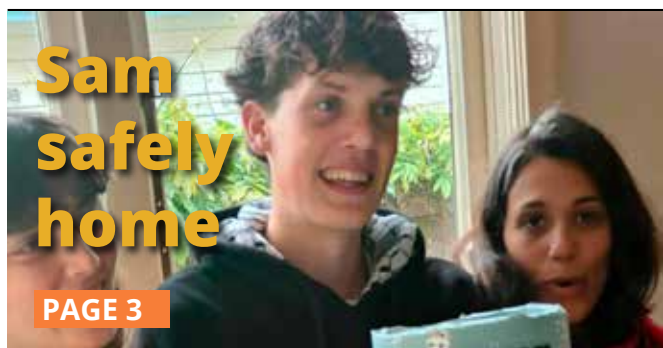


ŌTAKI TODAY

otakitoday.com

ŌKETOPA/OCTOBER 2025

Ngā kōrero o Ōtaki



Ōtaki first for Heniti

By Ian Carson

New ward councillor Heniti Buick has vowed to put Ōtaki first as she heads to a seat at the council table.

Heniti was elected as Ōtaki Ward councillor at the October 11 local body elections. Provisional results (as of Monday, October 13) had her with an unassailable lead, winning 1314 votes. Rob Kofoed got 920, and Cam Butler 653. Previous ward councillor Shelly Warwick was well out of the running, losing her seat with only 484 votes.

“Ōtaki is in my DNA,” Heniti says. “So of course I’m going to be thinking ‘will my decision be good for Ōtaki and its people?’ And if it’s an issue that affects the whole of Kāpiti, it’s got to be a decision that’s good for Kāpiti.”

She believes what has resonated with voters is her story – she was born here in a well-known local whānau, she was educated in Ōtaki, went away to study at Otago University, spent some time overseas and came back to work for the well-being of the town.

“I think my campaign team was also able to mobilise a cohort of people who had never voted before,” she says. “That’s not young people. I had 60-year-olds telling me they’d never voted, but they enrolled this time.”

Having motivated a groundswell of voters, she believes Ōtaki will have a big say in the General Election for MPs next year.

“We’ve created this campaign locally that can transform into everyone participating nationally.”

As a first-time councillor, Heniti offers not only a fresh new face at the council, but also fresh ideas.

At 36 she’s a relatively young councillor. She’s one of four women provisionally elected, including Mayor Janet Holborow, and councillors Liz Koh and Jocelyn Prvanov. She’s Māori (Ngāti Raukawa, Ngā Rauru, Ngāti Kauwhata ki Ōtaki). And she’s got life experience – including 10 years working in Australia as a dietician.

And she’s about to finish her MBA (master of business administration) at Otago University, no mean feat when she’s also leading one of New Zealand’s most innovative and successful community well-being organisations.

Under her leadership as chief executive of Te Puna Oranga o Ōtaki (TPOoŌ), she’s overseen the establishment of a totally new medical centre in Ōtaki’s Main Street. With te ao Māori at its core, it’s attracted big numbers of patients – Māori and Pākehā – and has had no trouble recruiting the necessary doctors.

TPOoŌ offers a successful vaccination programme, including a mobile clinic. It actively engages with people in the community to look after their well-being – physically, mentally and socially.

It runs the lunch programme for local schools, operating out of the refurbished kitchen at the old children’s health camp. And it operates Te Haemata youth space.

The organisation has gone from seven people on staff when she started a couple of years ago, to 45.

Heniti says that in her work she’s had to confront some hurdles for Ōtaki.

“I thought the only way to overcome them is to sit at a bigger table where you can influence change,” she says. “That’s the council table, but just one of the places where we can influence better outcomes for Ōtaki.”

Can she successfully juggle the commitment of council responsibilities with her work at TPOoŌ?

“As we build our strategy and our team [at TPOoŌ], I’ve employed people to lead them properly. I’ve been building infrastructure to live without me. I feel I’ll have time for the council work. And I’m finishing my MBA soon, so that will free up about 15 hours a week.”

Heniti says she always needs a challenge and

to be “in a space where I’m always learning”. The council role gives her that opportunity.

Apart from offering a powerful voice for Ōtaki, she says she wants to see the council become so efficient with its resources that it doesn’t have to put rates up the way they have.

“When the world get more efficient and relying more on technology, we should be more efficient. That shouldn’t cost more – it should cost less. It means decisions should be made on time and in the best interests of everybody. If you make a decision, execute it.

“I’m a fast mover, I fail often, but that’s how I learn fast and get to the right answers sooner. Otherwise I’m wasting time. That’s the energy I want to bring to council – different thinking, quick learning, and smarter outcomes.”

■ *More on the election page 4*

New Ōtaki Ward councillor Heniti Buick – “I like to be in a space where I’m always learning.”



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WHAT'S ON

WELLINGTON HERITAGE FESTIVAL
October 18 - November 9. **Ōtaki Museum**, 49 Main Street, Oct 25-27. **Māoriland Hub**, Main St, Ōtaki. Nov 1. A special programme of films made in Ōtaki over the past 100 years. **The Kilns at Te Horo**, 6 Jim Winia Way, Oct 25-27. **Ōtaki Health Camp Rotunda** Oct 25. Visit: wellingtonheritagefestival.co.nz/events/ for details and other events.

TE HORO GARDEN TRAIL Te Horo gardens open on November 15 and 16. Also a garden-inspired market, café and information hub in Te Horo Hall. Tickets on sale in early September for \$35, online at tehorohall.org.nz or at garden centres. See page 10.

KĀPITI COAST ART TRAIL Weekends of November 1-2 and 8-9, throughout the Kāpiti Coast. From humble beginnings in 2001 with just 26 venues, the 25th Trail now boasts 140 artists, shaping up to be our biggest yet. See kapiticoastarttrail.nz

KĀPITI HOROWHENUA HOMEOPATHY FOR CHILDREN Offering a holistic option in natural healthcare for families. Available for children under 12 years. Saturday clinics in Paraparaumu. Koha appreciated. Contact: kapitihomeopathyforchildren@gmail.com

WANT HELP DISCOVERING YOUR FAMILY HISTORY? Join Ōtaki Family History Inc. for monthly group meetings, 7.30pm on the 4th Tuesday of the month (Feb to Nov), at the Dr Gertrude Atmore Supper Room, Memorial Hall, Main St, Ōtaki.

ŌTAKI MUSEUM 49 Main St. 06 364-6886. *Mai i te Kāinga Tāone Iti – Wāhanga 1: 1843-1920 (From Kāinga to Village – Part 1: 1843-1920).* This is the third in a series of exhibitions focusing on the township of Ōtaki, 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.

ŌTAKI BUZZ CLUB meets the third Wednesday of each month at 7pm. Venue: Waitohu School hall, Te Manuao Road, Ōtaki. Come along if you're interested in beekeeping.

ŌTAKI MARKET 58 Main Highway, Ōtaki. Open every fortnight in winter. 10am-2pm.

TOI MATARAU GALLERY Māoriland 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.

TOI MAHARA Mahara Place, Waikanae. The Kāpiti Coast's public art gallery.

POETRY IN ŌTAKI Third Friday of each month, 10.30-11.30am, Library Supper Room, Aotaki St. All welcome. Call 021 050 1904 for details.

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. Enquiries to Ann-Marie Stapp 021 492 127.

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

WAIKANAEBEACH TOASTMASTERS: Meetings 2nd and 4th Thursday of every month, 7.30pm, Waikanae Arts and Crafts Rooms 27 Elizabeth St, Waikanae. Contact Neil at 0274 417 229.

PROBUS CLUB OF WAIKANAEBEACH CENTRAL. Meet at 10am 4th Thursday of the month at the Waikanae Community Centre, Utauta St behind Waikanae Memorial Hall. New members welcome. If you would like to join us please contact Roger Faithfull: probuswaikanaebachcentral@gmail.com

COMMUNITY BOARDS The next community board meetings will be scheduled after the result of the local body elections. The public is welcome at meetings. Search "meetings and agendas" at kapiticoast.govt.nz To speak at a meeting, register by calling 04 296 4700 or 0800 486 486, or email democracy.services@kapiticoast.govt.nz

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

A waddle of penguin economists

Economists serve a wide variety of sectors in business and social activities, and gaining a consensus on any one issue is virtually impossible in probably 99 out of 100 cases.

Consequently, when a group of 20 calling themselves “the penguin economists” agree on a public letter to the finance minister that claims her policies are failing and causing long term harm to communities, it is instructive to determine affiliations of the signatories.

Among the group were trade union economist Craig Renney, poverty action group economist Susan St John, former head of Te Whatu Ora Rob Campbell, and economist Ganesh Nana.

Twelve months ago when the same group, then numbering 15, sent a letter to the minister (Nicola Willis) along similar lines, it had a response from Housing Minister Chris Bishop that the finance minister was more likely to take advice from a penguin than economists aligned with Labour.

This year Willis commented: “It is hard to treat seriously a letter whose only idea is that the government should tax, borrow and spend more. That was the approach taken by the previous government and it resulted in runaway inflation, exploding debt and a structural deficit.”

In terms of political activities in the capital there is little doubt it is from this group of self-named penguins that the basics of Labour’s financial policies for next year’s election policy will come.

The contents of the letter suggest we might well expect policies framed to deal with climate change, child poverty, support for people on welfare, and increases in government spending to meet social need and stimulate economic growth. Accompanying these would be measures to correct what they termed tax distortions in investment markets.

Not surprisingly, the opinions of the penguins had a sharp response from their economist peers. Dennis Wesselbaum, an associate professor in the Department of Economics at the University of Otago, said blaming the current state of the economy on the leadership of Willis ignored aspects of the bigger picture.

Statistics he cited included: Consumer price inflation two years ago running at 6 percent and higher (food inflation peaking at 12.5 percent) – now down to 2.7 percent (food inflation down to 5 percent); and the current account deficit reduced from 7.5 percent of GDP to 3.7 percent.

They also included what he called “sobering” figures: GDP 1.2 percent lower than in June 2023 and unemployment up 4 percent to 5.2 percent.

New Zealand had entered into a period of “stagflation” under the previous Labour government, he said. It was the product of several years of poor macroeconomic management, often triggered or worsened by external shocks.

“In New Zealand’s case that included a combination of aggressive fiscal stimulus during the Covid pandemic, monetary policy mistakes (not raising interest rates sooner, for example), supply chain disruptions, tight labour markets and global energy price shocks.”

The economists’ argument comes down for the umpteenth time along similar lines to the political divide: Left; or right? A political centrist unwedded to either might well argue that he or she supports elements of both and dislikes with a passion any decisions made on ideological grounds that defy commonsense and/or logic.



No doubt we are going to hear much shouting and read column upon column of dispute between politicians when the general election campaign gets under way. But to find economists thinking that they should get into a financial policy shouting match a year out from a likely election raises the prospect of political boredom before the main event takes centre stage.

Might they not be better off examining, for example, the impact on the country of Auckland’s demise to 12th in rugby’s National Provincial Championship, equal with Southland, and above only their sister city North Harbour?

A dissertation might be helpful on the impact of Auckland’s central business district being termed by more than 70 percent of businesspeople surveyed in the area as lawless, unsafe, frightening and dogged with anti-social behaviour. At least we would have a better picture of whether the government should borrow policy from Donald Trump and send in the army to preserve order.

A shouting match between Auckland Mayor Wayne Brown and Housing Minister Chris Bishop on the merits of an army assignment to the Queen city would pique more interest than an exchange of opinions between economists of known left and right persuasions!

Don’t be surprised, however, if economists’ attention turns in coming months to what a downturn in the Chinese economy means for New Zealand. The Wall St Journal this week reported that China’s economic crisis is getting worse and worse. It conceded this was easy to lose sight of given the economic and political chaos in other corners of the world. China’s problems it ascribed to the position of the large state-owned companies that dominate China’s economy, some of which are vulnerable to a loss of American markets.

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

CARTOON OF THE MONTH

By Jared Carson

The penguin economists – see Bruce Kohn’s column above

ŌTAKI TODAY

Ngā Kōrero o Ōtaki

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Sam home after prison ordeal



Sam Leason celebrates his home-coming in Auckland with Palestinian solidarity organisers Acacia O'Connor, left, and Eloiza Montaña. Photo supplied

By Ian Carson

Sam Leason has returned home to Ōtaki after what he describes as inhumane treatment in an Israeli desert terrorist prison.

Sam, 18, was on the Global Sumud Flotilla attempting to deliver aid to Gaza when it was intercepted during the night on October 1 by Israeli comandos. Sam was on the *Sirius*, in international waters about 75 nautical miles off the Gaza coast.

“We were trying to get aid to the starving people of Gaza and break the illegal blockade,” Sam told *Ōtaki Today* on Sunday (October 12), the day he arrived back at his family’s Bennetts Road home. “About 8.30 at night, the Israelis boarded the boat, pointed guns in our faces, took our passports and made us sit all night on a wooden bench out on the deck” while they took the boat to Israel.

On arrival, the flotilla members had to wait in the sun to be processed.

“We had old people with us, some with disabilities, others who needed medicines. We were thirsty and hungry, but were forced to kneal in the hot sun on concrete for hours – for some it was eight hours.”

During the processing, they were strip searched and everything they had was confiscated except the clothes they wore.

