

# ŌTAKI TODAY

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ĀPERIRA/APRIL 2025

Ngā kōrero o Ōtaki



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## Fifty years for fire chief

By Ian Carson

**Ōtaki fire chief Ian King was driven into the local station with wife Heather in one of the brigade's old engines on April 5 for a gathering to mark his 50 years as a firefighter.**

His passion goes a long way back. As a student at Ōtaki College he would rush from class and jump in his Morris Minor when the fire siren sounded. He wasn't motivated by a fascination with fires that many youngsters had; rather he wanted to be in the thick of it, a fireman doing the work to save life and property.

His enthusiasm was rewarded with him being enlisted to help the Ōtaki Volunteer Fire Brigade's competition team, rolling up hoses and operating the pump. He watched and learned.

On July 17, 1972, and while still at college, he became a full member of the brigade – and with his eyes on the prize – fire chief of the Ōtaki brigade.

He had to wait a few years for that, and like many of his era, he also wanted to experience the world outside his home town. His brother, Bryan, was working with Contiki taking tourists by bus around Europe, so for 18 months Ian joined him, operating out of London.

If Ian had stayed in Ōtaki he would without question have remained as a firefighter, and his 50 years of service would now have been 53. But he has no regrets.

"Not at all," he says. "I had some of the best experiences of my life. I would have missed that if I stayed home."

Ian fulfilled his dream of being chief fire officer at Ōtaki in 1997, a position he still holds today at the age of 68. With more than 27 years in charge, he's the longest-serving Ōtaki fire chief, pipping Pat Sharp's 26 years from 1942-68.

His fire service involvement has not been just in Ōtaki. He was accepted into the City of Wellington Fire Brigade on his 18th birthday. At only 19 he passed the graduate Institute of Fire Engineers UK exam, being possibly the youngest ever person worldwide to pass. He went on to become a full member of IFE, and a fellow of the NZ Fire Brigades Institute.

In 1985 he was awarded a Commonwealth Fire Engineering scholarship, which saw him travel to the UK for two months to study with fire brigades in London, West Yorkshire, Cheshire and Norfolk. His report was instrumental in making big changes to the

equipment and procedures used by the Fire Service in New Zealand.

In 1986 Ian was promoted to station officer, and transferred to Palmerston North. After a brief stint back in Wellington in 1991 as senior station officer, Ian returned to Palmerston North as senior station officer, a position he held for the next 27 years.

*continues page 5*



Ōtaki fire chief Ian King sits on the back of the local brigade's 1940 fire truck with wife Heather and piper Phil Cowan. Phil piped Ian and his family into the fire station with a guard of honour that included local firefighters, those from other brigades and senior staff from Fire and Emergency NZ.

*Photo Otaki Today*

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## WHAT'S ON

**ŌTAKI SPIRITUAL FAIR** Ōtaki Memorial Hall, Main Street, 10am-4pm Saturday, April 12.

**KĀPITI BIG FISH OPEN SURFCASTING COMPETITION** Ōtaki Beach. 7am Saturday, April 12, and 8am Sunday, April 13. Enjoy a weekend at stunning Ōtaki Beach with your family and friends while fishing for the big one. Cash prizes for heaviest snapper and kahawai as well as daily runner-up prizes, spot prizes and giveaways. Entry \$50 adults. \$10 junior. otakiboatingclub.co.nz

**ŌTAKI MARKET** 58 Main Highway, Ōtaki. 10am-2pm Sunday April 13.

**KIDS MARKET** 10am-2pm Sunday, April 27.

**COMMUNITY BOARDS** The Ōtaki Community Board meets next at 7pm, Tuesday, April 29, in the Gertrude Atmore Lounge (attached to the Memorial Hall). The Waikanae Community Board meets next on Tuesday, April 29, at the Waikanae Community Hall, 28 Utauta St. The public is welcome at meetings. Search "meetings and agendas" at kapiticoast.govt.nz from two days before the meeting for the agenda, which is also at council libraries and service centres. To speak at a meeting, register by calling 04 296 4700 or 0800 486 486, or email democracy.services@kapiticoast.govt.nz

**ENDRES BACK** The highly regarded German pianist Michael Endres returns to give a Muled Wine Concert in Paekākāriki's St Peter's Hall at 2.30pm on Sunday, May 25. International critics say Endres is "one of the most interesting pianists recording today". Tickets: Adults \$35, students \$15. Sales from marygow@gmail.com and info 021 101 9609. Ticket outlets: Magpie Paramata, Mana Esplanade; Finn's Hotel, Paekākāriki; Moby Dickens Bookshop, Paraparauamu Beach; Jenoa, 2 Mahara Place, Waikanae.

**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. The third in a series of exhibitions opens on May 17, and focuses on the town of Ōtaki itself, and its development over the past 200 years. Visitors can also play the old theatre pianola while at the museum. The Anne Thorpe Reading Room is open at the same times as the museum. Museum open 10am-2pm Thursday to Saturday, except public holidays. 49 Main St. 06 364-6886.

**TOI MATARAU GALLERY:** Maoriland Hub, Main St, Ōtaki. Open Monday to Saturday 11am-4pm. Toi Matarau is a summit for multidisciplinary arts where Māori and indigenous artists gather, collaborate, are inspired and supported. See toi.maorilandfilm.co.nz

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

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

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

**POETRY IN ŌTAKI** Third Friday of each month, 10.30-noon, Rotary Lounge, Aotaki St. All welcome. Call 021 050 1904 for details.

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

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

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

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

# A test for Minister Willis's acumen

**B**eware the almost irresistible attraction in politics of committing to courses of action that on the surface seem political winners but hold beneath them a complex array of issues that will need to be taken care of.

In current circumstances there are issues swirling about Finance Minister Nicola Willis that stand out as falling into this category. They will test her political acumen in handling internal coalition politics and on holding positive perceptions of her performance in this most testing of portfolios.

The list is in a heavyweight category, as are many covered by this portfolio. It contains the decisions on replacement ferries for the inter-island shipping services of KiwiRail; consumer pricing in the retail grocery industry; the extent of competition in the banking industry; and the future governorship of the Reserve Bank.

There is yet no firm public answer as to who was responsible for the advice to Minister Willis that the arrangement for purchase of two mega-ferries from Hyundai in South Korea should be cancelled, instead of a renegotiation of the contract worked through.

The answer is relevant to what might be expected going forward, not just on the replacement ferry decision but on approaches to the other issues.

Was it the minister alone who decided to cancel the ferry contract? If not, are the same advisers who counselled her on that the same ones who believe that throwing public money, regulation or amending legislation to influence

free markets, can of themselves achieve nirvana – across the board lower consumer grocery prices?

A certainty is that unless supermarket prices around the country do not come down by Election '26 it will be the minister of finance who sits in the firing lane for opposition and public opprobrium. That looks almost as hard as David Seymour potentially expecting the school lunch programme furore to go away if he makes no changes to what he has done to date.

Remember Rob Muldoon and his price freeze? The country took almost as long to recover economically from that initiative as it is taking to get over Grant Robertson and Adrian Orr's money printing spree.

Political interference in free consumer markets when the market is open to all comers exposes the perpetrator to all the vagaries of business in that sector – stop-works by employees, fire, weather conditions for growers, shipping delays, commodity shortages, all of which can contribute to higher pricing.

Grocery markets are complicated. Incentivise here; regulate there; where will the reaction pop up? Will it be positive or negative? The Commerce Commission has not found an answer to change the duopoly despite a specialist grocery commissioner being established to probe the workings of the supermarket sector.

Debate on competition in the banking sector is an issue that on current settings seems set to end up as a win for the existing big four Australian-owned banks. Labour put Orr in as

Reserve Bank (RB) governor. He was known prior to appointment as a Labour sympathiser. To many of those who believed he had a strong commitment to Labour he seemed to deliver big time: Money printing to ease the government through a difficult path in handling Covid – no problem; get an extension of time in office to hamper the National-led coalition in office – no problem; keep it in a comparative strait-jacket on interest rates – maintain high levels of banks' security lodgements with the RB!

Now, Orr has gone. The government is under pressure to have the banks loosen lending criteria for farmers. No problem, minister, say the banks: Just loosen the security lodgements and watch the difference it makes in the market.

But perhaps the minister will not be happy the following week when lower interest rates have led to a lower NZ dollar and the cost of repayment of New Zealand loans on the international market has gone up significantly. What then? A short-lived period of lower rates!

Striking balance in these areas is the ultimate trick for all finance ministers. In broad terms Michael Cullen and Bill English got it right, albeit with customary argument on policies along the way of their financial stewardship.

An appreciation of most factors that may be influenced by decision making is an essential element in finding that balance. Scratching one political itch here only to provoke another elsewhere rarely produces consistent policy implementation.

Minister Willis may be setting herself up for political assessment on at least one issue, that of grocery pricing, on which she has no control.

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

## POLITICS



BRUCE KOHN

## CARTOON OF THE MONTH

By Jared Carson



## ŌTAKI TODAY *Ngā Kōrero o Ōtaki*

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# Toilet vandalism 'tragic, sad'

By Ian Carson

**The theft of key gear and vandalism at the Chrystalls Bend toilets has closed the facility while Kāpiti Coast District Council ponders a near-\$50,000 repair bill.**

During the night about March 15, padlocks were cut at gates leading to the area about a kilometre east of the Ōtaki River bridge. Burglars then smashed the door handle of the pump room in the middle of the block of three public toilets.

They then broke through a second door and smashed a cage containing vital gear to service the toilets. Solar-powered batteries, a water pump and and water cylinder were taken.

The toilets, behind separate doors, were untouched.

Ōtaki-based district councillor Rob Kofoed, who supported the project to build the toilets, says the theft was "a professional job".

"What they got would probably service a house," he says. "It was a surgical extraction. They knew what they were doing."

Rob says he's not just upset that the council has to foot the bill to fix the damage and re-install the gear, but also that it undid the work that provided the facility in the first place.

The toilets were installed last year after three years of planning driven by the Friends of the Ōtaki River. As the facility is on a well-used walking



Ōtaki-based councillor Rod Kofoed, left, and Friends of the Ōtaki River chair Max Lutz could still manage a smile despite the vandalism that closed the much-used toilets at Chrystalls Bend. Photo Ōtaki Today

trail and near the stunning Chrystalls Lagoon, Tourism NZ stumped up most of the funding for installation, assisted by the district council.

Chair of the Friends Max Lutz was "gutted" when he heard about the vandalism and theft.

"It's tragic," he says. "There was a lot of effort put into providing these toilets and it's sad that people can't use them at the moment."

For the half-hour or so Ōtaki Today was there on a Thursday morning, several people walking their dogs or cycling stopped, expecting to be able to use the toilets.

"They're certainly well used," Max says. "In the six months of operation, based on the number of flushes, we know it was used 9000 times."

"That shows how popular it is." Max says it's not just a facility for

people passing by. Waka ama and canoe polo teams and supporters practising or with events at the nearby Winstone Lakes also use them.

Along the expressway, lights illuminating the gateway to Ōtaki sculptures have also been stolen – twice – meaning long periods when they are not lit at night and tens of thousands of dollars for NZTA to repair and re-install.

Kāpiti Coast District Council says vandalism is costing ratepayers dearly and putting the continued operation of public facilities at risk.

Property and facilities maintenance manager Kelvin Irvine says money to fix damage caused by theft and vandalism is limited and responding to the current level of damage throughout the district can't be sustained long-term. If the vandalism continues, some facilities might have to close.

"At some point we'll have to make the call to either scale back repairs or close facilities," Kelvin says. "We can't keep this up."

He says vandalism has escalated in the last year.

"We are running out of money to fix smashed toilet bowls and basins, remove graffiti and clean up disgusting messes."

In the past month, there has been a total of \$80,000 worth of damage to toilets in Ōtaki, including \$49,000 for that at Chrystalls Bend.

Toilets at Campbell Park in Paekākāriki have also been repeatedly targeted by vandals, who have smashed bowls and basins, graffitied, and tipped broken glass and sand down the toilets and drainage system.

Call the police if you see suspicious behaviour around public facilities. To report damage, call the council on 0800 486 486, make an online service request at [kapiticoast.govt.nz](http://kapiticoast.govt.nz), or use the Antenna app on your phone.



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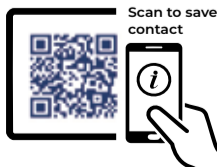
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# Film fest a stunner

By Ian Carson

Ōtaki celebrated along with the thousands of visitors to the Māoriland Film Festival from March 26-30.

The brilliant autumn weather ensured the crowds came out – whether it was to enjoy a movie, a film director discussion, or kai at the new open-air zone behind the Ōtaki Museum.

“You could feel the love,” one local told *Ōtaki Today*.

Māoriland cemented itself as one of

the world’s premiere Indigenous film festivals after announcing a 45 percent increase in attendance and double the box office figures.

Ironically, the festival is in a town that doesn’t have its own cinema – the last movie, *Parenthood*, showed at the Civic Theatre 35 years ago in March 1990.

Māoriland director Madeleine Hakaraia de Young says the film festival has demonstrated the powerful

demand for theatrical experiences, with audiences showing up in record numbers to watch Indigenous films together on the big screen.

“This remarkable growth comes amid a challenging economic climate, making this surge in attendance even more significant,” she says. “This year’s festival is proof audiences are hungry for cinema reflecting their stories and experiences.

“The success of *Tinā*, which has

just today [March 29] surpassed \$4 million at the New Zealand box office, further affirms Indigenous cinema is resonating deeply with audiences.”

The 2025 festival attracted more than 260 film industry representatives to Ōtaki, with guests traveling from as far as Greenland, Sápmi, Canada, the United States, Hawai‘i, Australia, Sakha, and across the Pacific.

■ See more page 13



## FIFTY YEARS FOR FIRE CHIEF from front page

During this period he was part of a small national team setting up a computerised station management system. He also did stints as assistant commander in both Palmerston North and Whanganui, and also spent more than 23 years as a member of

the Region 3, Manawatū/Whanganui critical incident stress/peer support team that counselled and supported firefighters after disturbing incidents.

