

# ŌTAKI TODAY

otakitoday.com

HANUERE/JANUARY 2024

Ngā Kōrero o Ōtaki



ONZM for Mary-Jane p3



Racecourse plans p6



Kokoro needs funding p20

## Pizza worker allegations

By Ian Carson

**Two of four migrant workers alleging exploitation by their employer worked for a month at Ōtaki's Pizza Land store.**

Anand Singh and Deepak (no second name) stayed at the Family Hotel in September-October. They claim they were paid for many fewer hours than they actually worked.

The two men, plus Parveen Kumar and Jatin Saroha, have filed applications with the Employment Relations Authority (ERA) seeking compensation for what they claim is exploitation by their employer. They are represented by Lower Hutt lawyer Faran Shahzad.

They all worked for Pizza Land at its main store in Lower Hutt, before Deepak and Anand were sent to the new store in Main Street, Ōtaki, in September.

Ōtaki Today visited three of the men on January 3 at their Lower Hutt flat (Parveen had just got a job in Gisborne). It was the same flat in which they allege they were threatened by their employer, Anil Kumar, with physical harm, kidnapping of family members, and deportation if they spoke to authorities about their experiences.

A Companies Office search shows Anil is sole director of Dharma Services Ltd, which operates Pizza Land.

After approaching Anil for comment, Ōtaki Today was referred to his lawyer, who said in a statement, attributed to Anil: "We are taking these [ERA] proceedings



Deepak, Jatin Saroha and Anand Singh at their Lower Hutt flat. Deepak and Anand worked in Ōtaki for a month.

Photo Ōtaki Today

very seriously and intend to fully cooperate and participate with the Authority's process. As an employer, we take the principles of the Employment Relations Act 2000 seriously and believe it is important to act in good faith and treat employees with respect, fairly and reasonably."

He said the claims were disputed. The men all came to New Zealand

from the same neighbourhood in New Delhi. They say in their ERA application they had been promised 30 hours of work a week at \$28 an hour, good accommodation and New Zealand citizenship. They also say they paid a "work premium" of between \$28,000 and \$46,600 to secure their jobs. Obtaining a work premium is illegal in New Zealand.

They say it became clear soon

after they arrived that their dream jobs were not what they had been promised.

In their ERA applications they say they worked variously from 50-70 hours a week but were paid for only 30. They claim that for some time they did not get paid at all.

"For the time period not being paid, I could not afford food and unable to provide for those who depend on me,

namely my kids, wife and parents," Deepak's application said. "During this time, when we complained on our living conditions to Anil, we were accused of being ungrateful and as collective punishment, he stopped providing the promised food, and for months we had to survive on previously bought rice, potatoes and lentils."

continues page 4

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WHAT'S ON

**FESTIVAL OF POTS AND GARDEN ART:** January 19-24, at Anam Cara, Rangiuu Rd, Ōtaki. See [otakipotteryclub.org](#)

**SUMMER MUSIC CARNIVAL:** Memorial Gardens, Ōtaki. 11am-4pm, January 20. See page 8.

**WHĀNAU FUN DAY:** Midday-4pm, Saturday January 27 at Ōtaki Pool. Free entry all day, with inflatables, live music, food trucks and a bouncy castle. Te Mania Auheke (slippery slide) will be set up at Haruātai Park, too, plus there's the splash pad, park playground (with Kāpiti Coast's tallest swing) and a pump track.

**GOLF:** Sam Doyle Memorial Golf Tournament, Ōtaki Golf Club, Saturday, February 3. As at print time, registrations are full but Rāhui Sports Club will add to a waitlist.

**COLLEGE REUNION:** Friday, February 9. It will include a tour of Ōtaki College at 2.45pm, and dinner at the RSA. See page 4

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

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

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

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

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

**COMMUNITY BOARDS:** The Ōtaki Community Board meets next at 7pm, Tuesday December 19 in the Gertrude Atmore Lounge (attached to the Memorial Hall). The next Waikanae Community Board meeting is at 7pm, Tuesday February 27, at the Waikanae Community Centre, 28 Utauta St. The public is welcome at community board meetings. Search "meetings and agendas" on the council website, [kapiticoast.govt.nz](#), from two days before the meeting for the agenda, which is also at council libraries and service centres. To speak at a meeting, register by calling 04 296 4700 or 0800 486 486, or email [democracy.services@kapiticoast.govt.nz](#)

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

**MEN'S GROUP:** Men meet 7pm every second Tuesday in Ōtaki for support and discussion on a range of issues. Contact Brendan Roach 06 364 8205.

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

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

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

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

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

**JP service** every Monday 10.30am-12.30pm;

**Age Concern** every 2nd Thursday 10am-noon

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

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

**WAIKANA 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](#)**

'Old dog' Winston gets to work

An old dog for a hard road can apply as much to politics as it does to back country farming.

A brief scrutiny of the activities of Winston Peters since he resumed the role of foreign minister in the National-led coalition government shows that while most Kiwis enjoyed holiday time over the Christmas-New Year break, the NZ First leader was already building up relationships with the United States.

A talk to the New Zealand-US Business Council before the break; a statement in support of western allied action to combat hostile actions against shipping in the Red Sea; and a telephone discussion with US secretary of state Anthony Blinken, convey a clear picture of a minister who knows what he wants and how to go about getting it.

What does he want? Initially at least, public evidence of a close working relationship with Washington that benefits both countries and indicates to Australia, Europe, China, and South-east Asia that Wellington is firmly positioned in the alliance of democratic countries. His early summer schedule achieved that goal. It set a foundation for discussions around the role that a New Zealand defence structure creaking under the twin burdens of aged equipment and recruitment issues can play in 21st century strategic management in the Pacific and globally.

It also set a stage for the coalition to be ready for future debate when Parliament gets under way again. New Zealand's positioning on the Gaza

conflict, and its stance towards Israel on the one hand and the Palestinians on the other, will be at the forefront of parliamentary debate. It is probable also that opposition parties will want to know whether the coalition intends taking up a type of membership within the Aukus defence grouping.

Labour held off membership. Peters and his National and ACT colleagues are likely to see more benefits than downside to a linkage that signals a willingness to partner with members who, in turn, accept that economic realities inhibit the extent of the country's ability to contribute hardware to areas of conflict.

In readying himself for this round of his foreign policy stewardship, the NZ First leader had one especially useful "old dog" trick up his sleeve.

President of the NZ-US Business Council is Rosemary Banks, New Zealand's former ambassador to the US and an old friend of the minister from his period in office as part of the Ardern administration. Her up-to-date knowledge of personalities, trends and position-taking in the American capital is gold on the international diplomatic circuit. With her in the wings, the "old dog" was ready for the complex road and his next "rodeo"!

It is probable that street fury whipped up by pro-Palestinian groups will expose the Luxon administration to a good deal of pressure for a change of position toward the Gaza conflict. Prospects of it doing so are close to zero. It has called for peace in the region and can argue that in doing so it is favouring neither Israelis nor

Palestinians but has, and is, giving voice globally to those who seek a quick end to the fighting. There is no downside for Peters in his resurrection of a stronger US-NZ relationship.

Expected to face hard questioning within the cabinet before this month is out is new finance minister Nicola Willis. Apart from the day-to-day rigorous demands of the portfolio itself, she faces an across-the-board political need of National, Act and NZ First for an agreed financial package that embraces the next three years of government. It should set out clearly the objectives and the way in which these will be achieved. The package should be directed at explaining the need, the aim, and the way the actions taken over the period will address the country's economic ills. In the absence of such a mutually acceptable policy mix the coalition partners are likely to risk regular debilitating internal differences over the handling of budgetary matters.

A three-year plan gives leeway for administrative juggling between the years of a parliamentary term, certainty to the investment community of government intentions and voters a clear indication of what their government has in store for them. A word of praise from international credit agencies whose views influence the course of interest rates could be expected to follow.

The "Old Dog" in the cabinet has set a clear course for the government in foreign policy within three months of taking office. The spotlight now turns to a newbie in cabinet terms – the finance minister – to match in her portfolio the pace of change that he has set.

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

POLITICS



BRUCE KOHN



ŌTAKI TODAY Ngā Kōrero o Ōtaki

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# Community at heart of ONZM

By Ian Carson

**New Year honours often recognise people for service to their community.**

Community was certainly at the heart of an award this year for Te Horo woman Mary-Jane Rivers, who was made an Officer of the New Zealand Order of Merit (ONZM). However, what sets her apart from many other award recipients is not so much her work on the ground, but as a facilitator – one who works out how best to strengthen communities, at which she is clearly very good.

Her New Year award citation said she received the honour for “services to community-led development, governance and education”.

“I was stunned,” she says of the award. “I thought it was our friends having a joke when I first heard.”

Her list of achievements is impressive, and though she rates getting the Inspiring Communities initiative off the ground as a highlight, on a personal level she’s also proud of pushing through chemotherapy during the past year to successfully beat breast cancer. While she has now relinquished her overseas roles, the battle seems not to have slowed her down much.

She is still involved in many organisations throughout the country committed to community initiatives.

She says she has greatly enjoyed her time advising on or managing development projects throughout the Pacific and South-east Asia. Her work has taken her to India, Eastern Europe, Africa, Kazakhstan and Mongolia. Several projects focused on the special role that women could play working together to lift themselves, families and communities out of poverty.



Mary-Jane Rivers ONZM at her Te Horo home.

Photo Ōtaki Today

She continues to support a women’s development project in Tamil Nadu, India, which has led to her becoming a board member of the international development NGO, UnionAID.

Mary-Jane was a driving force behind the creation of Inspiring Communities, which was created 15 years ago to focus on sharing the experience, lessons learned and inspiration from community-led initiatives. It has played a vital role in communities finding their own solutions.

“Community-led development recognises that communities are made up of diverse groups, which all have a stake in a place where

change is happening,” she says. “These groups can include local residents, central and local government, business, churches, iwi, hapū, funders and service providers. They might all be affected by the change, or have a vision for the way they want their place to develop.”

She says there is an increasing mind-shift towards the power of place-based, community-led development, where authorities are encouraged to collaborate with local people and groups.

“Communities know best about what works for them, what they need to thrive. Sharing local wisdom and practice-based evidence should inform public policy and systems change.”

The desperation of a young mother with two children motivated Mary-Jane to help establish the North Island’s first Women’s Refuge in Upper Hutt. The only other refuge in the mid-1970s was in Christchurch.