“They took my pounamu, which had been given to me by my godmother, and my mandolin, which was very precious to me.”

They were then transported in what Sam describes as a “very sketchy van with scratches and stains all over it”. The prisoners, in summer clothes, were blasted with freezing air conditioning, before arriving at Ketziot Prison in the Negev Desert, southern Israel.

On a recent visit to the prison, Israel’s national security minister, Itamar Ben-Gvir, expressed his approval of the harsh conditions for international activists detained from the flotilla.

He said in comments carried by the daily *Yedioth*

Ahronoth that he wanted to ensure they received “no special treatment” and he was “proud that we treat flotilla activists as terror supporters”.

“They should feel what the conditions in Ketziot Prison are like, and think twice before approaching Israel again. That’s how it works.”

Sam saw the minister being filmed while he and about 60 others were confined in a large outdoor cage. “We started chanting ‘Free Palestine.’”

There was no food for 24 hours, and during his six days at Ketziot, Sam was in a cramped cell that had eight bunk beds, but often had 12 prisoners. Those without a bed slept on the floor. A single toilet served everyone, and in the first of Sam’s cells, the toilet got clogged and was not repaired.

They saw guards drinking bottled water, but with the cells so hot, had to drink from a rusty tap.

Sam says everyone was petrified of what physical mistreatment they might receive, but in the end it was psychological – “They wanted to scare us”.

He was allowed out of the cell only three times – to see British consular personnel – and that was in the large cage out in the sun.

He says they were in inhumane conditions, but “not half as bad as the conditions for the thousands of Palestinians – some of them children – imprisoned for years and often without trial”.

He is disappointed that he heard nothing and got no support from the New Zealand government. All his interactions were through the British Embassy in Tel Aviv, Israel. When he was finally released and taken to Jordan, unlike people from other nationalities, Sam had to rely on the hospitality of Jordanians and funds from the flotilla campaign to get him home.

He arrived in Auckland on Saturday (October 11).

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Two newcomers to community board

Cam Butler, Simon Black and Jackie Elliott provisionally return to the Ōtaki Community Board after the 2025 local body elections.

They are joined by newcomer Rhyna Taratoa, and newly elected Ōtaki Ward councillor Heniti Buick. They replace Chris Papps and Shelly Warwick respectively.

Both newcomers will inject some youthful enthusiasm – community boards have not traditionally been known to attract younger people and are often seen by them as irrelevant to the communities the boards are appointed to serve.

At the next Ōtaki Community Board meeting

– a date yet to be announced – board members will vote for the chair. The chair in the 2022-25 triennium was Cam Butler, with Simon Black as his deputy.

THE NUMBERS

The following are the preliminary vote numbers for the top five candidates (those successful in bold). Final figures are expected by Friday, October 17).

Mayor: **Janet Holborow 8450**, Rob McCann 7433, Liz Koh 3831, Dean Harris 2568, Martin Halliday 2077.

Ōtaki Ward: **Heniti Buick 1314**, Rob Kofoed 920, Cam Butler 653, Shelly Warwick 484, Brent Frogley 288.

Districtwide councillors: **Rob McCann 6122**,

Liz Koh 5660, Lawrence Kirby 5202, Joanne Welch 2713, Gavin Welsh 1959.

Kapiti Coast Māori Ward: **Himiona Grace 484**, Deanna Rudd 470, Rangi Halbert 120, Brian Ruawai-Hamilton 76, Jason Thurston 60.

Waikanae Ward: **Steven Botica 1679, Jocelyn Prvanov 1734**, Nigel Wilson 1473, Michael Moore 953, Dean Harris 859.

Paraparaumu Ward: **Martin Halliday 1720, Glen Cooper 1607, Glen Olsen 1486**, Fiona Vining 1319, Chris Harwood 920.

Paekākāriki-Raumati Ward: **Bede Laracy 1397**, Zelda Edwards 800, Richard Young 556.

Ōtaki Community Board: **Cam Butler 840, Simon Black 702, Rhyna Taratoa 796, Jackie Elliott 563**, Angela Buswell 473. (Heniti Buick

joins the board as ward councillor.)

Waikanae Community Board: **Michael Moore 1573, Richard Mansell 1214, Phil Byrne 1172, Peter Bollmann 1121**, Tonchi Begovich 1060. (One of the Waikanae Ward councillors will also join the board.)

Paraparaumu Community Board: **Glen Olsen 1319, Karl Webber 1232, David Ogden 1225, Kathy Spiers 1084**, Bernie Randall 1077.

Raumati Community Board: **Zelda Edwards 525, Fiona Vining 515, Jonny Best 506, Sue Harris 499**, Timothy Sutton, 409.

Paekākāriki Community Board: **Tina Pope 268, Himiona Grace 214, Kelsey Lee 191, Elyse Robért 167**, Melissa Bryant 45.

XŌtaki recognises supporters

The XŌtaki College Alumni Trust has added two valuable supporters to its Hall of Fame.

Robin Philipp has made a lasting impact on the Ōtaki community through his generous philanthropic work. As a long-time supporter of XŌtaki he has donated generously to many projects, including his pivotal support to provide extended mental health counselling, orthodontic treatment for young people, and various infrastructure projects at the college.

Shelley Macrae has deep roots in Ōtaki through her grandmother and maintains a lifelong connection to the area. She has owned and managed successful local business Sander Apparel since 2004. In 2013, Shelley established a scholarship to foster educational opportunities and international exchange for high-achieving Ōtaki College students, reflecting her belief in education's transformative power.

HONOURED: Ōtaki Volunteer Fire Brigade honoured several of its members for their years of service on awards night, September 31.

Mike Watson (third from right) got special mention after recently stepping down as senior station officer. He had been serving in the brigade for more than 23 years. He has been appointed as a Life Honorary Member of the brigade.

“We thank Mike for his leadership, loyalty, and the legacy he continues to build,” said fire chief Ian King.

The brigade has been protecting life and property in Ōtaki since 1918.



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New owners excited about pharmacy

By Ian Carson

The Lower Hutt couple about to take over Hamish Barham Pharmacy are excited about the prospect of joining the Ōtaki community.

Bob and Jo Buckham will become the new owners officially on November 1, but intend to spend the previous week getting to know the pharmacy staff and systems.

For both of them the opportunity offered when the Ōtaki pharmacy became available ticked all the boxes.

“It was the exact type of pharmacy and location that got us into the profession,” Bob says. “We’re both from small rural towns and a pharmacy like this that’s independent and has a real path of care for the community is what we were looking for.

“We’re excited at the opportunity.”

Jo grew up in Waihi, Coromandel; Bob in the Taranaki town of Waitara. For the next couple of years the couple will commute from Lower Hutt, allowing their youngest daughter to finish her secondary education at her current school.

“When she goes on to university or wherever she chooses, then we’re definitely looking at moving up.”

They don’t see the commute as impeding their ability to connect with their local clients and the community.

“We keen to be not just be present in Ōtaki for the pharmacy, but also be part of the community – coming along to events and so on. We’re not the sort of people who just clock in and clock out.

“We want to learn as many names as we can and get to know people so we can help as best we can with their care.”

It’s the first pharmacy Jo and Bob have owned,



Bob and Jo Buckham, who take over Hamish Barham Pharmacy on November 1.

Photo supplied

though both have worked as pharmacists through their career. Jo has a community pharmacy background and is currently working at Taita Pharmacy in Lower Hutt; Bob has worked in hospital pharmacies and is currently with Hauora Māori Services at Te Whatu Ora/Health NZ.

Bob says they have plenty of ideas for their new venture, but will spend some time looking at how things work now. They’re aware that some people in the community have been asking for the pharmacy to open for at least some time at the weekends.

“We’ll be looking at that,” he says. “We want to know why they want that service – is it that they need to pick up prescriptions because they’re working during the week, or access to the retail, or to be able to come in and get some medicines? We need to work that out.”

All staff will be retained, and depending on how the pharmacy might grow, more local people might be employed.

“We also want to look at how we might be able to advance the idea of a pharmacy career, and we’re keen to connect with the college and

Wānanga and have students come in for some work experience. Those studying for health-related careers might want to know what being a pharmacy is all about.”

Meantime, long-time Ōtaki pharmacists Hamish Barham and Ian Barr are to retire, leaving their duties to Jo and Bob.

It’s the first time the pharmacy on the corner of Main Street and Aotaki Street has changed hands for more than 30 years. It was previously Bob Lithgow Pharmacy, and was bought by Hamish in 1991.

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Play a fusion of marae and Greek theatre

Stories rooted in kaupapa
Māori-led research

Māoriland is to be the venue for a powerful new work, *Out the Gate*, on Friday, October 31.

The play shines a light on the lived experiences of Māori who have navigated the prison pipeline and are working to reconnect with their families and communities.

Written by Helen Pearse-Otene and directed by Jim Moriarty, the play combines innovative choreography by Tānemahuta Gray with Te Rākau Hua o Te Wao Tapu’s signature Theatre Marae method – a process that fuses the spiritual, social, and political frameworks of traditional marae and Greek theatre to create a communal performance hui.

Out the Gate is to premier at Pataka Art + Musuem in Porirua just two days before the Ōtaki performance.

It’s described as more than just a play, but an embodied response to stories rooted in kaupapa Māori-led research and lived experience. The production is designed not only to entertain but also to provoke dialogue and reflection about incarceration in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Through episodic vignettes, waiata, music, choreographed movement, and physical theatre, the show threads together personal journeys of those affected by the criminal justice system, focusing on their transitions back to whānau and hāpori (community).

“Some of these men and women have been in 35, 40 foster homes,” Jim Moriarty says. “How the hell do you land? The stats around that are



***Out the Gate* writer Helen Pearse-Otene, left, and actor Paige Wilson watch a rehearsal.**

Photo Stephen A’Court, Te Rākau

horrible. “A lot of those people then end up going to jail. Who helps you, how do you make your way through that quagmire of early institutionalisation?”

The ensemble cast features more than 16 performers, including those with direct

experiences of the justice system, as well as seasoned theatre practitioners. The intentional blend fosters a rehearsal environment built on care and mentorship, ensuring that the stories presented onstage are both authentic and nuanced.

The cast’s diversity is central to the

production’s mission: to blur the lines between research, performance, and public conversation, offering audiences an immersive and immediate way to engage with complex issues.

In 2024, Te Rākau secured Health Research Council funding to develop a play based on the Tiaki project, a research initiative that explores what Māori need to thrive after their release from prison. *Out the Gate* is the community-focused distillation of this research, translating key findings from participants’ experiences into dramatic form.

The creative team hopes that service providers, policymakers, and whānau will use the work as a springboard for deeper engagement and understanding. A companion podcast, featuring rehearsal conversations, interviews, and material from Tiaki, is expected to be released in 2026.

The play doesn’t shy away from difficult topics. It traces the impact of childhood trauma, state care, addiction, and fractured whakapapa (lineage) on individuals, highlighting the long-term effects of institutionalisation and systemic disadvantage.

Helen Pearse-Otene and Jim Moriarty bring decades of therapeutic practice to the project, emphasising that although the path can be challenging, healing and reconnection are achievable with appropriate support.

Out the Gate also interrogates the broader social and political forces that contribute to disproportionate outcomes for Māori. It calls attention to racial bias, intersectional disadvantage, and the enduring legacy of colonial policies, while insisting that artistic practice can play a vital role in generating public understanding and advocating for systemic change.

■ See terakau.org/out-the-gate

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Road work disruption spurs petition

Road works at the highway shops had hardly started before a petition was launched seeking a stop.

Then councillor Rod Kofoed organised the petition to Kāpiti Coast District Council, which asked the council to “reach out to all affected businesses, communicate, apologise and compensate as necessary”. It also sought a stop to the works.

Rob says he was motivated by what he said was unnecessary disruption to businesses.

“I could see they were suffering,” he said. “There are cones everywhere, metal fencing is blocking the shop fronts of retailers, and there’s nowhere to park.”

“It’s a mess, and businesses shouldn’t have to put up with it – times are tough enough as it is.”

The petition was signed by more than 50 business people. It came soon after a gas pipe was ruptured mid-afternoon on September 12 outside The Big Egg shop, causing the evacuation of several retail stores.

Parents wanting to pick up children from schools – especially at Waitohu – had to use the expressway to Peka Peka and return via the turning bay at Forest Lakes.

The works at the northern end are the first to venture into the shopping area itself. Much of the strip is still to be done. NZTA Waka

Kotahi has contracted the work as part of revocation – preparing to hand over the road to Kāpiti Coast District Council.

The contractor has completed works south to the Big Egg. Small sections of footpath are not yet complete as Electra will do some upgrades before concrete works are finished.

Persistent rain in the second week of October has delayed kerb

and channel work, with the work crew (as of press time, October 13) waiting for the next fine day. They will then shorten the length of the works site and focus on footpath.

While, all shops will still have pedestrian access to their doors, it’s unlikely to appease retailers enduring the disruption.

Meantime, the Mill Road crew has been working on the BP roundabout, levelling it off and laying pipes. Traffic along Old State Highway 1 has been funnelled into a lane each way to allow work on the western side of the roundabout. It will soon shift to the eastern side.

The change means Rāhui Road will be closed until near Christmas with detours. Works will then proceed with main pipe laying up to the Rāhui Road overbridge.