Ian is an accredited international judge for the Australasian Road Rescue Organisation.

Ian retired from his professional career on his 65th birthday,

in August 2021. He was made a life honorary member of the Palmerston North Fire Brigade for his leadership – an honour he received at Ōtaki in 2000.

In his career, Ian has become one of New Zealand’s most respected fire officers, using his passion for the job to help others and making the Ōtaki brigade one of which he can be proud.



# Spotlight on Nikki

Well known locally by garden enthusiasts and formerly famous around town for her incredible blooms!

Nikki has a background in finance, project management, sales and horticulture, and she also ran a flower supply business for some years from Ōtaki Beach. She is a much loved and talented local and we’re thrilled to have her with us to help run the administrative part of the office – and give gardening advice!

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LICENSED REAA 2008 REALTY



The shared pathway under construction, above; cyclists were quick to take advantage of the new bridge addition; and at right, kaumātua Rawiri Rikihana blessing the new path. Photos NZTA/Waka Kotahi

# Bridge shared path opens

The “clip-on” for the Ōtaki River bridge shared path was opened officially on Friday, March 28.

For a build that drew widespread controversy over partial road closures, disruption and cost, the ceremony was relatively low key and drew only a smattering of locals, including Ōtaki and Waikanae community board chairs Cam Bulter and Michael Moore respectively.

A blessing by Ōtaki kaumātua Rawiri Rikihana got the pathway open and it was soon

in use by cyclists heading into Ōtaki from the south.

Waka Kotahi regional manager infrastructure delivery Jetesh Bhula said the transport agency was confident the pathway would be a valuable addition to the local community, providing a much safer route for cyclists and pedestrians over the Ōtaki River.

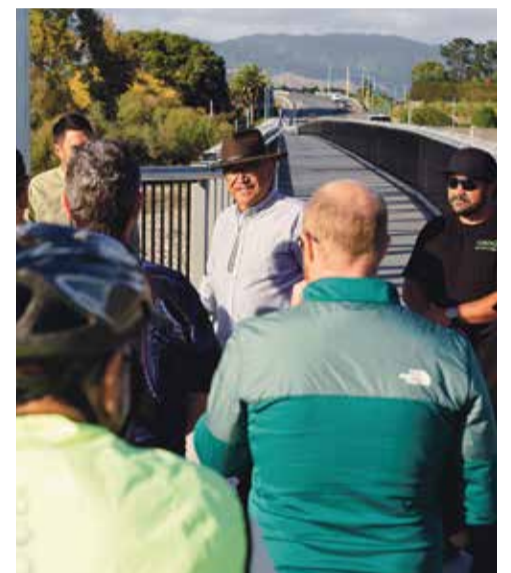
“Of course, the shared path is just part of the improvements being delivered by the Peka Peka to Ōtaki revocation works,” he said. “We look forward to continuing the project and our

work with the community as we deliver these improvements.”

During April, the public can expect to see activity in the Ōtaki Railway retail area, with kerbing and footpath works planned.

Contractors will complete the northbound side of the road first, heading north towards the Mill Road roundabout. Then they will return south, completing kerbing and footpath work on the other side of the road.

- Resealing is to be done on the bridge on the night of April 14 – see page 12.



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# End of era for Winemaker's Daughter

By Mishy Rikihana-Vieira

**After more than six decades of hard work and dedication to the hospitality industry, Michael Hyland has served his final meals at The Winemaker's Daughter.**

At 77, Michael felt it was time to close the doors at the Te Horo restaurant, which also ended the chapter on an extraordinary career spanning 63 years. However, it's not the end for the restaurant, as new owners plan to reopen for functions in 2026.

For 25 years, The Winemaker's Daughter has been a hub for the local community, hosting hundreds of weddings, special events, live music gigs, and vegan buffets for Ōtaki, Te Horo, and the wider Kapiti whānau.

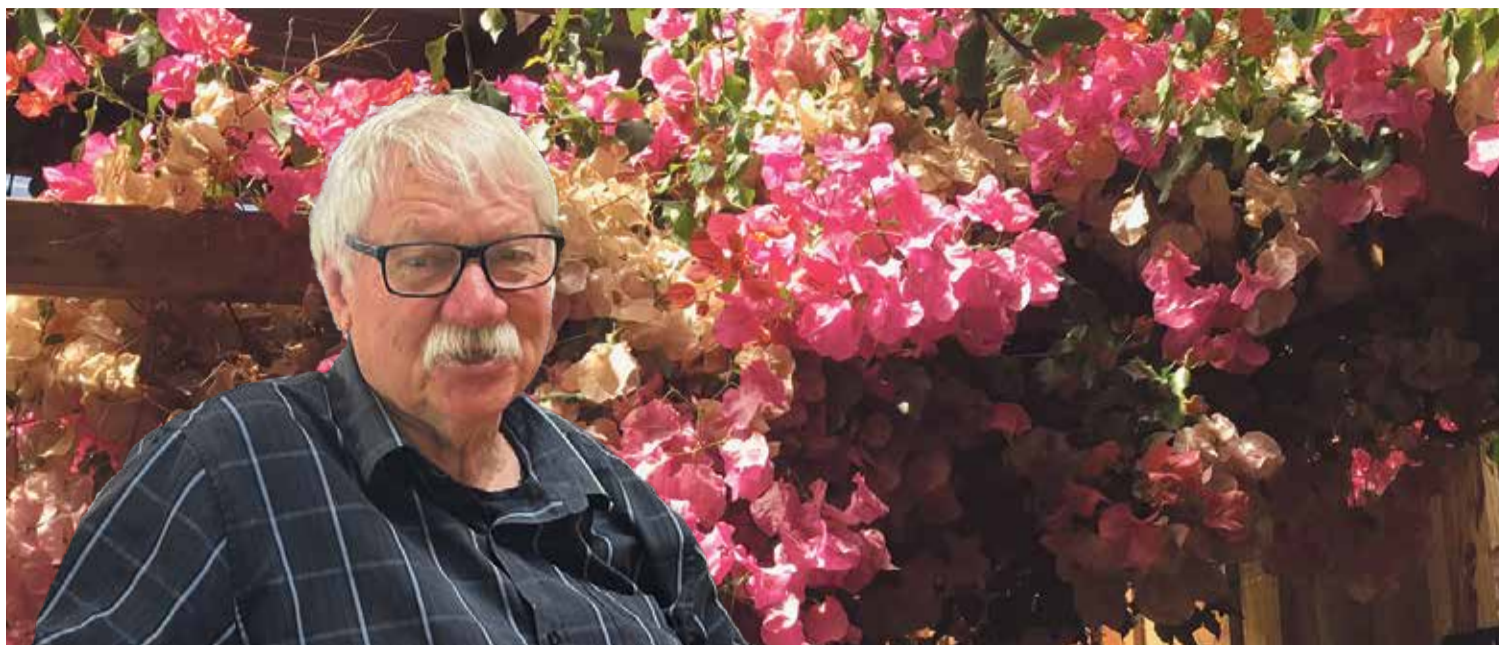
As news of its closure spread last month, almost 100 locals took to social media to share heartfelt messages of gratitude and support, a testament to the lasting impact Michael's business had on the region.

His journey in hospitality began at the tender age of 13, when he started working at his family's pub in his hometown of Hobart, in Tasmania. By 22, he was already a business owner, opening a hamburger bar on Wellington's bustling Courtney Place.

From there, Michael went on to own and manage a wide array of restaurants, bars, pubs, and hotels across New Zealand.

His local footprint includes managing both The Railway Hotel and Nag's Head in Ōtaki, Koru Ice ice-cream shop at Te Horo, the Sports Bar in Levin, The Pier in Paraparaumu, and the Beachside Brasserie (now The Waterfront) in Raumati Beach.

Michael has also run pubs in Tākaka,



Michael Hyland with the bougainvillea flowers that were an attraction for customers at The Winemaker's Daughter.

Gisborne, and Ngāruawāhia, cementing his place in New Zealand's hospitality scene.

His love for hospitality extended beyond New Zealand's borders. In his 20s, he and his partner, Queenie Rikihana, moved to London, where Michael attended Westminster Catering College. He went on to be catering manager of large hotel chains in London, gaining invaluable experience that would shape his future ventures.

Reflecting on his time in Ōtaki, Michael reminisces about the days of managing The Railway Hotel in the 1980s.

"It was a different time," he says. "The pub was in full swing most nights with people drinking jugs, smoking inside, and playing pool.

"I remember when the stockmarket crash

happened in 1987 – the owner arrived by helicopter to recover what cash he could quickly, and I was just hoping we had enough money left to pay my staff," he says.

Now retired, Michael looks back on his career journey with a great deal of pride.

The Winemaker's Daughter marks the 10th business he has sold, and he's deeply grateful for the unwavering support he's had from the local community throughout his career.

"I've always enjoyed the challenge of starting new businesses and creating something special for customers," he says. "I've also loved sourcing fresh, local ingredients and coming up with new dishes to try.

"Over the years, I've been lucky to work

alongside great business partners and loyal staff. We've seen so many local families celebrate weddings and special events, and the connection to Ōtaki is particularly meaningful for me, with my wife, Queenie, being a Rikihana and part of the local community."

While Michael's chapter at The Winemaker's Daughter has come to a close, the venue's legacy is far from over. The new owners of the property have announced plans to reopen it as a function centre in 2026, ensuring that the venue continues to serve the local community.

As Michael bids farewell to his remarkable hospitality career, his contributions to the local scene will undoubtedly be remembered for generations to come.

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# Happy campers, unhappy residents

By Ian Carson

As the council opens for consultation a new freedom camping bylaw, some residents at Ōtaki Beach say they are unhappy with the way campers have been abusing current rules.

At present, freedom camping is allowed near the Ōtaki River mouth for up to six self-contained vehicles for up to 48 hours. However, residents say there are usually many more than six caravans and vans parked at the river mouth – about 25 on a recent visit by *Ōtaki Today* – and they're there for several days at a time.

Many are clearly not self-contained, leading to complaints from locals that the outdoors is being used for toilets.

One resident who regards the area as the whenua of her tipuna says the unrestricted views of the sea make it a special place.

"I can absolutely understand why people would want to camp overnight here," says Felicity Underhill.

However, she says there are recurring issues with rubbish dumping and people going to the toilet in the dunes and bushes. "I'm lucky enough to walk on the beach

almost every day, but I avoid the river end because of the sheer number of campers and vehicles on the beach, and the desire to avoid the associated rubbish."

She's concerned about the proposal to add the 14 new spaces at the beach car park. Kāpiti Coast District Council is proposing to add 12 parks for self-contained vehicle on the western side of the car park directly opposite Tasman Road, and another two near the pavilion, which has toilets. Another site has been identified just south of the old highway bridge over the river, and nine other sites on the Kāpiti Coast.

Felicity says overnight camping at present isn't allowed at the beach car park, but it happens anyway.

"When people have stayed overnight, we have regularly found human waste along the dune paths, despite proximity to the toilets at the pavilion.

"I pick up cans and bottles and plastic from the beach and the dunes regularly, and there has been a particular issue with fires and waste, including broken glass."

She worries that locals and visitors who park in the area to relax won't have the view from the car park any more.

"The openness, ease of access, and view of the sea and the sky are some of the special and rare aspects of Ōtaki Beach that would be lost with the addition of 12-14 large campervans.

"I want to keep Ōtaki Beach open and safe and clean for all. I get that it means we should enable a couple of overnight campers, but other visitors should also be able to keep walking through that car park with their dogs or to go for a swim, without having to navigate a wall of campervans or their waste."

Felicity believed a new bylaw should enable the council to monitor and enforce the rules around camping.

"This could be very useful, particularly if it comes with monitoring of other antisocial behaviour at the beach."

The council says it's reviewing how it manages freedom camping to reflect recent changes to central government legislation.

The Freedom Camping Act was amended in 2023. It requires councils to identify the areas of their land where self-contained vehicles will be prohibited or restricted,

such as limiting the length of stay and number of vehicles per site.

The council's current Freedom Camping Policy outlines where freedom camping is allowed, but it doesn't allow for enforcement. It says some campers stay beyond time limits, use non-self-contained vehicles, or camp outside designated areas.

"In recent years, we've taken an educational approach to managing this through our sustainable camping ambassadors, but without enforcement, challenges remain," the council website says.

The proposals would be aimed at striking a balance between accommodating freedom camping and encouraging tourism, and protecting Kāpiti's physical, cultural and social environment.

To have your say or for more information, see [haveyoursay.kapiticoast.govt.nz/freedomcamping](http://haveyoursay.kapiticoast.govt.nz/freedomcamping) Submissions close at 5pm Friday, May 2.



## Tim Costley MP for Ōtaki



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

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*I look forward to meeting with you soon.*



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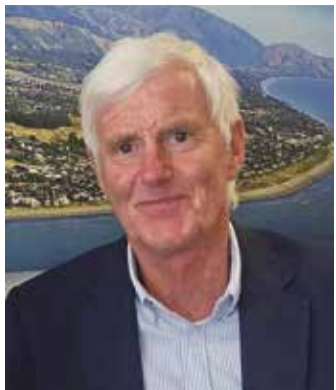
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From left, district-wide councillor Rob Kofoed, current Ōtaki Ward councillor Shelly Warwick, Ōtaki Community Board chair Cam Butler and community board member Jackie Elliott.

# Rob throws hat in ring for Ōtaki Ward seat

By Ian Carson

**Rob Kofoed has ensured it will be an interesting local body election race by announcing he's contesting the Ōtaki Ward seat on Kāpiti Coast District Council.**

Rob is currently a district-wide councillor, but lives in Ōtaki. He will be up against the current Ōtaki Ward councillor, Shelly Warwick. Shelly has said she will seek the seat again at the elections in October.

So far no others have declared their intentions for the ward, though there's some conjecture that Ōtaki Community Board chair Cam Butler and board member Jackie Elliott might also contest the seat.

