Our pools are the place to be this summer. Take advantage of the SPLASH! Sessions with inflatables and games every day of the school holidays between 1–4.30pm at Ōtaki, Waikanae and Coastlands Aquatics Centre, and enjoy our slashpads at Haruātai Park or Marine Gardens in Raumati.

For some extra special festive fun, join us at our Christmas pool party at Coastlands Aquatic Centre on Sunday 22 December from 10am–12pm.

And if you have summer birthdays to celebrate, consider a pool party in Waikanae. We've got the kit to help you celebrate in style – gazebos, tables, bean bags, lovely park grounds (and of course a swimming pool). Book at: [kapiticoastaquatics.co.nz](https://kapiticoastaquatics.co.nz).

You can also check out our nga whare pukapuka (libraries) for summer reading and holiday programmes, have fun at one of our parks or papa takaro (playgrounds), or explore our many tracks, trails and cycleways. There's something for every age, ability, and adrenalin level.



## Enjoy our public places safely

Here are some tips so everyone can enjoy our beaches safely this summer and help protect our precious environment.

- Our Beach Bylaw prohibits driving on most parts of the beach unless launching boats in designated areas. Two-wheeled motorbikes are not allowed on our beaches anywhere.
- Be on the lookout for well-camouflaged birds in the dunes and surrounds and leave them to their nesting.
- There are zones in place for longline fishing, dog walking, and horse riding.
- Make sure you swim between the flags at Paekākāriki and Ōtaki Beaches or visit our lifeguarded pools. Know your limits, never swim alone, and keep small children within reach.
- Keep an eye out for toxic algae in or near our rivers. We've started monitoring the Ōtaki River on behalf of Greater Wellington. If you get an alert or see the black mats of algae on the riverbed or floating in the water, keep your dog away and on a leash.



## Public holiday opening hours

Opening hours for some of our facilities and services differ over the holiday period.

Our Paraparaumu, Ōtaki and Waikanae service centres and our libraries will close at 3pm on 24 December. Our service centres reopen at 9am on 3 January, as do Ōtaki, Waikanae, and Paraparaumu libraries. Opening hours for our pools and transfer stations vary over the period, so check our website for details.

Please also note that building inspections are not available on public holidays and the days from 20 December to 10 January are not counted as working days in the related legislation.

For any urgent matters you can still get in touch with us by calling 0800 486 486.

We hope everyone has a relaxing break and a safe and iconic Kāpiti summer!

► [kapiticoast.govt.nz/opening-hours](https://kapiticoast.govt.nz/opening-hours)



# Lindsay 'king' in Mongolian ger

By Lindsay Gault

**"What is your age?" was always one of the first questions I was asked on my recent bike ride from China to Greece.**

In Mongolia my answer of 70 was always a cause for excitement – the average life expectancy there is 73, so I was in age-elite category.

"You are the king," said one of my hosts, Happy, as I sat down for breakfast in her family ger (tent). The previous evening her son had led me around every guesthouse in the tiny village of Erdenetsagan. None of the guesthouses were open, so I was invited to pitch my tent in the family compound.

So from day one in Mongolia I was introduced to the culturally embedded hospitality that was to keep me dry and fed right across this huge country.

Such hospitality was not limited to Mongolia; right across the eight countries of my journey I was touched by human kindness, transcending language, culture and ethnicity. There are good people in all corners of the world.

I started in the far east of China in Jinzhou, a city near the coast of the China Sea. Day one on the road I found my carefully plotted GPS course had led me into tiny villages with tracks completely covered in muddy pools. I swallowed the fear, not daring to look at the 11,000 kilometres ahead.

My plan for China had been to chop the route into 100-kilometre segments to land me in hotels. Tourists in China must stay in registered tourist hotels. Day one on the road and I was nervously hiding my tent in a swan sanctuary outside the town.

In Mongolia the beauty of the space across the steppes of horizon-sweeping grassland and herds of horses were constant companions.

I crossed back into the Xinjiang province of China, expecting difficulties with the many police checkpoints, but I was surprised to find the officers asking for selfies and offering more water bottles than I could possibly carry.

Kazakhstan had the big north-eastern steppes with wonderful space. It was a great time for reflection and meditation, despite the 40 degree heat. Kazakh family roadside picnics always offered fresh watermelon, which was a godsend in the heat.

Kyrgyzstan thrust mountain passes in my path, each about the same height as the summit of Mount Ruapehu. The was magnificent mountain scenery, beautiful lakes and gnarly roads.

Uzbekistan provided the spectacular man-made architectural



Lindsay, above, with Happy (centre) and her hospitable family in Mongolia.

Right: The Chinese border police were always friendly and keen to be in a selfie. Photos supplied



splendour of intricate mosaic mosques. The European leg through Georgia, Turkiye and Greece added dimensions for a whole new story – another day.

■ Lindsay lives in Ōtaki. His ride was in aid of the Cancer Society, and his eighth big charity ride.

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# ŌTAKI STREET SCENE



Katherine Joyce-Kelloway



Wendi Lindsay

ŌTAKI DISTRICT ARTS, ATTRACTIONS AND EVENTS

Summer 2024-25



## Pots and garden art set to wow

**The vibrant Festival of Pots and Garden Art is coming to wow the crowds again this January.**

Mark your calendars now for January 16-20, coinciding with Wellington Anniversary weekend, at Anam Cara Gardens in Ōtaki.

The festival is not just a celebration of pottery and garden art, it's also a platform for emerging and established artists to showcase their work and engage with the community.

The festival also features exhibitions and an artisan market. There will be "Have a Go" opportunities where interactive sessions allow attendees to dive into hands-on experiences, learn new techniques, and create their own pieces.

Artists will show their creative processes, offering insights into the art of pottery and other art forms. There will be talks exploring the history and evolution of guest artists' pottery and artwork.

An onsite café will be available again, and on Friday night, January 17, the festival will stay open until 8pm so visitors can bring a picnic or enjoy the food options available while listening to live music in the gardens.

The festival is one of Ōtaki's big three annual event attractions during summer, along with the Ōtaki Kite Festival (March 8-9, 2025) and the Māoriland Film Festival (March 26-30).



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## Festival of Pots & Garden Art 2025

January 16 - 20th 10am - 4pm\*  
\*with a late night on Friday until 8pm



[www.otakipotteryclub.org](http://www.otakipotteryclub.org)

**Anam Cara Gardens 150 Rangioru Rd Otaki**

# ŌTAKI STREET SCENE



## Looking for some Christmas fun?



**PAEKĀKĀRIKI CHRISTMAS FETE**  
St Peters Village Hall, cnr Beach Rd and Ames St, Paekākāriki  
Saturday December 14, 10am-2pm.  
With 50 stalls in and around the beautiful St Peters Village Hall, live music and entertainment, this is a great place to start some Christmas shopping.



**LEVIN CHRISTMAS AT THE RACES**  
Ōtāki Maori Racing Club, Te Roto Rd, Ōtāki  
Thursday December 19, 12-5pm.  
Join Levin Racing Club at Ōtāki Racecourse for their final hurrah of 2024 – featuring the Horowhenua Christmas Cup.  
The perfect way to unwind before the Christmas rush. Enjoy a picnic on the grass, and live music to entertain you. The Fashion Police will be on the course.  
Entry \$10, children under 18 free.



**CHRISTMAS WONDERLAND**  
Ōtāki College Hall, Mill Rd, Ōtāki  
Saturday-Monday December 21-23,  
6-8.30pm.

Bring the whole family to enjoy this annual Christmas event. And you might even get to see Ed, the college's cat, seen enjoying some quality time with Santa, above. Koha entry.

**WAIKANAĒ CHRISTMAS FAIR**  
Mahara Place, Waikanae  
Saturday December 21, 9am-2pm.

Christmas festivities with more than 80 craft and food stalls, and local retailers open. Shop for last minute Christmas goodies, grab a bite to eat, and listen to some live entertainment.

**WAIKANAĒ CHRISTMAS NIGHT MARKET**  
Waikanae Park, Park Ave, Waikanae  
Monday December 23, 3-7pm.

A fun filled evening with food trucks, live music, Christmas fresh produce and gifts.



**ŌTAKI CHRISTMAS MARKET**  
Old SH 1, opposite New World  
Sunday December 22, 10am-2pm

Enjoy a day out and buy local, unique gifts this Christmas. Choose from a wide range of artisan products – there will be something to suit everyone this festive season hand made cards, artisan bags, collectables + Crown Lynn, antiques, Nepal NZ Connection, bone carving, handcrafted jewellery, air plants, seedlings, native trees, letterboxes, bird feeders + garden art, art and crafts, wax melts, beautiful landscape art, music, CD's and records, handcrafted lip balms and body lotions and much more . . .



Look for the gift wrapping station, and take the kids for a free photo with Santa. Real Christmas trees will be for sale, as well as live music while you relax and enjoy the delicious kai – burgers, sausage sizzle, hangi, noodles, rice, pork buns, spring rolls, gourmet croissants home baking, ice cream, and waffles. And relax over coffee in the garden at Riverstone Cafe.



**A VERY MESSY CHRISTMAS!**  
Southward Theatre, Otaihangā Rd,  
Otaihangā, Paraparaumu  
Sunday 22 December 2024 1-2pm.

It's nearly Christmas Eve, and everything is going wrong in Santa's workshop. Rudolph's nose won't glow, the Naughty and Nice list has gone missing, and the naughty elves are causing chaos.

Santa's constantly being called away to fix problems, leaving Mrs Claus feeling ignored, while the glamorous Christmas Fairy struggles to keep everything on track.

With time running out, can Santa and his crew save Christmas before disaster strikes? Packed with laughs, songs, and festive fun, this panto is a holiday treat for all ages!  
Tickets at: [eventfinda.co.nz](http://eventfinda.co.nz)

**WURLITZER CHRISTMAS CONCERT**

Southward Theatre, Paraparaumu  
Friday December 29, 11am-12:15pm  
Hear the Mighty Wurlitzer Organ come to life. Organist Len Fifield will be treating the audience to a selection of Christmas classics and a bit of history about the organ - from its early days at the Civic Theatre in Auckland and how it came to end up at Southward Museum in Paraparaumu.  
Tickets at: [eventfinda.co.nz](http://eventfinda.co.nz)



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# ŌTAKI STREET SCENE



## ART GALLERIES & ARTISTS

**ATB TATTOO STUDIO & GALLERY:** Arthur St. abandonthebox.co.nz

**AWATEA POTTERY:** Brent Craig, 19 Hadfield Rd, Peka Peka. 027 242 7572. Brightly coloured, functional domestic stoneware.

**BIRGIT MOFFATT:** Sculpture, textiles. 32 Parenga Rd, Ōtaki Gorge. 022 460 2695. birgitmoffatt.com

**HANNEKE KOOP:** Ceramics, pottery, textiles. 144 Te Waka Rd, Te Horo. hankoop@gmail.com

**HEI TIKI TOI:** Woodwork. 24 Iiti St. Ariana Summers 021 990 566, and Ben Keene 021 205 6052.

**THE HORI GALLERY:** 84 Moana St, Ōtaki Beach. thehori.co.nz

**JAILHOUSE POTTERY:** Jennifer Turnbull, 3 Iiti St, Ōtaki. 021 295 7473. jenniferturnbull.co.nz

**JAMES CARTER POTTERY:** 12 Waitaheke Rd, Te Horo. 022 672 7036. Tactile, fun and functional pottery for everyday use.

**JOS SMITH ART STUDIO:** Painting/drawing. 7a Lemon St. 027 614 4145.

**KARL ANDREWS:** Painter, karlandrews.art

**KATHRYN ENNIS-CARTER:** 55 Settlement Rd, Te Horo. 021 620 757. Ceramics and fibre/textiles.

**KENO SCULPTURES** 7 Byron Brown Place, Ōtaki Beach. 021 855 088 • kenosculpture.co.nz

**KUKU CREATIVE (GREG MOFFATT)** phone 021 209 5912 or email kukumogs@gmail.co

**LINDSAY & NEIL HEY:** Lindsay - artist and printmaker 027 454 2374; Neil - master potter 027 443 9796, 6 Kingi te Ahoaho Pl. artsenvogue.co.nz

**LORNA TAWHITI:** may15tattoo.com  
e: lorna@may15tattoo.com

**LOUIE ZALK-NEALE** (Ngāi Te Rangī): 11 Millhaven Pl. Tī kōuka weaver & performance artist, wearable taonga, sculptures, drawings.