Farther south, at the intersection with Riverbank Road, there’s been resurfacing that’s caused traffic delays – sometimes of several minutes. NZTA Waka

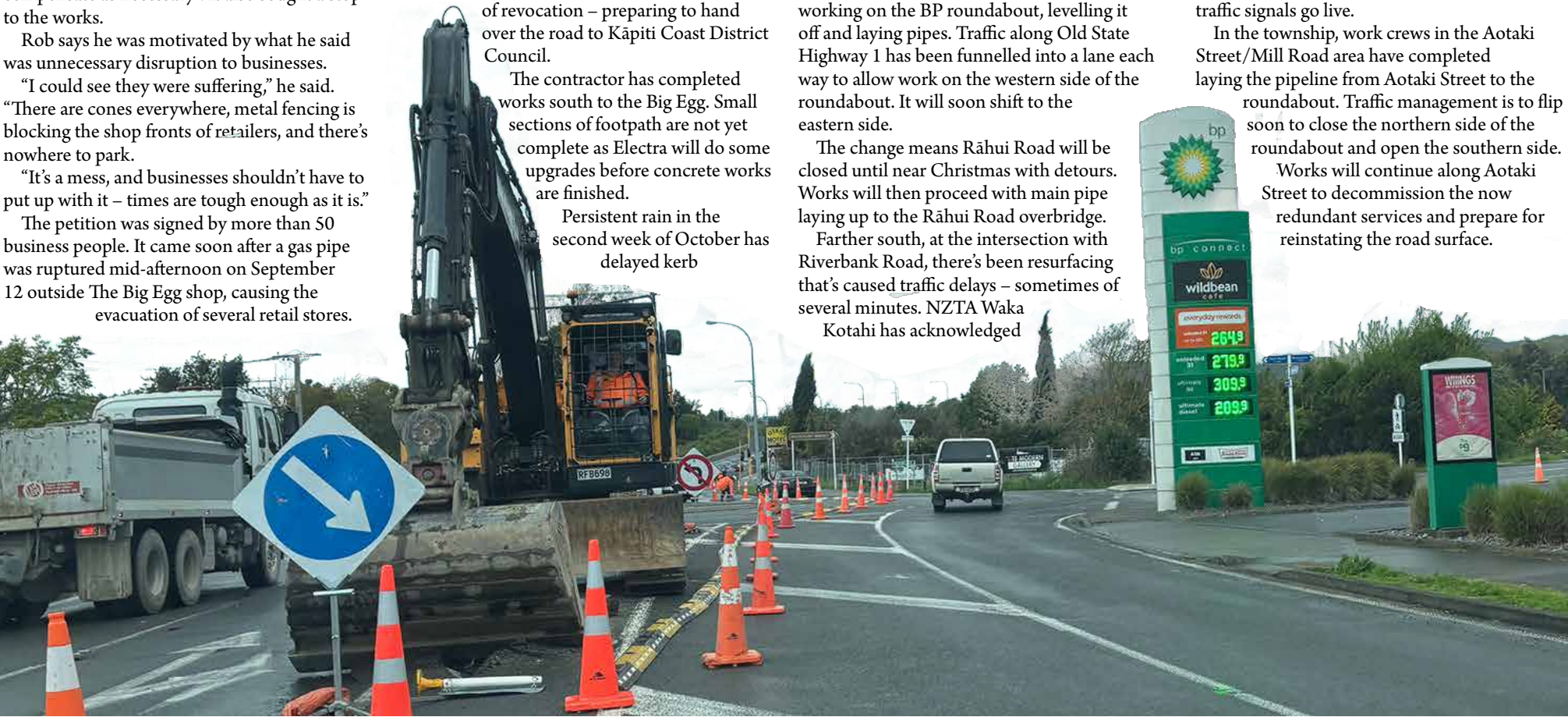
Kotahi has acknowledged

the inconvenience for motorists, and says it appreciates their patience.

All concrete work has been completed at the intersection with Old SH1, with the new traffic islands in place. As at press time crews were hoping to complete the last section of surface paving during the next night when the weather is fine. Line marking will follow before the traffic signals go live.

In the township, work crews in the Aotaki Street/Mill Road area have completed laying the pipeline from Aotaki Street to the roundabout. Traffic management is to flip soon to close the northern side of the roundabout and open the southern side.

Works will continue along Aotaki Street to decommission the now redundant services and prepare for reinstating the road surface.



Tim Costley MP for Ōtaki



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

Levin Office Hours

Corner of Bath and Oxford Street

Phone: 020 438 8462

horowhenua@parliament.govt.nz

Opening Hours:

Mon: 10am – 3pm

Tues: Closed

Wed: 10am – 3pm

Thurs: 10am – 3pm

Fri: 10am – 3pm

Paraparaumu Office Hours

Corner of Te Roto Drive and Kāpiti Road

Phone: 021 851 206

kapiti@parliament.govt.nz

Opening Hours:

Mon: 10am – 3pm

Tues: 10am – 3pm

Wed: Closed

Thurs: 10am – 2pm

Fri: 10am – 3pm

*Outside these hours by appointment.

✉ Tim.CostleyMP@parliament.govt.nz

I look forward to meeting with you soon.



Wastewater upgrade – final stage underway

Work has started on the final stage of the wastewater upgrade.

The work involves laying the new pipe across the Mill Road/old state highway roundabout and installing two new manholes on Rahui Road. The manholes are very deep at this point, so it'll take some time and a lot of careful work to install them. Also, the roundabout will be rebuilt with new kerbs and road markings.

We expect to be working in this area until February, including a Christmas work break from 15 December to 7 January. Traffic arrangements will change as the project progresses. Detours will be in place and pedestrian access will be maintained at all times.

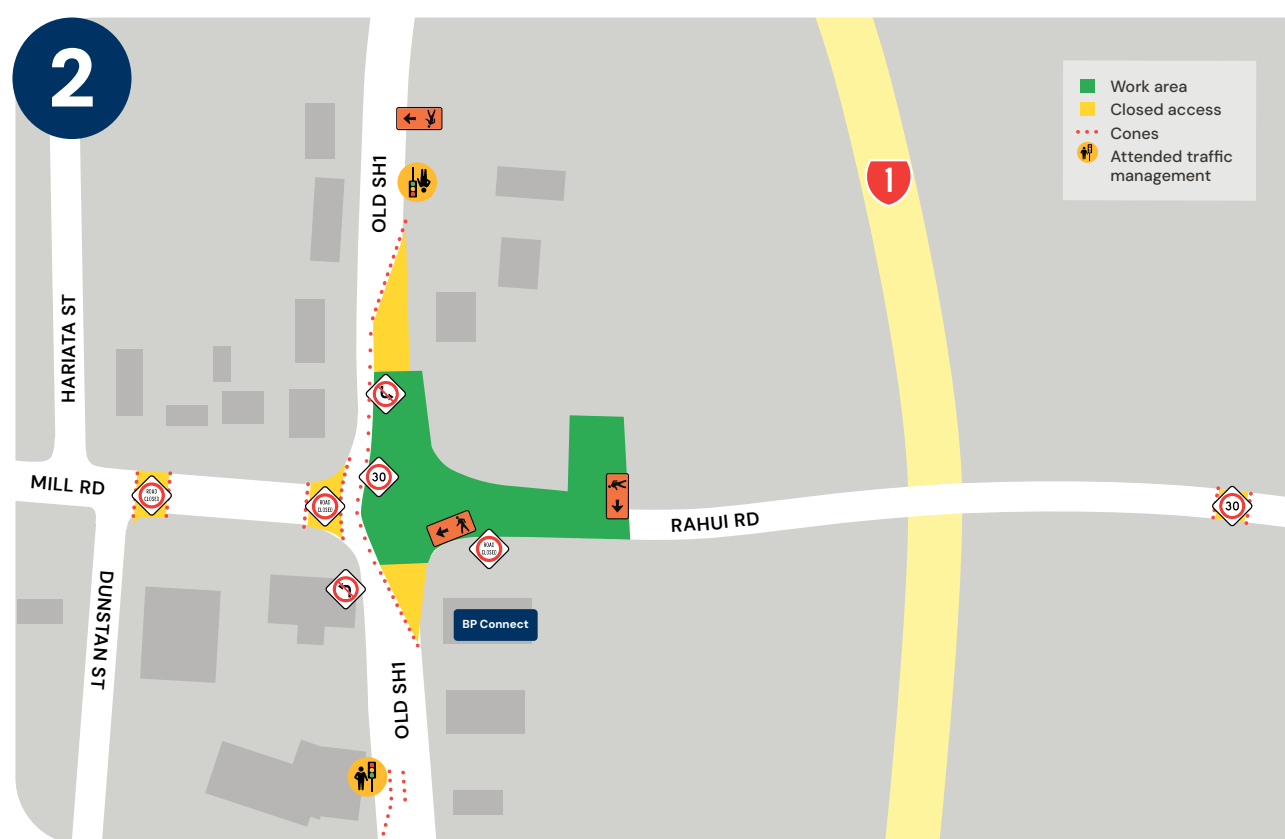
The first two stages of road layout are illustrated below. See our website for more.



Stage 1, 26 Sept to 22 Oct

TASKS INCLUDE:

- trenching from Dunstan Street to across the roundabout
- removing the streetlight from and demolishing the roundabout
- installing one manhole
- installing ducting for new streetlights
- installing new stormwater pipes at roundabout.



Stage 2, 22 Oct to 11 Nov

TASKS INCLUDE:

- trenching from the roundabout along Rahui road
- begin installation of pipe across roundabout and along Rahui Road
- begin construction of new roundabout
- complete installation of new stormwater pipes at roundabout.

Please note, dates are approximate and could change.

We know this work will cause some disruption and we thank you for your patience as we improve the capacity and resilience of our wastewater network.

Mowbray gets record price for rare stamp

Stamp collectors throughout New Zealand held their breath when the legendary Lake Taupo Invert Stamp with a Lake Taupo scene printed upside down went under the hammer in Wellington last month.

The stamp attracted plenty of attention, selling on September 20 for a world record \$263,250 for a New Zealand stamp. It sold in the stamp and coin auction of Ōtaki's own Mowbray Collectables.

Selling the stamp was New Zealand Post, which bought the stamp from Mowbrays for \$125,000 in 1998.

The sale was part of a two-day sale of stamps, coins, medals and banknotes that also netted a record for Mowbrays with total sales of \$1,634,000.



John Mowbray

Also sold were many of the world's first postage stamps, the Great Britain Penny Blacks of 1840, including 302 examples that sold at \$27,000.

A Mowbrays auction the day before of coins, medals and banknotes had sales of \$761,000, including medals from the New Zealand Wars. One medal to Joseph Lacey, a sailor on the ship HMS Hazard, which evacuated settlers from Kororareka (Russell) after the British flagpole was famously felled four times by Hone Heke, sold for \$8000.

"Naturally we are delighted with these record



The Taupo Invert Four Penny Stamp.
Image courtesy of Mowbray Collectables

results," says Mowbrays founder director John Mowbray.

"While there is much talk of tough economic conditions, we did not see that in the New Zealand stamp, medal and coin markets [that] weekend.

"With both New Zealand and overseas buying strong, these are great results for both buyers and sellers."



Te Horo Garden Trail returns

Spring fever is grabbing Te Horo as preparations ramp up for next month's Te Horo Garden Trail and Garden Market.

Fifteen gardeners will open their gates on November 15 and 16 to raise money for Te Horo Hall improvements. Just as many stallholders are getting ready for the market being held in the hall during the same weekend.

Chair of the trail's organising committee, Judy Wood, says there's been interest from garden lovers throughout the lower North Island.

"We are confident we will surpass the 600 sold for the last garden trail when it was held in Te Horo five years ago," she says. "Te Horo has a strong culture of growing and our gardens reflect that in their variety and high standards."

She says while tickets give access to all 15

gardens on both days of the trail, they will not be needed to attend the market.

"The market is open to everyone whether or not they have a trail ticket."

Stalls selling plants and garden-inspired crafts are booked for the market. Pre-loved garden books and tools, donated from throughout Kāpiti, will also be on offer.

Judy says the hall will also be the trail headquarters, with a café, raffles and trail ticket sales for latecomers.

"However we urge people to buy their tickets in advance."

■ Tickets \$35 online at www.tehorohall.org.nz or from garden centres: Te Horo, Harrisons (Peka Peka), Watsons (Ōtaki), The Garden Depot (Ōhau) or Palmers (Plimmerton).

1/2 + 8/9 Nov '25

Kāpiti Coast Art Trail

Te Ara Toi o te Takutai o Kāpiti

CELEBRATING 25 YEARS

A Quarter Century of Creativity

Celebrate 25 years of the Kāpiti Coast Art Trail and the talented artists of Ōtaki. Take your time, explore your neighbourhood, and discover where creativity thrives.

This November, the Kāpiti Coast Art Trail invites you to explore more than 140 studios from Paekākāriki to Ōtaki.

Step inside, meet the makers, and experience the creativity that defines our coast.

Plan your trail online and be in to win \$300 to spend on the day.

Allow extra time when travelling with roadworks around the district, it's the perfect excuse to slow down and enjoy the journey.

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Kids Market on Next List

The Ōtaki Kids Market has been named on the prestigious Next List 2025 by the Sustainable Business Network, highlighting its leadership in sustainability and youth empowerment. Recognised in the transformational leadership category, the market is now a finalist in the national Sustainable Business Awards.