Making his announcement six months out from the election, Rob says he's got plenty

of things he'd like to see through that he got started on through his first term on the council – especially the things that affect Ōtaki.

"I've enjoyed my time as a district-wide councillor, but I feel I can better serve Ōtaki if I have a role dedicated to representing Ōtaki," he says. "I'm fully dedicated to serving the Ōtaki community for next triennium."

Rob has also served on the Ōtaki Community Board. He's a qualified architect, a flight instructor and director of the Te Horo aerodrome. He's been an Ōtaki resident for 30 years.

Shelly said in early March she wanted to continue as the local councillor.

"I'm definitely running for re-election as Ōtaki Ward councillor," she told *Ōtaki Today*.

"It's been a very productive and positive term."

Shelly is a registered nurse who served two terms on the community board before her election to council in 2022.

Cam Butler says he is still undecided about his future in local politics.

Former councillor and current Ōtaki Community Board member Jackie Elliott is also undecided, but says she is keen to continue working "for my community and Kapiti".

"Whether it's standing for the Greater Wellington Regional Council seat, as a KCDC district-wide councillor or continuing my work on the community board... remains to be decided."

The elections will be held on October 11.

## Coffee up, but don't blame the barista

By Ian Carson

**In May 2021, I speculated that a \$10 flat white was a scary thought, but might not be far away.**

We're not there four years later, but cafés, coffee carts and restaurants are now bearing the brunt of a surge in wholesale coffee prices to record levels.

Coffee bean costs are up about 15 percent and possibly more for cafés that might not have good credit or loyalty to a supplier.

That's inevitably going to be passed on to consumers. For many cafés, those higher prices have already gone on the menu board.

It's all because of the cost of coffee beans. There are several factors, including poor crops in some of the major coffee-producing countries, such as Brazil and Vietnam.

Brazil, the world's largest coffee producer, has had frosts and long droughts that have reduced yields, especially for Arabica beans.

Vietnam, a big producer of Robusta beans, has had drought and heavy rainfall.

Adding to this is strong global demand, putting pressure on supply. China, for example, has more than doubled its coffee consumption in the past decade.

There's also a worldwide coffee picker shortage that's left plenty of coffee unharvested, big fertiliser price rises due to the Russia-Ukraine war, and looming over it all, the threat of big tariffs on coffee.

So next time you order, don't automatically blame the barista for whatever change you might get.



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Photo: 2024 Rising Star winner Tū Mātau Ora

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Visit [kapiticoast.govt.nz/GoodSorts](http://kapiticoast.govt.nz/GoodSorts) and **nominate your favourites** by 31 May 2025.



Wellington Airport Regional Community Awards 2025



# Bridge night work means detours

It's not over yet – the Ōtaki River bridge will be closed from 9pm to 4.30am on Monday, April 14, to allow resurfacing work.

The work, weather permitting, is to improve safety and reliability.

There will be big detours, especially for Ōtaki and Te Horo residents, but Waka Kotahi says a full overnight closure allows the work to be done quickly and efficiently.

### Getting to Ōtaki from the expressway:

Northbound vehicles getting to Ōtaki from the expressway will need to travel for about five minutes further north to the Ōtaki turnaround/rest area (near Lawlors Road) and turn around to travel south. This will be well signposted.

Drivers will then need to travel south towards the Ōtaki southbound offramp to get to Ōtaki township. This is expected to add about 10 minutes to travel times.

### Getting between Ōtaki and Te Horo:

The drive will add 25-30 minutes to travel times in both directions.

Te Horo to Ōtaki vehicles should use the Peka Peka northbound onramp to the expressway, travel north to the Ōtaki turnaround/rest area to turn around. They should then travel south and take the Ōtaki southbound offramp to get to Ōtaki.

Ōtaki to Te Horo vehicles should use the Ōtaki northbound onramp to the expressway and travel to the Ōtaki turnaround/rest area to turn around. They should then travel south and take the Peka Peka southbound offramp to get to Te Horo.



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- Paraparaumu Library, 10am–2pm, Thursday 10 April
- Waikanae Library, 10am–2pm, Wednesday 16 April
- Beach Road Deli Paekākāriki, 10am–12pm, Thursday 17 April

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# Moana inspiration

Regan Balzar stamped her artistic mark on Ōtaki at last year's Māoriland Film Festival with her mural on the front of Ōtaki Museum.

Regan (Te Arawa, Ngāti Ranginui, Raukawa, Apakura, Scottish and Irish) returned this year to add even more colour to the township, this time on the Matene Street wall of the Ballentyne's store. Regan's tryptic is titled *Me He Toka Tu Moana*, which she says encourages viewers to "be like a rock in the ocean, steadfast and strong in the tides of life".

One of the mural's panels was originally to depict Mahinarangi, who travelled from one side of the country to the other, enduring many hardships while pregnant with Raukawa. But as she was painting, locals asked if it was Kahe, who swam from Kāpiti Island with her baby daughter strapped to her back, to raise the alarm after a war party attacked the island.

"Even though my initial thoughts were of someone else, she [Kahe] is the local story, so that must be her," Regan says.

In another panel, a local said: "You've got to put Kāpiti Island on there", and so she did. As with the marakihau, a mythical sea creature Regan is seen painting at left. "That must be our taniwha that looks after our local waterways," locals told her.

"The community's come up and told me what I'm painting, which is kind of unusual," she says. "I've just painted intuitively and people have told me what they think it is. I'm painting for the community, so that's cool."

Artist Regan Balzar puts the finishes touches the third of her tryptic series, *Me He Toka Tu Moana*. Photo, and those at Māoriland Film Festival below – Ōtaki Today



# Forestry expert offers tips

**Plant in winter and know your motivation – that was a key message from native trees expert Ben Disney when he spoke to Ōtaki Carbon Forests’ first public meeting of the year on April 1.**

Ben, who is the MPI-Te Uru Rākau/New Zealand Forest Service forestry advisor for the Greater Wellington area, said it was important to be clear on “why you are planting”, and on threats to planting success, including cost.

These factors could steer not only what and where to plant, but future animal, pest and weed control plans . . . and even gaps between seedlings.

Want to spend less in the future? Ben advised that closer spacing should give seedlings more shade and earlier canopy cover, helping control invasive weeds. Wider spacing meant fewer trees needed to fill an area.

But he had a caveat – more money might



Forestry expert Ben Disney speaking at the Ōtaki Carbon Forests meeting. Photo supplied

be needed in years to come to control weeds. Spraying the spots for plants with a non-toxic weedkiller a few months before planting will help.

He said poor maintenance after planting was where many ventures failed.

Plantings, he said, wouldn’t survive drought

conditions if the roots were not well established. To reduce risks, plant only natives with a well-developed root system, and plant in winter when the soil is typically wettest.

In the summer, letting long grass grow up around young plantings provides some shelter from sun and wind, and helps retain moisture.

Ben advises on both pine and native tree plantings in his professional capacity.

Benefits to planting natives include improving water quality, providing habitat for native birds and invertebrates, soil erosion control. Ben added that they looked good, too.

Every year, the Energise Ōtaki Carbon Forests project holds a series of public talks to share tips and motivations for planting native trees.

The project supports landowners and kaitiaki with on-site advice and regular gatherings.

■ For more, call Di Buchan: 027 683 0213 or email [otaki.carbonforests@gmail.com](mailto:otaki.carbonforests@gmail.com)

## IN BRIEF



### New potters for April

Te Horo potter Emma Densy and her painter uncle, Richard Hansen, are the guest potters at the Tote Gallery for April. Pictured above are, from left, Emma’s mum Wendy, aunt Annette, Richard’s wife Sharon, Richard, and Emma’s husband, Kaleb Smith.

### Twenty-seven call-outs

The Ōtaki Volunteer Fire Brigade had a call-out on average nearly every day during March. There were 27 call-outs: nine for rubbish, grass or scrub; five each for medical emergencies and to attend private fire alarms; two each for property fires, motor vehicle crashes and to assist other brigades; and one each for a gas leak, and “good intent” – a call-out error due to poor information received from a caller.

### Bikers gather at races

The Centurions Motorcycle Club is holding a charity ride starting at Ōtaki-Māori Racing Club on Sunday April 13. The riders will assemble at the racecourse on the Saturday. After reveille the next morning, they will ride to the Pukeahu National War Memorial in Wellington.

# Rotunda waits on grant, but work under way

**After six years of hard work by Friends of the Ōtaki Rotunda, chair Di Buchan was pleased to tell the AGM on March 31 that restoration was finally under way.**

This year, the rotunda will be 110 years old, having been built in Rotorua and transported to Ōtaki for the Children’s Health Camp in 1931. The Rotunda Trust has applied to the Lottery Grants Board for \$702,000. The trust had to raise a third of the total cost of restoration before it could apply.

“Thanks to the community support we have received for our fundraising events, subscriptions and donations, and far from least, the significant

contributions from DoC, we have raised nearly \$365,000, including funds already spent on repairs and reports,” Di said.

The application was supported with letters from DoC, Heritage NZ, the Kāpiti mayor, every school in the area, Ōtaki Heritage Museum, Maoriland Charitable Trust, and many others.

A decision from the Lottery Grants Board is expected by the end of May.

Di launched another fundraiser on the night – sponsors for the rotunda’s 80 window panels. The cost is \$500 a panel, and sponsors will have their name recorded on a windowsill plaque. The opportunity will go to members and supporters before the general public.



Di Buchan with Friends of the Ōtaki Rotunda trustee Anthony Dreaver, left, and patron Jock Phillips.

■ For more, see [otakirotanda.org.nz](http://otakirotanda.org.nz)

## ADVERTORIAL

# A day to bike and hike at the new bridge clip-on

By ROB KOFOED

IT WAS an exciting day when we got on our bikes and cycled to Waka Kotahi’s opening of the Ōtaki River Bridge clip-on shared pathway.

I joined up on Friday 28 March with Gerard Black, Kāpiti Cycle and Action; Bruce Henderson, Chair of the Kāpiti Cycleway, Walkway and Bridleway Group; and Michael Moore, chair of the Waikanae Community Board for the important opening.

The River Bridge clip-on opening marked more than 10 years since the requirement for a cycleway and pedestrian pathway was identified as a connection for residents south of Ōtaki to commute to the township. The pending construction of the expressway’s shared path facility didn’t meet the Ōtaki community’s need to have safe direct access into the town.

The clip-on idea inspired my concept drawing (see at right) dated 2014 which was widely publicised at the time.

Constant lobbying since has made the project eventuate. (By the way, I was Deputy Chair of the Ōtaki Community Board at the time, when we identified the requirement for the clip on access.)

Fortunately for Ōtaki, the unrelenting lobbying did the trick and we have a great new shared path.

Rob is an Ōtaki-based district-wide councillor at Kāpiti Coast District Council. He recently announced he would stand for the Ōtaki Ward at the next local body elections in October. He will be running regular paid articles in this newspaper.



Above is a concept drawing by Rob’s business, Kofoed Architects, drawn in 2014 to show what a bridge clip-on would look like on the western side of the bridge. The clip-on was eventually built on the eastern side.

Above right, Rob stops for a break after being one of the first to cycle across the new clip-on shared pathway.

At right, Rob with Gerard Black (Kāpiti Cycle and Action, second left), Bruce Henderson (Kāpiti Cycleway, Walkway and Bridleway Group), and Michael Moore (chair of the Waikanae Community Board).



# Minecraft descends on Kapiti Island

Online players of Minecraft can now explore Kapiti Island virtually, thanks to a collaboration between Tourism New Zealand and the game's developers.

The island was chosen as a great example of New Zealand's remarkable birdlife, and is one of six iconic Aotearoa locations brought into the Minecraft universe. Others include Waitomo Caves, Rotorua, Abel Tasman National Park, Tekapo, and Doubtful Sound.

The Minecraft initiative allows players worldwide to experience the country's wildlife and cultural heritage in a new and interactive way. It coincides with the release earlier this month of Minecraft: The Movie, which was filmed in New Zealand.

In the game, players take on the role of filmmakers and, on Kapiti Island, are tasked with photographing three native bird species, including the kiwi. The island has about 1200 little spotted kiwi, the largest population of this rare species in the world.



Players are guided by Manaaki, a character inspired by the real-life Kapiti Island wildlife photographer and guide Manaaki Barrett. They learn about the island's unique birdlife and conservation efforts.

Manaaki and cousin Pania share stories and insights, deepening players' understanding of

the island's Māori history and environmental significance. As they progress, players must listen carefully to Manaaki and Pania's instructions, using camera symbols scattered around the island to identify the best spots for capturing images of native birds. The experience reflects a te ao Māori perspective,

focusing on respect for the land and its wildlife.

John Barrett (Ngāti Raukawa, Te Ati Awa, and Ngāti Toa Rangatira), co-founder of Kapiti Island Nature Tours and Manaaki's father, is enthusiastic about the project.

"We think that this Minecraft engagement will enable that story to be told to a whole new audience," he says. "This is more than just a game – it's a way to connect people with our culture and inspire them to come experience it for real."

Unlike traditional Minecraft gameplay that focuses on mining and building, the Kapiti Island experience emphasises exploration and photography.

■ To encourage virtual explorers to experience Kapiti Island in-person, Kapiti Island Nature Tours is offering a 20% discount for April. The discount applies to the family friendly Self-Guided Day Tours and includes the school holidays and Easter. Visitors can use the code KIWI20 when booking to take advantage of this promotion and "play for real" on the island.