**MARGARET HUNT:** Ceramics, pottery. Studio at 173b Waerenga Rd. 06 364 8053 or 027 450 2726.

**OLD COURTHOUSE GALLERY:** 239-245 Old SH1. Artists collective. 027 445 7545

**ORGANIC DESIGN STUDIO:** 40 Miro St. Gavin Berry 021 051 3096, Karen McCall 027 226 2094, Sarah Shaw 021 452 465. odskapiti.com

**PAULA ARCHIBALD:** Ceramics, pottery, sculpture. 3 Bell St. 027 247 7488.

**ROD GRAHAM:** Clayworks, 35 Ngaio St, Ōtaki Beach. 027 445 7545.

**RAMILA PARBHU:** Studio, 1 Atmore Ave. Abstract expressionism. Ramila has a unique technique of creating alchemy with acrylic paints.

**ROSEMARY MORTIMER:** Printmaker. 306 Te Waka Rd, Te Horo. 027 236 7343. rosemarymortimer.com

**SARAH LANGE:** Rata St Studio, Rata St, Ōtaki Beach. Resin and mixed media 022 3177 613, Open by appointment.

**SAVAGE ART:** Sonia Savage, 35 Ngaio St, Ōtaki Beach. 027 244 7322.

**SEAGRASS GALLERY:** Grant Stevenson, 38 Moana St, Ōtaki Beach. 027 231 4643. seagrassgallery.co.nz

**SHELSHOK GALLERY:** Mixed media. Lynne O'Connor, 35 Dal Din Drive. 027 332 8649

**STACEY YOUNG:** The Tailor's Wife, 8 Freemans Rd. Beautifully hand carved, tactile tableware, candle sticks and goddess figurines.

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**SUMMERSTONE GALLERY** 89 Ringawhatai Rd, Ōtaki. 027 927 1591.

**TOI MATARAU:** Māoriland Hub, Main St. Open Mon-Sat 11-4pm, and by appt. Stunning traditional and contemporary Toi Māori.

**TOTE MODERN ART GALLERY:** Ōtaki-Māori Racing Club, Te Roto Rd. Open Fri-Sun 10am-3pm. otakipottery.club.co.nz

**YVONNE DE MILLE** kitemaker, artist. yvonedemille.co.nz

## Family Christmas carol service

New minister Gradon Harvey is looking to get worship happening again in the beautiful church of St Margaret's in School Road, Te Horo.

He says it is one of the nicest churches he has been in, and wants it to become a community church, rather than just Anglican focused. He is inviting residents of Te Horo to consider making St Margaret's their church.

At 4pm on December 22 a family-focused Christmas carol service is on at St Margaret's, followed by Christmas cake and a cuppa.

Gradon says they are holding the first night of an Alpha Course (alpha.org.nz/) on Sunday February 16 at 4pm, followed by a children's

programme, and a light tea.

Gradon worked with the Anglican Church in Uruguay before moving to St Lukes in Waikanae for 18 years. He was executive director of an aid/mission organisation, then spent two years as interim minister of Raumatī Beach Church (Vineyard denomination church). He started as a part-time minister in the Ōtaki parish in September. He and wife Annette have four adult children.



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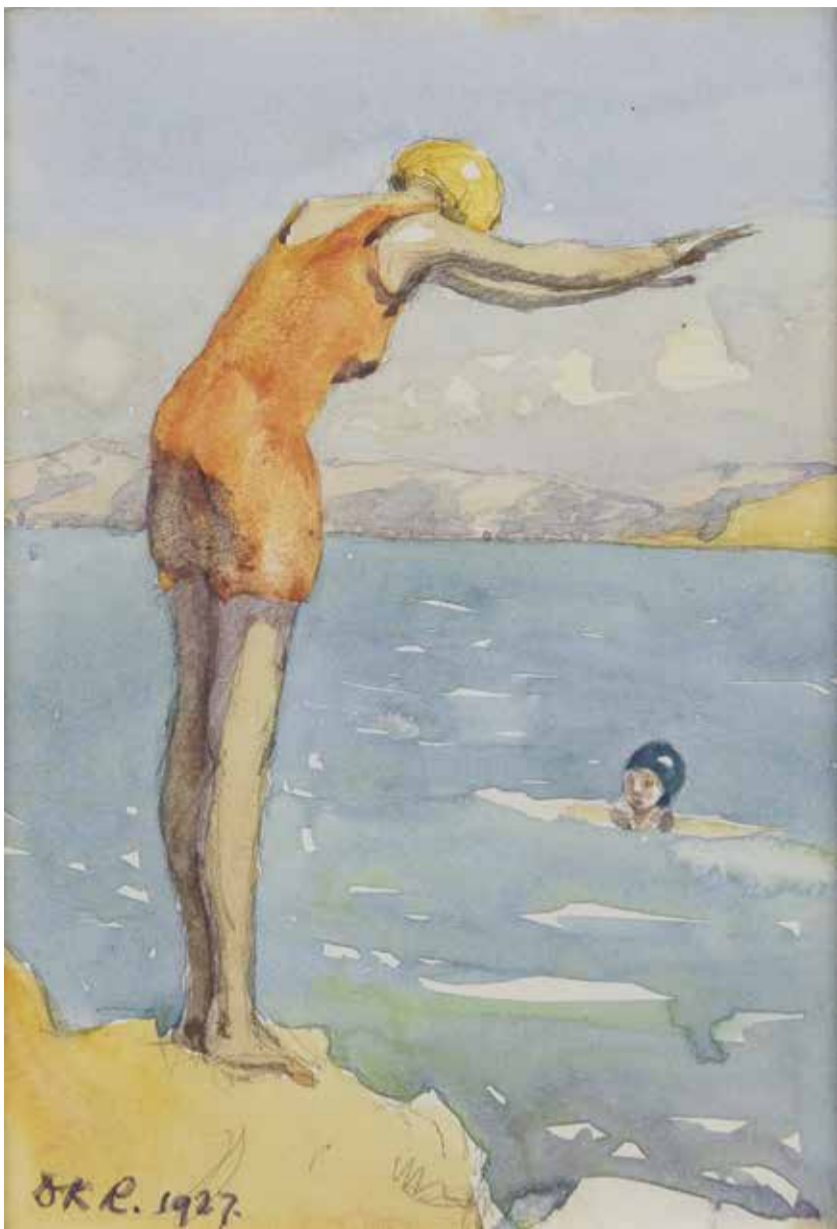
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## Artistic wanderer

Toi MAHARA is the home of the Field Collection. The collection is notable for the inclusion among its 44 works of 24 paintings by New Zealand's most celebrated expatriate artist, Frances Hodgkins (1869–1947). It is the largest collection of Hodgkins' work outside Te Papa Tongarewa and city collections in Dunedin, Auckland and Christchurch.

The Field Collection was the catalyst for the redevelopment of Mahara Gallery in Waikanae.

Although Frances and her sister Isabel were born and raised in Dunedin, the collection accumulated in Kāpiti because Waikanae became the centre of family life in the years after Isabel married local businessman and politician William Field.

It was preserved in later years by Isabel's son and Frances' nephew, Peter Field Sr. After his and his wife Dorothy's death, responsibility for the collection passed to the Field Collection Trust.

Frances Hodgkins was an artistic wanderer who, in spite of her itinerant nature, came to regard Waikanae as ancestral.



Isabel Jane Field, watercolour, by her sister Frances M. Hodgkins 1892. Field Collection.

Left: *Woman diving*, 1927, by Dorothy Kate Richmond, was a late acquisition to the Field family's art collection. D K Richmond was one of Frances Hodgkins' closest friends for many years. Her father James Crowe Richmond and William Mathew Hodgkins knew each other, but the two women did not meet until 1901 when they both joined the sketching class in Normandy, led by Norman Garstin (1847–1926). In her girlhood D K Richmond had been taken on a grand tour of Europe. She had also spent two years studying at the Slade where she won a scholarship. Within a short time of meeting her, Frances Hodgkins wrote, "Miss R. has decided not to go to England so we shall not lose sight of each other even for a few weeks. I have grown so fond of her, I don't know how I am ever going to let her go, she is one of those people whom you want always with you." (Linda Gill, *Letters of Frances Hodgkins* 1993, p94). Having shared classes together, Frances Hodgkins and D K Richmond travelled through France, Italy, England and The Netherlands returning together to New Zealand on the ship 'Ophir'. They held a joint exhibition at the McGregor Wright Gallery in 1904 and shared a studio in Bowen Street for two years. They stayed near the Fields in Paraparaumu and made a sketching trip to Rotorua together. When they parted in 1906 – Frances Hodgkins to return to Europe and D K Richmond to remain in Wellington to teach – they continued to correspond. – *The Field Collection, Mahara Gallery, 2000.*



**Kāpiti Coast District Gallery**

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## Kite flyers return to entertain all

**The 2025 Ōtaki Kite Festival sees the return of Australian kite maker and flyer Robert Brasington.**

Robert has enthralled us at several Ōtaki kite festivals and says, "Kite design has been my way of life now for more than 30 years. From the earliest days thoughts of designing, colour and movement have occupied my day dreams. Living on the island of Tasmania, close to the east coast beaches and its nature, gives me the opportunity to focus on a life that I love."

Peter Lynn Kites has been making and selling kites since 1973. Their product range includes small kid's kites through to their most widely known products – their large inflatable show kites, the most common one being the 25 metre long maxi octopus.

Peter Lynn and Simon Chisnall design their show kites in New Zealand, but they also produce kites for other designers around the world – Jan O'Loughlin from Australia, Volker Hoberg, Meik Schlenger and Andreas Fischbacher from Germany, Claudio Capelli from Italy, and John and Irene Tan from Singapore.

They also make special custom designs for many customers around the world. One of the most famous was an 18 metre long dragon 'Toothless' for 20th Century Fox. They flew this kite in different locations around the US, and towed it behind a boat in England down the Thames and through the Tower bridge.

Peter Lynn Kites are also the manufacturers of the world's largest kites. Their first

Guinness World Record for the Mega Ray and Mega Bite', which has 635 square meters of lifting area. These kites were made in 1997.

They also hold the 2005 Guinness World Record for the Kuwait flag kite with 1000 square metres of lifting area. They keep trying to go bigger each time. They also have an unconfirmed world record Ray with 1250 square metres of lifting area.

As well as making and selling Show Kites they travel the world putting on fantastic kite displays. Ōtaki is lucky to have them return each year.

Kites are thought to have originated with the Chinese perhaps 3000 years ago. Between 500 and 1000 AD, kites appeared in other parts of Asia, including Japan, Thailand, India, Malaysia and Indonesia, and from there spread into Melanesia and Polynesia. Kite flying became enormously popular throughout much of south-east Asia as a pastime, and found military application as well.

In the late 1600s, when King Phra Phetracha of Thailand was unable to capture a rebel city by conventional warfare, pots of gunpowder with long fuses were carried by kites over the walls, setting fire to houses within. During the ensuing commotion, the king's soldiers were able to enter and subdue the city.