The Next List celebrates people, projects and organisations throughout New Zealand that are driving bold, transformative change. Now in its second year, it honours those showing leadership in sustainable innovation. Run by the Ōtaki Women’s Community Club (OWCC), the Kids Market gives tamariki and rangatahi a platform to create, promote, and sell their own products. The initiative fosters creativity, entrepreneurship, and environmentally conscious practices – from upcycled crafts and waste reduction to eco-packaging and locally sourced goods. “This recognition is a huge honour for us, our young stallholders, and our wider community,” says the market’s marketing manager, Claire Roper. “It proves that tamariki and rangatahi are not only the leaders of tomorrow, they’re already making an impact today.” The market, which continues to grow in size and influence, attracts young entrepreneurs from throughout the lower North Island. It’s become a vibrant hub of youth innovation, community spirit, and sustainable leadership. Much of the success of the Kids Market are local volunteers who work behind the scenes to promote activities and ensure they run smoothly. They include market manager Chrissy Anderson, OWCC president and activities manager Tracey Humphrey, Kara Taogaga (treasurer and sponsorship) and Michelle Vui (bookings).

■ To learn more about the Ōtaki Kids Market, visit otakiwomensclub.org/kidsmarket.



At the latest Ōtaki Kids Market on October 5 were Shannon girls Georgie McKenzie, left, and Hayley Paton. Photo Ōtaki Today

BRIEFS

Grants help Whiti, kite fest
Whiti Te Rā Ki Ōtaki Sports Club and the Ōtaki Promotions Group have both received grants in the latest round of funding from NZ Community Trust. Whiti Te Rā was granted \$30,000 for playing uniforms and equipment, and the ŌPG got \$10,000 to help pay for the costs of running the 2026 Ōtaki Kite Festival.

Brigade attends 15 call-outs
Ōtaki’s fire brigade had 24 call-outs in September. Six were for private fire alarms; five each for medical emergencies and vehicle crashes; four for rubbish, grass or scrub fires; and two each for property fires and “special services”.

Heritage festival in Ōtaki
Ōtaki Museum is opening for three days on Labour Weekend as part of the Wellington Heritage Festival. The exhibition *From Kāinga to Village, Part 1: 1843-1920* is showing at the museum. It tells the stories about the people, events and things that shaped Ōtaki as it changed from a village to a town. It begins in 1843, when Ngāti Raukawa were living in pā and kāinga on Ōtaki Beach. Three years later they had moved a short distant inland to a site planned along the lines of an English village. The journey to the Ōtaki of today had begun. The museum is usually open 10am-2pm Thursday-Saturday; at Labour Weekend it will also be open 10am-2pm on Saturday, Sunday and Monday, October 25-27. See also *What’s On* page 2.

Have your say on speed limits on old SH1 through Ōtaki and Te Horo

Take the short survey at www.nzta.govt.nz/oldsh1speed

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Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Government

1-31 October

Seniors’ October 2025

Community-led events and activities in Kāpiti

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He Manaakianga Kaunihau Aotearoa

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Kāpiti Coast DISTRICT COUNCIL
He Kaitiaki Take Kōwhiri o Te Kaitiaki

Copies of the Seniors’ October 2025 booklet are available at local libraries and CABs or online at the Age Concern Kāpiti and Kāpiti Coast District Council websites.

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Sixteen new to 2025 art trail

Of 16 artists and art groups new to the Kāpiti Coast Art Trail, eight of them are in the Ōtaki region – from Peka Peka to Ōtaki Beach.

Those new in Ōtaki are:

Deborah Harris, who has an extensive global reach and experience. Her contemplative works bridge the realms of light, darkness, and colour, offering viewers a meditative journey into the soul. Trained in anthroposophical art and therapy, her practice involves veil painting, pastel, and charcoal techniques that layers weaving luminous hues to evoke harmony and spiritual reflection. – 37 Kensington Drive, Peka Peka

MIKE COOLEN uses old steel, old tools and recycled wood, repurposing it into quirky garden sculptures and critters. Mike has been doing this for the past two years, and enjoys seeing what he can turn this material into. “Sometimes it works and sometimes it doesn’t, but that’s the fun of creating.” – 12 Waitaheke Road, Te Horo.

FIONA KERTESZ has a strong love for animals and a background in both vet nursing and graphic design. She specialises in pet portraits and wildlife art, working in charcoal, graphite, and oil paint to create detailed, expressive pieces that capture the character of each animal. As a lifelong animal lover and pet owner, Fiona understands the deep connection people have with their pets. This personal insight helps her create portraits that bring comfort, joy, and lasting memories to her clients. – 44 Miro Street, Ōtaki

STEVE SCOTT established Kapture Photography & Design with a passion for capturing special moments and locations, both in the Kāpiti region and further afield, in



Fiona Kertesz’s sheepdog, one of many pet portraits she has created. *Image supplied*

addition to using natural and recycled materials to produce sculptural art pieces. From laser engraved hardwood platters and coasters, photographic landscape and wildlife prints, to one-off sculptural work or handmade refillable scented candles, there’s always a variety of unique art pieces available to enjoy. – 44 Miro Street, Ōtaki

MELINA MARTIN has a background in fashion and textiles, bringing a unique style to her artworks. Inspired by the wild intricate beauty of nature, and human-made predictable order, Melina loves to combine the two, often adding her favourite native birds into the mix. Creating screen prints and woodcuts Melina produces her images into limited addition prints on heavy cotton paper, or stamps her images into clay to produce her platters. Combining new world technology and old world techniques, Melina creates beautiful modern works in a concise palette. – 41 Ngaio Street, Ōtaki Beach

NGĀ TOI WAIHANGA KI ŌTAKI is a kaupapa Māori, artist-led cooperative and retail studio in the highway shopping district dedicated to showcasing, supporting, and

celebrating local creativity. It’s where artists can create, connect and sell their work directly to the public. Rooted in manaakitanga, it offers authentic locally handmade taonga, demonstrations, and workshops. Co-founders are weavers Manu Carkeek and Elaine Bevan, and potter Jean Kahui. The studio also has other local artists sharing their skills and selling their creations during the art trail. – 211d Main Highway, Ōtaki

CHARLOTTE GRAHAM, usually an early childhood teacher, is an emerging potter, inspired by nature, culture, functionality and community. Her pieces use renewable resources from her māra kai, are vibrant in colour and pleasant to the touch, lifting the spirit with expectations of pairing beauty and functionality. Charlotte will be sharing the studio of her father, renowned potter Rod Graham, at his studio. Rod and friends at Ōtaki Pottery Club have supported Charlotte into pottery while she was recovering from breast cancer. – 93 Norfolk Crescent, Ōtaki Beach

ŌTAKI MARKET COLLECTIVE is a vibrant hub of creativity and community, offering visitors a unique experience filled with artistic treasures and local craftsmanship. Among the many highlights are stunning artworks, from vivid canvases inspired by the female form to intricate woodwork that reflects the natural beauty of the region. Traditional and contemporary bone carvings add a cultural depth to the market, showcasing the rich heritage and skilled artistry of local carvers. – 136 Riverbank Road, Extension, Ōtaki

Artists on the Kāpiti Coast Art Trail can be found by location and medium on the trail website. ■ See kapiticoastarttrail.co.nz/participating-artists

KIA RANGATIRA TE TŪ!

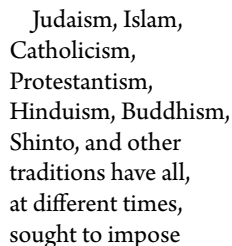
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For thousands of years, humanity has struggled with belief systems and the drive to dominate.



■ Phil is director of the kw4u Ōtaki energy cooperative. He has worked in IT consulting and lectured in management accounting and computer studies

THE ELECTORATE: TIM COSTLEY

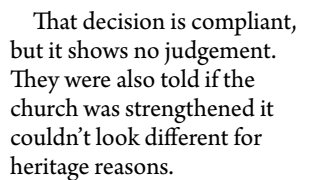
New Zealand has been eating itself up for years with compliance, that word that so many of us hate because it becomes synonymous with wasted time, wasted energy, and dumb decisions.

This country was built not on compliance but on judgement – it's how we split the atom, conquered Everest, launched a space industry and won the Rugby World Cup three times. Judgement, not compliance.

The biggest problem is that people mistake compliance with safety. The two are very different. Compliance can be one pillar of safety, but there are many others like professional knowledge, discipline, training, and judgement.

We see the broken compliance culture in road cones and traffic management, laborious health and safety procedures, and I saw this in my military career. Flying in bad weather certainly can be dangerous, but if you're

training people to fly search and rescue missions, they will end up in bad weather eventually. Compliance says avoid the bad weather; judgement slowly exposes you to more and more of it until you can safely operate in it.



So you can't strengthen it,
you can't use it, but you can
to a busy road and footpath.

leave it up next to a busy road and footpath.

This is dumb, and National is fixing it. We're saying that any part of a building that could collapse onto a public area needs to be strengthened, but the rest of the building is up to the owner. Use your judgement.

This is not just about the billions of dollars we will save; it's one more visible sign of a deeper move from an old culture of compliance to an enabling culture of judgement; protecting life but unlocking the door to a building system that works.

Judgement is how this country will get back its best and most competitive.

■ *Tim is the Ōtaki electorate MP*

CITIZENS ADVICE: **MARIA FYVIE**

Spring has sprung and you might have noticed your neighbour's trees are springing across your boundary fence a bit more than you'd like.

Or maybe you're eyeing up the fruit ripening on their tree but hanging on your side of the fence. What can you do?

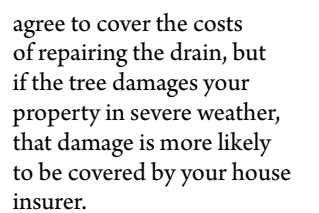
The best place to start is by talking to your neighbour. When it comes to the fruit (as well as any other part of a plant growing on your neighbour's property) it belongs to your neighbour, even if it is hanging over your side of the boundary. Have a chat across the fence and ask if they're happy for you to pick the fruit growing on your side.

If it's a tree or hedge that's growing across your boundary and causing you issues, again, have a chat with your neighbour – they might not have realised it's an issue, plus it might be a good way to get them to give you a hand!

They might let you know the tree is protected. If it's classified as protected by your local council, it can't be trimmed without council permission.

If the tree isn't protected, you have the right to trim branches and roots on your side of the boundary, usually at your own cost. But you mustn't do anything that could kill the tree, including digging up the roots or poisoning the tree – you could be liable to compensate your neighbour for the damage. Anything you trim still belongs to your neighbour, so you can place trimmings back on their property – but it's a good idea to speak to them beforehand so they know to expect it.

If the tree has caused damage to your property – for example roots entering and blocking a drain – your neighbour might



If you and your neighbour can't come to an agreement about a tree, you can try mediation if you both agree to it. If mediation is unsuccessful or you don't both agree to it, you can apply to the Disputes Tribunal or District Court, depending on the details of the application.

- If you'd like to find out more about your rights and obligations around trees growing on or across your property, pop in to see our Citizens Advice Bureau volunteers at 65a Main Street between 10am-1pm Monday-Friday, call us on 06 364 8664, or visit cab.org.nz and search 'tree' in the ask us box.

■ *Maria is secretary of CAB Ōtaki*

Ōtaki Today encourages letters to the editor. If you have something to say, write to us. Please include your full name, address and contact phone number. Only letters that include these details will be published, unless there is good reason to withhold a name.

Please keep the word count to a maximum of 200 words. Note your letter may be edited for grammar and accuracy. Not all letters received will be published, and the publisher reserves the right to reject any letter. Write to *Ōtaki Today*, 13 Te Manuao Rd, Ōtaki or email ian@idmedia.co.nz

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



Time to screen
National Bowel Screening Programme

Health New Zealand
Te Whaitu Ora

Ta Kōwhiriwhiri e Aotearoa
New Zealand Government

Bowel screening saves lives.

Are you eligible for free bowel screening?

Māori and Pacific peoples in MidCentral can have free bowel screening from the age of 50 to 74. It's important we have the right ethnicity recorded for you, so you can get your kit. You can call us on 0800 924 432 to check.

Having a banjo, backbone and moral compass

In previous columns I’ve sheeted much of what I see as a decline in social cohesion and community leadership back to the influence of online communications – the digital sugar that is addicting a generation to false answers and minimal self-awareness.

There’s another issue, perhaps moulded by the above, that clumps large groups of people into a “set of beliefs”, while fewer people seem to show much fortitude for their own personal values and beliefs.

JUST A THOUGHT



FRASER CARSON

Let’s start with kids. They are confronted by endless ethical questions as they grow up. Given they aren’t born with too many unnatural biases – although will have many traits shaped

by inherited DNA – the world inevitably throws them plenty of curveballs to test responses and shape their moral compass as they grow. That moral compass is inevitably largely shaped by those around them – parents, siblings, mates, teachers, etc.

Those of us who were once parents of young kids recall the inevitable confrontations kids would have with harsh realities. For example, “a mate in school is bullying an Asian girl”. That situation might prompt a question, from the child, along the lines of, “what should I do”?

As a parent I learnt pretty quickly that advice shouldn’t always be presented as a solution

or instruction, because a stock answer is no substitute for a bit of deeper personal thinking and encouragement to find a solution for oneself that could encourage their own values and beliefs.