## Kids market returns

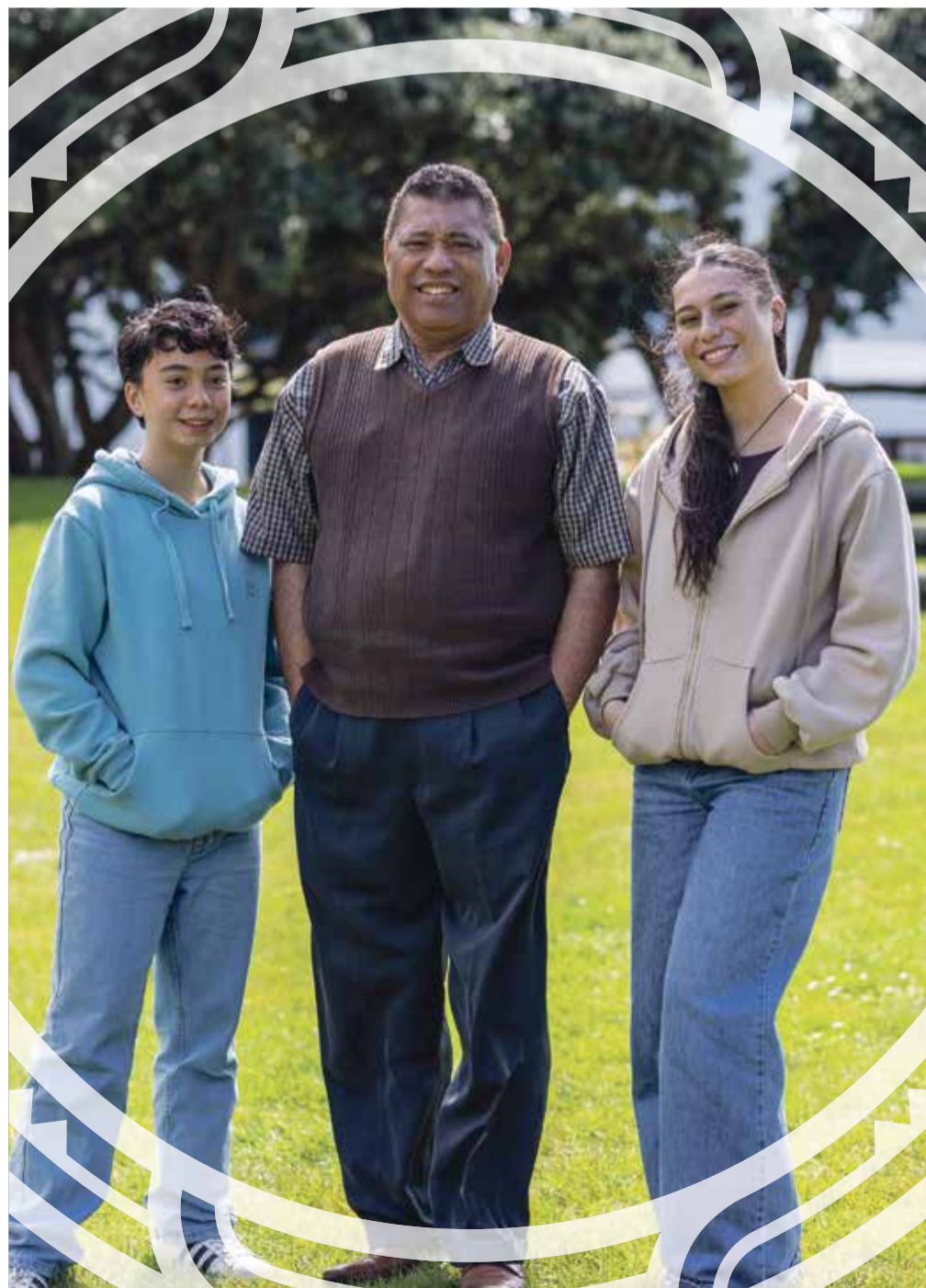
The Ōtaki Kids Market is returning on Saturday, April 27, from 10am to 2pm.

The market showcases the talents and entrepreneurial spirit of youngsters aged 5-19 in the community. From handcrafted goods and art to homemade treats, the Kids market provides a unique opportunity for tamariki and rangatahi to gain business experience, build confidence, and engage with the community.

"We love seeing the passion and hard work that goes into each stall," says Maureen Wallace, president of the Ōtaki Women's Community Club.

The Kids Market is a spin-off from the regular market, which the club has been running for nearly 30 years.

■ Kids Market, main highway Ōtaki, opposite New World.



## Protect yourself against flu before winter arrives

The flu vaccine is free if you're over 65

It's also free for pregnant people and for many others with certain underlying health conditions, including diabetes, heart and lung diseases, and mental health conditions.

To book your flu vaccine:

- visit [BookMyVaccine.nz](https://www.bookmyvaccine.nz)
- call the Vaccination Healthline on 0800 28 29 26
- contact your doctor, pharmacy or healthcare provider.

[info.health.nz/flu](https://info.health.nz/flu)

# HUATAU/Comment

**MAYOR'S VIEW: JANET HOLBOROW**

## Safer crossing of river bridge with milestone pathway opening

**A major milestone was reached as the pathway on the Ōtaki River bridge was opened to the public on Friday, March 28.**

This pathway will provide a safer route for cyclists and pedestrians crossing the river.

The project is just one part of the Peka Peka to Ōtaki revocation works, as the old highway transitions to being a local road. Work will be continuing in the coming months to create a safe and attractive environment in the township.

This work will go some way to addressing some of the challenges



faced by local businesses since the expressway took away passing traffic. Unfortunately, while the project is under way, there will be further disruptions, but once completed it will bring significant benefits.

Council is also improving connections with a brand new 650-metre shared path on Riverbank

Road. This new three-metre-wide asphalt path will connect Miro Street to the Old SH1.

Locals have long advocated for this connection and it's great to have it finally under way. My thanks to the council staff and contractors who are making this a reality.

Māoriland Film Festival was bigger and brighter than ever this year, featuring more than 100 films from around the globe.

It's always an incredible experience as the filmmakers are welcomed at Raukawa Marae, and this year was no exception. The grassy area was filled to bursting with colourful creatives

who brought their work to Ōtaki for this world-renowned event.

Quality New Zealand films are featured alongside works from overseas, and it provides an important opportunity to see local experiences and expression in an international Indigenous context. A highlight was *What's Going On*, a documentary on the work going on at Te Kura ā Iwi o Whakatapuranga Rua Mano.

The students interviewed each other as they reflected on their tiny home and community food truck projects, which have been a response to the housing crisis and food insecurity facing the community.

In the same screening there were other films featuring young people from New Zealand and Canada. It was great to meet some inspiring young filmmakers from Canada at the pōwhiri and then to see their creation a few days later.

Māoriland is about much more than viewing and presenting films, it's about connection and conversation, and about reflecting on the issues facing our communities across the globe. Ngā mihi nui to the Māoriland team for giving us all this opportunity to expand our minds and find new perspectives.

■ Janet is Kāpiti mayor

**THE ELECTORATE: TIM COSTLEY, MP**

## To Māoriland, thank you

**The Māoriland Film Festival has finished, and what a tremendous success!**

I really enjoyed my time at the festival, and the highlight has to be the world premiere of *Shrek* in re reo Maori. It was so much more than I expected. It wasn't just a literal translation, but incorporated culture and tikanga, like when all the fairytale creatures arrive and Donkey says "He pōwhiri?" That got a big laugh!

Ngā Purapura was packed full, not just with our local community and the cast, director and producers, but with people who had come from throughout New Zealand, and in some cases around the world. I want to give my sincere thanks and a huge "well done" to all of those who put on the fesetival for us each year.

I met *Shrek* director Tainui Stephens at Māoriland on the Wednesday. Tainui is a Kiwi screen icon and along with the whole crew, and Dreamworks in the US, did an amazing job.

Dreamworks weren't the only visitors in town. At the pōwhiri I was amazed at how many international visitors were here. For many it would be the only pōwhiri they might experience in their lifetime, and how special to have that taking place in our town.

Also arriving in Ōtaki recently was the new Fresh Choice supermarket, in place of the old green one.

You may have seen our National government is focused on bringing cheaper grocery prices to you. One way is by breaking up the supermarket duopoly. We want to find easier ways for new supermarket operators, including Kiwi-owned ones, to enter the market. More options means more competition, and more competition means cheaper prices.

We're taking action so Kiwis pay less at the checkout and keep more of their money. Fruit and vege prices dropped in 2024 thanks to our government's focus on cutting inflation, reducing interest rates, and spending government money in areas where it adds value, like health and education.

I'm proud that we're making progress but we want to go further. Whether the new supermarkets are owned by iwi, The Warehouse, or someone overseas, what matters most is that we reduce the cost of living for every Kiwi household.

Thanks to our government, mortgage rates are cheaper, business loans are cheaper, and supermarket prices are getting better, too. The cost of living for every family in Ōtaki is our number one priority.

■ Tim is MP for the Ōtaki electorate



**CAM'S CORNER: CAM BUTLER**

## Speak up if you know something about vandalism

*Tēnā koutou whanau o Ōtaki.*

### Vandalism

You have seen it on the news, on Facebook and in newspapers about how vandalism has been rife in Kāpiti and in particular in Ōtaki. If you have information that can help stop this waste of ratepayer money and lowering the mana of Ōtaki, please let the police/pirihimana know.

### Bridge shared path open

Yes the shared path on the old SH1 bridge is open. Good old Waka Kotahi gave very little notice and didn't want to invite many people. However we worked our way in so the Ōtaki Community Board was represented. It is a longer walk than I had imagined at 208 metres long and took a while at blessing speed. Thank you to Rawiri Rikihana from Ngā Hapū o Ōtaki for the blessing.

### Old SH1 revocation works

Revocation works at Te Horo seem to have



ground to a halt – unsure what the hold up is there.

Works on Old SH1 near the river are going ahead with some delays when it is one lane. This is resurfacing plus reshaping the kerbs to make it into a local road rather than a state highway.

The shopping area revocation works are yet to come...

### Countdown is now... Fresh Choice

I had a sneak preview of the revamped supermarket the night before the opening. I saw that they were still working at 9pm after the Ōtaki Rotunda AGM at the library so I

popped my head in to chat with new owners Brad and Rochelle. Certainly some effort has gone into making the shop more appealing and it's great to see it open again.

### Water reforms

Changes to who manages the three waters has been forced on KCDC by central government and it is out now for consultation. There are the two best options in the consultation document and KCDC needs your feedback. Head to the Have Your Say website page or do a written submission from forms at the library. Do we go it ourselves or team up with Horowhenua, Manawātū and Palmerston North? Have your say.

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

**TE HORO OUTLOOK: MICHAEL MOORE**

## Shared pathways are good for everyone

**The shared pathway attached to the Ōtaki River bridge is now open.**

This is the final part of a transformative addition to our landscape: a 35-kilometre shared pathway that stretches from Paekākāriki to Ōtaki. This dedicated off-road trail offers pedestrians, cyclists, and even horse riders (for some of the paths) a safe and scenic route, separate from vehicle traffic.

The 10km stretch from Peka Peka to Ōtaki was finished in May 2023 and last month, the final section across the Ōtaki River was opened.

This Coast35 pathway is the result of collaborative efforts by Kāpiti Coast District Council; Waka Kotahi NZTA; Greater Wellington Regional Council; Elevate Ōtaki, and the Kāpiti Cycleway, Walkway and Bridleway Advisory Group.

The pathway has features designed to enhance safety. The trail includes stream and river crossings, with uninterrupted journeys. The Makahuri underpass (formerly Marycrest) provides safe passage beneath the expressway, complemented by a signal crossing for Old SH1.

The Ōtaki River bridge crossing includes access under the bridge for east/west connection at both ends.



The shared pathway provides a multitude of benefits, including enhanced safety, providing a dedicated space away from vehicles, significantly reducing risk of accidents, and fostering a safer environment.

It also connects our community. The trail seamlessly links our communities along the Kāpiti Coast, with easier access to schools, shops and recreational areas, promoting unity and encouraging local exploration.

The pathway offers a picturesque route for walking, cycling and horse riding, but also encourages physical activity, contributing to the health and well-being of residents and visitors. The network of trails will attract visitors as cyclists and walkers travel to our cafés, shops, and accommodation.

The pathway will also allow users to immerse themselves in the natural beauty of Kāpiti, fostering a deeper appreciation of our local environment and encouraging sustainable tourism.

The community's response has been overwhelmingly positive. Cycling advocate Lynn Sleath highlighted the collaborative effort behind the project, noting that the shared pathway was incorporated into the Peka Peka to Ōtaki expressway project after concerted community advocacy. In the northern section, the pathway navigates near Ngā Manu Nature Reserve, and even the new Kilns at Te Horo.

The completion of the Kāpiti Coast shared pathway marks a significant milestone in our community infrastructure. It exemplifies the power of collaboration and vision in creating spaces that enhance safety, connectivity, health, and economic prosperity.

As residents and visitors take to Coast35, they embark on more than just a journey across the Kāpiti Coast – they experience the collective spirit and dedication that brought this pathway to life.

- Next Waikanae Community Board meeting 7pm Tuesday April 29, Waikanae Community Centre, 28 Utauta St.
- Waikanae Capital Improvement Fund: Applications are open April 11 to May 23 and considered at the June 10 meeting. See [www.tinyurl.com/WCBgrants](http://www.tinyurl.com/WCBgrants)
- Michael is chair of Waikanae Community Board and a Te Horo resident.



# Smart jobs – gazing at the stars, or aiming for the stars

**Many innovation and technology companies in the region report that skilled talent is hard to come by, despite an economic downturn and the threat to employment by things like AI.**

One would think that with rising unemployment and more people wanting to live here, there wouldn't be too much difficulty. But the facts are clear, with many companies finding it hard to attract talent from overseas, or by poaching from other nearby companies.

The obvious solution, albeit longer term, is to encourage more creative-thinking young people, typically with a bent towards mathematics and science, to orientate their educational and career ambitions towards a future in innovation, technology and science.

But, if our future in New Zealand largely rests on our ability to produce clever things, especially if they can earn a few overseas dollars, wouldn't we be desperately looking for the next generation of innovators and scientists? That would surely mean our government is encouraging young people, especially through our education system, to at least be aware that there are fulfilling jobs in this

area, and ones that can last the test of time.

The truth is there's no absolute answer, but my recent experiences indicate that the government is hardly grasping the nettle and our schools are patchy in the delivery of encouragement and smart vocational guidance.

Things have changed a little, but maybe not much from when I was one of the 80 or so students, on day one, at Waitohu Primary School. Our class was in Room 2 and we loved our teacher, Miss Pratt.