“I was working for Upper Hutt City Council and there was nowhere for this woman and her children to go,” Mary-Jane says. “We managed to get her into a safe house, but knew that more formal support for women was needed.”

Despite opposition from some church groups, arguing refuges broke up “good Christian families”, she gained support from the council and other organisations to establish the Upper Hutt refuge. Others followed.

She went on to establish and lead the Social Policy Unit in the Ministry of Works and Development. Its role was to assess the impacts on communities of big development proposals. Initially these focused on energy developments in Northland, Taranaki, Otago and the Chatham Islands. Later the focus changed to government and industry restructuring.

In 1985, aged 34, she became the founding director of policy in the Ministry of Women’s Affairs.

Next she was the first chief executive of the newly formed Citizens Advice Bureau. In that role her networking and interpersonal skills led the organisation through a significant period of change towards national quality standards, computerisation and enhanced policy advice for government, based on local enquiry data.

She later became a freelance consultant. Mary-Jane and husband Patrick McCombs moved to Te Horo about four years ago after living for many years in Mount Victoria, Wellington.

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# Pizza workers allege exploitation

from front page

He and Anand had brought some savings with them, which they had to use to buy anything else. Jatin had only \$100.

Meanwhile, the men say five of them all had to sleep on the floor in one room of the flat, and were each charged \$220 a week. Their beds were plastic wrapping laid on the floor.

“It was really difficult, and it’s still stressful while we wait to see what happens with our case,” Jatin says. “We haven’t got work and our families back home are worried about us.”

“We were going to send money home, but there isn’t any. Some of us have a wife and kids who rely on us.”

In his ERA application, Jatin says for the hours he worked his average pay was \$4.12 an hour.

Deepak’s application says for nearly two months he wasn’t given any days off. He was not paid when he was ill, and after working on public holidays he got no extra pay or alternative days off. He says he and other workers were also often woken in the middle



The Pizza Land store in Ōtaki.

of the night to go to the Lower Hutt store to check the dough and put it in the fridge.

Anand alleges they were threatened with deportation if they said anything. That would have meant the humiliation of returning home penniless.

However, the men met lawyer Faran Shahzad, who encouraged them to take a case to the ERA and apply to the Ministry of Business, Innovation, and Employment (MBIE) for Migrant Exploitation Protection Visas, which allows them to leave their job

while any allegations are being investigated.

An MBIE spokesperson told Ōtaki Today they would not comment on individual cases, but applications for Migrant Exploitation Protection Visas were processed as a high priority

Meanwhile, Deepak, Anand and Jatin are desperate to find work. They all have experience in hospitality, in Deepak’s case having worked in 5-star New Delhi hotels.

“We’re honest people and we’re not afraid of hard work,” he says. “We would love to be working for a good employer, anywhere in New Zealand, including Ōtaki.”

Jatin says they all thought New Zealand would be a great place, but their experiences have tainted that perception.

“It’s hard to be happy here when you’ve been treated badly and you’re stressed about your future.”

Lawyer Faran says he would be happy to talk to any employer who could offer the men jobs. He is offering free assistance with contracts, visas etc.

• Contact faran.shahzad@faranip.com

## IN BRIEF

**Man arrested**

A 36-year-old male was arrested on December 29 and charged with driving while disqualified, driving with excess blood alcohol causing death, and driving with two or more qualifying drugs in the blood. The arrest follows the death on August 18 last year of Conor Doyle, who died when his motorcycle was struck by an oncoming vehicle on Mill Road, Ōtaki. The man has been remanded in custody to appear in Levin District Court on January 24.

**Waitangi Day celebrations**

Whakarongotai Marae in Waikanae is hosting the district’s Waitangi Day commemorations from 10am-5pm on Saturday, February 3. The free event is open to all and will begin with a mihi whakatau on the marae (gather at the marae gates at 9.30am), followed by kapa haka, entertainment, historical storytelling, and activities for tamariki, with high tea and hangi for a koha. There will also be food trucks and stalls, See Ātiawa ki Whakarongotai on Facebook for details.

**Kite fest volunteers sought**

Ōtaki Kite Festival organisers are seeking more volunteers for Saturday and Sunday, February 17 and 18. Roles include beach marshalling, looking after the dunes, selling kites and helping kids at the kite train. Rostered two-hour shifts are from 10am. Help with the set-up on Friday and set-up/pack-up on Saturday and Sunday would also be appreciated. If you can help, email Katie Miles at otakikitefestival@gmail.com or call 027 4515 044.



## Call-out to celebrate 65 years

**One of Ōtaki College’s first students, Ron Gibbard, is organising an informal reunion to mark the college’s 65th anniversary.**

The gathering is on Friday, February 9. It will include a tour of the college guided by principal Andy Fraser at 2.45pm, and dinner in the evening at the Ōtaki RSA.

Any former student from any year is welcome to attend, plus anyone who might have attended Ōtaki School but went on to another college.

■ If attending, email [rongibbard@gmail.com](mailto:rongibbard@gmail.com) or text 021 123 0187.

Students from 1959, when the college opened as Ōtaki District High School, at the 50th reunion in 2009. From left, Glenn Burt, Paul Overend, John Cottle, Carol Taylor, Enid Heath, Lennie Nichols, Ron Gibbard, Heather Stewart, Ray Moy and Heather Watson.

Photo supplied

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#### VIETNAM DISCOVERY

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17 Sept 2024 29 DAYS

#### SOUTHERN INDIAN ODYSSEY

1 Nov 2024 16 DAYS

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# Cars impounded as cops nail hoons

Four people have had their vehicles seized by police after burnout incidents in the Ōtaki area.

Each of the four had their vehicle impounded for 28 days and charged for driving with “a sustained loss of traction”.

At one incident at Jim Winiata Way on December 18, the new road past the newly opened Mirek Smisek kilns was scattered with tyre marks (see photo at right). Several people were watching the burnouts as they occurred.

The noise and ensuing smoke disturbed residents, one of whom noted the car registration and reported the incident to police. The owner was traced to a Waikanae residence and the vehicle was impounded.

On November 30, another vehicle doing burnouts on Old State Highway 1 north of Waikanae was filmed by a member of the public. With the vehicle registration clearly visible, police were able to trace it to the Ōtaki owner.

The owner was found to be in Kirk Street, Ōtaki. Police executed a search warrant on January 2 at the address and impounded the vehicle for 28 days.

In the early evening on December 29, a car was observed laying rubber in Kirk Street, Ōtaki. Police attended



At left, damage on the road at Jim Winiata Way after burnouts (photo supplied). Above, a vehicle in the ditch along Old Hautere Road on December 15 (photo Ōtaki Today).

after a member of the public reported the incident and identified the registration number. The owner also lost the car for 28 days.

Ōtaki police chief sergeant Phil Grimstone says his team – with the assistance of Kāpiti’s road policing staff – will continue to monitor and target burnout incidents to the south of Ōtaki, especially around the Hautere, Te Horo and Peka Peka areas. However, he says the assistance of the public has been valuable.

“We’ll keep an eye on these areas, but what really helps is when someone gives us a registration

number, or films the incident,” Phil says. “If we don’t catch the offenders in the act, we can at least trace the owner and impound the vehicle.”

The process when police are not at the scene to clearly identify drivers is to put responsibility on the owner of the vehicle. It is then up to the owner to take the blame or advise who the driver might have been.

The Justice Department is also advised in case the owner also has outstanding fines.

Meantime, Phil says local police were able to help their colleagues in Tokoroa after a vehicle was reported

as driving erratically and overtaking dangerously in their area on December 31. A 31-year-old Te Horo Beach man was subsequently charged with dangerous driving. His licence was suspended for 28 days.

Nine people were processed in the Ōtaki area for drink driving during December, a number Phil says is “higher than usual for this time of year.”

One was a 41-year-old male who crashed his vehicle on Old Hautere Road on December 15 (see photo above). He registered 825 micrograms of breath alcohol, well

over the limit of 250mcg. He was charged with driving with excess breath alcohol and careless driving.

Another driver, who registered 813mcg, hit the wire barrier along the middle of the road on the main road north of Ōtaki. Other drivers – including two females aged 23 and 62 – were caught with excess breath alcohol throughout the Ōtaki area. The males were aged between 20 and 48. Several were apprehended after reports of erratic driving.

One was on the expressway, another in Main Street, Ōtaki, and another in Waerenga Road.

HAPPY  
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224

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# Development races ahead

By Ian Carson

**Plans for development of a new village at Ōtaki-Māori Racing Club have been submitted to the Environmental Protection Authority for consent.**

The plans show a concept that includes a mix of more than 500 housing units, clustered in seven zones around the racecourse on what is mostly vacant land.

There are six types of housing: single-unit, courtyard, and terrace houses; apartments; and cluster housing with shared facilities. The forms of the houses are scaled for the racecourse environment with 15-degree roof pitches, verandahs, porches for shelter and utility, and a mix of privacy and community. The design is aimed at encouraging neighbour support and a village atmosphere.

The housing stock will be factory produced, using an insulated panel system that can be customised to suit individual tastes. A production facility to manufacture housing is planned on the north-east corner.

The area around the racecourse buildings, including the stables, is largely untouched, though a new building is planned to accommodate a childcare centre. It's expected that the current buildings will be upgraded for better use by the village, racing visitors and the club. Ōtaki Pottery Club will continue to operate its Tote Modern gallery and workshops on the site.

Racing will continue at the venue, as it has since 1910 (the club was established in 1886, though originally raced near the beach).

Among the features of the proposed development is a new pedestrian and cycleway circling the course itself, parks and open spaces,

and a stormwater detention/retention "lake".

The village is being developed by The Wellington Company (TWC), with Moller Architects leading the design work.

TWC director and founder Ian Cassels says the development is a concept that will meet the changing needs of a new generation of citizens.

"It's becoming difficult for young people to buy their own property," he says. "There needs to be new thinking around housing affordability."

He believes the racecourse village will make life easier for home owners. Part of the affordability is in aggregating services, and while people might prefer to buy their house and land, it's likely most will lease the land. The advantage is lower cost because the development owner will pay rates for the land as a whole, rather than each homeowner paying for their own block.

Ian says the objective of TWC and the racing club is "to create a community that Ōtaki will celebrate as a magnificent place to raise children, complete with gardens, orchards and play areas."

"As much as possible, costs of energy, rates, insurance, maintenance etc will be managed to an absolute minimum. The ideal is for people to be able to spend much of the day – when not working offsite – in a variety of activities capable of being supported by the village and wider Ōtaki."

The development is being processed under "fast track" legislation. It could be consented within three months.