My answers were often just another question: “What do you think is the right thing to do?” I hasten to say that a little behind-the-scenes chat to the school or other parents might have also been called for.

Nevertheless, the great thing about kids is that they are experts at asking questions. You know the routine. . . .

Mum says: “Tidy your room.”
Jonny: “Why?”
Mum: “Because I want you to.”
Jonny: “Why?”
Mum: “Because I want you to.”

It goes without saying that Jonny is not just testing the boundaries but exploring whether it’s merely to keep Mum happy, or if it’s ‘the right thing to do and for some reason.

Mum might have been better off asking: “If you tidy your room, would you feel a bit happier because you could find your toys and have more



Pixabay photo

room to play with your friends?” Throughout history, we’ve seen plenty of examples of people not having enough backbone and moral compass to “do the right thing”, so society and our communities suffer. A history example was the fascist government of Spain’s Franco, the last of the dictatorships that started the Second World War, but in declining power by the 1970s.

Enter Pete Seger, iconic folk singer and activist, invited to perform in Barcelona in 1971. Seger would have known he risked arrest by the authoritarian regime but also knew the crowd in Barcelona were looking to his branded courage and beacon of hope.

Before Seger took the stage, government officials handed him a list of songs he was forbidden to sing. These were songs associated with freedom, protest, and solidarity, many of which had become anthems for the years of Spanish resistance.

Seger looked at the list mournfully and remarked that it pretty much resembled his entire setlist.

What was he to do? Agree and disappoint the

100,000 strong crowd, or defy authority and risk being thrown in prison?

That day Seger walked onstage before the delirious audience and held up the list, saying, “I’ve been told that I’m not allowed to sing these songs.” Then, with a grin, he added, “So I’ll just play the chords. Maybe you know the words.” He began playing his banjo and the audience joyously sang along.

What could the authorities do? Arrest Seger or everyone in the stadium? It had been defeated by one courageous man, a banjo and a crowd who sang their defiance together.

Not long after, as the singing still reverberated across Spain, the Franco government stuttered its last breaths.

Jonny not tidying his room hardly seems much like Seger’s civil resistance in the face of the Spanish regime’s restrictions, but one can just imagine Pete’s parents allowing a little bedroom disobedience in the name of giving the boy a bit of backbone . . . and moral compass.

■ Fraser is founder of the community-building websites flightdec.com, redoar.net and inhub.org.nz



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Imagine if you didn't have to make excuses tomorrow

Imagine your great-grandparents were the first generation in 250 years to not be chained on a farm as slaves.

Imagine your grandparents were raised by people who were the first in 10 generations allowed to attend school, learn a trade, own something, and have aspirations other than not being beaten, killed or worse by their owners.

How might that have affected how your parents were raised?

Would that have changed how you were brought up?

Now imagine that was true for an entire race. African-Americans don't need to imagine that.

It was normal for them. It was normal for the majority to think of that status quo as right and not challenge the benefits they received from things continuing as "normal".

That wasn't long ago.

Slavery was legal in the United States until 1865. Twelve years after slavery ended, my great-great-grandfather, Wi Parata Te Kākākura, took the Bishop of Wellington to court after Ngāti Toa gave the Church land for a school to be built on, and the church instead kept it for themselves. The highest court in Aotearoa at the time rejected our case and called Te Tiriti o Waitangi "a simple nullity" because it had been signed by "barbarians".

This wasn't long ago either.

Later, while my parents were at school here in Ōtaki, African-American children in America were still being segregated into separate schools, with hand-me-down resources from schools, and where white farm owners could remove African-American children from school

whenever they decided they needed them to work.

This was still true in places until the 1960s, about 20 years before I was born.

Until then, the majority considered it normal and right to put white children in one school with funding and access, and African-American children in another, without.

Do you think that recent history might mean African-Americans have a different set of challenges and opportunities than the population of people who had, not long before, been allowed to literally own them?

If Donald Trump had been born African-American in Louisiana, with slaves for great-great-grandparents, would his great-grandfather have been the successful businessman, setting his father and then himself up for success?

What if you were born there?

My great-grandmother was a 14-year-old girl when the men of the government decided she and all other women would be allowed to vote in Aotearoa – the first self-governing country in the world to do so.

That wasn't long ago.

Until then, it was normal that half our country be told they weren't important enough to have input into who leads it and makes the decisions that shape it. And of course, they could never have a place in that government as leaders themselves.

If you have a daughter, imagine explaining that to her as normal today. Or explaining to her that until the 1980s, most women in Aotearoa weren't allowed to take out a loan without a male co-signing on their behalf.

I wonder how many men thought it was right for them to be the only ones important enough to vote, because they happened to be born a male. And how many bank managers wondered if their policies were right. I wonder how many realised they were in a position to do something about it.

I don't need to wonder how many men today believe women don't have a different set of challenges from men, men who had been allowed for so long to lead and make decisions, while women were expected to be quiet and have babies.

I don't need to wonder it because I see them commenting all the time about how we shouldn't treat men and women any differently, and how we all have the same opportunities.

"If I can do it, then they can, too," – my personal favourite. As if yesterday has no effect on today, because they've had a fine old week.

Humans have a horrible track record of making extraordinary wrongs look and feel right because they benefit those who are in power. We complement this with a delicious glass of experience, opportunities, and challenges that we think is the same serving everybody else enjoys.

But we also have a beautiful history of forming movements as collectives and pushing back for change – when enough of us give a ****.

It often means those pushing that movement forward suffer – but we do it because we've realised what's currently normal isn't right.

- Men "giving" women the right to vote.
- White Americans "giving" African-Americans the right to not be born-a-slave.
- The Te reo Māori marches that resulted in the Kōhanga Reo movement – the government "giving" Māori the right of choice to learn our language at preschool.

I'm glad I don't need to explain to my daughter why she isn't important enough to vote, but her brother is.

I'm glad I don't need to explain to my son why he's not allowed to speak Māori at school.

I wish I didn't have to explain to my friends the impact of generations of land, culture, and opportunity theft. But I'm hopeful my kids won't have to explain when they're my age.

I also hope I never have to explain to either of them the importance of voting.

When we've been in a position to do right, explanations of wrongs are excuses – worse than an ambulance at the bottom of the cliff.

If you're old enough to vote, you're in a position to do right. You can move us away from that cliff.

I hope you voted in the recent local body elections so you don't have to make excuses tomorrow.

I hope you showed you gave a ****.

■ Pera (Ngāti Raukawa ki te Tonga, Te Ātiawa ki Whakarongotai, Ngāti Toa Rangatira) is a rap singer, story writer, and the Local Hero recipient at the 2019 New Zealander of the Year awards.

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Oranga Ōtaki

PĀKAIAHI

the keeper of the fire

RONGOĀ



JOANNE HAKARAIA

Joanne is kaitohu (director) of The Rongoā Mauri Studio and is ACC registered for Rongoā Māori Services. See rongoamauri.com

Before delving into its deeper story, it helps to know a little of what makes pākaiahi so unique. Also called “Artist’s Conk” or bracket fungus, it belongs to the *ganoderma* whānau and is closely related to reishi, the “mushroom of immortality”.

Pākaiahi grows on the trunks of dead or dying trees, its large woody brackets often persisting for many years while its unseen mycelium spreads silently beneath the forest floor. Traditionally, it was valued for its practical use as a fire-starter – smouldering even in damp conditions – and as rongoā for warming the body, drying dampness, igniting the puku, and bringing ease to digestion and the lungs.

Modern research highlights pākaiahi’s richness, noting natural compounds such as polysaccharides (beta-glucans) and triterpenes. These interact with immune cells, helping the body to recognise challenges and maintain balance. Rather than acting as a quick fix, pākaiahi is considered an immunomodulator – supporting the body’s natural ability to adapt, restore, and find coherence.

This same fiery quality reveals its essence as rongoā. Just as it could spark flame in the damp ngahere, so too does it ignite the inner fire of the body – supporting digestion and awakening the body’s natural defences. Mushrooms hold the lunar mysteries of the forest: shadow-born, tied to the unseen realms. Pākaiahi embodies this alchemy, gathering the mana of a great tree and transforming it into a dense, potent offering. Where a rākau once stood in light, pākaiahi now carries its mauri in shadow, the death of a tree becoming the life of a mushroom.

To drink an extraction of pākaiahi feels like sipping the essence of the forest itself. It calls on the whenua to restore vitality, to sweep away stagnation, and to rekindle the flame of life. In today’s times of constant stress and strain, pākaiahi stands as a reminder of the resilience woven through the ngahere.

For me, pākaiahi is a practice. During seasonal transitions or times of overwhelm, I add a few drops of a double-extracted tincture I make into my morning shake – a fire-starter for my puku. If you feel called to experience it, they are available from rongoamauri.com

Disclaimer: This information is provided for educational purposes only and reflects both traditional use and current research. It is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure, or prevent any disease. Always seek advice from a healthcare professional if you have a medical condition or are taking medication.



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MAHI MĀRA/Gardening

Sweetcorn for the summer pot

Corn is extra effort to grow and takes up lots of room, but it's so worth it! Strong seedlings, good timing and good companions make all the difference.

Corn rockets away in the warmth. Await soil temperatures of 20C for your first planting. The warmer it is, the better the crops.

Little and often plantings October through December (or January if you live somewhere warm) brings you a steady supply to the kitchen.



KATH IRVINE

Corn is firmly in the hungry camp – it's a grass after all. Plant into good compost, and give each seedling a little vermicastings on the side. Liquid feed the youngsters weekly if need be, to boost growth from the outset.

Though seed can be direct sown, I prefer to tray-sow into plug trays or toilet rolls to prevent rats, mice and birds gobbling the seed, or slugs and snails devouring the new shoots.

The closest I dare plant my corn together is 30cm. Too close and crops are too small – find the goldilocks point where you make the most efficient use of your space, at the same time giving the crop what it needs.

Adapt spacings to suit your soil, go wider in poorer soils. Two cobs per plant is an average harvest to expect, so if you rock out three or four you can be pretty pleased with yourself.

Gappy corn means poor pollination. The tassels at the top drop pollen on the silks at the end of the cobs. Each silk is a kernel. If a silk isn't dusted with pollen, no kernel grows. Nature is so fine, isn't she!

For best all-round pollination, plant corn in groups – circles or squares are better than rows. A group is stronger against big winds. Give plants a gentle shake as you pass by on your daily walkabout if there's no wind at that crucial time when silks and tassels are formed. Gappy cobs are still perfectly edible.

Corn tillers – that is, it sends shoots out from the base. It's often recommended to remove these, but it doesn't seem to make much difference, so I leave them and often score another little cob or two.

Heritage corn is a different beast entirely to hybrid corn. Most heritage corn is best suited to grinding for flour, and is too floury to eat (for me anyway) but is waaay more nutritious. Golden bantam and early gem are two heritage varieties that have the perfect balance of tasty and sweet.

For companion planting, sow or transplant a mixed living mulch of light feeder crops, greencrops and flowers around the seedlings. Soya beans, dwarf beans, zinnias, marigolds, calendula, phacelia and crimson clover work well on the sunny edge, as do pumpkins if you add extra compost. Use the shady edge for lettuces, leafy greens, rocket, parsley and the like.

When the silks on the end of the cob wither and turn brown it's ready to pick. Hold the cob firmly and snap it downwards to break it off. Be sure the pot is boiling and ready to receive!

■ *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.*



ABOVE: The pot's on the boil, harvest the corn, strip the leaves and mulch them back on the bed and race the corn to the pot!

RIGHT: Corn is ready to pick when the silks turn dark brown.

BELOW: Tray-sow corn into plug trays or toilet rolls as below to prevent rats, mice and birds gobbling the seed, or slugs and snails devouring the new shoots.



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HAUORA-PŪTAIO /Health-Science

Flawed studies give MSG an undeserved bad rap

In 1908, Japanese chemist Kikunae Ikeda set out to discover the source of the rich savouriness of his wife's sea kelp broth.

Upon discovering that the amino acid glutamate was responsible for the broth's satisfying flavour, he named this distinctive taste "umami", which translates to "pleasant savoury taste".

Going on to market it as the water-soluble sodium salt, monosodium glutamate (MSG), the popularity of this flavour enhancer exploded across Japan, China, and Southeast Asia. By the late 1940s its adoption had also become widespread throughout the United States, appearing in everything from canned soups and TV dinners to military rations.

For decades millions of people had used MSG without problem – and then in 1968, everything changed with a brief letter to the editor of the *New England Journal of Medicine* (NEJM). Dr Robert Ho Man Kwok, a Maryland paediatrician, described his symptoms of numbness, weakness and palpitations after eating out at Chinese restaurants, pondering whether they might be due to excessive salt, the cooking wine, or perhaps the food seasoning MSG.

His letter, catchingly titled *Chinese Restaurant Syndrome*, resulted in numerous responses from other doctors over the following months. Some reported similar experiences, while others, including the NEJM editors, were sceptical: why did different people report completely different symptoms; why did some people experience symptoms almost immediately, others much later; why was the phenomenon reported in some areas but not at all in other towns and

cities? Curiously, all the symptoms associated with the syndrome – such as palpitations, dizziness, and headaches – could be triggered simply by anxiety.