In the year before I left Waitohu for Ōtaki College, I was ushered into a small room to hear what my future might hold. In the room was the head of Waitohu School, the principal of Ōtaki College, plus my parents.

I don't recall saying much but the Ōtaki College principal gave his opinion on where my secondary education should be streamed, presumably having looked at the evidence of my primary education.

In effect I would be streamed into one of three areas – General Studies, which distinguished itself from Professional Studies and Technical Studies by the fact I wouldn't be learning languages or woodworking skills, but would be doing commercial practice and bookkeeping.



So, not feeling particularly excited or inspired, that's what I did, and without question.

A few years later and towards the end of my final year at Ōtaki College, I had no idea what I might do for further education or a career. Nor do I remember much advice in that regard, although I recall my parents taking me to have a look around the Government Printing Office in Wellington, presumably to see if that might strike an interest.

Rather by default I narrowed my options down to going to university and studying history, since going to university was a family expectation and history happened to be my best subject at school.

Then, completely by chance, a friend's mother wanted her son to do a design degree at the Wellington Design School and asked me to encourage him by submitting an application myself. Blow me down,

my application succeeded and my friend's application failed, so on I marched to an accidental career.

But it begs the question. Why does our future prosperity, and the welfare of our rangatahi, have to depend almost entirely on random chance?

I have encountered young women at a girls' school flatly saying that technology and science isn't for them because it's about "boys in overall on a dirty factory floor". When you tell them that the range of vocations is huge, from arts and culture through to medical research that saves people's lives, their interest is pricked.

Thankfully the old concepts of "streaming" in education are behind us, but it does seem that siloed thinking persists. A classic example is the government's education prescription which emphasises what they call "return to basics". But too often this ignores the fact that the next Professor Margaret Brimble is

just as likely to have been encouraged to express herself at school through music, painting or learning te reo. Yet "return to basics" wants to encourage maths and science, and not so much the arts and creativity.

While I can celebrate that I lucked on a satisfying and useful career, and my friend took a different course, I can report that he went to university to do accounting, and that he ended up earning a lot more money than me working overseas for a very wealthy corporation.

So, I don't entirely knock the whims of fate, but equally, there are far too many young people who don't get a decent chance at finding their calling, and too many employers grasping at shadows. The result is that our people and communities are poorer. As my school report would say, "could do better".

■ 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)

## JUST A THOUGHT



FRASER CARSON

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Momentum Clinical Research

# MAHI MĀRA/Gardening



Above: African marigolds make great greenhouse ground cover.



Above right: Celery does well in a winter greenhouse.



Left: Greenhouse soil can be dry and dusty at the end of autumn.

Photos Kath Irvine

## Revitalise the greenhouse for the next round of crops

**The greenhouse soil has worked hard all summer, so revitalise it before planting the next round of crops to keep health steady.**

That's our goal – no dips and dives, just brilliant, consistent health. Seize the day and get it done before soil cools off.

These preps will enable you to continue cropping, and will ready your soil to sail on into tomato/pepper/aubergine plantings in late winter.

Start with a good old clean-up.

Remove all the yellowing, ratty, old foliage from productive crops like tomatoes, peppers and cucumbers to keep healthy airflow circulating, let in lots of light at this low-light time of year, and to free up space at their base for planting or sowing new stuff.

Moisture is your next port of call.

If soil is dry (and chances are that it is), you'll need to rehydrate it. Dry soils need a few slow soaks to become properly moist. I like a sprinkler for this job – one you can set in an arc to go exactly where you want it.

Once puddles start to show, let it rest for a few hours or overnight. Don't be tricked if the top looks wet! Check beneath and repeat until moisture is good.

When it is, your soil is ready for compost. Spread it on about 2cm thick, over all the spaces you've just cleared.

If you don't have enough homemade compost, extend it by mixing in really well rotten manure or worm castings. Still not enough? No worries. Compost beneath each new seedling and sow a low growing greencrop in the un-composted spaces.

Pour a liquid seaweed feed over the newly spread compost, then sow or plant right away – living roots are the most efficient (and best!) way to keep soil energy up.

- Sow a mixture of lower growing greencrops like daikon, phacelia, calendula, bishops flower and crimson clover around and beneath established crops to create a living mulch. Chop them back as and when is needed to improve light and air, dropping the chopped material onto the soil.
- Add taller greencrops like mustard, broadbeans and lupin to the mix when sowing spaces you won't be planting with crops right away. Chop them down as they gear up to flower – this gives the soil a huge boost. Set the tops aside and sow more greencrops (great if soil dried out), or plant crops into the space. Use the chopped material as mulch.

There are plenty of cool things to plant out in the April greenhouse – dwarf beans, basil, beetroot, bok choy, celery, spuds in buckets or salad greens.

- Water in the morning, and only as needed. Plants don't evaporate as much on cooler days – overwatering stresses them out, and can stir fungal disease. Water the soil not the foliage.
- Liquid feed new crops using a gentle, dilute brew after watering, once a week until growing strongly.
- Make a big compost for next autumn's greenhouse zhush up.

### EDIBLE GARDEN



KATH IRVINE

■ Kath has been growing vegetables to feed her family for 21 years. Spray-free, natural, low-input food gardens are her thing. Kath offers organic gardening advice through her articles, books, workshops, and garden consultations.

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# HAUORA-PŪTAIO /Health-science

## Screening effective if targeting at-risk population

**New Zealand has one of the highest rates of bowel cancer in the world, with more than 3000 people diagnosed every year.**

Early detection with bowel cancer screening programmes is a cost-effective way to reduce illness and deaths.

But screening tests are effective only if they target at-risk populations, where the prevalence of the disease is raised. Bowel cancer poses a higher risk to older people, making age a primary criterion for screening eligibility. International best practice guidelines recommend initiating screening at 50, or even earlier given the significant global increase in bowel cancer among people under 50 (early-onset colorectal cancer – EO CRC).

Bowel screening programmes are available from 50 years of age in the UK, and 45 years in Australia and the United States. In New Zealand, under the previous Labour government, the age for screening the general population was set at 60; the current government is going to lower this, but only down to 58. For a cost-effective lifesaving intervention, New Zealand remains way behind the play.

The Labour government had selectively lowered the screening age for Māori and Pasifika to 50 because of their higher proportion of early-onset colorectal cancer and lower five-year survival rates. The current government cancelled this programme and rejected an official recommendation to have a lower screening age for these at-risk groups – replacing it with a screening programme that has the same eligibility age for everyone. Bowel Cancer NZ chief executive Peter Huskinson described it as a step backwards for equity.

And equity is the cornerstone of an effective screening programme. Everyone deserves the opportunity to achieve their best possible health, but this isn't accomplished by treating everyone the same. Instead, it requires equity – acknowledging that individuals have unique needs and providing fair and just health care tailored to their specific circumstances.

The rights and health of vulnerable people and groups can easily be trampled under the beguiling banner of equal treatment for all.

The gold standard for detecting bowel cancer

is colonoscopy, but it's an expensive test that's not realistic for mass screening. The faecal immunochemical test (FIT), which tests for traces of blood in a bowel motion, is a simple, non-invasive, and cost-effective screening method.

Unfortunately, screening tests, while convenient, compromise on accuracy. This is assessed in terms of test sensitivity (of the people who have the disease the percentage who correctly test positive) and test specificity (of the people who don't have the disease the percentage who correctly test negative). An ideal test has 100% sensitivity and 100% specificity.

The faecal immunochemical test typically has a sensitivity and specificity about 80% and 94%, respectively. Let's see how such a test would perform if we tried to screen the entire New Zealand population for 3000 cases of undetected bowel cancer.

With a test sensitivity of 80% we will accurately detect 2400 cases of bowel cancer (80% of 3000). Not perfect, but a vast improvement over leaving all cases undetected that could progress to incurable advanced cancer.

But what about the test specificity of 94%? Most people without bowel cancer will correctly test negative (94%), but that still leaves a false positive rate of 6 percent, and, when screening a large population in which most people do not have bowel cancer, those false positives really add up.

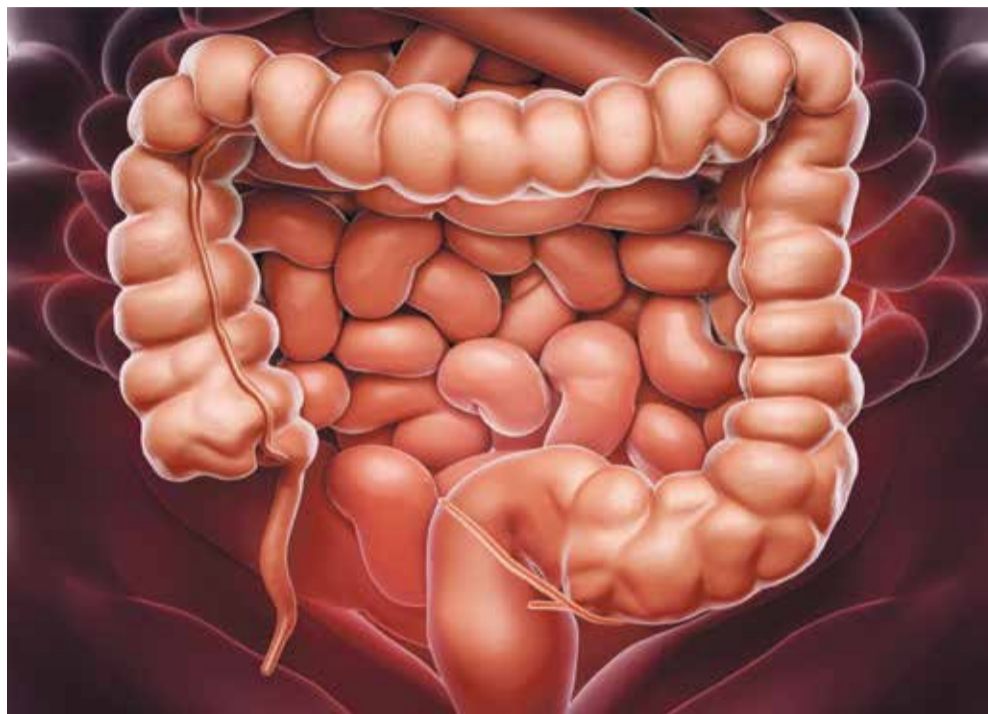
More than 300,000 people would produce a positive test result, but only 2400 would actually have bowel cancer. In statistical terms, the positive predictive value (the probability that a person with a positive screen test result truly has the disease) is only 0.8%. Follow-up testing with a colonoscopy of everyone with a positive screening test result would totally overwhelm our health system and be untenable.

Follow-up testing with a colonoscopy of everyone with a positive screening test result would totally overwhelm our health system and be untenable. Health researchers use statistics like sensitivity, specificity, positive predictive

### HEALTH SCIENCE



DR STEVE HUMPHRIES



value, and many more besides, to determine the most appropriate selection criteria for screening people. Whether politicians follow their advice is another story.

Participating in bowel cancer screening is an excellent step towards safeguarding our health, but we should also be thinking about prevention. To lower your risk of bowel cancer, eat plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables, avoid

ultra-processed foods and eating too much red meat, and get plenty of exercise.

Processed meat, smoking and alcohol are all Group 1 carcinogens linked to an increased risk of bowel cancer. Prevention is better than cure.

■ 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.

### HELPLINES AND LOCAL MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES:

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

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

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

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

#### Services for support & information:

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

#### For children and young people

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



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# Artificial intelligence – it’s not all scary and bad

**A**I won't take your job, but someone using AI to get it done quicker will.

It won't tell our stories like we do, but it will fool someone into thinking it has. So we need to understand both its power and its risks.

At the Māoriland Film Festival in March, Tainui Stephens talked about the importance of being human in our stories, at a time when AI puts the notion of truth up for grabs.

You probably knew you can take a 100-page pdf and ask AI to summarise it, looking specifically for the things you care about in a school, iwi, or business report. But did you know you can ask AI to clone any voice you have a recording of, and then get it to say whatever you want?

Did you see the AI-generated videos on Facebook of a cloned Dr Lance O'Sullivan (Te Rarawa, Ngāti Hau, Ngāti Maru) selling a diet pill he has nothing to do with? These scams probably fooled more than a few people who trust the truths of (the real) Dr O'Sullivan.

When you use free versions of AI, you're feeding their brain with your truth and mātauranga (knowledge). That truth gets added to the warehouse and they then sell it back to the next customer, wrapped in the AI's own biases and viewpoints (which are basically decided by whatever was published on the internet that AI was first fed on). Sometimes that's OK, sometimes it's not - but you need to know that in order to make the decision.

It's a numbers game, and unfortunately, we're often the minority in that giant warehouse of truths. What do you think the images look like

when you ask AI to create a "successful man"? Or how about a criminal in New Zealand? Whose truths do you think those are?

AI is an incredibly powerful tool but we need to remember the companies building and selling that power are profit driven. Their shareholders aren't asking for a report on how much value they added to humanity, te taiao (the environment), or the mental health and well-being of our rangatahi (youth). They're asking for customer and product growth reports.

The world's biggest tech companies made billions last year. Meta (Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp) alone raked in \$165 billion in 2024. And while they got richer, we kept giving away our mātauranga for free on those platforms.

But it's not all scary and bad. As a tool, even the free versions of ChatGPT and Claude are amazingly useful for everything from writing reports and summarising meetings, to helping explain a concept to tamariki.

When used properly, it's like the difference between a calculator and working through long-form addition.

I've been using AI over the last year to build a platform that turns knowledge and truths into learning and training resources without the time, tech, money or expertise you'd usually need.

Without AI, this would have taken years, people, and resources that I don't have. By learning to use AI effectively and safely, I've been able to build a platform that allows us to share our truths, our way, led by tikanga,

## GOOD THINKING



PERA BARRETT



purpose and values, not profit.

The platform is called Kaha Create and it's our answer to a system that's been taking our stories, our mātauranga, and turning them into profit for everyone except the people who matter most.