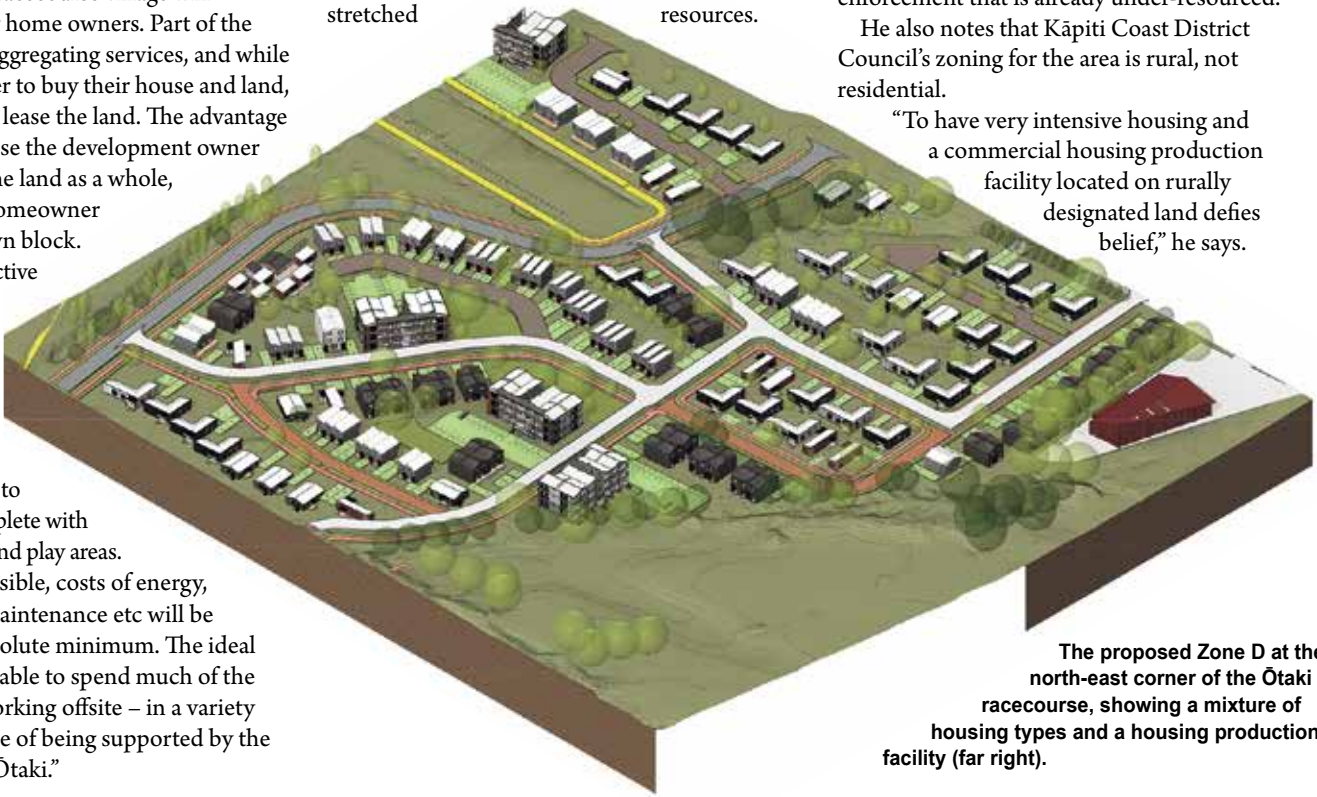
Some residents of the adjoining Te Roto and Rāhui roads are not convinced of the development's merits. One on Te Roto Road says there have been informal meetings of residents and while most people are not entirely opposed to the broader concept, they have concerns about the impact of multi-storey buildings overlooking their rural properties, and the affect a population boost will have on Ōtaki's stretched resources.



He says the development could increase Ōtaki's population by 50 percent. The concerns are related to the lack of provision for healthcare and pharmacies, a poor train service, the capacity for schools to cope, and law enforcement that is already under-resourced.

He also notes that Kāpiti Coast District Council's zoning for the area is rural, not residential.

"To have very intensive housing and a commercial housing production facility located on rurally designated land defies belief," he says.



The proposed Zone D at the north-east corner of the Ōtaki racecourse, showing a mixture of housing types and a housing production facility (far right).

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Examples of the Bode housing proposed at the racecourse.

Above left (opposite page) is vertical cluster three-storey housing. Units are one-bedroom 41sq m plus deck, and two-bedroom 53sq m plus deck.

Above from left:

Two-storey terrace housing with four-bedroom units of 54sq m and deck.

Square single storey house with two bedrooms, 64sq m and deck.

Courtyard single-storey house with two bedrooms, 88sq m; and three bedrooms, 104sq m.

Stand-alone single-storey house, two bedrooms, 54sq m and deck.

At right is the proposed site development.

Images courtesy of Moller Architects



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

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

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

Kind regards,



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

## What you need to know

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

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

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

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

## Our new contact details

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

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

**Monique Duckett**  
monique.duckett@futerisk.co.nz  
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Brand New Secondhand during a previous performance at Ōtaki's Memorial Gardens.  
Photo supplied

# Summer music treat

Four bands will be performing at the Memorial Gardens, next to the Civic Theatre, in the Ōtaki Summer Music Carnival on Saturday (January 20). The free concert, from 11am to 4pm, includes: Loaded Brasso begin the gig at 11am. The 12-piece Kapiti-based Latin American ensemble has a unique brass style of popular jazz. Led by David Langley, the band featuring vocalist/drummer Bob Glensor will play a mix of classic jazz and original compositions. At 12.30pm the spotlight will be on Taitoko. Their music is a dynamic

Kiwiana blend of old school, funk, rock, and groove, as described by local bass player/sound man Keith Murch. The repertoire encompasses originals and covers, featuring vocalist/guitarist Neil Jensen. Brand New Secondhand are on stage at 1.30pm. They are a modern reggae vibe band with a percussive musical sound and a classic feel. At 3pm, Uprising feature as the final band for the event. Band members are from Whanganui, Feilding and Marton. Drummer and music teacher Richard Munt says their music, primarily rooted in reggae, is a dynamic blend of old

school, funk, rock, and groove. With a repertoire encompassing originals and covers, Uprising is a newcomer for the Summer Music Carnival. Apart from providing free, live music, the organiser, Music Festivals & Events NZ, is putting on a free children's bouncy castle and a \$2 sausage sizzle. If the weather turns bad, the event will go to the Ōtaki RSA. Later in the evening the programme continues at The Telegraph Hotel, with the same bands featuring. There's a \$10 ticket price at the Tele. Doors open at 8pm; bands play from 9pm to close.



## Pots and garden art festival ready to wow

The Festival of Pots and Garden Art is set to wow visitors once again from January 19-24 at Anam Cara. The annual celebration of artistry and creativity, hosted by the Ōtaki Pottery Club, brings together artists from throughout the country to showcase their work and share their passion for pottery and garden art with enthusiasts and visitors. The event has guest artist exhibitions in which visitors can immerse themselves in a wide range of pottery and garden art exhibits, each piece a testament to the artists' talent and imagination. Acclaimed guest artists this year are Amy Brennan, Bruce Winter and Elisabeth Vullings. "Have a Go!" lets you learn from the best! Participate in hands-on activities led by skilled potters, where you can learn pottery techniques or try your hand at the wheel. There are live demonstrations as artists showcase their skills through live pottery-making, and guest artist talks – insightful conversations with featured artists as they share their artistic journey and experiences in the world of pottery. The Anam Cara venue in Rangiora Road, Ōtaki, is nestled in park-like surroundings, setting the perfect backdrop for a celebration of pottery and garden art. The pottery club is also running an on-site café. Look for the festival on social media to stay up to date.

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# Two honoured

Rex Kerr and John Barrett were recognised for their contribution to Ōtaki College and the community on December 15 when their names went onto the college’s Hall of Fame board. Friends, family and colleagues helped the two celebrate in the college hall. Their names join those of David Pritchard, Chris Parkin, Jackie Sutton and Pete Housiaux. The Hall of Fame is an initiative of the XŌtaki College Alumni Trust, which assists the college in raising funds for projects and coordinating events.

■ See [xotaki.org.nz](http://xotaki.org.nz)



Jackie Sutton, who was inaugurated into the Hall of Fame in 2021, with husband Ralph.



Ōtaki Museum stalwarts Neale Ames and David Ledson.



Elizabeth and Rex Kerr in front of the Hall of Fame honours board in the Ōtaki College hall.



Ange Sturmey and college principal Andy Fraser share a lighter moment.



Rex Kerr, left, and John Barrett in front of the Hall of Fame board where their photographs are now displayed.

Photos Ōtaki Today



XŌtaki College Alumni Trust chair Max Lutz and wife Debbie.



Former teachers Eddie and Marg Bisdee.

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# HUATAU/Comment

GOOD THINKING: PERA BARRETT

## True community comes from intentional kotahitanga

**As the first few days of 2024 roll in, are we changing the world with our resolutions or just the size of our waistlines?**

If four million slightly skinnier or stronger adults is our collective New Year's resolution, we've got more to worry about than who or what else the new government will sacrifice to big money donors.

After a year of more community, climate, and moral challenges for us and mostly from us, surely we're past the point of believing we can solve this shit as a group of disconnected, healthier or wealthier individuals.

Are those 2024 goals you thought about in the few days after December as ambitious for all of us as they could be? Do they involve stopping to fix some of those potholes on the road to tomorrow that we're leaving for our kids? Taking the bus or a bike to reduce the wear on the seal? Or driving over them and moaning about your tyres?

The prime minister's previous

company, Air NZ, always says to put your own oxygen mask on first (between trying to trademark the phrase "kia ora" and his new company/coalition mandating less te reo Māori being used by the government). And it's true, we need to be well to help others. If your whānau are healthy and well, show me your New Year's resolutions to make sure the same is true for the others in your collective.

If you don't know who your collective is, tell me how you're going to find them.

If you have tamariki under your care, how will you help them understand their part in the world or community or maybe even their part in your whānau? How will you help them address the challenges we've created for them, or at least how to avoid contributing to them. How will they connect with their collective to solve them? Because I swear on the three Ps of the Act Party (privilege, profits and/or prison) they won't be able to do it alone.