Many of the responses to Dr Kwok's letter adopted a satirical tone, using humour and irony to critique the perceived overreaction to MSG. Even the earnestness of Dr Kwok's original letter was questioned given he signed off as the

HEALTH SCIENCE



DR STEVE HUMPHRIES

senior research investigator at the National Biomedical Research Foundation, an institute for which no record could be found.

But newspapers, not letting facts get in the way of a good story, dropped the scepticism and satire of the NEJM conversations and ran with the dramatic story of a "Chinese Restaurant Syndrome", and how doctors were concerned the food additive MSG was making people ill. It caught the public imagination, and an

urban myth was born – driven by a toxic mix of chemophobia and xenophobia.

The 1960s were a time of increasing concern over food additives such as preservatives and artificial sweeteners, though this was often combined with an irrational fear of anything "chemical". A refined white powder being added to food with the chemical-sounding name "monosodium glutamate" was an easy target for stoking people's chemical fears. And there was also considerable anti-Asian sentiment in the United States, a cultural bias that made it easy for people to single out Asian-style food as suspect and potentially harmful.

In the face of declining business, Chinese and other Asian restaurants displayed "No MSG" on their signage and menus, and food manufacturers started removing MSG from their products.

Most people didn't stop to think why this problem had just suddenly appeared; nor did they stop to wonder how glutamate, a common, naturally occurring component of food, could be causing problems. Cheese, tomatoes, mushrooms, and human and cow's milk are just some of the foods that contain free (unbound) glutamate. Moreover, glutamate is the most prevalent amino acid in dietary protein, and during digestion this protein-bound glutamate is released and subsequently absorbed.

Consequently, glutamate is abundant in the human diet, and the addition of MSG as a flavour enhancer contributes only a small percentage more – below normal daily fluctuations. Many people, while diligently steering clear of Chinese restaurants and foods containing added MSG, were unknowingly preparing meals at home with even higher levels of glutamate!

Some argued that MSG's sodium content might pose a health problem by increasing sodium consumption. But, because both salt and MSG enhance flavour, substituting some salt with MSG – which contains just 12 percent sodium compared to salt's 39 percent – lowers overall sodium intake.

In the wake of Dr Kwok's letter, several scientific studies reported associations between MSG and negative health outcomes. However, the scientific community strongly criticised

these early studies, noting that they relied on anecdotal evidence or were based on poorly designed, unblinded experiments that did not control for the nocebo effect – where just the expectation of harm can lead to negative health outcomes.

Unfortunately, people often don't pay much attention to the details of how studies are run, and those methodologically flawed studies fed into the public narrative that MSG was harmful – the public panic over MSG continued to build.

Subsequent, high-quality, placebo-controlled studies failed to show any reproducible adverse effects for MSG consumed with food. Notably, individuals who self-identified as having adverse reactions to MSG failed to do so under placebo-controlled, double-blind conditions, and ongoing scientific reviews continue to affirm the safety of MSG as a flavour enhancer.

Nevertheless, many people continue to avoid MSG; even when the science is clear, urban myths and persistent biases can be difficult to overcome. Unfortunately, "MSG free" labelling remains a selling point and continues to reinforce the notion that MSG is harmful.

Misinformation and rumour have given MSG an undeserved bad reputation. It's a useful kitchen seasoning that can enhance the flavour of a wide range of meals while lowering salt use.

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



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A good CRM is non-negotiable for growing your business

Let me ask you a few questions. How many customer details are floating around in notebooks, inboxes, or in someone’s head? How many sales opportunities have slipped through the cracks because you didn’t follow up at the right time? Could your team deliver the same consistent service if you stepped away for a week?

For many business owners, the answers to these questions reveal a hard truth: your customer relationships aren’t being managed as well as they should be. And in today’s

YOUR BUSINESS



CHRIS WHELAN

competitive world, that’s a risk you can’t afford.

That’s where a CRM - Customer Relationship Management system - comes in. A CRM isn’t just another piece of software. It’s mission control for your business: a central hub

where every client detail, every interaction, and every opportunity is tracked, managed, and ready for action. Done right, it doesn’t just make you more organised - it makes you more profitable.

Here’s why a good CRM is a game-changer for SMEs.

1. Streamline Your Operations

Time is your most valuable asset. Yet so many business owners spend hours chasing scraps of information across emails, spreadsheets, and sticky notes. A CRM cuts through the chaos by automating repetitive tasks — things like email follow-ups, scheduling appointments, and entering customer details.

I coached an electrical firm that was juggling three separate spreadsheets and WhatsApp threads to track jobs. They constantly missed quotes, doubled up on site visits, and lost thousands in unbilled work. Within a month



of adopting a CRM, they had everything on a single dashboard, automated reminders in place, and a 20% jump in closed jobs. That’s the difference between running a business by memory and running it by system.

2. Enhance Customer Communication

Trust is built on consistent communication. A CRM ensures every phone call, email, and meeting is logged - so you never miss a follow-up or forget an important detail. But great communication isn’t just about reminders; it’s about engagement.

Ask yourself: how often do you give your customers something valuable for free? Not just an invoice, but insights. An article on how to install a bathroom. Tips for safe scaffolding. A quick guide on rewiring a house. Or a checklist for keeping refrigeration units running smoothly. These nuggets don’t just inform - they position you as the expert who adds value beyond the sale.

With a CRM, you can map out six months of communication in advance: themes, offers, industry insights. You write it in your own voice, schedule it through your CRM, and let the system do the heavy lifting. Whether by email

or SMS, your customers hear from you regularly with ideas that make their lives easier. And when it’s time to buy, they already know who to trust.

Pro Tip: Personalisation matters. A “Hi Sarah, here’s a service reminder for your system” will always land better than “Dear Customer.” A CRM makes that easy.

3. Increase Sales and Profitability

Here’s a sobering thought: how many sales opportunities are you losing simply because no one followed up? A CRM gives you visibility into your entire pipeline — leads, quotes, probabilities, and forecasts. No more blind spots.

And the numbers back it up. Businesses that implement CRMs see, on average, a 29% increase in sales revenue. Some studies show a return of \$8.71 for every \$1 invested in CRM. Imagine that for your business. If you’re turning over \$500,000 today, a 29% lift could mean an extra \$145,000 this year without adding a single new lead source.

That’s the power of managing what you already have more effectively.

4. Improve Team Collaboration

As your business grows, miscommunication kills momentum. Sales, marketing, and service end up

working in silos. Messages get crossed, customers get frustrated, and opportunities are lost.

A CRM fixes this by giving everyone access to the same source of truth. One customer record, one history of interactions, one view of the pipeline. Sales can add notes that marketing sees. Service can log an issue that informs the next sales conversation. Collaboration stops being a buzzword and becomes a working reality.

Some CRMs even integrate with the tools you already use - from email to project management platforms - so you don’t have to reinvent the wheel. Notes added in one place show up everywhere. No duplication, no excuses.

5. Boost Customer Satisfaction

At the end of the day, business success comes down to satisfied customers. Happy customers stick around, spend more, and refer others. A CRM helps you deliver that by keeping track of preferences, service history, and special requests - so you can personalise every interaction.

Take one café I worked with. They used their CRM to track regular customers’ coffee orders. When someone walked in, the barista already knew their “usual.” That tiny gesture turned casual buyers into loyal fans who wouldn’t dream of going elsewhere.

The same principle applies no matter your industry. When customers feel known, remembered, and valued, they don’t just buy once - they buy for life.

Final Word

A CRM isn’t overhead. It’s leverage. It frees up your time, sharpens communication, boosts sales, unites your team, and builds loyalty that lasts.

If your customer data is scattered, your follow ups are inconsistent, and your pipeline is foggy, it’s time to get serious. A CRM won’t just organise your business - it will transform how you grow it.

Chris is a business and leadership coach based in the Wellington region, helping small and medium-sized business owners grow profit, build strong teams, and lead with purpose. Contact Chris at the Centre of Business Excellence – chris@wcbe.co.nz or 022 2332 669.

Exercise for a sharper business mind

In Mental Health Awareness Week (October 6-12), ExerciseNZ has shone shining a light on one of the most underappreciated, yet effective forms of self-care: movement.

“Movement is one of the most powerful, underused tools we have for mental health, and it’s available to everyone, every day,” says ExerciseNZ chief executive Richard Beattie.

It’s been proven to sharpen focus and concentration, vital in today busy business world.

This year’s theme highlighted by the Mental Health Foundation, Top Up Together, is grounded in The Five Ways To Wellbeing, and is a reminder that mental health is shaped by the small actions people take every day.

One of the most powerful of those actions? Movement.

Movement is more than a physical intervention, it’s a mental reset.

Regular activity reduces anxiety and depression, improves sleep, builds confidence, and strengthens emotional resilience.

According to the latest industry consumer survey, mental health remains within the top



Image by Wenisa Ng, Pixabay

two reasons New Zealanders exercise. Mental health has consistently been a leading motivator.

“The data is clear. Kiwis already understand the link between movement and mental

wellbeing,” Richard says. “Mental health consistently ranks as one of the top reasons people exercise, which tells us this message is resonating nationwide.”

Recent research from Frontiers in Psychology finds that even short bursts of movement, such as 10 minutes, can boost mood and reduce psychological distress.

A 2025 systematic review published in PubMed shows that engaging in structured physical exercise, even among high-stress populations, yields measurable improvements in mental health and quality of life.

Evidence further supports the notion that group or partner-based physical activity is particularly effective for reducing loneliness and increasing social connectedness.

The Five Ways To Wellbeing provide a simple, evidence-based framework that the entire exercise industry can align with as a long-term commitment to supporting mental wellbeing:

Whakawhanaunga/Connect: Create connections through group classes, partner workouts, or community walking/run groups that help members feel connected, seen and supported.

Me Kori Tonu/Be Active: Provide diverse, inclusive, and enjoyable ways to move,

catering to all ages, bodies, abilities, and cultural needs.

Aro Tonu/Take Notice: Encourage mindfulness with breathwork, reflection, and goal setting.

Ako Tonu/Keep Learning: Empower all to learn new techniques, try unfamiliar formats, and discover more about their body.

Tukua/Give: Give back by creating welcoming spaces, offering free intro sessions, or supporting members to uplift each other.

To mark Mental Health Awareness Week, Exercise New Zealand is encouraging communities to see movement as a simple, powerful way to “top up” their wellbeing together.

It says that aligned with The Five Ways To Wellbeing, moving our bodies connects us with others, grounds us in the present, and strengthens both mind and body. Whether it’s through group classes, partner workouts, or a solo walk to reset, everyday movement is one of the most accessible ways we can support our mental health, together.

“As the leading voice for the exercise industry, our message is simple: move your body, support your mind, and do it together,” Richard says. “Movement is one of the easiest, most powerful, yet underused tools we have for mental health, so let’s use it.” – exercisenz.org.nz

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

“People still want to get a quick take-away pie or cake from the cabinet without having to pay a fortune for it.”

– Robyn Pullen, Oz’s Bakery



Anita Hurcomb behind the counter at Dice in Ōtaki’s highway shopping precinct.

Photo Ōtaki Today

Oz still a baking wizard after 42 years

Through tough times and good, Oz’s Bakery has been a constant in Ōtaki for the past 42 years.

Baker Osmond Pidduck set up shop in the mid-1980s after learning the bakery trade at the big hot bread shop on the highway at Paraparaumu.

As a young boy his father would bring him up to Ōtaki and he would stay with his Uncle Mick and Auntie Ra Rikihana, who lived at “Rikiville” on Mill Road. He has always loved being in Ōtaki.

Recognising the value of highway traffic, Oz took on the shop at 200 Main Highway Ōtaki, which was previously the Lawson’s jewellery store.

The routine of starting work at 3am seven

days a week, and being the baker for almost everything sold at Oz’s, has never changed. It’s probably the reason for the bakery’s longevity.

“Oz has always done just about all the baking,” says wife and business partner Robyn Pullen. “It’s probably why the business has survived all these years. Doing everything himself means he can keep prices down and still provide the favourite foods that people have loved for years.”

Little has changed in Oz’s cabinets since he sold his first sausage roll in 1983. The bakery is still renowned for its freshly baked steak-and-cheese pies, filled rolls and sandwiches, cream donuts, custard squares, cakes and breads.

Robyn sees them as the kinds of food that people always enjoy, no matter the trends in modern cooking.

“People still want to get a quick take-away pie or cake from the cabinet without having to pay a fortune for it.”

Recognising that not everyone is the same, however, 15 years ago Oz and Robyn established Dice right next door to Oz’s in Ōtaki’s highway shopping precinct. Much of the baking still comes from the hands of Oz (though other staff do a lot of the baking for Dice).

Dice has a modern decor and branding, and has more “up-market” offerings. Countering the traditional fare of Oz’s Bakery, Dice has a slightly different clientele, offering paninis, bagels, and toasted wraps, summer salads, real fruit ice-creams, smoothies and Emporio coffee.

Oz’s is probably Ōtaki’s longest-running retail business at the highway shops.

Throughout the past 42 years, Robyn and Oz have seen some remarkable changes, including the arrival of outlet shops, which transformed the sleepy “railway” area into a shopping metropolis.

And of course the changes that came with the expressway – less traffic and a more relaxed shopping environment.

“We’ve been through some tough times, as all businesses do,” Robyn says. “But we’ve always believed in Ōtaki. That’s probably why we’ve been here so long!”