If you want to learn and practise for free, I'll be holding AI walk-in labs at Te Wānanga o Raukawa on the Fridays of May 2 and 9. Come in and learn a bit about how you can use AI to get stuff done quicker, while thinking about what to consider when giving our stories or kōrero to AI. These labs are a safe space to have wānanga, test, and learn with a couple of us who have been using AI for a while.

■ Pera is a rap singer, story writer. He received the Local Hero award at the New Zealander of the Year awards in 2019. To learn more, email [pera.barrett@gmail.com](mailto:pera.barrett@gmail.com) or see [kahacreatesoona.com](http://kahacreatesoona.com)



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HOROWHENUA

**ŌTAKI COMMUNITY: SIMON BLACK**



## Progress on CCTV cameras

**Building on my February column, the Ōtaki Community Board is making steady progress on community safety efforts, including our local CCTV plan with the Horowhenua Community Camera Trust (HCCT).**

Last year, the Ōtaki Community Board made a presentation to KCDC's Strategy, Operations, and Finance Committee. We advocated for practical solutions like a no-cruising bylaw, allowing the HCCT to use existing KCDC cameras, and increasing support for local businesses.

While we continue to work with KCDC on these matters, we are progressing with the HCCT to establish better CCTV coverage in Ōtaki.

For those unfamiliar, HCCT is a Levin-based charitable trust run by vetted volunteers, operating in partnership with police. Footage from their network of more than 80 cameras is accessed only on request by police; their kaupapa is community safety, not surveillance.

We've been working with HCCT to find key spots in and around Ōtaki for improved camera coverage, particularly to monitor traffic in and out of town, including the beach area. To make this happen, we need support from the community.

We're currently looking for residents, businesses, or landowners willing to either host a camera or allow HCCT to access an existing, good-quality feed. Hosting might involve providing 24/7 power and internet, and in most cases HCCT handles installation, maintenance, and technical setup.

It's a small but powerful way to contribute to local safety.

Also, the Ōtaki Community Board is keen to fund community-led safety projects through the Ōtaki Community Board Grant Fund. This fund helps local individuals and groups with financial support for their projects.

To submit a grant application, scan the QR code in this article.

Interested in helping? I would love to hear from you – [simon.black@kapiticoast.govt.nz](mailto:simon.black@kapiticoast.govt.nz).

■ Simon is deputy chair of the Ōtaki Community Board



# Taupata, the resilient little coastal rongoā

**Taupata (*coprosma repens*) is a resilient little tree capable of withstanding even the harshest elements. In fact, it appears to flourish in extreme weather conditions.**

Tāwhirimātea (weather god) and Tangaroa (god of the sea) act as its allies, providing support that enhances taupata's strength. It thrives by absorbing minerals from coastal areas provided by Tangaroa, while gaining resilience and fortitude from Tāwhirimātea.

This mirrors the lives of the people who coexist with them.

If you were to remove taupata from the rugged environment of its allies, would its nutrients and minerals be affected? In a similar vein, if a person stepped outside the familiarity of their surroundings, would they undergo a transformation?

How would each thrive when placed in unfamiliar settings?

Taupata shares many similarities with its relative karamū (*coprosma robusta*), except taupata is a coastie. One distinguishing feature is the shiny, waxy surface of its leaves, which helps prevent sea salt from adhering.

On the underside of the leaves, you'll find small pits, known as domatia, located at the intersections of the veins. These fascinating domatia serve as homes for tiny insects, such as mites. These mites play a



JOANNE HAKARAIA



crucial role in protecting the plant by removing harmful fungi from the leaves.

It's believed that taupata has evolved to create these special shelters specifically for the mites to inhabit!

Taupata has been traditionally used by Māori for treating inflammation of the kidneys and bladder. Additionally, it plays a role in supporting gut flora.

By respectfully harvesting its leaves and acknowledging the plant's mauri (life force) through karakia and tikanga, we honour the enduring bond with our natural world. This practice not only supports our well-being but also ensures that taupata continues to thrive.

Taupata is not only a soothing beverage but also a natural remedy. This deep connection to the land and its flora highlights the profound wisdom in traditional practices, where plants are revered not only for their physical benefits but also for their spiritual significance.

If you know the whakapapa of the area where taupata grows, harvest some leaves and make a wairākau (tea) as below.

**To make a wairākau:**

1. Place about six leaves (fresh or dried) in a teapot or coffee plunger
2. Pour 250ml of boiled water into the pot
3. Semi-boil for 10 minutes
4. Strain and drink.

Please make sure that you can confidently identify any plant before tasting.

■ Joanne is a certified rongoā practitioner and registered with ACC. Email [jo@rongoamauri.com](mailto:jo@rongoamauri.com)



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# PAKIHI/Business

## Get out of the do it yourself conundrum

**L**et's talk about a trap I see far too often in the world of small and medium-sized business owners, what I call the DIY conundrum.

It's the belief that if you want something done right, you've got to do it yourself. Many business owners fall into this mindset, convinced no-one can match their skills or commitment. And while that may feel true, it's a costly miscalculation.

The truth is, trying to do it all alone doesn't lead to success, it leads to burnout.

We've inherited a hustle-and-grind culture that glorifies doing everything yourself. But the real secret of success isn't grinding – it's designing. It's not about working harder; it's about working smarter. The smartest leaders don't do everything

themselves. They build teams. They delegate. They systemise. They free themselves to focus on what matters most.

Think of it like this: just as you wouldn't ask a doctor to become a plumber, or vice versa, you shouldn't try to wear every hat in your business. Let professionals excel in their area of expertise. That's what drives sustainable growth.



**YOUR BUSINESS**

**CHRIS WHELAN**



Image by Pexels from Pixabay

And look, I get it. As a business owner, you've poured your heart, soul, and savings into your business. You've taken the risks. You've made the sacrifices. Your dedication is unquestioned.

But let me ask you, have you crossed the line from dedicated to drained? From driven to depleted? If so, you might be stuck in the DIY trap.

There are five clear signs that you're overworking and what you can do to change course.

### 1. The 24/7 mentality

Are you always "on"? Even when you're out to dinner with your family or walking in the bush, are you still mentally clocked into work?

**Action step:** Set clear boundaries between work and personal life. Create a shutdown ritual, a consistent end-of-day routine. Plan tomorrow today. Use a tool like the "Frog Sheet" (Brian Tracy's idea: "eat that frog") to identify your top task, so when you finish the day, you've closed the loop. Turn off email notifications. Score your day out of 5. Then switch off – mentally and digitally.

### 2. The "I'll do it myself" trap

Do you struggle to delegate? Do you believe no-one else can do it as well as you?

**Action step:** Start small. Delegate one low-risk task. Build from there. Remember: true leadership is about influencing outcomes through others, not doing everything yourself. If you're the bottleneck, your business can't grow, and neither can your people.

### 3. You're running on empty

Are you physically, emotionally, or mentally drained? Are you exhausted more often than not? **Action step:** Prioritise self-care. Schedule daily

exercise. Eat well. Rest. Stephen Covey calls this "sharpening the saw". If you focus only on production and ignore your capacity to produce, you'll burn out. Take care of the asset – you.

### 4. You sacrifice personal time

When was the last time you took a real break? Do your hobbies still exist, or did you trade them in for long hours?

**Action step:** Reclaim your personal time. Schedule short breaks during the day. Take mini-holidays every 90 days. They don't have to be expensive, just intentional. Turn off your phone. Go for a bushwalk. Have a picnic with your family. You'll return sharper, calmer and more focused.

### 5. Lack of systems and automation

Are you still managing everything manually? Are you drowning in spreadsheets and paper trails?


**Action step:** Systemise and automate. Use CRMs, project management tools and automation software to handle repetitive tasks. Automate the routine; humanise the exceptions. That's how you create space to think, plan and lead.

### The bottom line

Being a workaholic in your own business isn't a badge of honour, it's a warning sign. Success doesn't come from doing more, it comes from doing less of the wrong things, and more of the right ones.

The real mark of a successful business owner is the ability to create a business that thrives without them doing everything. If you're ready to step back from the chaos and into a more strategic role, where you lead instead of just do, then take the first step. Set boundaries. Delegate. Re-energise. Systemise.

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





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## Review power provider, Consumer urges

**Too many businesses and households are paying more than they need to for power, Consumer NZ says, and big energy price increases are looming.**

Consumer is urging New Zealanders to check for cheaper options to help offset higher bills.

Price increases are already being implemented, with big retailer Mercury recently advising it would lift prices an average of 9.7%.

"Analysis of Powerswitch data shows users can save, on average, almost \$500 a year by checking for cheaper options," says Powerswitch manager Paul Fuge. "Such a saving would effectively offset upcoming price increases for many households."

Powerswitch encourages consumers to take advantage of its free comparison service to ensure they are not paying more than necessary.

"We find most households coming to Powerswitch discover they are paying more than they might need to," Paul says. "For example, 93% of users could find savings of more than \$100, 73% could be saving more than \$300 and 61% of users could potentially save more than \$400."

"Escalating energy prices could make a bad situation even worse, so it's more important than ever to make sure you're getting the most bang for your buck."

Energy costs emerged as one of the top three financial concerns for consumers in Consumer NZ's latest quarterly Sentiment Tracker online survey. The rating indicates how energy affordability is increasingly affecting consumers.

Similarly, in Consumer's last annual energy survey, 20% of households said they struggled to pay their power bills, with 11% reporting living in cold homes after reducing heating to cut costs.

Household concern about increasing power bills is likely contributing to an increase in the use of Powerswitch.

The warmer summer months typically have the lowest household power bills, so summer is traditionally a quieter time of the year for Powerswitch. But not this year. In the months December to March, more than 10,000 customers used Powerswitch to initiate switching to a cheaper power deal. That's a 48% increase compared with the same period last year and the highest recorded for this four-month period since Powerswitch was set up.

According to Consumer, cost is a significant reason to switch energy providers, with 45% of people making the change due to price hikes.

Changes in circumstances, such as getting a big bill (25%), and changes in household circumstances, such as moving (22%), also drive switching behaviour. Satisfaction with current providers and the perceived effort required to switch act as barriers to switching.

A big chunk of the price rise noted by consumers is due to increases in what the electricity lines companies can charge.

**BUSINESS PROFILE**

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



James Michael at a New World tasting session, right, and above, his Gratitude kefir that's made in Ōtaki.

*Photos supplied*



# James's drink takes off with fizz

**When a drink fizzes, it's going to be through force carbonating or through active probiotics. In the case of Gratitude's kefir health drink, it's the probiotic cultures doing the work.**

"Our lemon and ginger kefir has up to 56 strains of active cultures," says Gratitude's James Michael. "Probiotic yoghurts have two."

Kefir is a Turkish word that means "feel good". And that's exactly what James says his kefir – made in Riverbank Road, Ōtaki – does for drinkers.

Ten years ago James was debilitated by chronic fatigue, and getting ill regularly. A friend gave him a kefir drink to try.

"I was amazed at how good it made me feel, almost straight away. Within 12 months my immune system had transformed. I had energy again, and I wasn't getting sick all the time."

The citric acid in lemons is said to enhance liver function and flush out toxins. Ginger is believed to support detoxification by promoting circulation and digestion – the two ingredients reputedly helping users to feel rejuvenated and energised.

James started making kefir himself, firstly to provide himself with his own supply, and then realising he should try to help other people by making it available commercially.

Because of its natural fizz, it took about three years of experimentation before he got it right.

He talked to Coral Tree Organics in Riverbank Road, well known as a producer of organic apple cider vinegar. Soon he was renting space at Coral Tree, occasionally picking their brains as the Gratitude business started to take shape.

James is clearly proud of his kefir product. He enthuses about the hours he puts into hand-

cutting organic lemons grown locally and fresh, spray-free ginger from Fiji.

The resulting brew is slowly fermented – for up to four weeks – to draw out the sugars and ensure stability.

"You can't rush these things," he says. "You've got to let nature do its thing."

Nature certainly goes to work with the kefir "fizz". With no carbonating and no pasteurising, it's the "live" probiotics that provide the kick and the surprisingly strong fizz on opening. James says the genuine brew starts off slow and then gets more fizz the older it gets.

James's kefir is stocked at New World Ōtaki and seven other New World stores, at the Hori Kawhe in Ōtaki Beach, plus Moore Wilson's and Commonsense Organics, where it features as one of the top selling health drinks.

So why call the company Gratitude?

"I think gratitude is an important part of life,"


James says. "There are so many things we can all be grateful about, especially our well-being."

"And it feels good to take time to be grateful for the little things in life, like a beautiful drink, a walk on Otaki beach or time with family and friends. That's where the 'feel good' of kefir and gratitude merge. So, the name Gratitude works with us."

The "us" is James and wife Careoline, who operates Organic Wealth. Careoline does waste audits and carbon reports, collects food waste in Ōtaki for community composting, and provides waste minimisation services for events such as the Ōtaki Kite Festival.

While Gratitude doesn't have its own retail outlet, James is happy to deliver free in the Ōtaki area.

■ Call James on 021 775 491 or email [james@organicwealth.nz](mailto:james@organicwealth.nz)  
See [www.gratitude.nz](http://www.gratitude.nz)


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# HĪTŌRIA/History

# HISTORY MILLING AROUND

## Multitude of sources for historical stories

**F**or the past few months, a key activity within Ōtaki Heritage has been doing the research and conceptualising for the museum’s new exhibition.

The exhibition, which will be about the township from 1843 to 1920, will be open on the usual Thursday to Saturdays from Saturday, May 17. Although 1843 is the start date, the township was established in 1846, which makes next year its 180th anniversary.

There are a multitude of sources for stories; too many I sometimes think. They often tell only a small part of a story and so other sources are scanned to enable a coherent story to be told. On occasions, they will tell what should be the same story, but in important different ways.