The current focus on divisiveness for votes has increased those challenges, but so has our naivete as the younger members of this ecosystem we're a part of. Lots of us don't know how to be us, only I or me. We talk about the Whare Tapa Wha model for well-being and forget the street, pā, whenua or neighbourhood that little house sits on. Luckily our tuakana, or older siblings, we share the world with always have lessons if we're listening.

While our friends in te Tairāwhiti were dealing with the horrors of Cyclone Gabrielle, the tūi I'm watching right now stayed singing and swooping high then resting on pōhutukawa branches purpose built to support flowers and feet firm.

While so many whānau prepared for another emergency housing Christmas far removed from cards showing those bright red flowers in bloom, the tūi drank its nectar made sweet for mutual benefit.

That ecosystem and mutually beneficial dance of our tuakana should be an example we aspire to. Like them, we need the relationships that weave persons to be stronger as a people. Community is critical for our well-being.

True community comes from intentional kotahitanga, or togetherness, through acts of kindness and vulnerability with your community, collective and neighbours. This might be your iwi, your street, school or something else. We need to feel community not just in the functional sense of survival, of calling on our neighbours when the water rises over the stopbanks, of being able to share your neighbour's emergency water supply when the earthquake cuts off the mains.

Even before needing to call on our

community, we need it. We need it for our mental well-being. We need to know we have the support of those around us. We need to know our purpose in our community. And we need to know we belong.

I hope you also felt that kotahitanga. Like the tūi perches supported on the pōhutukawa branches, I hope you know your community is there for you in 2024, too. Like the flowers painted in purpose, I hope you feel a sense of direction in how you participate in your community – that you feel a sense of purpose, and like the tailor-made taste tells tūi the nectar is for her, I hope you know you belong.

If you can't tell, for all the challenges we've seen in 2023, I hold a lot of hope. This year, we're all going to need to do the same.

■ Pera is a rap singer, writer, and founder of Shoebox Christmas, which has a new home at kohatree.co.nz. Pera received the Local Hero award at the New Zealander of the Year awards in 2019.

### LETTERS

#### Wāhine or wahine?

Dear editor.  
Thank you for reporting on our recent [Wānanga] graduation ceremony [December issue]. It was a wonderful day for our students and their whānau, iwi throughout the country, staff and the wider community. Thanks for supporting te reo Māori through your newspaper. I would just like to bring your attention to the word "wāhine". Wāhine (with a macron or double aa) denotes plural, similar to "women". Without a macron denotes a singular state – as in "woman". Te Wānanga o Raukawa is happy to assist or advise on any queries about Māori language usage and protocols.

**Kahukura Kemp, Ōtaki**

*We used it incorrectly with the macron in our headline. – Editor*

#### The Coca Cola cleaner

Dear editor.  
In the mid 60s after arriving from England my mother had a job as a cleaner at the local hospital to earn extra money. She was surprised to learn that to remove nasty stains from the toilets Coca Cola was used . . . it worked! When I moved into my house in Ōtaki 10 years ago there were two rust-coloured stains down the back of the toilet bowl caused by a cistern dripping water containing iron from a bore. I had the ballcock mechanism replaced and I tried everything to remove the stains, but to no avail. Recently I went to the Ōtaki Soap Box and bought a product called "Strong Commercial Toilet Bowl Cleaner". It contained phosphoric acid. Wow! I started using it and the stain is fading. I googled phosphoric acid and other than its use as a strong cleaner, it is also used to give a slightly tart taste in soft drinks! This includes, you guessed it, Coca Cola. My Christmas whisky was definitely "on the rocks".

**Jonathon Harrison, Ōtaki**

### CAM'S CORNER: CAM BUTLER

## Looking forward to a great year ahead in 2024

#### Tena koutou Ōtaki whānau, and welcome to the new year,

So how many new year's resolutions have you broken already? I don't break any as I don't tend to make any. Probably should eat better, save more, lose weight etc etc, sigh.

#### Fast track developments

The Moy Estate developer has asked for the fast track process to be put on hold due to the amount of information that the decision-making panel has asked for. Seems the panel is taking this seriously when the nearby residents, the Ōtaki Community Board and Ngā Hapū o Ōtaki all say there is an issue with access to the development.

Ōtaki-Maori Racing Club is



progressing with The Wellington Co beavering away in the background.

#### Old SH1 roadworks and river bridge partial closures

So the shared path along Old SH1 is done – what do you think of their safety barrier? The hit sticks might work to warn drivers when they stray but man they are ugly! Like the yellow bollards in Waikanae from their revocation, I do wonder about their aesthetics.

It now sounds like the the single-lane closure of the Old SH1 bridge to come in the new year will be after the Ōtaki Kite Festival in February. Sounds like there was no way to mitigate up to 25,000 people visiting in a weekend for the kite festival.

#### Kite festival

Speaking of the kite festival, they really, really need volunteers to ensure that the festival can run properly. If you can help for two or four hours, please get in touch with Katie via otakikitefestival@gmail.com

#### Vision Ōtaki

The community board is truly appreciative of the community input so far in what they would like to see Ōtaki become in the future.

Have you had your say? Give us your thoughts and vision by visiting the Vision Ōtaki area at the library, fill in our postcards or head to the website at [www.haveyoursay.kapiticoast.govt.nz/vision-otaki](http://www.haveyoursay.kapiticoast.govt.nz/vision-otaki)

This year, in partnership with Ngā Hapū o Ōtaki, we will be organising a number of events and community group events to allow the community to guide future strategy.

Feedback, current issues, food sovereignty etc, it is going to be a great 2024!

Keep being sunny, Ōtaki.

*Like Otakicomunityboard on Facebook.*

■ Cam is chair of the Ōtaki Community Board

### TE HORO OUTLOOK: MICHAEL MOORE

## Embracing a new year in Te Horo

**It's 2024! As the clock struck midnight, we welcomed the dawn of a new year with open hearts and it is my hope for a shared sense of community spirit and collaboration.**

In the wake of challenges we have faced, I hope residents of our rural community are determined to make this a year of unity, resilience and stronger connections.

We are aiming to launch a project with the support of Predator Free Wellington to establish a trapping programme. If you'd like to participate or offer support, please get in touch.

One of the most heartening aspects of a new year is an opportunity to spend quality time with our



whānau, cherishing the bonds that tie us together. It's a time of laughter, sharing meals, and enjoying our beautiful natural local environment.

Sadly, there have been a few incidents reported of vehicles on the beach at Te Horo being driven in a threatening and dangerous manner, especially around other beach-goers. Our beaches are shared spaces and there's no space for this kind of activity under any circumstances.

Along with our beach residents'

association and the Te Horo Hall committee, there's a commitment to foster better community connections as beautification works get under way at the beach parking area, and the earthquake-strengthening work commences for our community hall, which is 110 years old this year!

We received some great community feedback for our Vision Waikanae and Kāpiti survey. This will help us as we progress the council's long-term plan and also prioritise other issues of importance.

The Waikanae Bridge on Old SH1 that goes to Otaihanga and Paraparaumu will be closed to south-bound traffic from mid-January until at least the end of April. This is to install the shared pathway "clip-

on" and some additional bridge strengthening work.

This Waka Kotahi project will help rectify a very narrow and dangerous walk and cycle crossing. Access to Paraparaumu from the Waikanae township will be via Te Moana Road to the Kāpiti expressway. Please be mindful of increased traffic along that residential route. Three temporary pedestrian crossings are installed, to assist with some traffic calming, that will eventually become permanent. Please note there's a 50km/h speed limit on this road.

*The next Waikanae Community Board meeting is 7pm, February 27 at Waikanae Community Hall, Utaata Street, Waikanae.*

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



# Good decisions the result of deliberation and evidence

**If there's one thing that should disturb us, as a humanity that seeks some kind of future for ourselves and our mokopuna, it's got to be the aching trend towards poor decision-making.**

Blame it on a breakdown in social cohesion and rampant disinformation, or whatever. If it doesn't worry you, it certainly does me. So let me make my case.

The assault is on a little thing called "truth," which is most obviously happening in the political and media arenas, particularly in countries where grievance and populism collide and work on a scale that builds authoritarian threats to democracy (the will of the people). While disinformation is part of being human and has been around since Eve picked an apple, our daily lives seem to be increasingly infected by toxic untruths and rush to wild answers.

Take for example the idea that we can solve problems without evidence or the input of expert advice. All that's needed is a bunch of uninformed (or misinformed) opinions, with the more people expressing the same opinions the better – wallah, there's the solution.

This might explain why, when I was

in recent conversation with a friend about world events, that he believed there was a decline in "leadership". Have we become so overwhelmed and confused by an avalanche of challenges that it's simply easier to metaphorically kick-for-touch and just leave it to the noisily opinionated, or politicians, who always know better.

As a communications specialist, I was asked some years ago to look at an issue and offer solutions. Inevitably the process involved understanding the goals of the organisation and gaining a solid understanding of the issues that impacted those goals. This

required a deliberative process where I needed to talk with a wide range of people, from inside and outside of the organisation.

One of the bigger issues to emerge was that pathways towards a solution were being blocked by key people within the organisation. This seemed to have developed gradually over the years and had become internally unacknowledged and entrenched.

A report was duly presented to the organisation's governance and management teams and, faced with the evidence and recommendations, they took it positively and appeared

to recognise an obvious need for change.

Then it was suggested that there should be an open discussion with some of the organisation's people. That seemed fair and reasonable, except that it was allowed to become a forum for blatant untruths which – you guessed it – supported the status quo and the self-interests of the very people blocking progress.

The discussion was led by the organisation's chair, who had already managed to fully understand and agree with the findings of my investigation. However, when faced with on one side evidence and on the other side obvious disinformation, she nevertheless sided with the majority view.

This was not merely about a lack of courage or leadership, but actually about the idea that a majority view must always be right, even if it's obviously wrong. I discovered, too,

that this was a chair who could only allow board decisions to pass if there was unanimous agreement on motions. The result was a complete disintegration of board decision making, until such time as exasperated board members resigned, leaving a unified board wallowing in its own myopic and visionless decision making.

These things might seem to be of small matter, but I can attest that it is happening everywhere in our communities, organisations, businesses and global forums. The course we take is so often dictated by nonsense and a lack of sound deliberative thinking that is hardwire detached from truth and evidence.

But before suggesting we abandon collective thinking in favour of only allowing so-called experts to make our choices, consider this recent article in RNZ, under the heading of "How citizens' assemblies could

resolve New Zealand's toughest debates".

It described Ireland's first ever constitutional convention, a group of 66 randomly selected citizens and 33 politicians who met one weekend a month over more than a year to thrash out potential changes to the country's constitution.