And the last word from Oz: “Thank you to the Ōtaki community for supporting the bakery over the years.”

■ Oz’s Bakery and Dice, 200 Main Highway, Ōtaki. 06 364-5472



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HĪTŌRIA/History



The Lions' Museum in the 1980s, now the Gertrude Atmore Supper Room.



The façade of the BNZ building being demolished in 1966.



The Museum, top, and how some passersby appear to view the it.

Ōtaki Heritage – a tale of two organisations

Rather than write about a historical object such as a book, or a medal, or a key, I am taking the opportunity to write about a local historical entity called Ōtaki Heritage | Te Whare Pouhere Taonga o Ōtaki.

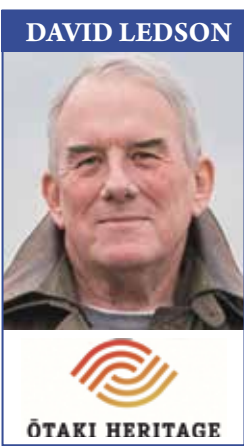
It starts with the stories of the two foundations on which it was built – the Ōtaki Historical Society and the Ōtaki Heritage Bank Preservation Trust.

The Ōtaki Historical Society (OHS) was founded in 1977 by the Reverend Gordon Dempsey, who had come to Ōtaki to be vicar of the All Saints Anglican parish. Its aims were formalised in 1978: “to foster an interest in New Zealand history, to collect and preserve items of historical interest relating to Ōtaki, and to sponsor public meeting, exhibitions, publications, and the like”.

It began with 28 founding members. Membership reached a peak of 243 in 2003. In 1978 it published the first *Historical Journal*.

In its first year, the OHS was encouraged by the Ōtaki Mayor Murray Scott to establish a museum. However, for more than 20 years nothing came of the idea. During that time, artifacts given to the historical society were stored in a variety of places – including in members’ homes, and in the museum set up by the Ōtaki Lions’ Club; first, in the old BNZ at the Railway, and then next to the Memorial Hall. When the Lions’ Museum was closed in the 1980s, items it held went to the Wellington Museum and the Hyde Park Museum, which used to operate at Te Horo.

In 2002, the opportunity for a museum resurfaced when the BNZ building on Main Street was put up for sale by Kāpiti Coast District Council. The BNZ had vacated the building in 1965, and it was bought by the then Ōtaki Borough Council in 1967 use as council chambers and offices.



In 1968, in what might be considered an act of heritage vandalism, the front façade was demolished so Main Street could be widened. This was close to being surpassed when, in the 1980s, the walls of the banking chamber were covered with grass cloth painted peach, and the timber doors, dado and architraves were painted grey.

In 1989, after the Ōtaki Borough Council had been amalgamated with KCDC, the building was used as a council service centre. In 1998 the council vacated the building.

With no use for the building, and no buyers for it, in 2003 the council agreed to lease it to the Ōtaki Heritage Bank Preservation Trust (OHBPT). The OHBPT was an initiative led by Anne Thorpe, with the aim of preserving the building by establishing

it as a museum. The historical society had decided it did not have the resources that would be required to take this on. After renovation by the OHBPT and its supporters, the building was blessed, and held its first exhibition in February 2004.

Until 2023 the OHBPT and OHS worked collaboratively on heritage matters, while operating as separate entities. Then, with their amalgamation in that year, Ōtaki Heritage came into being – headquartered at the Ōtaki Museum in Main Street.

The reason those of us who volunteer for Ōtaki Heritage do so is because it continues the heritage focused purpose of its predecessors to the benefit of the community, in terms of a sense of identity and pride in this place and our place in it. In simple terms, we want to make it possible for those of us who live here, as well as visitors to our town, to “discover, enjoy and explore Ōtaki’s rich and unique heritage”.

We do this essentially through storytelling. And we do this by collecting and protecting the things that enable Ōtaki

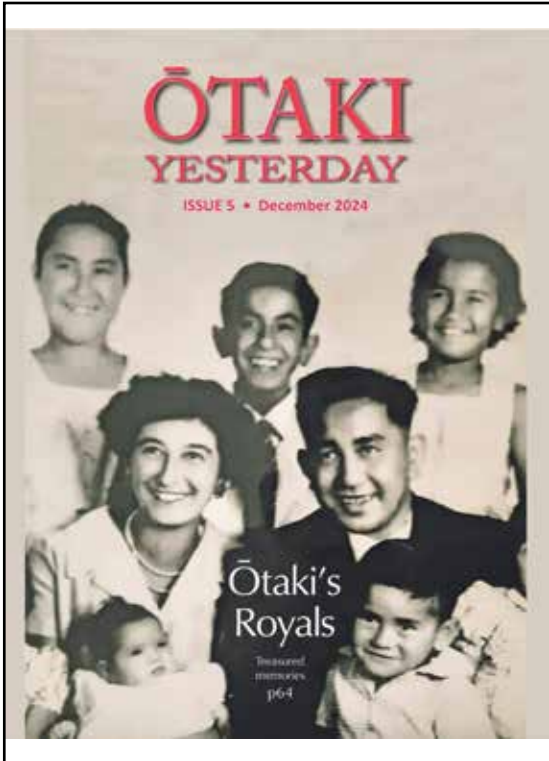
stories to be told, and then making those stories accessible to as many people as possible. This we do through activities such as exhibitions, publishing the *Ōtaki Historical Journal*, having an online presence, and opening the museum to the public.

In preparation for our annual general meeting, we recently reviewed our results for the 2024/2025 financial year. Comparing some of them with results from the OHBPT years delivers some interesting results.

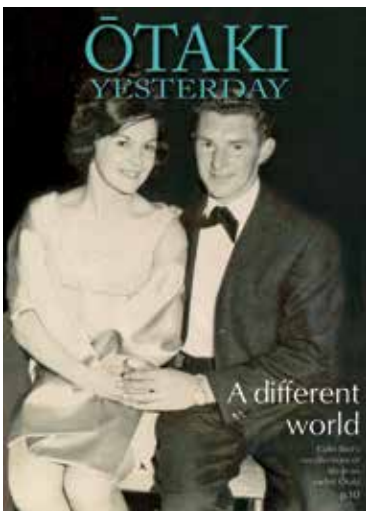
- In 2010 the OHBPT had income of \$94,000, of which \$31,000 was a council grant. By 2019 the income had reduced to \$41,000, most of it the council grant. In the 2024/2025 year, the OH grant from KCDC was \$45,275, of which about \$12,000 was paid back to KCDC as annual rent on the building.
- In 2019, the museum had 2578 visitors. In 2024/2025 we had about 1000 fewer visitors. However, we did get to see 156 participants in the Clue Hunt, held annually on Wellington Anniversary Weekend – most of them were from out of town.
- In 2019, 140 volunteers contributed to the operation of the museum. We now have just 40.

There are a variety of factors causing our numbers in these key areas to trend downwards, and we are working to address them. Fundamentally, though, it’s about us engaging with the community, and the community knowing who we are and what we do, valuing it, and engaging with us. And, in our case, as much as having an online presence is important today, so too is having a physical presence in the community. We have some challenges in this area.

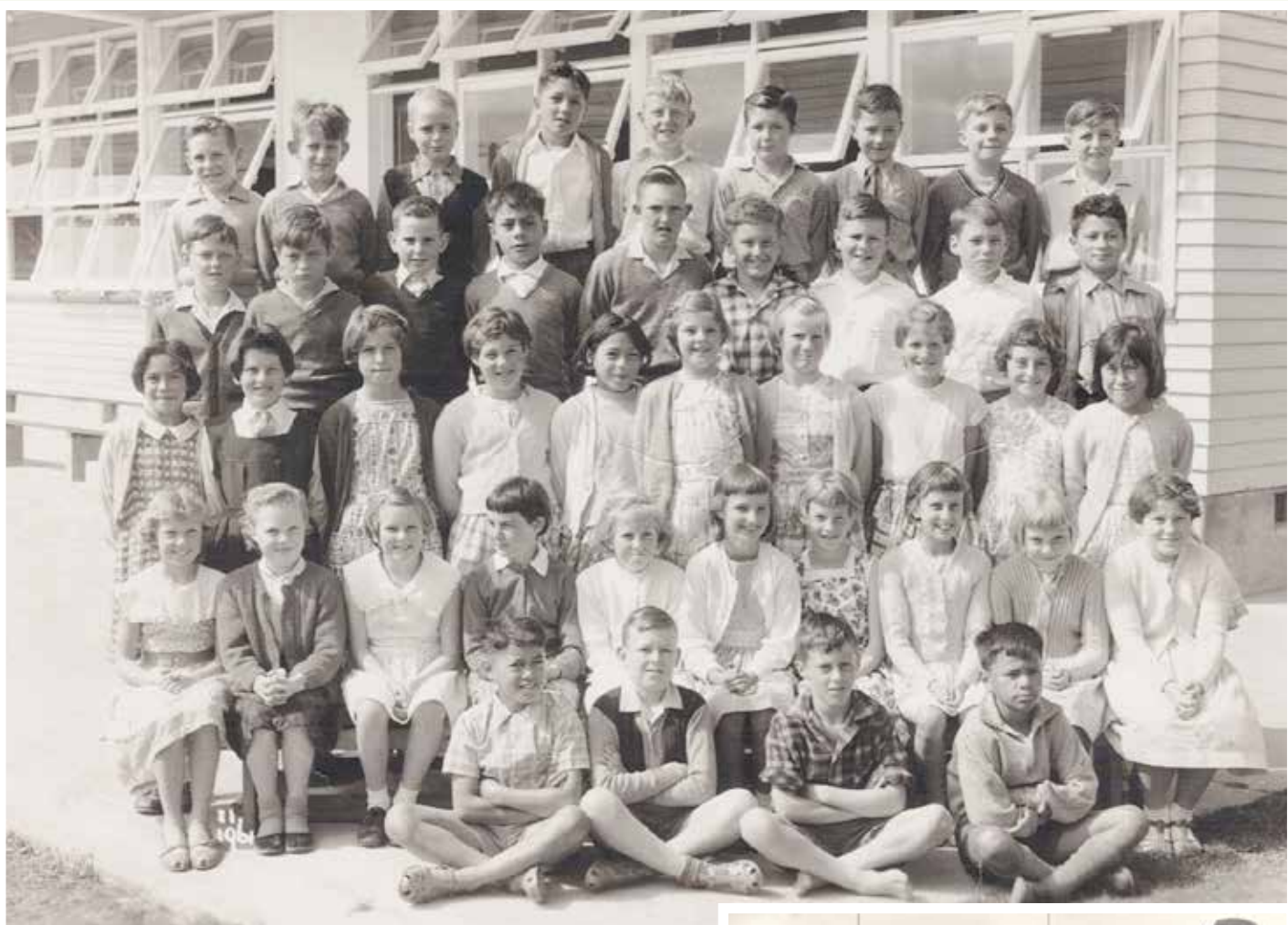
I have been surprised at the number of people who come into the museum exclaiming that they didn’t know we were a museum. We are, and we are open Thursday, Friday and Saturday 10am-2pm. It is a dull building to look at, and easy to miss as you walk past it. Enter the door, though, and you will find a quite different world inside.



The 2024 issue of *Ōtaki Yesterday*, featuring more stories about the people and places of old Ōtaki, is another historical publication produced by Ōtaki’s ID Media. To buy a copy as a special gift, or just for yourself, contact Debbi debbi@idmedia.co.nz or text **027 285 4720**. Copies (including previous issues as below) \$25 each.



ŌTAKI SCHOOL 1961



ŌTAKI SCHOOL 1961. Another huge class of 42 students. Do you recognise anyone? Please let us know if you do.



Ōtaki River entrance tides October 15 – November 12

<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 15 OCT	05:28	11:37	18:16	-	-	-
THU 16 OCT	-	00:30	06:48	12:57	19:28	-
FRI 17 OCT	-	01:37	07:56	14:02	20:23	-
SAT 18 OCT	-	02:29	08:48	14:52	21:07	-
SUN 19 OCT	-	03:13	09:29	15:33	21:44	-
MON 20 OCT	-	03:52	10:06	16:10	22:18	-
TUE 21 OCT	-	04:27	10:38	16:44	22:50	-
WED 22 OCT	-	05:00	11:10	17:16	23:21	-
THU 23 OCT	-	05:33	11:40	17:48	23:53	-
FRI 24 OCT	-	06:05	12:11	18:20	-	-
SAT 25 OCT	00:25	06:38	12:44	18:54	-	-
SUN 26 OCT	01:00	07:12	13:19	19:32	-	-
MON 27 OCT	01:40	07:51	14:00	20:18	-	-
TUE 28 OCT	02:27	08:36	14:50	21:14	-	-
WED 29 OCT	03:25	09:31	15:54	22:20	-	-
THU 30 OCT	04:33	10:37	17:07	23:30	-	-
FRI 31 OCT	05:43	11:49	18:17	-	-	-
SAT 1 NOV	-	00:34	06:49	12:57	19:16	-
SUN 2 NOV	-	01:31	07:47	13:54	20:07	-
MON 3 NOV	-	02:22	08:39	14:45	20:55	-
TUE 4 NOV	-	03:11	09:27	15:33	21:42	-
WED 5 NOV	-	03:58	10:13	16:20	22:28	-
THU 6 NOV	-	04:45	10:59	17:08	23:16	-
FRI 7 NOV	-	05:32	11:46	17:56	-	-
SAT 8 NOV	00:05	06:20	12:34	18:47	-	-
SUN 9 NOV	00:57	07:09	13:25	19:40	-	-
MON 10 NOV	01:52	08:01	14:20	20:38	-	-
TUE 11 NOV	02:51	08:56	15:21	21:41	-	-
WED 12 NOV	03:55	09:58	16:30	22:49	-	-

GOT OLD PHOTOS?