Here’s an example. Books are important sources, and when you want information on

early Ōtaki, a “go to” book is *Otaki: the town and district*, published in 1952 and written by Francis Simcox, who was born in Ōtaki in 1880. In the book it is recorded that the Town Hall burned down “about 1910”. In fact, a quick search through a fantastic online source, PapersPast New Zealand, reveals that



it was burned down in June 1914 by a fire that, according to the *New Zealand Times*, “burned merrily”. The paper noted that “An agitation is also on foot to supply the town with a firebell”.

A rich and invaluable source of stories, both online and in the museum, are various reports produced for the Porirua ki Manawātū district inquiry; often referred to as Wai 2200. In 2008, the Waitangi Tribunal received several requests to inquire into Treaty claims in the Taihape, Rangitikei, Manawātū, Horowhenua, and Kāpiti areas. After conferences with the claimants and the Crown, the tribunal divided the region into two inquiry districts: Taihape, and Porirua ki Manawātū.



Above: Mission mill, Ōtaki, ca 1900. Artist W F Barraud. *Image courtesy of Alexander Turnbull Library*



Above right: Ōtaki Flour Mill. 1890s. *Image courtesy of Wellington City Archives*



Right: Mill wheel and part of the mill stone from the Pukekaraka Mill. *Photo Ōtaki Heritage*

About 117 claims are part of the inquiry, which is funded by the Crown Forestry Rental Trust. The trust was established in 1989, and its funds come from annual rental fees for licences to use certain Crown forest licensed lands.

A fantastic online source is the National Library, which has a great selection of photographs and, as I recently found out, of maps; Archives New Zealand’s online map selection is also very good. It was to the National Library site I turned to get some photographs for an exhibition story on Ōtaki’s two flour mills, which operated from 1850 through the 1870s.

One was on the Haruātai Stream, in the

vicinity of Millhaven Place, and the other on the Waitohu Stream, commissioned by the Catholic Mission, about half a kilometre due east of the golf club clubhouse.

The mill in the photograph (above) is identified as “the Otaki Maori Church of England Mill”, and additional information: “There was a second mill at Otaki, the Pukekaraka Catholic mill, built 1854.”

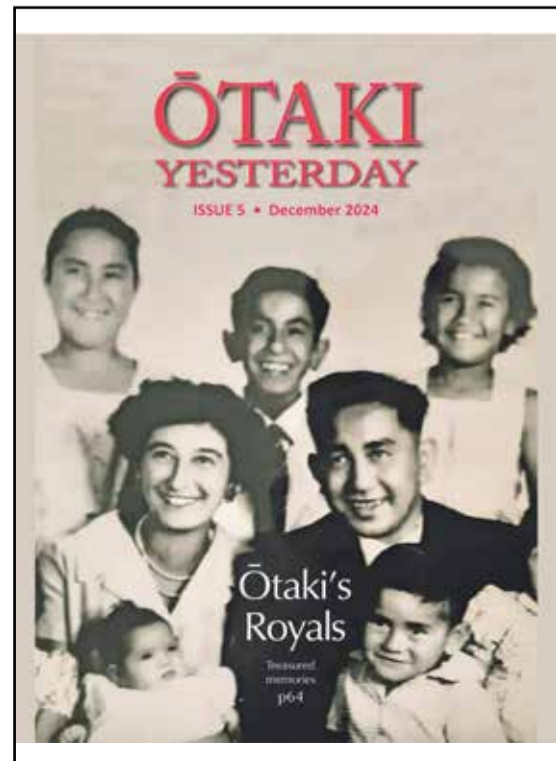
However, it seemed unlike another photograph also identified as the Church of England mill. So, it seemed there was no photograph of the Pukekaraka mill.

Distraught, (that might be an overstatement), I looked further into the matter, finding two

important clues that clearly identified that as the mill photograph I was after. The first was the landscape which, in this case, suggests a location in the sandy dune country out towards the golf course, rather than one further inland. The second, and more obvious one, is the configuration of the mill wheel.

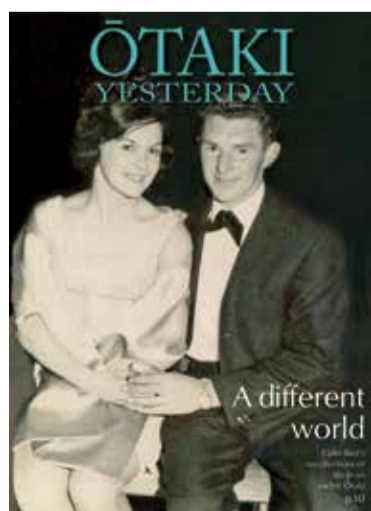
As can be seen in the photograph, the Pukekaraka wheel has one vertical spoke and two diagonals. The one on the Haruātai Mill, which is shown in a clip from a photograph of the mill, has a vertical and a horizontal spoke, and two diagonal ones.

And, with that irrevocable evidence, this story has rolled to its conclusion.



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

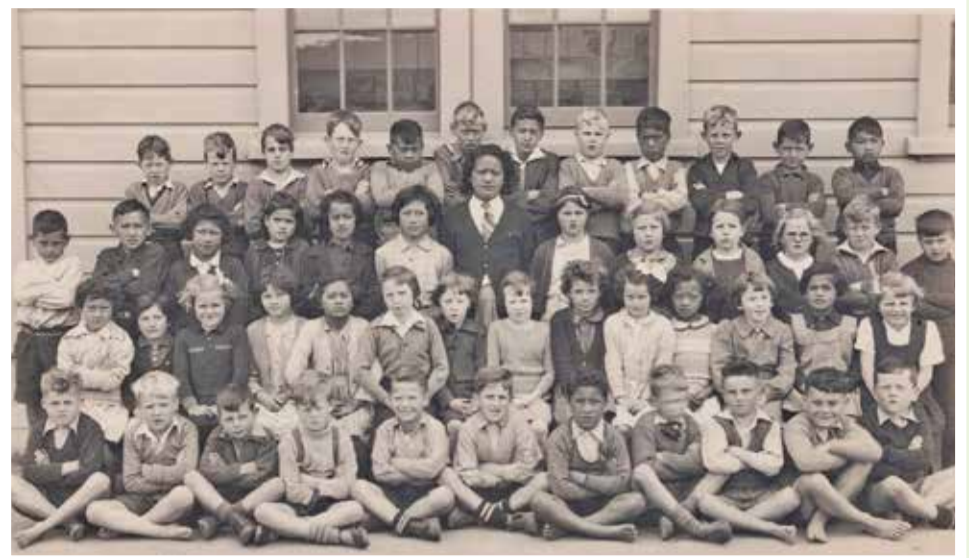
Copies (including previous issues as below) \$25 each.





# ŌTAKI SCHOOL 1941, 1942, 1945, 1946, 1947

Compiled by Debbi Carson



## ŌTAKI SCHOOL

1941 1942  
1945 1946  
1947

This amazing set of photos came from 90-year-old Sally Southcombe, who having received Ōtaki Today at her rest home in Paraparamu, was enjoying the old school photos pages. She decided to find her old class photos and bring them to us. Having grown up in Ōtaki in the 1930-50s on the family farm on Waitohu Valley Road, Sally was delighted to find we lived in her old playground of Waitohu. Back then Te Manuao Road had few houses, and was mostly farm land. Regaling us with stories of her childhood on the farm, and her school days, we discovered she had gone to school with my father, Colin Bird. On close inspection of the photos, I managed to pick dad out in some of the classes. Sally's eyesight isn't what it was and she was unable to tell us where in the photos she was. This set of photos shows children born in the mid 1930s, in their first year at school, 1941, through to their intermediate years, 1946-47. Anyone recognise their parent or grandparent? Please let us know. Sally would love to remember who they were as well.

## Fiftieth anniversary of WRM at Raukawa Marae

In 1975, Whakatupuranga Rua Mano (WRM) was established as an ART (Te Āti Awa, Ngāti Raukawa and Ngāti Toa Rangitira) confederation programme of action to lead and uplift ngā uri whakaheke (descendants) and the ART confederation into the year 2000.

Hapū and marae-led initiatives, rangatahi hui and Te Wānanga o Raukawa are just some of the outcomes of Whakatupuranga Rua Mano (WRM).



On February 23 at Raukawa Marae, Puāwai marked the beginning of a year long anniversary events programme celebrating the achievements and values of WRM.

Ngā Taonga Sound & Vision were grateful to be invited to screen archival film featuring many key people involved with WRM, including Whatarangi Winiata, Maui Pomare, Harata Solomon, Whatakaraka Davis, Pakake Winiata, Kimo Winiata, Awhina Gray, Turoa Royal, Te Kenehi Teira and many more.

E mihi kau ana ki te hau kāinga o Raukawa marae, nā koutou te mana o Puāwai i manaaki, ka tika me mihi hoki ki ngā kaitiaki o ngā taonga kiriata mō koutou i tautoko nui mai i tēnei kaupapa whakahirahira. Tēnā koutou katoa.

**Te Rūnanga o Raukawa and Penapena Taonga.**  
Photo: Te Māreikura Whakataka Brightwell



# TAMARIKI FUN

## Police puppies named after sports teams

Three young police puppies in training have been named Pulse, Phoenix and Poua after local women's sports teams, to help celebrate and support women in sport.





Named after the Central Pulse netball team, Wellington Phoenix women's team, and Hurricanes Poua rugby team, the idea came from police dog trainer sergeant Matt Fage, who wanted to honour local women athletes. "I think the teams were quite chuffed to be part of this," Matt said.

Players from the teams were invited to meet the puppies at the Dog Training Centre in Upper Hutt. In the past, police dogs have been named after famous male players, but this is the first time women's teams have been chosen.

**JUST JOKING!**  
 1. Q: What kind of chocolate do you find in airports?  
 2. Why was the sand wet?  
 3. Why did the tomato blush?  
 4. Why did the banana go to the hospital?  
 See answers below.

## Couple married 84 years

A couple from Brazil has set a new world record for the longest marriage among couples still living. Manoel Angelim Dino, 105, and Maria de Sousa Dino, 101, have been married for an incredible 84 years and 77 days, as confirmed by the Guinness World Records on Valentine's Day. The two met in 1936 and were married in a small chapel in Ceará, Brazil, in 1940. The Dinos have a family of 13 children, 55 grandchildren, 54 great-grandchildren, and 12 great-great-grandchildren. The longest marriage ever belongs to Canadians David Jacob and Sarah Davy Hiller, who were married for 88 years and 349 days. The Dinos are just a few years away from that record.

## Dr named Kiwibank NZer 2025



Professor Bev Lawton has been named Kiwibank New Zealander of the Year for 2025. A pioneering women's health expert from Wellington, she was recognised for her lifelong dedication to improving health care for women in Aotearoa, especially in Māori communities. Prof Lawton is the founder of Te Tātai Hauora o Hine, the National Centre for Women's Health Research Aotearoa, and has led major advances in cervical cancer screening, maternal health, and health equity. Bev, who has Ngāti Porou ancestry, was praised by judges as "a true champion" who ensures her research leads to real change and who works closely with the communities she serves.

## WORDMAKER

Can you make 15 words from

**B I B B L E**

Bibble has several meanings

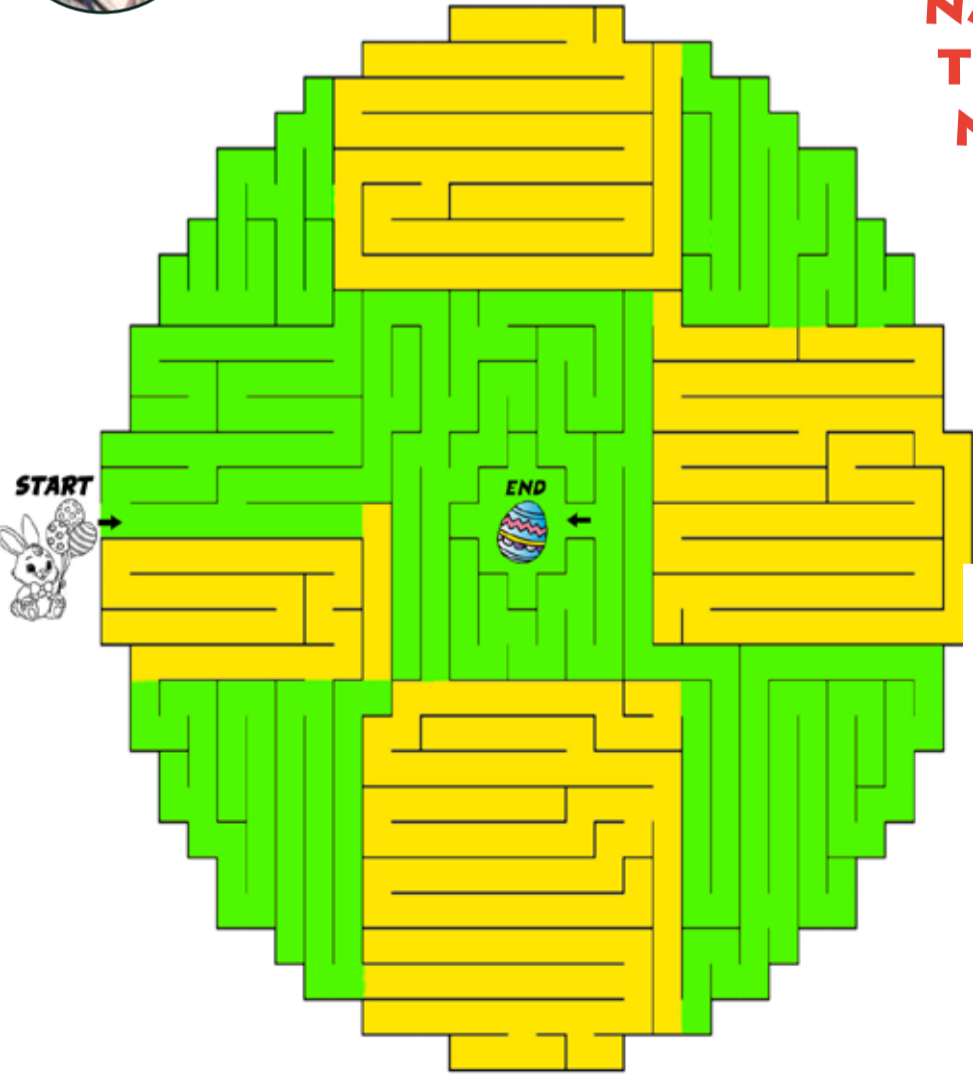
Bibble means to eat and/or drink noisily; it is one of the main characters in the *Barbie: Fairytopia* series; it is a small, smooth rounded stone; and a fictional British snack that appeared in the series *Victorious!* It is popcorn and food colouring.