By all accounts, this form of "deliberative democracy" worked in Ireland and is continuing, so why wouldn't it work in New Zealand to solve questions such as fair tax systems or choices about infrastructure priorities? Well, it turns out a group of eminent scientists at Auckland University (Koi Tū Centre for Informed Futures) agrees it could work here and is considering how it might be used.

Let's, for all our sakes, wish them every success.

■ 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)



Image by Pixabay

## JUST A THOUGHT



FRASER CARSON

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# MAHI MĀRA/Gardening



Pick plums, such as Black Doris (above) just before they drop from the tree, and prune excess foliage off the grapevines.



Photos Kath Irvine

## Keep on top of summer tasks in the garden



Thin excess fruit off the citrus trees.

**One of your key tasks this month is to check the soil beneath young fruit trees, because drying out now will check their growth.**

Give the soil a slow water until moisture is restored, then top up the mulch if it's thinning out. For deciduous fruit trees, lean more into dry/woody products than greenery. Avocados and citrus appreciate a bit more green stuff in the brew.

Let the grass be long! Pause before you rush in and clearfell all the grass or weeds surrounding young trees. Long grasses provide a protective, useful canopy through hot months and an engaged network below the soil. Be sure trees are watered and well mulched at their base, then leave the long grass protection around the outside.

**Summer prune espalier**

Trim your espalier fruit trees as they shoot away. This quick summer prune keeps things fruitful. Go along each branch and reduce long upward shoots back to 2-3 buds.

**Bird protection**

Slinging birdnet over your fruit trees is the simplest, and most efficient way to protect your fruit from the birds. Good quality net is a worthy investment. For long-lasting fabric that you can re-use for years to come, buy direct from the industry.

A 12m-wide net is my favourite size to cover a 3m tree loosely, with enough slack for it to still spread out. A big net is heaps easier to put on.

You don't need a net for every single tree; just enough to cover the trees that are ripe at the same time. Three or four usually is plenty.

**Pluck foliage from fruiting vines**

Snap excess foliage off grapevines and kiwifruits to bring light and air to ripening bunches of fruit. Extra airflow is especially important if they are in a greenhouse or on a porch. Extra light is also important if you live somewhere cool. Don't go too hard, just enough.

**Harvest plums**

There's a small window when fruit is ripe

for the picking. With a plum, I reckon its just before it hits the ground. Pick your plums when the skin has that gorgeous dusky bloom on it and the slightest touch knocks them from the branch. I cup the fruit in my hand and wiggle my fingers – if they drop in my hand they're perfectly ripe. Dare I say it, it's more like fondling than picking.

**A few extra fruity bits**

- Feed citrus and avocado trees. Spread a fine layer of compost plus a few dollops of well rotten manure or seaweed. It's an important feed for young trees, to inspire strong growth while it's warm, boosting them a little bigger and bolder before they take on winter.
- Thin excess fruits off citrus and completely remove all fruits off 1 or 2-year-old trees. Let your young tree put its mojo into shoots and roots instead of fruits.
- Trim off strawberry runners – the shoots that stretch out from the mama plant – to keep your strawberry plants energised. You can pot these up and get new plants growing for next year.

■ *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.*

THE EDIBLE GARDEN

KATH IRVINE



Let the grass grow long to provide a protective canopy during the hot months.



# Search for wellness muddled by conflicts of interest

**I**ncreasingly, people search for health information on the internet, though the quality of that information is highly variable, with much of it inaccurate or misleading.

One of the more popular and trusted online health websites is WebMD, an American company with a team of more than 100 doctors and health experts whose stated policy is to provide “the most objective, trustworthy and accurate health information” to “help you live a healthier life”.

But WebMD does have a conflict of interest. The service is free to you the information consumer because pharmaceutical companies and other healthcare providers pay for advertising and sponsored content. So, while WebMD is promoted as an information resource, there is also a marketing aspect through which, if you have or believe you have a health problem, you might use a promoted product or service.

We are talking big corporate money. In 2017 WebMD was bought by investment firm KKR & Co for US\$2.8 billion. No one buys a company unless there’s a return on the investment.

One criticism of WebMD is that its “symptom checker” can too easily lead a person to believe they have a health problem requiring treatment, when self-care would be sufficient.

I tried it by typing in “feeling tired” (it was a busy time over Christmas/New Year) and that I had some lower back pain. I was informed, with a “fair match”, that I might have a kidney infection.

WebMD certainly doesn’t factor in the nuances that a doctor would, and it could be a hypochondriac’s nightmare, where a headache becomes a brain tumour, or heartburn becomes stomach cancer.

WebMD covers complementary and alternative medicines (CAM), as you might expect, given that the global Big Pharma economy of US\$1.5 trillion a year is small change compared to the wellness industrial complex, with a global economy of US\$6 trillion a year.

This creates a problem for WebMD: on



one hand it needs to be seen as a trustworthy scientific source of evidence-based information, on the other hand it doesn’t want to miss out on the lucrative CAM bandwagon with its detox teas, supplements, diets, energy healing, acupuncture, homeopathy, etc.

This leads to another criticism. While there’s a lot of information about potential products and treatments, there’s often less critical evaluation about their effectiveness, a bias that favours the promotion (and sales) of products and treatments.

For instance, WebMD, in its “Purple Power Foods” article, provides a lengthy description of healthy foods that contain anthocyanins, and how anthocyanins might “help protect your cells from damage that can lead to illness and disease”.

This could easily lead a person – particularly one on a medical website researching their health – to believe that anthocyanin supplementation might be a healthy option. But anthocyanins are not an essential nutrient, and what WebMD does not clarify is that no deficiency disorder has been associated with a lack of anthocyanin consumption, and that there is no clear clinical evidence that anthocyanin supplementation improves health. That information would provide more balance.

As another example, WebMD goes easy on critically evaluating homeopathy when it describes the research for it as “mixed”.

For many people “mixed” probably signals there might be something to it. To a researcher, mixed results are what you get when something

doesn’t work: some positive study outcomes due to chance or methodologically flawed studies, but no consistent positive outcomes in methodologically sound studies.

A simple and fair challenge for promoters of homeopathy is to take their most robust effect and show it can be consistently replicated in high-quality placebo-controlled studies. This they have not done.

There is no good scientific evidence that homeopathy works better than placebo, and that is what WebMD, as a science-based medical

website, should clearly explain.

WebMD frequently describes all the things a CAM product might do, and all the health problems people take it for, but then adds a rejoinder such as: “... there is no good scientific evidence for any of these uses”. Typically, there is no detailed breakdown of what that means. For instance, perhaps existing short-term controlled trials have shown no effect, but are there any – much more difficult to run – long-term studies investigating daily use?

WebMD, with a shallow overview, seems to just place a bet both ways: for those people into CAM, they can focus on what a product might do, and the fact that a lot of people use it; other people can focus on the statement that there is currently no clear scientific support for the product. WebMD can be inconsistent and confusing.

Don’t get me wrong, overall, WebMD can provide a lot of very useful information. Just don’t become a hypochondriac using its symptom checker, and be aware that the effectiveness of products and treatments might not always be evaluated as much as it could be. And, although people often use WebMD to try and diagnose a medical problem, as they say in their disclaimer: “WebMD does not provide medical advice, diagnosis or treatment.”

That’s what your doctor is for.

■ 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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Message of thanks

We, the children of Wehi Royal, would like to thank everyone who contributed and helped in any way during the loss of our Dad. The pae, kaikaranga , ngā minita me ngā ringawera and whānau friends who were all there at Raukawa Marae. He piki mihi tēnei mō ōu koutou awhi, manaaki aroha hoki.

Nā ngā tamariki o Wehi rūau ko Hira Royal.

Te Puna o Te Aroha  
The Wellspring  
of Love

Waitangi  
Commemorations

Saturday 3 February 2024, 10am–5pm,  
Whakarongotai Marae

Nau mai, hāere mai, wakatau mai rā

We invite you and your whānau to join us in the  
commemoration of Waitangi Day

Please assemble at the gate at 9.30am in preparation  
for the mihi whakatau at 10am

Historical kōrero (presentations/discussions)  
Kapa haka performances  
Live solo and band entertainment  
Stalls • Hāngī and other kai • Tamariki activities  
High Tea



PAKIHI/Business

Effective leadership the backbone of a thriving business

In the realm of success, whether in business, personal growth, or community service, the influence of effective leadership is undeniable.

It's the backbone of any thriving organisation and the catalyst for growth and innovation. As a leader, I've observed first-hand how a positive, proactive approach can shape the culture and future of a business. But what's often overlooked is the subtle, yet powerful, impact leadership has on setting the tone for an entire operation.

Imagine a ship navigating through turbulent waters; the captain's ability to remain calm and collected doesn't just reassure the crew, it also sets a precedent for how challenges are handled.

Similarly, in business, a leader's demeanor and strategies filter down through every level of the organisation, influencing team morale and performance.

It isn't all about your title

Leadership isn't just about directing from a place of authority; it's about fostering an environment where creativity and collaboration come to the forefront. It's about being the guiding force that empowers others to take initiative and bring forth their best ideas.

When a leader exhibits confidence and

clarity in their vision, it resonates with the team, encouraging them to strive for excellence.

But it's not all smooth sailing. Leadership comes with its fair share of obstacles, and it's how we navigate these challenges that truly defines our capacity to lead.

From budget constraints to shifting market trends, the ability to adapt and find innovative solutions is what separates good leaders from great ones.

Take, for example, the challenges faced by Robert

Falcon Scott in his quest to become the first person to reach the South Pole. In contrast to Roald Amundsen (who took onboard insights and lessons from North American Arctic communities about extreme weather transport – dog-sleds and gear), Scott tried to apply what he believed to be best (horses and carrying all supplies rather than pre-planned resupply points).

The approaches of these two expedition leaders can teach us a lot about leadership. It requires a clear strategy, consistent messaging, and the flexibility to adapt to new information. Regrettably, Scott did not adapt to changing conditions (for example when it became obvious that the horses were not suited to the mountainous Antarctic), and he might have



Leadership isn't just about directing from a place of authority; it's about fostering an environment where creativity and collaboration come to the forefront. It's about being the guiding force that empowers others to take initiative and bring forth their best ideas.

placed "success" (reaching the South Pole) above the lives of his men.

Similarly, effective leaders must be able to tackle persistent business challenges with a combination of tried-and-true methods and innovative thinking.

Communication at the core

Now, let's delve into the crux of leadership: the art of communication.