Royal kites were often flown at night, illuminated with lanterns, and a gold coin might be tied to the kite to reward anyone who returned it in case of loss.

Kite fighting is also popular in India and Japan. Usually the kites are small, squarish,



**Peter Lynn Kites' famous 18 metre long dragon, Toothless, made for 20th Century Fox, being towed behind a boat on the river Thames in London.**

*Photo nzgeo.com*

and highly manoeuvrable. They are made from thin paper and bamboo, and flown on lines impregnated with grains of glass.

Since 1983, the Japanese Rokkaku style of kite fighting has been adopted with enthusiasm by the western kite-flying fraternity. Rokkakus are sizable (more than two metres high), and, like most of the fighters, are single line kites, but that doesn't imply that they are not manoeuvrable.

Wellington kite flyers Anne and Peter Whitehead met on a kite field, and both are committed kite makers and fliers.

They produce the New Zealand Kitefliers Association newsletter and also edit an international kite flying magazine.

International festivals loom large in the lives of serious kite fliers. The Whiteheads try to get to one each year.

"There are fewer than 100 makers of large [six-metres-plus] kites worldwide, so we are really a small international fraternity that meets at festivals. There we can see what everyone else is producing, and get inspired with fresh ideas as to what is possible," Anne explains.

# KITE FESTIVAL ŌTAKI

# 8-9 March 2025

Organised by

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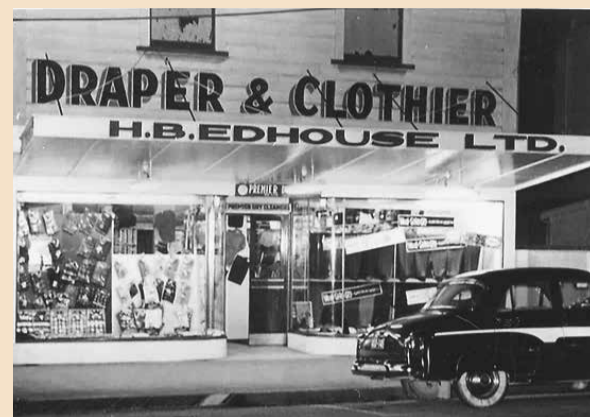
  
**Kāpiti Coast**  
DISTRICT COUNCIL  
Me Huri Whakamuri, Ka Tīro Whakamua



Main Street, Ōtaki looking east, possibly mid-1920s (note the power poles, first installed about 1924).  
Photos: Ōtaki Heritage



Eric Cook's first bike and radio shop in Main Street, 1924. The hoses gave free air for tyres.



Edhouse's department store, 1950s.

## Times past – an Ōtaki Christmas

When Christmas time came in Ōtaki 100 or so years ago, it was the busiest time of the year for local shopkeepers. They made a big effort to decorate their stores, giving the town a festive appearance. Big crowds assembled to complete their Christmas shopping "and to indulge in the spirit of revelry usually associated with such an occasion".

### CHRISTMAS IN ŌTAKI – A HAPPY CROWD

*Ōtaki Mail*, December 29, 1926

Although the heavy rain on Friday afternoon threatened to mar the joy of Christmas live, the weather-god was kind and fair conditions prevailed during the evening.

The decorations, carried out by the shopkeepers, gave the town a festive appearance and a large crowd assembled to complete their Christmas shopping and to indulge in the spirit of revelry usually associated with such an occasion.

The business people of Ōtaki nearly all report good business. The head of one firm told a *Mail* reporter that the general tone was even better than in previous years with the cash returns a little in excess of last year. One pleasing factor is that the public realise that buying in Ōtaki is good buying. The prices compare more than favourably with those ruling in other centres and Ōtaki people are not slow to realise that the prosperity of the town, in no small degree, rests with the support given to the trade in the district.

The weather conditions on Christmas Day militated against outdoor gatherings, but on Boxing Day the beach and all other pleasure resorts as well as the motor sports and all other functions were well patronised.

So Christmas 1926 passes, but let us as citizens make this resolution, early though it is, that next year's will be even brighter and better and will mark another year of progress and prosperity for our town.

### CHRISTMAS SHOPPING

*Ōtaki Mail*, November 22, 1929

Many of the shops in Ōtaki, in common with businesses in other towns, are beginning to display Christmas goods. Even at this early stage, a glance round some of the premises indicates clearly that local retailers are sparing no efforts to cater adequately for the wants of a discerning public during the greatest buying period of the year.

Though the Christmas season is still a few weeks away, many residents of Ōtaki are making

preparations in connection therewith by laying in a stock of seasonable gifts and edibles. It is, indeed, a wise policy to commence the Christmas shopping in good time, because it is the early shopper who obtains the best bargains. Shopping before the rush sets in, in earnest, gives one an opportunity to select goods at one's leisure, and it also lightens the burden of the retailers' assistants by spreading the extra work over a more lengthy period.

Again, it is an advantage in that when gifts are required to be sent to other parts, they can be forwarded by post before the postal officials are engaged in the Christmas rush, thereby easing the rush in the busiest period of the year.

The most important point of all for Ōtaki and district people, is to remember that loyalty to the retailers in this town itself leads to all-round prosperity. It means better times for the shopkeeper, and makes more work for all. Ōtaki can boast of shops which provide a range of Christmas goods and novelties equal to anything in quality and price that can be found in shops in larger centres. Local residents might well take for their slogan during the Christmas period. "Shop early, and shop in Ōtaki."

### CHRISTMAS APPEAL

*Ōtaki Mail*, December 14, 1931

Though we are passing through a strenuous financial period, there is daily evidence that the spirit of Ōtaki is right. During the winter period, when work was very scarce, and unemployed were greater in number, than ever before recorded, those in need of help were not forgotten, and various local institutions did splendid work in providing food and clothing for those who were almost at starvation's door.

Ōtaki is proud of those organisations which assumed the role of the good Samaritan and made the lot of needy women and children lighter by that practical sympathy which was so closely associated with the work of the Carpenter of Nazareth.

The Christmas season is approaching. In most of the homes in Ōtaki there will be plenty, and Christmas will be a period of happy rejoicing. But there will be a number where the spectre of need stalks, and for the sake of the women and children we feel sure that Ōtaki will rise to the occasion and share its Christmas cheer with those less fortunate than themselves.

### TRADE IN ŌTAKI

*Ōtaki Mail*, November 14, 1932

Though it is over six weeks till Christmas, a large number of Ōtaki residents are making preparations in connection with giving Christmas presents – that is to say, they are purchasing gifts and putting them away until the time arrives.

To the people of Ōtaki we would make an appeal to support local tradesmen in their Christmas gift purchases. Upon the prosperity of the business firms of Ōtaki depends, to a very large extent, the prosperity of the citizens. The greater the business done by firms in Ōtaki, the more demand there will be for labour.

The Ōtaki shopkeepers have experienced a very trying time during the past year, but they have faced the position squarely, without proclaiming it from the housetops, nor appealing to the Government for help.

There has been no easing of the burden of taxation which the trading community has had to carry; rather has the load been increased. But our businessmen, often carrying many residents along on the credit system, because the latter are "up against it" too, are weathering the storm, and loyalty to Ōtaki and to these firms, demands that as much trade as possible should be kept in the town, circulating the money among ourselves, and thus building up the prosperity of the community to the general benefit of all.

### ŌTAKI NEWS

*Horowhenua Chronicle*

January 6, 1933

- Mr and Mrs Louis Salek, of Wellington, are staying at Miss Miles, Ōtaki Beach.
- Mr J Ferrier Walker, JP, of Dannevirke, is at present staying at Miss Miles, Ōtaki Beach.
- Kawahai has been extremely plentiful at the mouth of the Ōtaki River during the holidays. One party landed as many as a hundred in a day.

### CHRISTMAS AT CHILDREN'S CAMP TOYS AND DINNER

The festivities at the Raukawa Health Camp at Ōtaki began early on Christmas Eve. One saw groups of children making paper streamers, blowing up balloons, adults opening up mysterious parcels that had been left on the doorstep, and wrapping up still more.

Beautiful flowers appeared out of the blue, and suddenly there was fairyland. At 5pm a big fir tree

appeared in the messroom, which was soon covered with balloons of many colours, and parcels of all shapes and sizes.

Father Christmas, arriving in his motor car, was hailed with cheers of delight. He quickly distributed his bag of toys, and then cut down parcels from the tree. A delightful surprise was provided by a wonderful contrivance lent and demonstrated by some friends – such a tree as the children had never seen before – revolving to music and well lit with candles. Bags of sweets and nuts were distributed. Back to the dormitories went the children to hang up stockings and pillow cases, hoping that Father Christmas would call again; then a goodnight song and to sleep.

It was interesting at daylight to watch and listen unobserved to the little pyjama-ed and nighty clad figures going from bed to bed, comparing toys and to see who had the prettiest tea cup and saucer, which gift every child and adult had received.

The New Zealand flag was hoisted, saluted and *God Save the King* was sung; a walk to the beach, clothes donned; and then to dinner. Such a dinner, provided by the many listeners of 2ZW. If those who had given such generous help could have looked on the charming scene they would have been amply rewarded.

### CHRISTMAS AT THE 'SAN'

A very cheerful time was spent in the beautiful Sanatorium grounds at Ōtaki on Monday afternoon, when the annual garden party, organised by the medical officer in charge, with the aid of the sisters, nurses, and many willing helpers, was held.

A band, composed of old-time bandmen and other residents of Ōtaki helped to spread sunshine, and heralded the approach of the New Year Queen and her attendants, the parts being taken by some of the outpatients.

A treasure hunt, a "prospect", and several games of skill and luck were arranged for those who were able to participate, while the bed-patients who had been moved out on to the verandahs spent their time with competitions. A very fine afternoon tea was served on the lawn and ice creams were handed round. The afternoon proved a welcome interlude to the usual Sanatorium routine, and gave them an opportunity of meeting some of the well-known residents of Ōtaki, as well as other friends.

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# Learning model promotes industry skills

Each year in March the Māoriland Film Festival (MFF) brings the world of Indigenous cinema to Ōtaki for five days of screenings, workshops, art exhibitions and special events.

The festival attracted more than 19,000 people earlier this year, making it the largest international Indigenous film festival in the Southern Hemisphere.

MFF provides a space for filmmakers to connect with audiences, forge professional relationships and advance careers.

Its success is evident from the awards it has earned and its consistent growth, contributing significantly to the local community.

Since 2017, the festival has added more than \$1.8 million in value to the community every year, establishing itself as a vital cultural and economic force in the region.

Ngā Pakiaka Tātai Tauatanga is MFF's festival succession plan, and was established in 2024 with Creative New Zealand support.

It continues in 2025 as part of Te Uru Maire – Māoriland's Māori Trades Training Programme, where participants will be paid for their kaupapa.

Senior festival kaimahi (workers/ employees) tuakana mentor and train emerging festival producers (teina) as they help deliver the festival. The teina shadow and support the team to gain a good understanding of festival operations to develop future festival kaimahi. This tuakana-teina learning model promotes industry skills and pathways in a uniquely Māori environment.

By developing rangatahi talent, fostering collaboration and creating opportunities for new work, MFF supports the growth of a sustainable and vibrant Māori arts ecosystem. Its aim is to build a network of skilled and connected arts practitioners who will contribute to the long-term sustainability of Māori arts festivals.

The Māoriland Charitable Trust, in collaboration with DreamWorks Animation, has completed work on dubbing the animated film *Shrek* into te reo Māori. It will have its world premiere at the Māoriland Film Festival in March 2025, followed by a series of special screenings across New Zealand.

"We are hugely excited to re-imagine this phenomenal and captivating story, which has captured the hearts of families worldwide in te reo Māori," says Māoriland producer Libby Hakaraia.