**JUST JOKING ANSWERS**  
 1. Plain.  
 2. Because the seaweed.  
 3. Because it saw the salad dressing.  
 4. He was peeling really bad.



## CADE'S EASTER HUNT



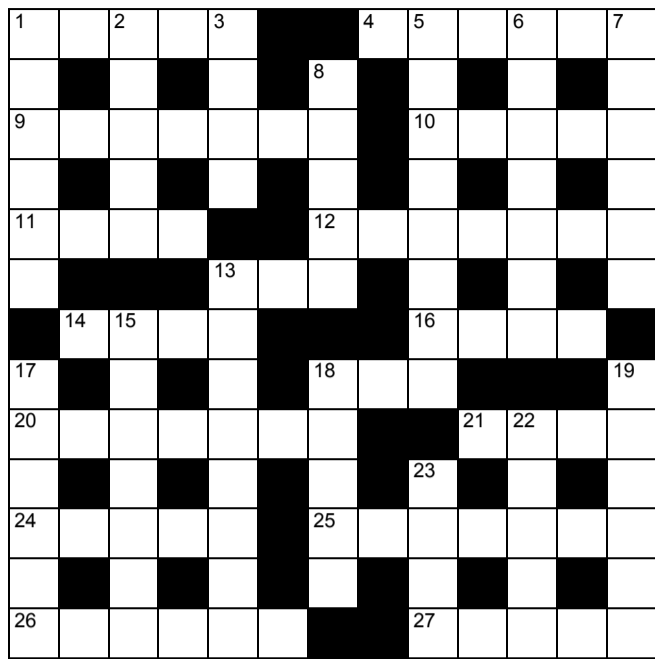
**WHAT DO YOU THINK THE POLICE SHOULD NAME THEIR NEXT PUPPIES?**

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THE CROSSWORD #NZNZ1936E (answers below)



ACROSS

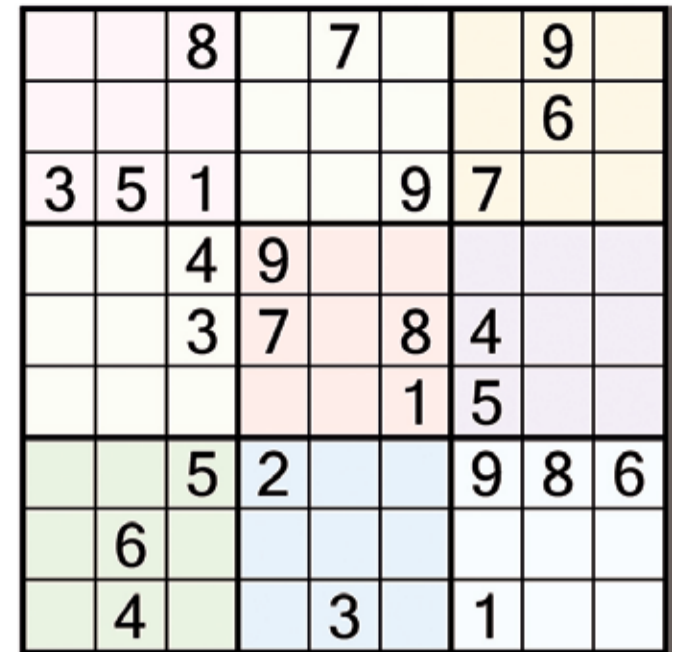
- Acknowledgement that a message has been received and understood (5)
- Be thrifty (6)
- Longest running New Zealand television series (7,8)
- Rental document (5)
- Level (4)
- Set move in rugby (7)
- Work vehicle (3)
- Stretch across (4)
- Assistant (4)
- Hearing organ (3)
- Subjugate (7)
- Quaint (4)
- Main artery in the body (5)
- Site of Outward Bound school since 1962 (7)
- Unpleasantly damp (6)
- Hesitate (5)

DOWN

- Wealth (6)
- Claw roughly (5)
- Native tree with crimson flowers (4)
- See 9 Across
- To sum up (2,1,4)
- Bay named by James Cook in 1769 (6)
- The way to traverse the Otago Rail Trail (5)
- Infamous 1981 NZ-Australia sporting moment, the \_\_\_ bowl (8)
- National park which includes Punakaiki (7)
- Technique used by Hundertwasser and seen at the Arts Centre opened in Whangarei in 2022 (6)
- Written assignment (5)
- Formal discussion (6)
- Town on SH70, the Inland Kaikōura route, badly damaged in the 2016 Kaikōura earthquake (5)
- Large stringed instrument (4)

SUDOKU PUZZLES thepuzzlecompany.co.nz

EASY #79E 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.



BIBBLE: WORD MAKER ANSWERS from page 22: 5-letter words: 1. bible. 4-letter words: 2. bibb 3. bibe 4. bleb 5. bile. 3-letter words: 6. bib 7. ebb 8. bel 9. lib 10. lei 11. lie. 2-letter words: 12. be 13. bi 14. el 15. li.



APRIL QUIZ  
Answers below.

- For the seventh consecutive year, what has been the most common registered family name for babies born in New Zealand?
- How many faces does a dodecahedron have?
- Aureolin is a shade of what colour?
- Who was the Ancient Greek God of the Sun?
- How many minutes are in a full week?
- Which country has the highest life expectancy?
- What company was originally called Cadabra?
- Queen guitarist Brian May is also an expert in what scientific field?
- What year was the first iPhone released?
- Which country drinks the most coffee per capita?

FACEBOOK WORDS YOU DIDN'T KNOW YOU NEEDED

FACEBOOK, love it or hate it, there are gems to be found. We'll run 100 fabulous words from English Grammar's recent post in future papers that you can pop into your vocabulary. Until then we will absquatulate to bible while watching the cricket! I can hear borborygmus and the cricket commentators' balderdash, or is that blatherskite? Maybe both!

- Absquatulate** – to leave abruptly
- Argle-bargle** – noisy arguing
- Balderdash** – absurd or nonsensical talk
- Baloney** – nonsense of foolishness
- Bibble** – drink or eat noisily
- Blatherskite** – a person who talks at length without making sense
- Bloviolate** – to speak pompously or at length
- Borborygmus** – the sound your stomach makes when hungry
- Brouhaha** – noisy excitement or reaction
- Bumbershoot** – umbrella.

SUDOKU SOLUTION #79E

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



Ōtaki River entrance tides  
April 9 – May 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 9 APR -	01:32	07:50	13:55	20:13	
THU 10 APR -	02:17	08:30	14:36	20:52	
FRI 11 APR -	02:56	09:06	15:13	21:26	
SAT 12 APR -	03:30	09:38	15:46	21:57	
SUN 13 APR -	04:02	10:09	16:19	22:27	
MON 14 APR -	04:33	10:39	16:50	22:57	
TUE 15 APR -	05:04	11:10	17:21	23:28	
WED 16 APR -	05:36	11:42	17:54		
THU 17 APR 00:00	06:10	12:17	18:29		
FRI 18 APR 00:35	06:48	12:57	19:08		
SAT 19 APR 01:16	07:35	13:45	19:54		
SUN 20 APR 02:08	08:33	14:45	20:52		
MON 21 APR 03:16	09:42	15:55	22:02		
TUE 22 APR 04:32	10:54	17:08	23:17		
WED 23 APR 05:42	12:00	18:15			
THU 24 APR -	00:24	06:42	12:58	19:14	
FRI 25 APR -	01:22	07:35	13:50	20:06	
SAT 26 APR -	02:14	08:24	14:39	20:55	
SUN 27 APR -	03:02	09:11	15:26	21:42	
MON 28 APR -	03:49	09:58	16:13	22:28	
TUE 29 APR -	04:36	10:46	17:00	23:14	
WED 30 APR -	05:25	11:35	17:48		
THU 1 MAY 00:02	06:15	12:26	18:37		
FRI 2 MAY 00:53	07:09	13:21	19:28		
SAT 3 MAY 01:48	08:08	14:20	20:25		
SUN 4 MAY 02:51	09:12	15:25	21:29		
MON 5 MAY 04:02	10:20	16:35	22:40		
TUE 6 MAY 05:13	11:26	17:43	23:51		
WED 7 MAY 06:15	12:25	18:43			
THU 8 MAY -	00:51	07:06	13:15	19:32	
FRI 9 MAY -	01:39	07:49	13:58	20:14	
SAT 10 MAY -	02:20	08:27	14:37	20:51	
SUN 11 MAY -	02:58	09:03	15:14	21:26	
MON 12 MAY -	03:32	09:37	15:49	21:59	
TUE 13 MAY -	04:06	10:11	16:23	22:32	
WED 14 MAY -	04:41	10:46	16:58	23:06	
THU 15 MAY -	05:16	11:23	17:33	23:41	
FRI 16 MAY -	05:54	12:02	18:11		

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DEATHS

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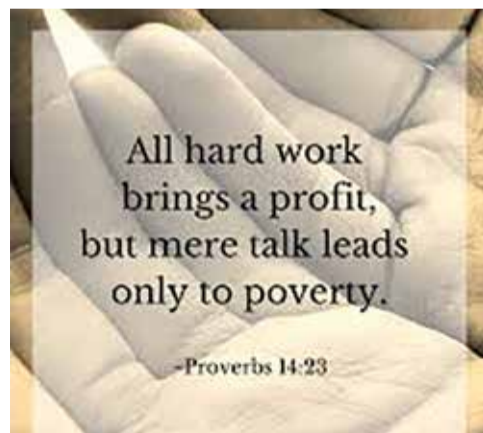
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**MORGAN, Alexander Frederick**  
August 7, 1933 - 18th March 2025 (of Taradale, formerly of Ōtaki). Alex peacefully slipped away on the morning of March 18, 2025, now reunited with the love of his life, Ann. A beloved Dad to Larry, Sandra, Steve and Karen, and cherished Pop to his grandchildren and great grandchildren. 91 years well lived and well loved. According to Alex's wishes, a private cremation has taken place. Messages can be sent to 37 Waterhouse St, Taradale.  
"Although our mighty tree has fallen, the seeds of his legacy will live on in his family."

**SHEPPARD, Antony John**  
Peacefully at Ultimate Care Madison, Levin on Monday 10 March 2025, aged 91 years. Loved Dad of Kevin, Lynn and Julie. Loved Tony of all his grandchildren and great grandchildren. messages to the Sheppard family c/- 284 Oxford Street, Levin 5510. A service was held at Harvey's Chapel on Monday March 17, 2025.



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**HOROWHENUA FREEMASONS**

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# TAKĀRO/Sport

## Two new tennis champs

Two new champions were crowned this month at Ōtaki Sports Club's annual tennis club championships finals, both beating the defending champions to take the titles.

Tama Te Whata beat 2024 men's singles champion Callan Nikora 2-6 6-4 12-10 in an intense match that could have gone either way.

In women's singles, Hannah Grimmett beat Jackie Gould 6-4 6-3. The match was a repeat of the 2024 final, with Jackie the victor last year.

The 2025 tennis club championships were the largest the club has seen since it brought back the event in 2022.

The finals were due to be held over three days – April 4-6 – with 24 matches scheduled, until rain washed out the three matches scheduled for Friday April 4 and the last match on the 6th.

With the other 20 matches played in warm sunny conditions, Ōtaki was treated to a festival of finals tennis that saw players at all levels competing for titles.

Tennis club captain Adam Shelton said consolation and plate finals were held alongside the main draw senior finals, giving players new to tournament play great opportunities to become club champions.

In the women's consolation doubles final, Shelley Mecoy and Bronwyn Doar beat Rebecca Spiller and Sage Coan. Shelley and Bronwyn are regular doubles partners and the victory was the pair's first ever win together, setting the platform for many more wins ahead, Adam said.

In other notable results, Hannah and Jackie



Hunter Pritchard in the Ōtaki Sports Club Tier 2 junior tennis club champs singles final.

Photo Tom Beauchamp

combined to win the women's main draw doubles for a second year running, beating Leonie Campbell and Marcia Ohlson.

Callan Nikora and Emma Whiterod won the mixed doubles, beating Leonie Campbell and Craig Eves in a repeat of last year's final, and are now champions for three years straight.

The men's doubles final saw defending champions Callan Nikora and Pātaka Moore take on Tama Te Whata and Tom Beauchamp.

The match was rained off when Callan and Pātaka were up one set, and it was completed after Ōtaki Today went to print.

In the junior singles finals, Max Beauchamp, 11, beat Xavier Nikora, 14, in straight sets 6-2, 6-1 in the Tier 1 final.

Oliver Martin, 12, beat Hunter Pritchard, 12, 4-2, 4-0 in the Tier 2 final.

In Tier 3, Scarlett Beauchamp, 9, beat Te Paea Hathaway, 12, 7-5 in a very even match.



## Rāhui top in both grades

Rāhui has begun as it did last season with convincing wins in both senior grades of Horowhenua-Kāpiti club rugby.

After three rounds in the Ramsbotham Cup premier and Bill Muir Cup senior B grades, Rāhui teams are yet to register a loss. They both sit at the top of the table in their respective grades.

Last weekend (April 5), the Rāhui premiers played Levin College Old Boys at Levin Domain, winning comfortably by 31-10. Also playing away, at Playford Park in Levin, the senior B team defeated Levin College Old Boys 38-26.

On March 29, at Ōtaki Domain, the premiers beat Shannon 38-5, and the Bs beat Levin Athletic 42-10. In the first round, on March 22 at Waikanae Park, Rāhui premiers defeated Waikanae 26-17 and the Bs won against Waikanae 55-7.

Both teams have a bye this Saturday, April 12.

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