A leader's words carry weight, and their messaging can either build or erode trust. It's not just about what is said, but how it's said. Tone, context, and delivery all play crucial roles in ensuring the message is received as

intended. A misstep in communication can lead to misunderstandings and setbacks, while clear and inspiring messaging can unify a team and propel them toward shared goals.

The power of storytelling in leadership cannot be overstated. A well-told story can inspire action, convey complex ideas, and build a sense of community. It's a tool that, when wielded effectively, can transform visions into reality.

However, leadership isn't just about the grand gestures and the big speeches. It's also about the day-to-day interactions – the feedback sessions, the casual conversations, and the way leaders present themselves in every situation. These moments accumulate to create the overall tone of leadership.

In conclusion, leadership is an intricate dance of strategy, communication, and presence. It's about setting the tone that resonates with the entire organisation, guiding it through calm and stormy seas alike.

As leaders, we must be ever-mindful of the ripples our actions and words send throughout our teams. After all, leadership sets the tone, and that tone echoes far and wide, shaping the future of our endeavours.

Remember, only Action changes Outcomes.

■ Focus, accountability and mentoring are the keys to building a better business. To do things better, book a free 30-minute consultation to see what in my 25+ years in business can shift the dial for you. Call 022 2332 669 or see [www.wcbe.co.nz](http://www.wcbe.co.nz)

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Kāpiti WEA begins 2024 with open day climate seminar

The Kāpiti Coast WEA begins its 2024 series of educational seminars, courses and bus trips on February 17 with an open day seminar titled "The Climate is Changing but are New Zealanders?".

Keynote speakers are Professor Ralph Sims of Massey University and Dr Brian Lynch, a committee member of the Green Corridors Trust. As a WEA open day, the seminar is free.

Ralph has been at Massey University since the early 1970s, with a secondment to the International Energy Agency from 2006 to 2010.

Among his many public roles, he has been a lead author for five assessment reports for the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change – which won the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize – an adviser to the World Bank's Global Environment Facility and UN Food and Agriculture Organisation, and chair of a panel of experts that prepared "Transition to a low-carbon economy for New Zealand" for the Royal Society of NZ.

Ralph will present an overview of global greenhouse gas emission trends, international targets, and potential climate impacts. New Zealand has one of the highest per capita rates of emission internationally. He will outline New Zealand's track record on emission reductions since 1990, and prospects for further reduction and meeting targets given existing, new and proposed government policies.

The Green Corridors Trust started planting native trees "from ranges to river" along the Turitea Valley and Summerhill urban walkways in Palmerston North about 25 years ago. Committee member Dr Brian Lynch will discuss who is involved and the benefits generated by green corridors for improved water quality, birdlife and recreation.

Kāpiti Coast WEA is a non-profit educational organisation established in 1977 and dedicated to promoting "ideals of a just, equitable and sustainable society through the medium of education".

Seminars in 2024 cover a wide range of topics covering the arts, science, history and current affairs.

"Activities aim to be stimulating and informative and are led by experts in their fields," says education sub-committee convenor Kevin Clark. "There is something for everyone."

Saturday seminars are held in the Waikanae Presbyterian Church Hall from 10am-1pm between February and October. Cost is \$30 for non-members and \$20 for members. WEA membership fee is \$25 per year or a season ticket costs \$125 and provides free access to all Saturday seminars.

■ To register for the open day, phone Stacey on 027 7153 677 or email [kapitiwea@gmail.com](mailto:kapitiwea@gmail.com) before February 14. The 2024 programme brochure is available from late January in Kapiti Coast libraries.



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



Arabella Buchanan enjoying the outdoors at Backyard Kids. Below right (top) Eden Murphy and Phoebe Avermaete, and below Charlie and Arabella Buchanan

Photos Ōtaki Today

# A place for learning and fun

**A year after opening in Riverbank Road, preschool Backyard Kids is near capacity with 55 children enrolled.**

All the learning spaces are in use, though owner Alice Pritchard is on the lookout for another kaiako (teacher) so one of the larger rooms can be operated as two. She hopes that will happen this term.

“Finding ECE-trained teachers has been a challenge and we are continuously looking,” Alice says. “It’s important that we employ teachers who are passionate about the first 1000 days and beyond of a child’s life. The teachers we have are of a high standard and we want to continue to have that quality for our tamariki and their whānau.”

Up to 40 children attend the newly built school every weekday. Especially popular is the Mānuka Room, which caters for the under 2s.

“We have a waitlist for at least the next eight months. I do urge people to start looking early if they are wanting childcare. A lot of centres fill up quickly.”

A unique feature of Backyard Kids is its long opening hours, beginning at 7.30 weekday mornings and running until 5.30pm. It’s one of the reasons care for the under-2s is so popular, as it caters for people who have to be at work early or travel out of town each day.

There are still some spaces for over 3-year-olds. After a year of challenges, Alice says a highlight has been the

support of whānau who have trusted Backyard Kids with their children’s care.

“They value education and the importance of what quality care looks like,” she says. “We have loved getting to know our wider community and this is a focus to build on this year. We know Ōtaki is a special place and we want to make that evident at Backyard Kids.”

The purpose-built school cares for children aged from 3 months to 6 years old. It can accommodate a total of 60 – 13 in the under-2s group and 47 preschoolers.

It opened on January 25 last year and at full complement will have 11 staff, including a nutritionist who prepares meals for the children on site.

The toddlers are accommodated in a separated space, leading outdoors to their own playground and garden.

The central classroom – to be divided in the near future into two spaces for children aged up to 6 – leads out to another larger playground with ample shade and planter boxes where the children learn how to grow their own food that is prepared in the pre-school kitchen.

Alice was born and raised in Ōtaki, and has worked as a primary school teacher. She says her dream for Backyard Kids – now realised – was to create a space where children would not only learn, but also enjoy themselves.

■ Backyard Kids, 73 Riverbank Road, Ōtaki. See [backyardkids.co.nz](http://backyardkids.co.nz)





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# HĪTŌRIA/History



Ōtaki Beach in 1965. Prominent on the esplanade are, from left, the skating rink, the surf club, the pavilion and the row of (smaller than now) Norfolk pines. The Feltham Children's Home (now Ocean View) is behind the trees.  
Photo Whites Aviation – Alexander Turnbull Library

## Museum spotlight shifts to the beach

**Work is under way, with increasing desperation, to complete the next exhibition at Ōtaki Museum so it is able to open about the end of February.**

The new exhibition will take visitors away from the current exhibition about The Railway, to one about the area on the western flank of the community – the place that lies between the Ōtaki River and Waitohu Stream.



It will cover in a relatively brief and simple form the actually complex stories that characterise the 19th century history of The Beach, and stories from the 20th and current centuries, that show how much The Beach has changed since the landscape was dominated by pā and kāinga.

Notwithstanding what some people appear to think, putting together an exhibition is not the same as writing a book. For example, whereas a book might be able to devote a chapter of countless words about the place of

whalers in the Ōtaki Beach story, in the exhibition the limit is about 300 words, plus three or four photographs.

This constraint is frustrating in two ways.

First, the stories are interesting and so the lure of detail can be seductive, but at the final count much of it will be cast aside. Second, the reality is that rather like mining for gold, you have to dig through a lot of rubble before you see the sparkling shine of the treasure you are seeking. That insight transforms an otherwise standard and oft repeated story into something new and exciting. But when you do find it, what a pleasure it is.

The beginning set for the story of Ōtaki Beach in the exhibition is the early 1820s, when Ngāti Raukawa first came to Kāpiti with Te Rauparaha, albeit in relatively small numbers, followed by the larger numbers in the three migrations from Maungatautari, near Cambridge, in the late 1820s. They eventually settled in and around two principal pā, Rangiuru and Pākāutu, located to the north of the Ōtaki River. The pā were vacated about 1848, when the majority of people moved to the present township.

The story then moves on to the whalers (and traders) dividing their time between Kāpiti Island and Ōtaki Beach, and the arrival of missionaries.



The beach area in 1965. Note the council motor camp on the left, and the health camp at right.  
Photo Horowhenua Historical Society

In terms of the missionary story, a lot of the focus has been on Octavius Hadfield, who arrived at the pā in 1839. However, it's noteworthy, in terms of the introduction of Christianity, that in 1829 Te Rauparaha had met the Reverend Samuel Marsden (Te Mātenga) in Sydney, and so too is the important role of Hohepa Matahau, a young man of Ngāti Raukawa descent, in Ōtaki and Waikanae in 1836.

There are also major stories on the camping grounds, the health camp, Feltham Children's Home on Marine Parade (now the Ocean View rest home), as well as stories about the 1855 Wairarapa earthquake, the surf club, and efforts by students and community groups to manage the environmental impacts that are affecting the beach, especially around Waitohu Stream.

There will be areas of the exhibition that set out brief biographies of some of the principal characters from the stories. And, through the use of maps and photographs, the changes in the character of The Beach over the years will be displayed.

This exhibition will run for nine or so months, and then one on Ōtaki township will be opened. It's planned that elements of the railway, beach and township exhibitions will be used to establish

a "permanent" Ōtaki exhibition, complemented by smaller exhibitions, which would change at regular intervals.

The aim of this change is to ensure that the museum continues to be able to preserve and celebrate the history and culture of the Ōtaki area.

It's important that whatever the museum does that it engages the community and other visitors in way that is interesting and fun. Consequently, we are delighted to participate in the Kāpiti Coast Heritage Clue Hunt during Wellington anniversary weekend; the museum will be open on Saturday, Sunday and Monday from 10am to 2pm.

Each of the nine participating museums, from Ōtaki to Paekākāriki, will have their own clue. One correct answer to a clue gets one entry into the draw for one of four prize packs, the correct answer to all nine clues provides nine chances to win.

Last year's clue hunt was a success, with a large number of visitors to the museum. We look forward to a similar result this year.

■ Ōtaki Museum, 49 Main St. Open 10am-2pm Thursday to Saturday, except public holidays. See [otakiheritage.org.nz](http://otakiheritage.org.nz).



**Compiled by Debbi Carson**



**At left (absent): Ron Gibbard and Richard Bannister.**

And Larry Grosse, the local Presbyterian minister, was not known for his catching but was able to pull off one stunning catch a season. It was always called his "miracle" catch.

*Photos courtesy of Ron Gibbard*

# CLUE HUNT



**WELLINGTON ANNIVERSARY WEEKEND, 10AM - 2PM**

**Pick up your clue hunt entry form at the first museum you visit.**

\*Please visit [www.kapitiheritage.org.nz](http://www.kapitiheritage.org.nz) for prize draw terms & conditions.