The original *Shrek* has been dubbed into more than 40 languages and enjoyed by millions of people around the world. However, this is the first time a DreamWorks Animation film has been adapted into te reo Māori.

"With the team at Māoriland, we've found a partner who shares our passion for diverse stories," says Scott McCarthy, vice-president of localisation for DreamWorks Animation.



Māoriland Film Festival is recognised as a trailblazer in nurturing new talent. Rangatahi are already actively involved in the festival, engaging in programming, pre-production and event presentation. Known as Ngā Pakiaka, these rangatahi are critical contributors to Māoriland's success.

Photo supplied

"This project is more than a movie – it celebrates cultural diversity and the power of storytelling to connect people. Just as *Shrek* brings unlikely friends together, this project highlights that same unifying power."

Since bursting onto screens in 2001, audiences of all ages have been enchanted by the delightful, irreverent adventures of a misunderstood ogre and his ragtag group of roguish fairytale folk.

The winner of the first ever Academy Award for best animated feature, *Shrek*, Fiona, Donkey and their signature friends, family and tormentors have become a defining force in the cultural zeitgeist, shaping the landscape of animated storytelling and popular culture at large.

"*Shrek* is a sensational movie because it's a masterpiece of comedy, loaded with irony, puns and sly references to Western pop culture," says Māoriland director Tainui Stephens. "Any reversioning of *Shrek* presents significant but delicious linguistic and performance challenges."

Such challenges are already known to Mātewā Media, which has reversioned five animated films into te reo Māori. Their first was *Moana*, then *Lion King*, and their latest, *Encanto*, was released this month. *Moana* in te reo Māori screened at the Māoriland Film Festival at an outdoor venue that was

attended by hundreds of Māori-speaking whānau.

With funding support from Te Māngai Pāho, kaihautū Larry Parr says: "The reversioning of *Shrek* is another opportunity for us to celebrate and promote te reo Māori. This production will allow audiences to engage in a unique yet familiar and entertaining environment."

The NZ Film Commission's manukura (chief advisor) Māori, Te o Kahurangi Waaka, says: "The commission acknowledges that te reo Māori is a taonga to be nurtured and celebrated. The reversioning of *Shrek* with Māoriland fosters progression of Māori talent, especially rangatahi/ youth, grows the industry and grows te reo Māori."

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## Ayesha's nursing career about to begin

**Ōtaki local Ayesha Hyam, pictured right with childhood pet cockatoo Epo, has pursued her dream to become a nurse.**

Ayesha grew up in Wellington and moved to Ōtaki 10 years ago with her whānau, husband David and children Rose and Felix. They moved here to buy an affordable home, but it was also where her mother, Andrea Cootes, grew up, and where her maternal whakapapa is.

The Cootes whanau has a long Ngāti Raukawa and Ngāti Toa history.

Ayesha started her working life in hairdressing, but had always wanted to go nursing. Three years ago she decided to take

the plunge and begin her bachelor of nursing degree at Whitieria Polytechnic in Porirua.

It hasn't been easy as a mature student with no income, juggling study and family life, but with a supportive husband and family, she has finished and is looking forward to getting back into employment.

Having been told at the beginning of their study that nurses were much in demand and jobs were assured, it was a shock to be told at the beginning of her final year of study that jobs with Te Whatu Ora (Health New Zealand) would be hard to find due to health budget cuts. It was unsettling for students.

Ayesha is fortunate, and extremely grateful, to have been offered a position at Kenepuru Hospital, when about half of new graduate nurses have not been successful in finding work with Te Whatu Ora.

Ayesha has been vegetarian for 15 years. Below is one of her favourite Chelsea Winter recipes – a wholesome, tasty, filling, and cheap dish that the whole family enjoys. She doesn't use the stock as she says the spices make up the punchy flavouring, and is suitable for year round eating.

Congratulations, Ayesha, we certainly need more nurses.



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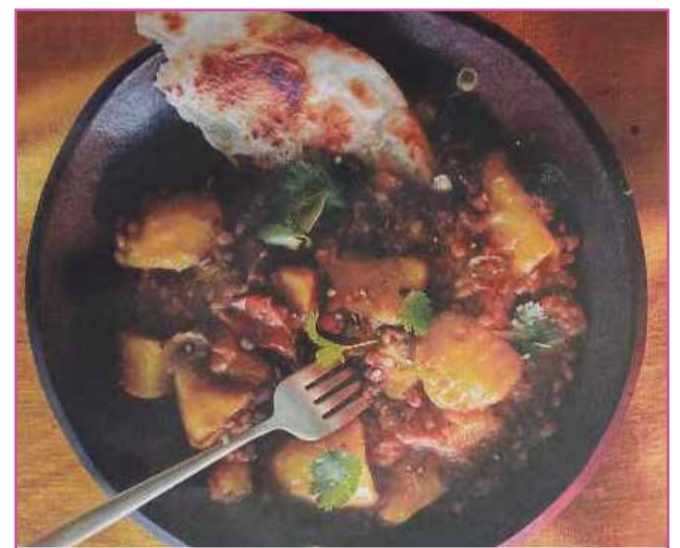
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### Barrier curry

prep: 15min    cook: 1 hour    serves 4-6

- 1/4 cup grapeseed or coconut oil
- 2 large onions, thinly slice
- 1 1/2 tablespoons grated ginger
- 4 cloves garlic, chopped
- 1 1/2 teaspoon ground cumin, ground coriander and curry powder
- 1/2 teaspoon chilli powder
- 2 teaspoons ground turmeric
- 1/2 teaspoon each ground white and black pepper
- 750mls vegetable or chicken-style stock
- 3/4 cup dried brown lentils
- 4 medium-sized potatoes chopped into 5cm pieces
- 2 large ripe tomatoes, chopped
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1 1/2 teaspoon garam masala
- 1/2 cup coconut cream

**To serve**  
cooked brown or white rice  
lemon wedges  
chopped fresh parsley or coriander  
warmed roti or pita bread

**Heat oil** in a deep sided frying pan or flameproof casserole over a medium-low heat. Add the onion and cook stirring frequently for about 15 minutes, until golden and mushy. This is where a lot of the flavour and sweetness in the curry comes from.

**Add the ginger** and garlic, cook for a few more minutes. Add the cumin, coriander, curry powder and chilli, stir for a minute.

**Add the turmeric**, peppers, stock, lentils, and chopped potatoes. Stir, cover with a lid and simmer on a low heat 30-40 minutes, stirring occasionally until the lentils and potatoes are tender, and the sauce has thickened. Add more liquid if you think it needs it, or cook a little longer if not thickened enough.

**Add the tomatoes** and simmer a few more minutes. Stir through the lemon juice, garam masala, and coconut cream, and season to taste with salt and pepper. Adjust with more coconut cream, or cook a little longer to thicken if required. Fresh, chopped spinach can be added if desired.

**Serve with rice**, a squeeze of lemon, herbs and bread.

COMMENT: ŌTAKI COMMUNITY: SIMON BLACK

## AI a handy tool for everyday tasks

Artificial intelligence (AI) has been making waves lately, with plenty of hype and fear around its potential.

But here's the reality: AI is here to stay, and it can be an incredible tool to help

with everyday tasks. One popular example is ChatGPT, a free app (with optional upgrades) that I've found invaluable for simplifying and managing my busy life.

Curious about how to use it? It's as easy as downloading the app or visiting chat.openai.com, creating a free account, and typing in a question or task. Need ideas for a Christmas dinner menu? Ask for recipes. Unsure how to word an email to your boss? ChatGPT can suggest a tone-perfect draft. You can even say, "Explain the council's long-term plan in simple terms," and get clarity.

I've used ChatGPT to:

- write this column
- help friends with dispute resolution strategies
- support family members on tricky conversations like asking for a pay rise



- troubleshoot IT issues, like setting up a laptop
- design graphics for invitations
- plan events like weddings or community gatherings
- create spreadsheets for household budgeting.

household budgeting.

For the community, ChatGPT can assist with writing submissions to council or government, making it easier to have your voice heard on local decisions.

That said, ChatGPT isn't flawless. It can confidently present incorrect information (a phenomenon called "hallucination"). Always double-check facts, especially for legal, professional or critical decisions.

So, why not give it a try? Download ChatGPT or a similar app, experiment with your questions, and discover how it can lighten your workload and enrich our community... and does anyone know the whereabouts of John Connor? LOL. Have a great Christmas break!

■ Simon is deputy chair of the Ōtaki Community Board and a senior firefighter with the Ōtaki Volunteer Fire Brigade

## Zero Waste the summer project

If you've got a summer DIY project, your last chance to get affordable timber supplies from Zero Waste Ōtaki before Christmas is coming up.

Plus, if you need a makeshift table for the festive gathering of whānau, come and pick up a free giveaway internal door – the flat surface will work perfectly for laying out kai. You can also get the 4x2s needed for the table legs at the same time, at only \$2 a linear metre.

"Last year, we had a massive turn-out of customers before Christmas as people came to get their supplies for their summer projects," says ZWŌ chair Barbara Hoverd. "We are expecting possibly even more this year because more and more people are becoming aware of ZWŌ as news spreads."

To cater for that, ZWŌ is extending the hours on the last open day of the year – Wednesday, December 18. Normally open from 9.30-11am, it will close at noon that day.

The yard next to the Ōtaki landfill on Riverbank Road (the driveway entrance is to the left, before the landfill booth) will reopen on Wednesday, January 8 and there will be two Sunday openings in January – on January 12 and 26 from 9.30am to noon.

ZWŌ recycles good-quality demolition timbers away from the landfill and makes it



available to the public. On any given opening day, visitor numbers can be up to 70, with up to two tonnes of timber being bought.

The group sorts timber into categories such as piles, fence posts, fence palings, decking, interior framing wood, native timbers and plywood. Stacking, sorting and de-nailing is already done. The ZWŌ Facebook page is regularly updated with photographs of customer projects, along with interesting items that have arrived on site and are ready for sale.

ZWŌ volunteers help direct visitors to the supplies needed.

During the year, ZWŌ is normally open to the public every Wednesday from 9.30-11am and on the last Sunday of the month from 9.30am-noon.

■ Look for zerowasteotaki on Facebook.

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# HUATAU/Comment

**PLAIN SPEAKING: IAN CARSON**

## Dead papers and anonymous letters – who’d be a local journalist?

The announcement by publisher NZME that it was closing the *Kāpiti News* and *Horowhenua Chronicle* and 12 other community newspapers by Christmas was a shock.

I knew some local newspapers were struggling, but our two regional papers seemed to be doing OK. That might ultimately prove to be correct, if, as rumoured, there’s local interest in reviving them or starting entirely new papers to fill the gap.

It’s tough in journalism at the moment, and we can only feel for the jobs that have been put on the line.

There’s also the huge issue of news information. The void left by the



closure of the last of our regional newspapers will be hard to fill. Where else will council, real estate, car yard and other advertisers go? If the gap is filled by the clutter and dross created by social media, god help us all.

On the subject of local journalism, we published an article last month that drew more than the usual number of letters to the editor.

We were able to publish two letters

in this issue because the writers had correctly put their name to them. Others were anonymous, but showed the scribes had an intimate knowledge of the issues, pointing out their view that *Ōtaki Today* – and more specifically me – had been a bully (and other choice descriptions).

Soon after publication, a copy of *Ōtaki Today* was returned to our letterbox – again anonymously – with the not so cryptic “Stick it up your”. I assume the writer of this graffitied protest ran out of ink, because I’m still pondering what I should stick it up.



I don’t mind a robust exchange of ideas or opinions, as long as they’re respectful and well thought through. I’m also happy to argue the merits of a local newspaper writing about public figures who might do something silly.

But I need to know who I’m arguing with.

Anonymous letters – either emailed or in the post – show that someone wants to say something nasty, but they’re not game enough

to put their name to an accusation or perceived wrong.

Sometimes, common ground can be found, and, if there’s solid evidence, a view might be changed. Debate is healthy in a democratic society.

So also is the need for journalists to have the ability to call out public figures who believe they can do what they like with impunity. Anonymous letters that threaten “consequences”, and graffiti on newspapers, are not helpful to meaningful debate.

I take my role as a local journalist seriously. The support I have received from people to keep doing that keeps me motivated.

■ Ian is editor of *Ōtaki Today*

**THE ELECTORATE: TIM COSTLEY, MP**

## What a year it’s been

This is my last column for the year and what a year it has been.

There are challenges out there; I’ve never pretended we could fix the country overnight, but there are some great signs to celebrate one year on from forming a new government.

Inflation is firmly down to normal levels, and a year earlier than anyone predicted. That means interest rates have been coming down for the last three consecutive months, and to the lowest level in a few years. If you compare the rate today to a couple of months ago, on the average mortgage you could be paying \$120 less per week. That makes a real difference.

Crime stats are down, too, with serious and violent crime, ram raids, and victimisation all coming down. Phones are down in schools, too – I love that!

Going up is our funding in health: \$604m extra for Pharmac is funding 26 new drugs for cancer in particular, and if you’re one of the families that benefits from this, you’ll know what a difference it makes. The current health budget is the biggest on record, and while there is much more work to do, it is important we continue to invest and prepare for the future.

Some local highlights for the year: I’ve loved attending local markets, from the Ōtaki Kite Festival to Matariki to the kids market. I’ve enjoyed visiting local schools and kindergartens, spending time with community groups and Ōtaki businesses.

I was proud to bring the prime minister here, and in fact every frontbench minister has visited our region this year; 25 National MPs have spent time in our electorate! It shows how hard I’m working, and I’m humbled that I get the support and respect of colleagues to come and visit. Watch out for one more special visit before Christmas.

Perhaps the greatest privilege of all has been helping local whānau and families one-on-one, making a meaningful difference for these families at a very personal level. We won immigration cases, helped people get surgery and other treatment they need, got better support from MSD, had family members with disabilities and other higher needs transferred into the region where they had been denied. I’ve even helped to get people into work.

It’s been an honour to be your local MP for the last year and I look forward to serving you through 2025 and beyond. Have a safe and Merry Christmas, and a Happy New Year.

■ Tim is MP for the Ōtaki electorate

**CAM’S CORNER: CAM BUTLER**

## Good progress on road, bridge works

*Tēnā koutou whanau o Ōtaki, Road works o’clock*

There is some great progress happening on the wastewater pipe running along Mill Road and Aotaki Street – you will have seen them chugging along. And yes, there are some inconveniences along the way with disruption to intersections and parking. Please keep in mind that the workers at the coalface are just doing their job and are keeping safe.

The fire main pipe replacement is now in the final stages with some odd jobs around the town being replaced and the cone pathway on Old SH1 now gone. Yahoo!

**Bridge shared pathway**

I have heard some frustrations with the bridge works looking so close to finished and yet still down to one lane. That will change in mid December with both lanes open at night and evenings, and full



opening over the Xmas period. Further finishing works on the shared path will need some lane closures in January and February. However we are well over the hump so to speak.

**33 Main Highway development**

In a significant development the council voted to not allow the reserve at the end of Moy Place to have its status change to allow it to become the entry to the Moy Estate development at 33 Main Highway. This is a significant win for the residents in the area, and the Ōtaki Community Board and iwi who have supported their position on this.

**TE HORO OUTLOOK: MICHAEL MOORE**

## Summer season reflections on a busy year

**As 2024 draws to a close, it’s a good time to look back on a busy and productive year for our community.**

If you’re planning a holiday break, either here on the beautiful Kāpiti Coast or a journey away, here are some stand-out achievements to reflect on. It has been a year filled with challenges, milestones, and moments of unity that have built connections and got some invaluable work done.

There are two extraordinary success stories I want to celebrate here in Te Horo.

Firstly, the phenomenal support everyone put behind the fundraising effort over many months, to save and strengthen our 110-year-old Te Horo Hall, was nothing short of extraordinary. Under the magnificent stewardship of Andrew Annakin and a dedicated enthusiastic committee, about \$450,000 was raised.

Our community overwhelmingly got behind this project. But more than just raise the much-needed funds to earthquake strengthen this local historic taonga, it helped connect our rural community, that is divided by the new expressway.

The connections and building a wider sense of community will far outlast the 50 or so fundraising events. A particular highlight for me was the farm walks, which



were just magical. The hall is due to reopen over the summer, and there will be some more events planned. I encourage everyone to get involved.

Secondly, the Te Horo Beach village has had a renewed environmental focus, which has been a prominent feature from the Friends of Te Horo Beach committee. Under Nikki McGill’s leadership and an energetic committee, they launched Predator Free Te Horo Beach that has had great local participation.

This followed extensive trapping and bait stations being established along our stretch of coast up to the Ōtaki River mouth by the regional council.

Over time, this will have a significant benefit for our local native wildlife, including the rare NZ dotterel / tūturiwhatu that are currently breeding around the Mangaone Stream mouth and lagoons. Please keep vehicles and dogs

This is also a significant dilemma for the developer, who got consent from the government (not via KCDC) for the development with access from Moy Place and Sue Avenue. Do they go legal and try to force KCDC to change the reserve status? Go back to central government? Or do they change the development and go for access off Old SH1? All of those cost money and who pays for it? I guess we will find out in the coming months.

**Meri Kirihimete!**

The board has had our last meeting for the year with tinsel, Xmas shirts and hats, though internally I was thinking it was still November! It has been a tougher year this year for sure so let’s hope the new year brings better things.

Keep being Sunny, Ōtaki.

• Like *Ōtaki Community Board* on Facebook  
 ■ Cam is chair of the *Ōtaki Community Board*

away from this area over the summer months.

This area still needs some longer-term protection that supports sustained rehabilitation. I look forward to engaging with locals next year to progress this work.

The Friends group also led a community riparian planting programme on the banks of the Mangaone Stream. All these activities were complemented with a magnificent environmental mural on our beach wharepaku toilets/change-rooms that included additional improvements like a beach shower, picnic table and boundary protection, making for a welcoming space to enjoy.

All this work was recognised by Local Government NZ, which awarded a special commendation to the Waikanae Community Board for this environmental focus at Te Horo Beach.

I wish everyone a wonderful festive season. Let’s celebrate our unique community spirit and embrace the opportunities the coming year promises.

• Next meeting: 7pm Tuesday, March 4, 2025, Reikorangi Hall, 5 Akatarawa Road.  
 ■ Michael is chair of the *Waikanae Community Board* and a *Te Horo* resident

# Two things that might change everything

**In a world consumed by much nonsense, a simple truth rings out for those bothering to pay attention.**

Once in a while there are turning-points in history that massively alter the trajectory of human civilisation – a bit like the Nasa rocket that slammed into an asteroid to alter its course.

While these shifts happen before our very eyes, they often seem to go unrecognised at the time because we routinely consider turning-points in history as events from our past.

Right now I believe we're seeing such a shift. Why is it happening, will it be good for humanity and are we paying enough attention?



**JUST A THOUGHT**

**FRASER CARSON**

Of course, artificial intelligence (AI), the future of work and the state of the planet loom as game changers. But all this, and more, is being consumed by wider events.

The two shifts I'm thinking of are the self-dismantling of the United States as the world's preeminent cultural and economic force, and the hot mess the internet is fomenting upon itself.

Trump comes to the White House armed with a very small popular vote "mandate" to impose tariffs on important trading partners, quarrel with allies, exit Nato, gut his own government agencies and cuddle up to foreign dictators.

Fair enough, one might say for an electorate

that thirsted for Trump's "America First" change. But these things, based on a razor-thin majority of a few thousand American votes, threatens to tear down a decades-old world order and launch a tsunami that could engulf the entire global village.

For more than 80 years the US has used its standing as the dominant power in the world to "promote freedom of movement" and to "champion open world trade". As Henry Luce, conservative publisher of *Time* and *Life* magazines saw it in 1941: "[there are] possibilities of such enormous human progress as to stagger the imagination."

Luce saw an America that exported to the rest of the world – "its technical and artistic skills – engineers, scientists, doctors, developers of airlines, builders of roads, teachers, educators".

The Second World War had seen the US abandon its previous isolationist relationships with the world, and decided it would be a "good Samaritan" and global cop. It effectively ushered in what we now know as free market and deregulated neoliberalism, with the US asserting global force and influence to feather its own better interests.

While all this neoliberal mumbo-jumbo sounds a bit too good to be true, it's certainly not to the liking of everyone. Economic growth and efficiency has grown economies, especially for rich countries and wealthy individuals, while accelerating income disparities and reducing access to essential services for the most vulnerable populations.

Now that less wealthy countries are looking to the US and other rich countries for a fair crack of the trade and economic pie, including compensation for free market impacts on climate change, Trump's America is slamming



Image by Pixabay

the door shut and heading back to isolationism.

Right now there's another historic turning-point that's altering the trajectory of human civilisation, that's perhaps even less obvious to many. That's what's happening to the internet.

Most of us use the web to do all manner of things, from information searches to online learning, through to promoting a business. While it's far from perfect, it has become essential in the operation of commerce, government and nearly everything else, to the point it is now the most ubiquitous infrastructure we have.

But the internet increasingly appears to be in trouble, in large part because of the aforementioned US-led neoliberalism.

Despite the original promise that the internet would "belong to the people" and deliver "unimaginable enlightenment and riches", through easy sharing, connectivity and trustworthy information, the reality is increasingly downright negative.

The emergence of the big controlling corporations of the internet (mostly based in the US) ensured that "people empowerment" would ultimately be a fantasy. But, just like

the demands for accountability over fair trade, climate change and pollution, these corporations are facing a host of legal and political challenges in everything from privacy breaches to mental health issues, toxic disinformation and tax evasion.

But most notably, and accelerated by the Frankenstein radiation of AI, the distorted algorithms of search and social media are becoming uncontrollable.

Science fiction writer Neal Stephenson imagined in his 2019 novel *Fall*, a near future in which the internet becomes so polluted with misinformation, disinformation and advertising that it is largely unusable. We're galloping towards that situation with every passing second.

If there's a silver lining to Trump's election and the meltdown of the internet, it's the possibility the deep hole into which we are likely to fall is in fact transformational, and that new people-orientated ways of creating wealth and social cohesion emerge, that help us live sustainably and in peace. Let's hope so.

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

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# PŪTAIAO/Science

## A price to pay for wanting to go faster

**The Kapiti expressway between Ōtaki and Raumati South now has a new 110km/h speed limit.**

This will “help to reduce travel times, increase efficiency, and get people and freight where they want to go quickly and safely”, according to Transport Minister Simeon Brown. Local National MP Tim Costley adds that a more efficient transport network means local businesses can be more productive.

We shouldn't get too swept up in the political hype; many things might improve the productivity of my business in Ōtaki, but being able to drive down to Paraparaumu 62 seconds faster isn't one of them. And people consistently overestimate the time saved by increased expressway speeds.

Additionally, the speed limit of 90km/h for trucks set under Land Transport (Road User) Rule 2004 will still apply, so the travel times for freight will remain the same.

Nevertheless, the higher 110km/h speed limit had overwhelming support, with 93 percent of more than 3000 public submissions in favour. In our modern society, with life's time demands pressuring us to maximise every minute, a high value is placed on mobility and being able to get places quickly – time is money.