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Drop your coloured picture in to **Riverstone Café** by Feb 11 to win a \$20 book voucher or an *Animals in Vehicles* book.

## OT KIDS' NEWS



### HERCULES: HUGE FUNNEL WEB FOUND

The largest male specimen of the world's most venomous spider has been found about 80km north of Sydney. It has been sent to a new home at the Australian Reptile Park, where it will help save lives. The spider, dubbed Hercules, measured 7.9cm from foot to foot, surpassing the previous record-holder found in 2018, a male funnel-web named Colossus. Sydney funnel-web spiders have powerful fangs that can pierce a human fingernail and typically range in length from 1-5cm. Females are generally larger than males, though not as deadly. They are predominantly found in forested areas and suburban gardens from Sydney to Newcastle in the north and the Blue Mountains to the west. Hercules will contribute to the reptile park's antivenom programme. Spiders undergo "milking" to extract venom, which is essential for producing life-saving antivenom. "We're used to having pretty big funnel-web spiders donated to the park," says Emma Teni, a spider keeper at Australian Reptile Park. "However, receiving a male funnel-web this big is like hitting the jackpot. His venom output could be enormous, proving incredibly valuable for the park's venom programme." Since the programme began in 1981, there have been no deaths in Australia from a funnel-web spider bite.



Animal care director Danielle Lucas at Gatorland, holds up the unnamed baby gator. *Gatorland / Ken Guzzetti*

### RARE WHITE ALLIGATOR BORN

A rare white American alligator has been born at Gatorland, a Florida theme park and wildlife preserve. The unusual-looking creature has leucism, a condition that causes a lack of pigmentation. According to the park, the new baby is the first known leucistic gator born in captivity – and one of just eight in the world. Unlike albinism, leucism doesn't affect the eyes. This remarkable creature was born to Ashley, a mother with a typical colouration, and Jeyan the father, which does have leucism. The baby alligator was born alongside a sibling with standard colouration. The new gators are descendants of a group of leucistic alligators found in a Louisiana swamp in 1987. Leucistic alligators are considered the rarest genetic variation among American alligators. They exhibit white colouration but often have patches or splotches of normal colouring on their skin. What sets leucistic alligators apart from their counterparts is their translucent skin and blue eyes. In contrast, albino alligators have red or pink eyes. Due to their lack of darker skin pigmentation, leucistic alligators are prone to sunburn and must avoid direct sunlight for extended periods. To help protect the pale creatures in its care, Gatorland has opened a special "white gator swamp", which has filtered sunlight. Gatorland is calling on the public to help name the two new gators. Already, there has been a frenzy of offers on social media, including Leucie and Rickie, Salt and Pepper, and Rice and Gumbo.

## COLOURING COMPETITION



NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ AGE: \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_



*Porrhothele antipodiana*, also known as the black tunnel-web spider, is a New Zealand species. It is most common and widespread in the greater Wellington region where mature males are often encountered in or around dwellings. It should not be confused with its distant relative, the highly venomous Australian funnel-web spider. This monster was found at the bottom of editor Ian Carson's garden in Ōtaki! He wasn't game to hold it in his hand but did manage it with gardening gloves on.

You can make **83** words from SPIDER! And if you don't know the meanings look them up.

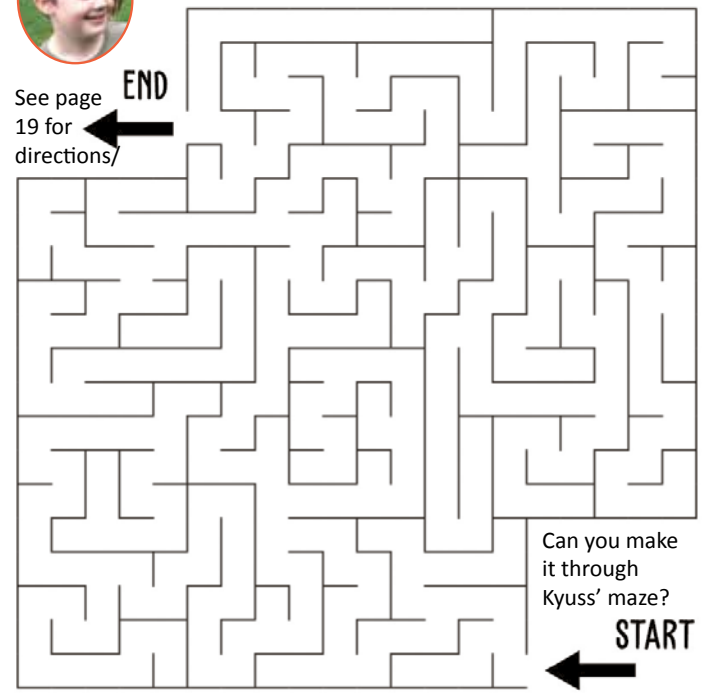


How many words can you make from the word spider? Answers are below.



### KYUSS'S JANUARY MAZE

See page 19 for directions/



Can you make it through Kyuss' maze?

**SPIDER WORD MAKER ANSWERS:** 6-letter words: 1. prides 2. prised 3. redips 4. spired, 5-letter words: 5. drips 6. pride 7. pried 8. redip 9. riped 10. siped 11. spied 12. peris 13. pies 14. pries 15. prise 16. ripes 17. speir 18. spier 19. spire 20. dries 21. resid 22. rides 23. sired, 4-letter words: 24. dips 25. drip 26. peds 27. pied 28. sped 29. per 30. pier 31. pies 32. rps 33. rpe 34. rps 35. sips 36. desi 37. dies 38. dire 39. ides 40. ired 41. rids 42. ride 43. rids 44. side 45. ired 46. reis 47. rise 48. sire 49. deps, 3-letter words: 50. dip 51. ped 52. per 53. pes 54. pie 55. pis 56. psi 57. rep 58. rip 59. sip 60. die 61. dis 62. eds 63. ids 64. red 65. rid 66. ers 67. ire 68. rei 69. res 70. sei 71. ser 72. sir 73. sri 74. dep, 2-letter words: 75. pi 76. de 77. ed 78. id 79. er 80. es 81. is 82. re 83. si.

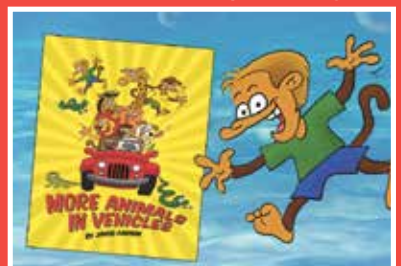


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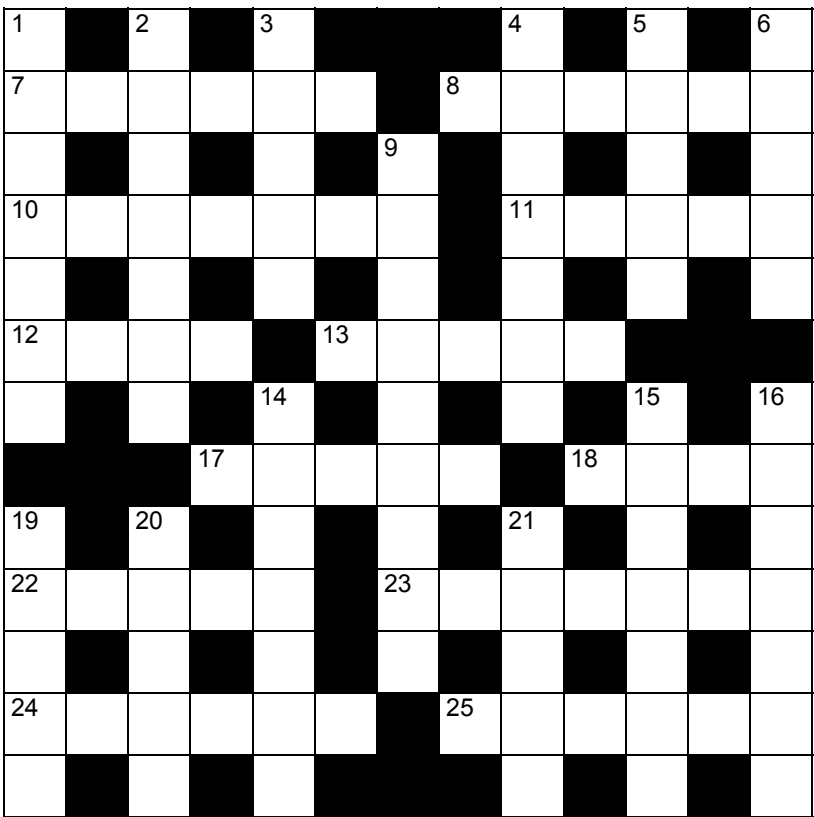
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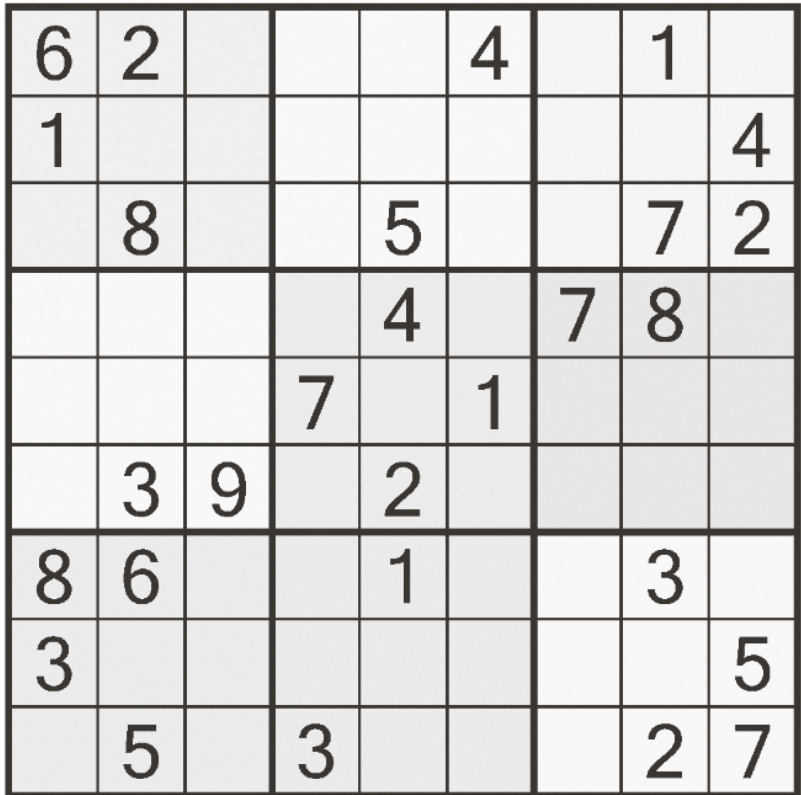




THE CROSSWORD #NZ1920D (answers below right)



**SUDOKU PUZZLES** thepuzzlecompany.co.nz  
EASY #64E Use logic and process of elimination to fill in the blank cells using the numbers 1 through 9. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and 3x3 block. Puzzle solution below right..