The speed limit change is part of the National

government's “Accelerate NZ” commitment to reverse the previous Labour government's speed limit restrictions. But those speed restrictions were consistent with the internationally

### HEALTH SCIENCE



DR STEVE HUMPHRIES

recognised Safe Systems approach, which is based on the premise that people inevitably make mistakes, and when those mistakes occur the design of our roads and vehicles, and the speed limits we set, should make the resultant accidents survivable.

Reducing speed is a key Safe Systems tool. The basic laws of physics are clear: the faster you go the more accidents you will have, and the more serious those

accidents will be. Even on the well-designed German autobahns, every year thousands of people are seriously injured, and hundreds die. There are injuries and deaths that largely would have been avoided if people had been driving slower.

Under the Safe Systems approach, in residential areas where there is a high risk of interaction with pedestrians, vehicle speeds should be 30km/h – if a pedestrian is hit by a car at 30km/h there is a 90 percent chance they will survive, but only a 20 percent chance at 50km/h.

Slowing drivers in residential areas is also more equitable; drivers shouldn't have all the benefit of being able to travel across town

faster while passing all the cost of injury onto vulnerable others (pedestrians, school children and cyclists).

After the implementation of the Safe Systems speed restrictions in June 2020, Auckland Transport reported a 47 percent reduction in road deaths, and a 25 percent reduction in injury crashes in those speed restriction areas.

Public health academics and other experts, both in New Zealand and overseas, have criticised the reversal of the Safe Systems implementation, pointing out that increasing road speeds not only increases the road toll, but it has the additional costs of increasing fuel consumption and increasing environmental pollution.

Modern vehicles are, by design, most efficient around 70-80km/h (the lowest revs in the highest gear). These numbers generally hold true regardless of the vehicle make or model, or type (petrol, diesel, hybrid). Increasing speeds beyond 70-80km/h increases fuel consumption (by about 10 percent going from 100 to 110km/h) and increases greenhouse gas CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and pollutants like nitrogen oxides – this is the price we pay for wanting to go faster.

A recent study found that lowering speeds on New Zealand roads from 100 to 80km/h had reduced fuel use by about 15 percent. Fuel consumption and environmental impacts are increasingly being taken into account overseas; for example, in 2019 the Dutch government reduced motorway speeds back to 100km/h,

primarily to reduce vehicle nitrogen oxide emissions.

At the individual level these effects can appear minor, but at the societal level they are substantial. In New Zealand the social costs from vehicle pollution (asthma and other respiratory illnesses, cardiac illness, premature deaths, lost productivity, etc) are estimated to be more than \$10 billion annually. The social cost of vehicle crashes is another \$10 billion, for a combined total of 5 percent of our GDP. Meanwhile the National government tells us we can be more efficient and productive by going faster! Recent European studies show that driving slower is not only safer but, overall, economically prudent for society as well.

And, at a time when we are not on track to meeting our climate change obligations, we should be driving to conserve fuel and reduce emissions as transport accounts for 40 percent of New Zealand's greenhouse gas CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. People will argue that their individual contribution would make little difference, so why bother – and that's why we have a climate change crisis.

The value we place on mobility, human life, the environment, and even which political parties we vote for, is captured and reflected in our road speed signs.

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

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# MAHI MĀRA/Gardening

## A comfrey brew to add sting to the garden

**Fermented herbal teas are the kind of garden solution I love – easily made at home, deceptively potent and no negative fallout.**

At this time of year there are two in particular that come to the fore – nettle and comfrey – tag teaming to strengthen the foliage that in turn improves disease resilience by strengthening the leaf coating (cuticle).

Leaf cuticle is a point of entry for pathogens, all of which arrive in various ways. Some dissolve the cuticle with enzymes and sneak in that way, others are opportunistic – using openings created by wind, pests or humans.

**Stinging nettle** (*urtica dioica*) is loaded to the brim with minerals and vitamins, at service to the plant kingdom entire, and you and I. A little wilted nettle with a fried egg is a fine spring breakfast. It's amazing at any time in its life cycle, but when it's gearing up to seed, as it is now, the silica content rises – fancy silica being the very mineral needed for this job. Nature aligns!

**Comfrey** brings calcium (among other things), a key ingredient for fruit production. Adding it regularly from now on in greatly reduces the stress that comes with low calcium levels.

Add a couple of cups to your backpack sprayer, include EM and seaweed too, if you have them, then shower the orchard and vegie garden with cell strengthening goodness. This



EDIBLE GARDEN

KATH IRVINE

feed is especially useful when crops are under par or disease pressure is high in an inclement season. Use it monthly if all is well, or as much as weekly if your trees or plants are stressed in any way.

If you have none to hand, never fear – make a brew today. Tis super quick and easy and will be ready in about a week if weather is warm.

To make tea:

- gather enough nettles and comfrey to pack a 10 litre bucket
- boil a pot of water and pour it over the herb, then top the bucket up with unchlorinated and unflouridated water
- leave it in a warm, sunny spot – I use the greenhouse during cooler weather – sit a lid loosely on it and give it a good, whirly stir every day.

It's ready to use when it stops bubbling, which takes anywhere from seven to 14 days. In cool weather, it'll take longer.

When it's ready, filter it into a clean bucket through a sack or the like to remove any little bits that might block the sprayer. Empty the sieved bits onto your compost pile or around deserving plants – your tomatoes will love it.

Store the juice in a dark cool place and use it up by autumn.

Make no mistake, these sprays aren't the saving grace, rather the cherry on the top of your diverse, living, naturally healthy garden. They contribute overall to steadily building and improving plant health. Shift your focus in this direction, towards a few gentle, well-timed nudges. That's all your food garden needs.

■ *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.*



Stinging nettle, such a vital plant. Kath lets it grow in the garden and as it seeds, adds it to liquid feed. Photo Kath Irvine

**A huge thank you to the many businesses who supported our Fireworks Extravaganza. Without your support the Fireworks Extravaganza could not have happened.**

## Waitohu School

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TO BE: Valuing and nurturing individuals to be themselves.  
OUR BEST: In all things there are many forms of best – as individuals and as a community of learners we always strive to be our best.

# Work to begin at gorge slip

After a series of detailed geotechnical, environmental and engineering investigations, Kāpiti Coast District Council has finalised the plan to reopen Blue Bluff on Ōtaki Gorge Road.

Earthworks are scheduled to begin early next year. All going well the road will reopen about

May, restoring access to Ōtaki Forks and Tararua Forest Park.

Two slips need to be fixed; the overslip where material has fallen onto the road from the hill above, and the underslip where the road is undermined by a collapse beneath it.

To fix the overslip, debris will be cleared and the

road rebuilt along its original alignment. At the site of the underslip, workers will cut back into the bank and realign the road further from the river.

Waka Kotahi funding has been approved, and the agency has lodged resource consent applications with KCDC and Greater Wellington for the work.

## HELP US MINIMISE THE IMPACTS OF FLOODING ON OUR COMMUNITY

We're updating flood hazard maps for Kāpiti Coast awa (rivers and streams).

Your photos, memories, and experiences can help us reduce the impacts of flooding on people, businesses, and infrastructure.

Visit our website to share your flood photos and kōrero to help prepare and protect the community.



Go to - [haveyoursay.gw.govt.nz/kapiti-flood-hazard-mapping](https://haveyoursay.gw.govt.nz/kapiti-flood-hazard-mapping)



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Bode is excited to invite locals to visit our site in Ōtaki and explore first-hand the future of affordable, high-performing, sustainable living.

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Located along the old highway, the entrance is marked by open gates and welcoming flags. Step inside and discover our signature Bodes – homes designed with light-filled spaces, superior energy efficiency, and quality craftsmanship, all within cost-effective, sustainable designs.

This site highlights the exceptional standards of Bode's SIPs (structurally insulated panels) construction, offering comfort and performance without compromise. Explore how Bode is shaping the future of housing in Ōtaki with innovative, affordable homes that don't just meet but exceed expectations.

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**BUSINESS PROFILE**

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



Bruce Saunders at his Kāpiti Firewood yard on Riverbank Road.

Photo Ōtaki Today

# Bruce's wood business on fire

**Bruce Saunders is a chip off the old block.**

He's affable, hard-working and loves the outdoors. His father was Sandy Saunders, well known as an Ōtaki College teacher and coach of the First XV from the 1960s into the 1990s. His mother, Noeline Reichenbach, was a teacher at Waitohu School. They and the family would often trek into the hills around Ōtaki.

Now Bruce is doing what he clearly enjoys – getting his hands dirty in a huge yard on Riverbank Road where he sells about 3000 tonnes of firewood a year. His business, Kāpiti Firewood, sells dry split firewood throughout Kāpiti and Horowhenua.

The wood is mostly pine, but also includes macrocarpa and gum, or mixed. It comes from his own 14 hectare pine forest in Shannon, occasionally from other forests, and from farms where the owners want to clear some land – often to replace the exotic trees with native species.

"I never run out of supply," he says.

Bruce's one hectare yard at this time of year is piled high with wood – some of it logs, but mostly already split and in open sheds or outdoors. It's the time of year when timber from trees that were mostly planted in the 1990s and harvested in recent months dries out, ready to burn in winter.

"It'll dry out pretty quickly when you get

the warm breeze coming through," Bruce says. "Even the green stuff now will be dry for winter."

Rain doesn't bother him too much. A few days in the sun, or a bit longer under cover is usually enough to get the timber dry.

While the pre-winter months of February-March are busy as people stock up for winter, Bruce says there's always a steady trade. Some people get in early, others just want something for the wood-fired barbecue or summer evening firepit.

Bruce's driver, Siana Andrews, delivers free to any location from Levin to Paekākāriki. His partner, Kirsten Heenan, runs his office.


Bruce bought Kāpiti Firewood in 2012 when

it was located near what is now the expressway. He had to move, so he brought the wood he already had to the site to Riverbank, along with all his machinery.

Not long after he left Ōtaki College, Bruce went to Canada where he did building work – and played rugby. Back in New Zealand after three years, he worked in dairy farming and forestry.

Before buying Kāpiti Firewood, he collaborated with Levin Sawmakers to build a custom hydraulic chainsaw made on the trailer of an old Mitchpine trailer. Bruce still uses it in his yard.

■ See [kاپitifirewood.co.nz](http://kاپitifirewood.co.nz), 022 380 5174



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# HĪTŌRIA/History

## Memories abound in local gardens

**Many gardens – not just small private ones but also larger public ones – are often “memorial” gardens, although they might not always be called that.**

While we do have a memorial garden proper here in Ōtaki, other spaces serve the same purpose without that title.

The officially named Memorial Gardens that surround the Ōtaki War Memorial are well-tended by Kāpiti Coast District Council and are an important public green space in this town. The use of this area is not limited to the Anzac Day ceremonies, but provides a place for ongoing remembrance of and respect for those who died in the terrible world wars. On a daily basis, the gardens provide respite, relaxation and, on occasion, entertainment for locals. Its inclusion of public toilets and the Plunket rooms does not detract from its purpose, but rather enhances it as a truly public space.

The garden was designed by Harold Small (born in Ōtaki, 1879), and though the plantings have changed over time, the space still reflects his passion for horticulture and design. He was an avid proponent of native plants in residential gardens, which was unusual in that time. His interests in botany started at an early age and he attended Canterbury College School of Agriculture, (known now as Lincoln University) where he studied and topped his classes in botany, entomology and agricultural chemistry.



OUR HERITAGE

NICKY TREADWELL



Ōtaki’s Memorial Gardens fill up every Anzac Day as locals commemorate those who died in war. Photo Ōtaki Today

When he returned to Ōtaki he continued his interest in the horticultural field, growing and exhibiting prize daffodils, but also developing further his love for native plants. As a job, Harold worked as a farmer, growing horticultural crops. He developed a large collection of native plants and advised other collectors, from both here and overseas, and his efforts earned him a fellowship with the Royal Horticultural Society. After moving to New Plymouth he continued to farm, grow daffodils and landscaping gardens. He died in 1947, aged 68.

Outside the Ōtaki Library is a space that has been developed as a community vegetable and fruit garden, again beautifully tended by KCDC. Close by, next to the War Memorial Hall, are more garden beds, their plantings changing every season. Between the two spaces is the Gertrude Atmore Lounge (known as the Supper Room), the clock tower and a large rock that commemorates the life and service to the town of Dr Gertrude Atmore (nee Applegate), with the words “beloved physician” included on the plaque.

Academically talented from an early age, Gertrude was the only woman to graduate in 1919 from Otago Medical School. Her

career as a physician began in Coromandel, but just before her marriage to Charles Frederick Atmore, a lawyer based in Ōtaki, she had shifted to Ōtaki where she became the superintendent of the Ōtaki Tuberculosis Sanatorium. After her marriage she set up her own practice in the town, specialising in obstetrics.

She quickly earned the trust of the locals, including the large Māori population, and did indeed become “beloved”. Among her philanthropic activities was her involvement in setting up the Ōtaki Children’s Health Camp, and the undertaking of the voluntary role as its medical officer.

When her husband became mayor of Ōtaki, a position he held on and off for several years, she took on the role of mayoress, which she continued for nearly 20 years. This period covered the Second World War and the Depression, and her duties extended to assisting women in many ways during this time.

It was in 1964 that the clock tower was dedicated to her, and the plinth and rock including the plaque erected. An inscription on the clocktower read: “May I appeal to you as you pass by and glance at this evidence of affection and love of the women of Ōtaki, to emulate the indomitable spirit of service so nobly shown by Doctor Gertrude Atmore.”

The Kate Sheppard Garden is in Huruātai Park and consists of 16 camellia bushes planted in 1992 to commemorate the centenary of Women’s Suffrage in New Zealand/Aotearoa. In 1893 this country was the first in the world to enshrine in law the right for women to vote in parliamentary elections – a hard-fought victory for the women who organised the push for the right to vote. The white camellia was the emblem of the women’s suffrage movement.

Named the suffragettes, the title comes from the word suffrage – meaning the right to vote in public political elections. Many of the women who claimed the title were those involved in the Women’s Christian Temperance Union, trade unionists and wāhine Māori. During the seven-year campaign, a total of 31,872 were collected, the largest petition ever gathered in Australasia. It was delivered in a wheelbarrow.

There are other types of memorials in the town that some might not find aesthetically pleasing, but have been created with all the emotion that other memorial gardens and spaces contain. Rather than having carefully tended plantings, the memorials to people who have died as a result of road accidents are decorated with plastic flowers, mementos and messages. In evoking daily the memories of the individuals who were killed, these power poles are surely as powerful an emblem as a stone obelisk or large rock.

Not all memorial gardens are permanent structures, however. It might be that a place becomes significant in a transient way – perhaps significant for one day, not necessarily a lasting period of time. It is our memories of the space and what occurred there that create the permanence in our minds.

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

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# OLD SCHOOL PHOTOS ŌTAKI COLLEGE

Compiled by Debbi Carson



## ŌTAKI COLLEGE 1986 FORM 4RB

Who remembers these 14 year-olds from 1986? Drop us an email if you know who these students and who their teacher is.

### GOT OLD PHOTOS?

If you have old school photos – or any photos of old Ōtaki – please get in touch. We're building our archive so we can keep publishing snapshots of life when the town and district were younger. Email us, including names and other information if you can.

Contact [debbi@idmedia.co.nz](mailto:debbi@idmedia.co.nz) with additions or corrections to captions.

# Festive season celebrations in the Archives

## Ngā Taonga extends best wishes for the festive season to the readers of Ōtaki Today.

To celebrate the season, we're sharing a few historic personal records cared for by the Archive that capture the joy of Christmas gift opening. You could say that these items are both past and present! They can be watched by visiting [ngataonga.org.nz](http://ngataonga.org.nz) and searching for their reference number.

### CHRISTMAS 1952: Ref. F27649

This home film, credited to A H Reynolds, captures a family opening Christmas presents by a decorated tree outside the filmmaker's Auckland house. There's a bright array of presents for the family – dolls and dolly furniture for Heather, and toy cars and tools for Bruce.

There's Christmas dinner inside with the extended family, the

children playing in the grass with new toys, cutting the Christmas cake and eating Christmas lunch.

### CHRISTMAS 1953: Ref. F27621

A H Reynolds is at it again in this home film that captures the cheery family opening presents one year later in 1953.

Bruce and Heather Reynolds open their presents in bed on Christmas morning. Bruce points a toy gun at the camera and Heather holds up a soap set.

The family gather at the Christmas tree to open more presents together. Everyone is wearing party hats and showing their presents to each other and the camera.

Heather unwraps a blackboard and a woman holds up a plate with the Queen and Prince Philip on it. The family lines up outside to wave at the camera.

### NEW EXPERIENCES ARE AN EVERYDAY THING: (1967) Ref. F38742

Credited to Hilda Brodie-Smith, this film is a collection of early life experiences for her twins, including unwrapping gifts at Christmas time. They must have been happy with the tricycles!

The twins, Julia and Michael, experience some of life's firsts: their first day at Porirua School; firecrackers; Christmas; managing to blow up a balloon; bubble-blowing through a wire loop; learning to count; visiting the dental nurse; and a birthday party with friends.



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H  
M

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The team of Hobson Mills Law wishes you a safe and enjoyable holiday season.

# TAMARIKI FUN

## Pepper home safely

Pepper, a six-year-old cockatoo who was stolen from Staglands on November 17, has been safely returned to her home. A young Porirua man who bought Pepper online earlier in the week recognised her from a news story and took her to the Porirua Police Station. Staglands manager Sarah Purdy expressed her gratitude, calling it “an early Christmas miracle”. Pepper is thinner than usual after her ordeal, but is otherwise healthy and happy to be home. The reserve has since moved her to a safer aviary to prevent any future incidents.



## CADE'S CHRISTMAS PUZZLE

This is a WORDSEARCH puzzle with a hidden message. Find all the words listed at right. Words can go in any direction and share letters, as well as cross over each other. Once you find the words, copy the unused letters starting in the top left corner, to spell out the hidden message.

## THE ALMOST CHRISTMAS SENTENCE

T H R S E E E S F S W E E K S U N T I L  
 C H R I T S L O A T L M A S A G S U P W  
 G O N B A A O V L M T E M X G C J S S O  
 L S E S R D R Z E M T U I T Y G G M C Z  
 C K Q S E B B W E S R S T G M D Z A N E  
 V F V D A C R C F F O E I F H N B G V Q  
 W K S K R N R A P M N M I R M U G R M Z  
 P R E S E N T S C A W H W N H Z O N U H  
 W L D P M E M A C K H E Y W D C P I R F  
 Y D N A C G E Z A G A O M N E E U U I U  
 F W J U N X R R F I Y L I M A F E U W N  
 B S B S H Y F I T V N B P M L R S R S J  
 T Y G Y A E R H R I A U R I D W P A M V  
 T H G Z A A S M H N Z Z H L U Q D X L H  
 X A J S O D B M Y G Z L A C W K Y R Y Z

CANDY CANE CHRISTMAS ELVES FAMILY FOOD FUN  
 GIVING PRESENTS REINDEER SANTA SLEIGH STAR TREE

ANSWER:

## Walliams' surprise visit

Children's author and comedian David Walliams has made a surprise visit to Sylvia Park School in Auckland. Students in Room 6 had written many letters asking him to visit after learning persuasive writing techniques. Walliams, who is touring New Zealand, decided to stop by after being touched by their efforts. Room 6 teacher Sarah Gatland said her class was thrilled to meet “the best author” they'd ever seen. During his visit, Walliams shared stories from his career, read from his books, and gave away signed copies of his latest novel, *Super Sleuth*. He thanked the students for their enthusiasm, saying they helped inspire his writing. The visit ended with a heartfelt school-wide haka.



## Is it ok to sing along at the movies?

The world's largest cinema chain, AMC Theatres, has officially banned singing during screenings of the new movie *Wicked*. Their message is clear: “Silence is golden . . . no singing.” A debate has sparked opinions among fans and theatres. *Shortland Street* actor and *Wicked* fan Ava Diakhaby thinks audiences should enjoy the movie. “We're there to hear the performances of Ariana Grande and Cynthia Erivo,” she says. Film reviewer Tom Augustine says some audience reaction is fine, like clapping or cheering, but full karaoke might be too much. What do you think? Do you to sing along at the movies?



a r t

## holiday projects

Here's a fun activity for the **SUMMER** holidays,

when the sun is **too hot**

to be outside, or heaven forbid it's raining!

Find some old magazines

and make this **SILHOUETTE** collage. Take a **PHOTO** of your child and print out **A LARGE VERSION OF IT.**

Cut pictures from the magazines and glue them on the back of the picture.

Once it is all glued, let it dry for a day, then recut to the shape of your child's face. Glue to a base page and frame!



## WORDMAKER

Can you make 34 words from

C O C K A T O O



Answers are on page 26.

## SAFE

### THIS SUMMER

An adult must watch children in water at all times – no mobile phones or devices.

Never rely on water wings - they can NOT protect your child from drowning.

Ensure your backyard pool is properly fenced and complies with current regulations.

Pool gates must NEVER be left open.

Talk with your children often about swim safety, in the car or at dinner.

## SWIMMING

Make it a rule that children are not allowed in the water until an adult is present.

Remove all toys from the pool when everyone has finished swimming.

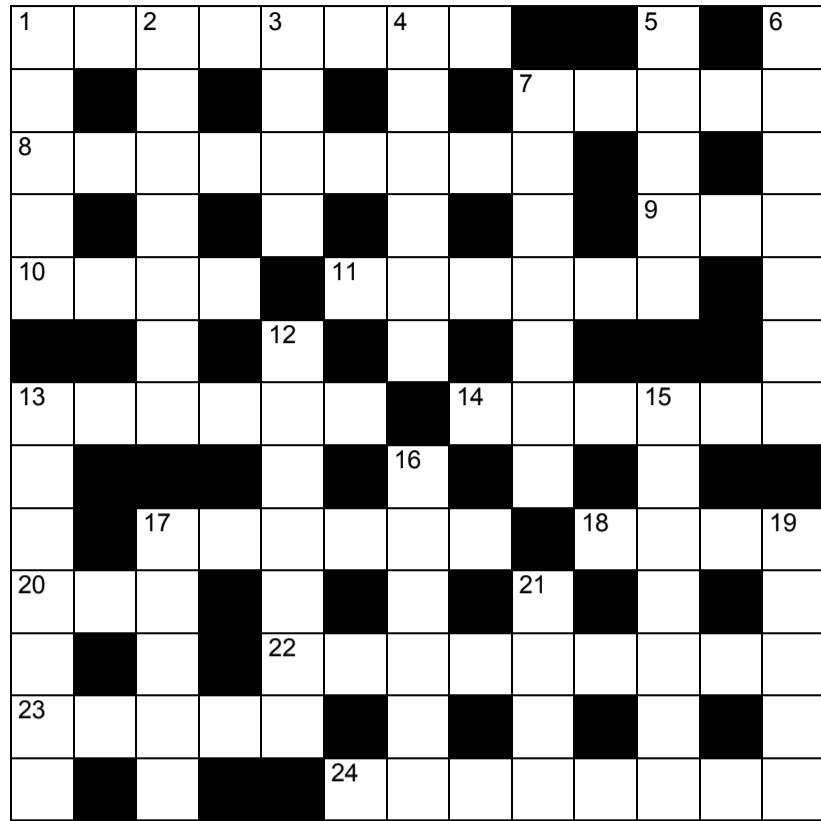


When out on the water in boats, make sure children are wearing a life jacket.