- ACROSS**

7. Song written for important events (Māori) (6)

8. Collect (6)

10. Wool product (7)

11. Great Barrier Island (5)

12. Compass direction (4)

13. Farmer (inf) (5)

17. House (5)

18. Blue duck (Māori) (4)

22. Influence (5)

23. Inhabitant of Westland (7)

24. Yearly (6)

25. Expose falseness (6)
- DOWN**

1. Be uncomfortably hot (7)

2. Bystander (7)

3. Mururoa \_\_\_, where PM Norman Kirk dispatched
- an “honourable” mission to witness France’s nuclear tests in 1973 (5)

4. In mythology, home to Māori before they sailed to New Zealand (7)

5. Whakaari/\_\_\_ Island (5)

6. Northland bay named after a fish by Captain Cook (5)

9. Wrong (9)

14. One of NZ’s best known hotels, The \_\_\_, which closed in February 2023 (7)

15. Double-barrelled smoothbore firearm (7)

16. Beach famous for its boulders (7)

19. Small piece of material (5)

20. Tied up (5)

21. Speleologist (5)

### JANUARY CRICKET QUIZ

Cricket is a game of passion, skill and luck. Test your cricket knowledge here for a bit of fun. *Answers below.*

- Who was NZ’s first test captain, in 1930?
- Against which country did NZ first play a one-day international in their beige coloured outfits?
- Which nation was the first to be beaten by NZ, in a test outside of NZ?
- When Stephen Fleming became NZ’s most successful test captain, which captain did he pass for that honour – a. Martin Crowe b. Geoff Howarth c. John Wright d. Glen Turner?
- What led to the cancellation of India’s first tour of NZ, scheduled for 1936/37?
- Who was the first New Zealander to score 5000 runs in ODIs?
- Which of these players did NOT captain NZ – a. Ian Smith b. John Wright c. John Parker d. Richard Hadlee.
- How many tests did NZ play before recording their first victory?
- First-class cricket has been played at the Nelson Cricket Ground. In what town or city is this ground?
- Apart from the Basin Reserve, what other cricket ground in Wellington has hosted a first-class match?
- The Ōtaki Cricket Club won what shield in 1967-1968?
- What is the name of the home ground for Ōtaki Sports Club?
- Born in Ōtaki in 1925, and raised on a dairy farm, what NZ batsman played one test match at the Basin Reserve in 1956?

**JANUARY CRICKET QUIZ ANSWERS:** 1. Tom Lowry. 2. Australia. New Zealand’s first match in coloured clothing was the opening match of the 1980-81 World Series Cup against Australia at the Adelaide Oval on November 23, 1980. 3. South Africa on January 1, 1962. 4. Geoff Howarth. 5. Widespread famine in India led to the tour’s cancellation, and it was not until 1968 that India finally toured New Zealand. 6. Nathan Aspinall. 7. d. Richard Hadlee. 8. 44. They went from 1929-30 until 1955-56 without a win, and then managed to beat West Indies under the captaincy of John Reid. 9. Hastings. 10. Wellington College Ground hosted a first-class cricket match between Wellington and Auckland December 25-28, 1923. It was a timeless match meaning it continued until one team won. Wellington won by 365 runs. 11. Horowhenua “B” Grade, France Shield. 12. Haruatai Park. 13. Trevor Barber.



“Each new year, we have before us a brand new book containing 365 blank pages. Let us fill them with all the forgotten things from last year—the words we forgot to say, the love we forgot to show, and the charity we forgot to offer.”

PEGGY TONEY HORTON

- DNOW:**
1. Swelter
2. Witness
3. Atoll
4. Hawaiki
5. White
6. Bream
9. Incorrect
14. Chateau
15. Shotgun
16. Moeraki
19. Scrap
20. Bound
21. Caver



**Ōtaki River entrance tides**  
**January 17 – February 16**  
<https://www.metservice.com/marine/regions/kapiti-wellington/tides/locations/otaki-river-entrance>

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

		HIGH	LOW	HIGH	LOW	HIGH
WED 17 JAN	02:34	08:42	14:56	21:17	-	
THU 18 JAN	03:27	09:38	15:52	22:13	-	
FRI 19 JAN	04:27	10:40	16:53	23:14	-	
SAT 20 JAN	05:35	11:51	18:00	-	-	
SUN 21 JAN	-	00:22	06:49	13:03	19:09	
MON 22 JAN	-	01:32	07:58	14:09	20:14	
TUE 23 JAN	-	02:34	08:55	15:04	21:10	
WED 24 JAN	-	03:25	09:42	15:51	21:57	
THU 25 JAN	-	04:09	10:22	16:33	22:38	
FRI 26 JAN	-	04:48	10:58	17:11	23:15	
SAT 27 JAN	-	05:23	11:32	17:46	23:49	
SUN 28 JAN	-	05:57	12:05	18:21	-	
MON 29 JAN	00:22	06:29	12:37	18:54	-	
TUE 30 JAN	00:54	07:01	13:10	19:28	-	
WED 31 JAN	01:28	07:34	13:44	20:03	-	
THU 01 FEB	02:03	08:09	14:21	20:41	-	
FRI 02 FEB	02:42	08:50	15:04	21:24	-	
SAT 03 FEB	03:29	09:41	15:56	22:16	-	
SUN 04 FEB	04:28	10:45	16:58	23:20	-	
MON 05 FEB	05:40	12:01	18:09	-	-	
TUE 06 FEB	-	00:33	06:58	13:18	19:22	
WED 07 FEB	-	01:46	08:06	14:23	20:29	
THU 08 FEB	-	02:47	09:03	15:18	21:26	
FRI 09 FEB	-	03:40	09:52	16:08	22:17	
SAT 10 FEB	-	04:28	10:39	16:56	23:05	
SUN 11 FEB	-	05:14	11:24	17:42	23:51	
MON 12 FEB	-	05:59	12:09	18:27	-	
TUE 13 FEB	00:36	06:43	12:54	19:13	-	
WED 14 FEB	01:21	07:29	13:40	19:59	-	
THU 15 FEB	02:08	08:17	14:29	20:47	-	
FRI 16 FEB	02:57	09:10	15:21	21:40	-	

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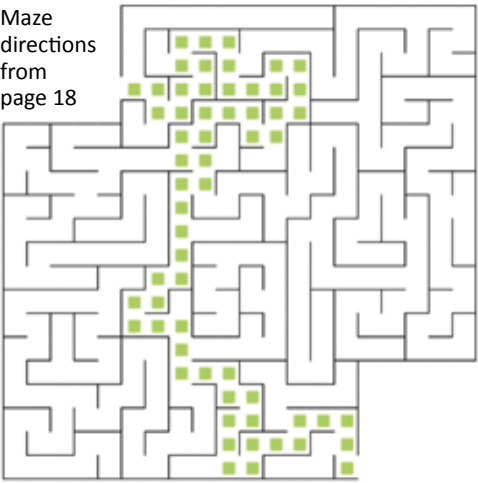
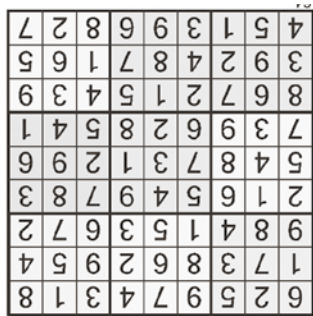
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SUDOKU SOLUTION #64E





TAKĀRO/Sport



Ōtaki swimmer Kokoro Frost, who's seeking funds to get to the world championships at Doha in February. Photo supplied

Doha beckons but Kokoro needs funding

By Annie Bythell

**This year could well be the big year for Ōtaki swimmer Kokoro Frost, but he needs funding to make his dreams come true.**

Kokoro has been selected to represent Samoa for the swimming world championships in Doha, Qatar, in February after success at the November 2023 Pacific Games where he was in the finals in several individual and relay events. He was part of a team that won silver in the men's 4x100m freestyle relay.

The Doha world championships and the Australian championships in April are qualifiers for the July Olympic Games in Paris. Kokoro's form shows he's a serious contender on the world stage, but first he needs to raise \$8000 to get him to Doha. There he will be competing in the 50m and 100m butterfly, and the mixed 4x100m freestyle/medley relay.

While still being an amateur swimmer, he has had to seek sponsorship, which so far has included a donation of \$1000 from Derek

Kelly at local real estate agency Kelly & Co. However, there's a shortfall. Samoa doesn't fund swimmers, and he doesn't qualify for New Zealand high performance funding.

Kokoro grew up in Ōtaki. He attended Kāpiti College and Palmerston North High School, and graduated from Victoria University with a communications degree. He's about to finish a masters of intercultural communication and applied translation while working part-time as a communications coordinator for Swimming Wellington.

He was a member of Ōtaki Scout Group and is on the honours board at the Ōtaki Surf Lifesaving Club. He coaches the Titans club swimmers at Ōtaki pool, and when he is not working and studying in Wellington he trains at the Ōtaki and Paraparaumu pools.

■ *Anyone who'd love to see an underdog from a small town do well, and can help with sponsorship or fundraising, can email Kokoro's mother, Seuga Frost, also a coach with the Titans, at [smfrost@xtra.co.nz](mailto:smfrost@xtra.co.nz)*



**MOFF MEMORIES:** The revival of padder tennis as a sport prompted Stephen Moffatt (Moff) to dig out some photos of his days at Waitohu School. In December 1963, at the end of the school's first year of existence, a student padder tennis tournament was played. Moff played in the final against Wayne Webster. The top photo shows Wayne nearest the camera. Teacher Graeme Moss was umpire, Neil Denton the scorer. The other photo is of Moff, the teacher far right Shirley Hoskins. Note the truck and concrete mixer in the background, probably in preparation for work to build the school's swimming pool Photos courtesy of Stephen Moffatt

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

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