Teach your children how to spot a rip and how to be safe at the beach.

for more information go to: [watersafetynz.org](http://watersafetynz.org)

THE CROSSWORD #NZNZ1932A (answers below)



ACROSS

- 1. Former All Black and rugby league international who campaigned on behalf of David Bain (3,5)
- 7. Shape a tree (5)
- 8. Our second largest national park, after Fiordland (9)
- 9. Morepork or ruru (3)
- 10. Speed contest (4)
- 11. Trainee (6)
- 13. Carpet maker in NZ (6)
- 14. Computing expert (inf) (6)
- 17. Being (6)
- 18. Competent (4)
- 20. Concern of IRD (3)
- 22. Bed for a premature baby (9)
- 23. Alphabetical list (5)
- 24. Major NZ industry with operational

headquarters in Rotorua (8)

DOWN

- 1. Bloke (inf) (5)
- 2. Morally correct (7)
- 3. Off course (4)
- 4. Canvas shelter (6)
- 5. Businessman who became leader of the National Party in 2021 (5)
- 6. Hermit (7)
- 7. New Zealand term for a drop scone (7)
- 12. Favourite NZ cereal often featuring collectible sports cards (4-3)
- 13. Pīwakawaka, bird (7)
- 15. Natural environment (7)
- 16. Plaster coating (6)
- 17. Radiate (5)
- 19. Ahead of time (5)
- 21. Musical instrument (4)



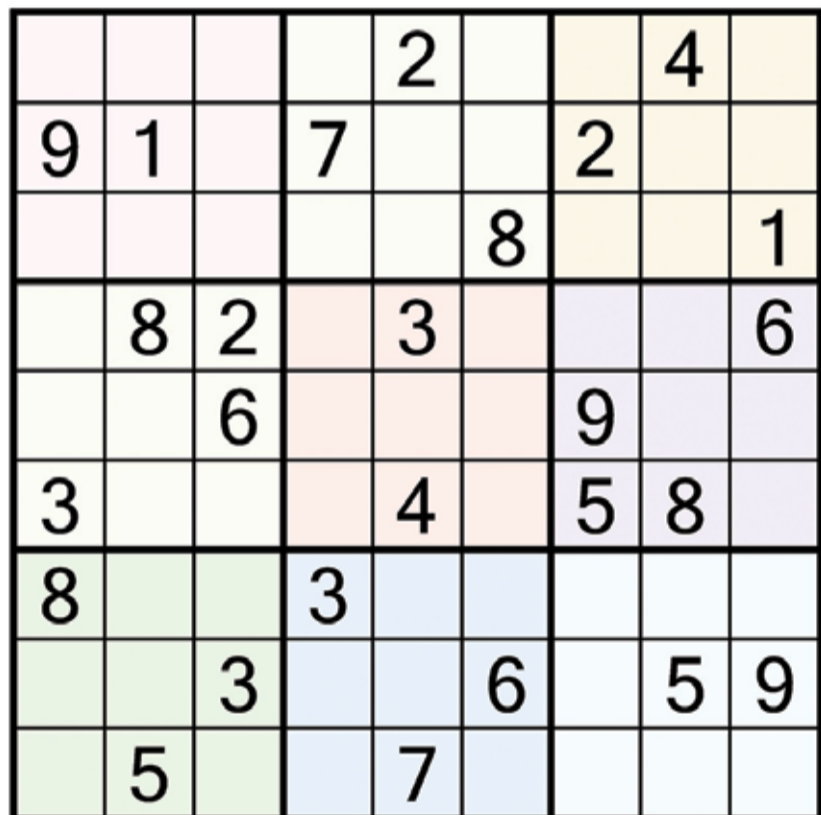
A KIWI CHRISTMAS QUIZ

Think you know a bit about your country? Answers below.

- 1. According to a popular New Zealand Christmas song of the 1960s, who will "pull the Christmas sleigh in the Southern Hemisphere"?
- 2. In which New Zealand department store did Santa Claus first appear?
- 3. What tree did some early settlers refer to as "Antipodean holly"?
- 4. Santa Claus made his commercial New Zealand debut in which year?
- 5. Which organisation supplied free cigars, coffee and cake to New Zealand soldiers at Christmas during the First World War?
- 6. Who is credited with conducting the first Christmas Day church service in New Zealand?
- 7. Which way do you stir the Christmas pudding mixture for good luck?
- 8. What fruit, when put into the container, will keep a stored Christmas cake moist?
- 9. The first mince pies contained meat as well as fruit. True or false?
- 10. What television character attends and consumes three Christmas dinners so as not to offend anyone? a. Mr Bean b. Vicar of Dibley c. Mrs Brown.

SUDOKU PUZZLES thepuzzlecompany.co.nz

HARD #75H Use logic and process of elimination to fill in the blank cells using the numbers 1 through 9. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and 3x3 block. Puzzle solution at right..



A KIWI CHRISTMAS QUIZ ANSWERS: 1. Sticky Beak the Kiwi. 2. DIC, Wellington. 3. Pōhutukawa. 4. 1894. 5. YMCA. 6. Samuel Marsden. 7. Clockwise. 8. Apple. 9. True. 10. Vicar of Dibley.



COCKATOO WORD MAKER ANSWERS from page 30: 5-letter words:

- 1. acock 2. coact 3. cocoa. 4-letter words: 4. cock 5. cook 6. tack 7. tock 8. coca 9. coco 10. koto 11. took 12. coat 13. coot 14. taco 15. toco. 3-letter words: 16. ack 17. kat 18. koa 19. oak 20. oka 21. act 22. cat 23. coo 24. cot 25. oca 26. oat 27. oot 28. tao 29. too. 2-letter words 30. ka 31. ok 32. at 33. ta 34. to.



Ōtaki River entrance tides December 11- January 17

<https://www.metservice.com/marine/regions/kapiti-wellington/tides/locations/otaki-river-entrance>

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

	HIGH	LOW	HIGH	LOW	HIGH
WED 11 DEC -	00:28	06:48	12:57	19:11	
THU 12 DEC -	01:30	07:52	14:00	20:10	
FRI 13 DEC -	02:29	08:51	14:59	21:07	
SAT 14 DEC -	03:25	09:45	15:52	22:01	
SUN 15 DEC -	04:17	10:35	16:43	22:53	
MON 16 DEC -	05:06	11:23	17:32	23:42	
TUE 17 DEC -	05:52	12:08	18:19	-	
WED 18 DEC	00:30	06:37	12:52	19:05	
THU 19 DEC	01:15	07:20	13:35	19:51	
FRI 20 DEC	01:59	08:02	14:19	20:36	
SAT 21 DEC	02:43	08:45	15:04	21:22	
SUN 22 DEC	03:29	09:32	15:53	22:11	
MON 23 DEC	04:19	10:23	16:46	23:02	
TUE 24 DEC	05:13	11:22	17:42	23:58	
WED 25 DEC	06:14	12:25	18:39	-	
THU 26 DEC -	00:56	07:16	13:28	19:35	
FRI 27 DEC -	01:53	08:15	14:24	20:29	
SAT 28 DEC -	02:46	09:06	15:13	21:18	
SUN 29 DEC -	03:34	09:51	15:57	22:04	
MON 30 DEC -	04:17	10:32	16:39	22:47	
TUE 31 DEC -	04:58	11:11	17:20	23:29	
WED 1 JAN -	05:38	11:50	18:01	-	
THU 2 JAN	00:12	06:18	12:30	18:44	
FRI 3 JAN	00:54	06:59	13:11	19:28	
SAT 4 JAN	01:38	07:42	13:56	20:14	
SUN 5 JAN	02:24	08:28	14:43	21:02	
MON 6 JAN	03:13	09:18	15:35	21:54	
TUE 7 JAN	04:08	10:15	16:32	22:51	
WED 8 JAN	05:09	11:19	17:35	23:54	
THU 9 JAN	06:18	12:29	18:41	-	
FRI 10 JAN -	01:03	07:30	13:41	19:50	
SAT 11 JAN -	02:12	08:39	14:47	20:56	
SUN 12 JAN -	03:14	09:38	15:44	21:56	
MON 13 JAN -	04:09	10:29	16:36	22:48	
TUE 14 JAN -	04:57	11:14	17:22	23:34	
WED 15 JAN -	05:40	11:56	18:05	-	
THU 16 JAN	00:16	06:20	12:35	18:46	
FRI 17 JAN	00:55	06:58	13:12	19:24	

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



CROSSWORD #NZ1932A ACROSS: 1. Joe Karam, 7. Prune, 8. Kahurangi, 9. Owl, 10. Race, 11. Intern, 13. Feltex, 14. Techie, 17. Entity, 18. Able, 20. Tax, 22. Incubator, 23. Index, 24. Forestry. DOWN: 1. Joker, 2. Ethical, 3. Awry, 4. Awning, 5. Luxon, 6. Recluse, 7. Pikelet, 12. Weet-bix, 13. Fantail, 15. Habitat, 16. Stucco, 17. Exude, 19. Early, 21. Oboe.

# TAKĀRO/Sport



LEFT: The Ōtaki Combined team that won the NZ secondary schools canoe polo junior category last month. From left, Finn Butler (Ōtaki College), Lachie Roddick (Paraparaumu College), Luke Schischka (Horowhenua College), Kieran Butler, Bailey Johns and Jericho Housiaux (all Ōtaki College), and coach Cam Butler.

BELOW: Ōtaki canoe polo players in action are Kieran Butler (with ball) and Luke Schischka.

Photos supplied



## Local paddlers rise to top

**World champion women and consistent medals in secondary school championships put Ōtaki canoe polo players, coaches and administrators at the forefront of the growing sport.**

In 2016, Ōtaki stalwart Peter Housiaux coached the New Zealand senior women's team that won the world championships in Italy. Several team members were from Ōtaki.

"This was a reflection on both Peter's coaching and the high level the Ōtaki womans team was competing at in New Zealand's national competitions," says Ōtaki Canoe Club coach/manager Cam Butler. "As a local club, we certainly punch above our weight."

Ōtaki teams continue to compete successfully at national competitions organised by the New Zealand Canoe Polo Association. The growing number of young players means local teams also do well at secondary school level.

Ōtaki College often competes at the NZ secondary school championships. Last month the junior team (under 15-year-olds) won their category at the championships. The Ōtaki Combined team came away with the gold medal in the open division 2 category.

The "combined" team included players from Ōtaki, Horowhenua and Paraparaumu colleges – a situation that occurs when no single school has enough players for a team (minimum five, preferably seven).

Cam says that going into the final with no subs due to sickness, and against a team physically much bigger that had beaten Ōtaki in the round robin, there were some nerves.

"A change of tactics to suit our size saw the Ōtaki Combined team come away with a well deserved win. As the coach I was just so proud of the team who played themselves to a standstill."

Canoe polo is a sport in which kayaks are used to get up and

down the court or pool. Teams compete against each other with water polo balls to score in their opponent's goal, which is suspended above the water at each end of the playing area.

The sport is played throughout the world and gaining in popularity throughout New Zealand. YouTube has some useful videos, including previous live streams of the secondary school championships.

"If you're interested in having a go at this fun sport then the Ōtaki Canoe Club will welcome new members when we restart in the new year," Cam says. "We play two nights a week with a beginner night on Sundays at Haruātai Pool."

All gear is provided.

Club members practise at the pool and outdoors at Winstone Lakes just north of the Ōtaki River.

■ See Ōtaki Canoe Club on Facebook and Instagram. For more information or to join, email otakicanoeclub@gmail.com or phone Cam 021 703 095.



Ōtaki

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