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

THE CAST OF *BUSYBODY* 1971
An Ōtaki Player's production held in the Ōtaki Memorial Hall.
From left: ? Rolland, Aileen Lumley, Sue Gardiner, Greg Peters, Alma Bartosh, Christine Oborn and Neville Key.
Absent – David Fletcher.
(Photo by Nevilles, 17 Temuera St, Ōtaki. Phone 8508.)
Photo: courtesy of Horowhenua Historical Society Inc.



FROM THE ARCHIVES:

City of Porirua marks 60 years

The city of Porirua marks its 60th anniversary this month. It was October 2, 1965, when the population of Porirua hit 20,000, officially qualifying the town to become a city.

Ngā Taonga Sound & Vision holds a unique record of Porirua in the 1960s, right as these changes were taking place: *Birth of a City*, by keen amateur filmmaker and long-term Kāpiti Coast resident Hilda Brodie Smith.

Hilda and her husband Allan were active in the mid-century cine club scene, completing an impressive 30 films using non-professional equipment like 8mm cameras.

The Brodie Smith films are technically sophisticated; unlike most home movies of the time, they have complicated soundtracks that involve voiceover narration, in-camera effects and carefully synced ambient sound.

The couple's other productions included a drama about a cheating husband and his scheming wife, a documentary about how 8mm films were developed, and charming home movies about the couple's adopted twins.

To watch *Birth of a City*, or the other films by Hilda Brodie-Smith that have been digitised by Ngā Taonga, go to ngataonga.org.nz and search for reference number F38753.



Porirua from the air, 1969. Whites Aviation Collection, Alexander Turnbull Library

TAMARIKI FUN

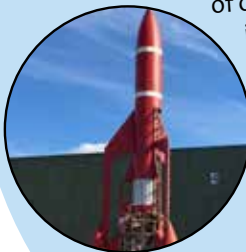
Kārearea Bird of the Year again!

The New Zealand falcon, the kārearea, has been voted the 2025 Bird of the Year, again. Known for its high-speed hunting and sharp eyesight, it previously won in 2012 and is now part of a special group of repeat champions. The competition is run by Forest and Bird and is celebrating 20 years. More than 75,000 voted this year, showing the care people have about New Zealand's native birds. Caitlin Pieta, from Auto Mossa, led the kārearea's campaign, and said it was an honour to support such a remarkable bird. Forest and Bird said the falcon was an early lead, and stayed on the top spot throughout. The competition also has a serious message – most of this year's top 10 birds are at risk of extinction, with two species having fewer than 300 left in the wild. Habitat loss, climate change, and introduced predators are big threats, but public support helps.



Thunderbird owner thought he bought a model

The owner of a massive Thunderbird 3 space rocket parked outside Humberside Airport allegedly thought he was buying a model, it has been revealed. Former airport worker Andrew Bellamy said the son of one of the site's former owners made the error in 2008 when he bid on the replica. The original Thunderbirds, a classic kids' puppet sci-fi series, celebrated 60 years of its first TV broadcast on September 30, 1965. Andrew Bellamy said when his team was sent to Blackpool to collect what they thought was a model, they were asked if they had a truck. "It was quite funny because we heard that he'd bought a model – didn't even bother checking," he said. Thunderbird 3 was the primary spacecraft of the show's international rescue, piloted by Alan and John Tracy.



Bluey movie

Big news for Bluey fans! The popular animated pup is heading to the big screen in her very own movie, and will be in cinemas from August 2027.



BBC Studios and Walt Disney Studios have announced the upcoming film, which will be written and directed by Bluey creator Joe Brumm. The movie will be made by Ludo Studio in partnership with BBC Studios. "I really enjoyed working with longer stories in Series 3," said Brumm. "Making a full-length movie feels like the perfect next step. I want this to be a fun event the whole family can enjoy together." The voices of Bluey's mum and dad, Chilli and Bandit, will be played again by Melanie Zanetti and David McCormack. Fans can also look forward to music by Bluey composer Joff Bush, known for creating the show's playful and heartfelt soundtrack. This is Bluey's first ever movie.

RIDDLES
ANSWERS
1. A stamp
2. Charcoal
3. Fingernails

CADE'S PUZZLE
ANSWERS: 1. Kapa Haka 2. Maori 3. Reading 4. Homework
5. Writing 6. Maths

ACTIVE BODIES, ACTIVE MINDS!

There is clear evidence that physical activity improves learning for tamariki and rangatahi. The education sector in Aotearoa is facing many challenges, including variable achievement statistics, attendance rates and increasing mental health challenges for primary and secondary school students. However, evidence supports the positive role that physical activity plays in addressing these challenges and giving the next generation the skills and knowledge they need to succeed. This evidence shows children engage more in learning, stay in school longer, have higher levels of achievement, and experience higher levels of mental wellbeing. How active are you?



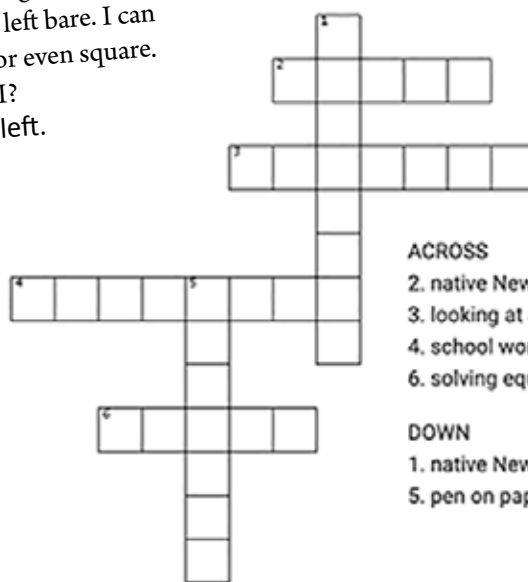
WORDMAKER

G A R D E N

Who eats their vegies?
Can you make 80 words
from GARDEN?
Answers below.

RIDDLES

1. I went to London and have been to Rome. I could go to India and sometimes I get sent home. I do all of this by simply sitting in a corner. What am I?
2. I am black when you get me, red when you use me, and white when you're all through with me. What am I?
3. I can be long or I can be short. I can be grown and I can be bought. I can be painted or left bare. I can be round or even square. What am I?
Answers left.



CADE'S PUZZLE

answers
below left



ACROSS

2. native New Zealand language
3. looking at and understanding words
4. school work at home
6. solving equations

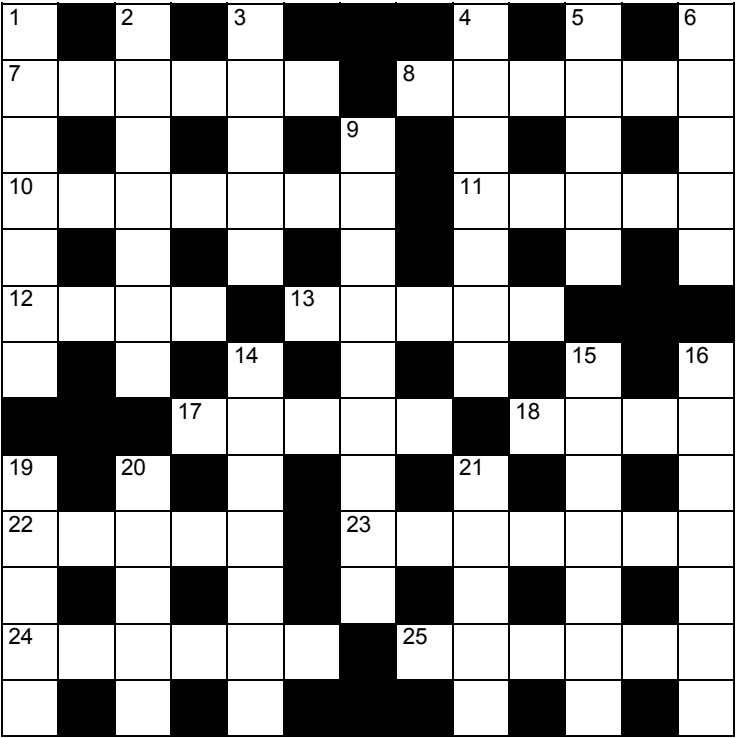
DOWN

1. native New Zealand singing and dancing
5. pen on paper

GARDEN: WORD MAKER ANSWERS from above

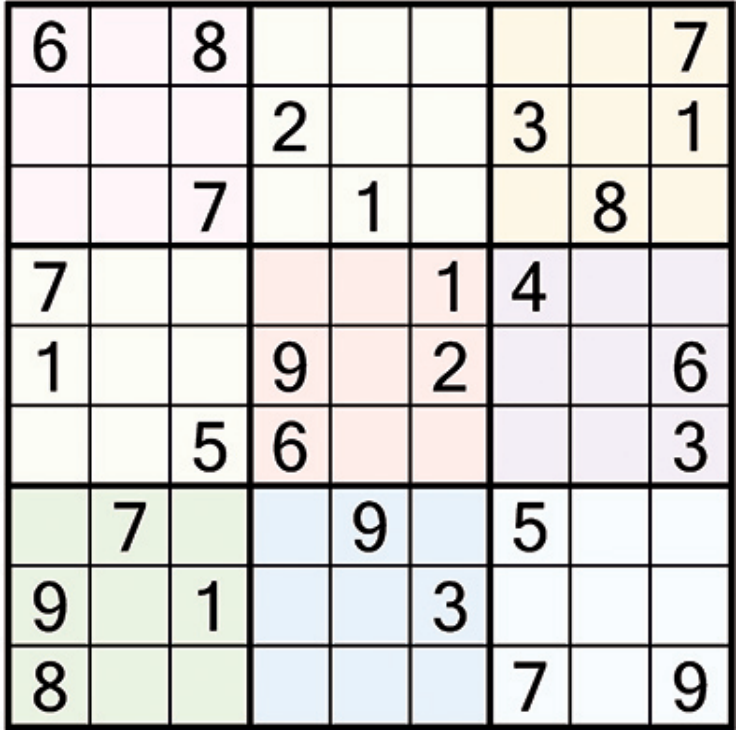
6-letter words: 1. danger 2. gander 3. ranged 4. grade 5. grand 6. raged 7. anger 8. denar 9. rang 10. redan 11. regna 4-letter words: 12. aged 13. dang 14. drag 15. dreg 16. egad 17. gaed 18. grad 19. ager 20. areg 21. dare 22. darn 23. dean 24. dear 25. gaen 26. gane 27. gear 28. gear 29. gear 30. gran 31. nar 32. nar 33. rage 34. rand 35. rang 36. read 37. rend 38. earn 39. nare 40. near 3-letter words: 41. dag 42. gad 43. ged 44. age 45. and 46. dan 47. den 48. end 49. eng 50. erg 51. gae 52. gan 53. gar 54. gen 55. nag 56. neg 57. rad 58. rag 59. red 60. reg 61. are 62. are 63. ear 64. era 65. ern 66. nae 67. ran. 2-letter words: 68. ad 69. ag 70. da 71. de 72. ed 73. ae 74. an 75. ar 76. en 77. er 78. na 79. ne 80. re.

THE CROSSWORD #NZ1953D (answers below right)



- ACROSS
- DOWN
7. Mug of beer (6)
1. Upheaval (5-2)
8. NZ was Britain's _____ until 1907 (6)
2. Very busy (2,3,2)
10. Common coastal fish (7)
3. Jester (5)
11. Keen (5)
4. Prize made of ribbon (7)
12. Impulse (4)
5. New Zealand tree fern (5)
13. Seven (Māori) (5)
6. Gift brought by the Three Wise Men (5)
17. Precious stone (5)
9. Motorsport park near Cromwell (9)
18. Town that is New Zealand's capital of country music (4)
14. Won easily (colloq) (5,2)
22. Unaccompanied (5)
15. Christchurch attraction which opened in 1992 (7)
23. Ōtepoti (7)
16. Wander aimlessly (7)
24. Introduced pest that thrives in the South Island (6)
19. Seven Sharp co-presenter (5)
25. Key defence position in football (6)
20. Uncertainty (5)
21. Delight in (5).

SUDOKU PUZZLES thepuzzlecompany.co.nz
HARD #96H 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.



CROSSWORD #1953D ANSWERS Across: 7. Handle, 8. Colony, 10. Kahawai, 11. Eager, 12. Urge, 13. Whitu, 17. Topaz, 18. Gore, 22. Alone, 23. Dunedin, 24. Rabbit, 25. Goalie. Down: 1. Shake-up, 2. On the go, 3. Clown, 4. Rosette, 5. Ponga, 6. Myrrh, 9. Highlands, 14. Hosed in, 15. Gondola, 16. Meander, 19. Barry, 20. Doubt, 21. Enjoy.

WORD SEARCH: NZ FASHION DESIGNERS
answers page 19



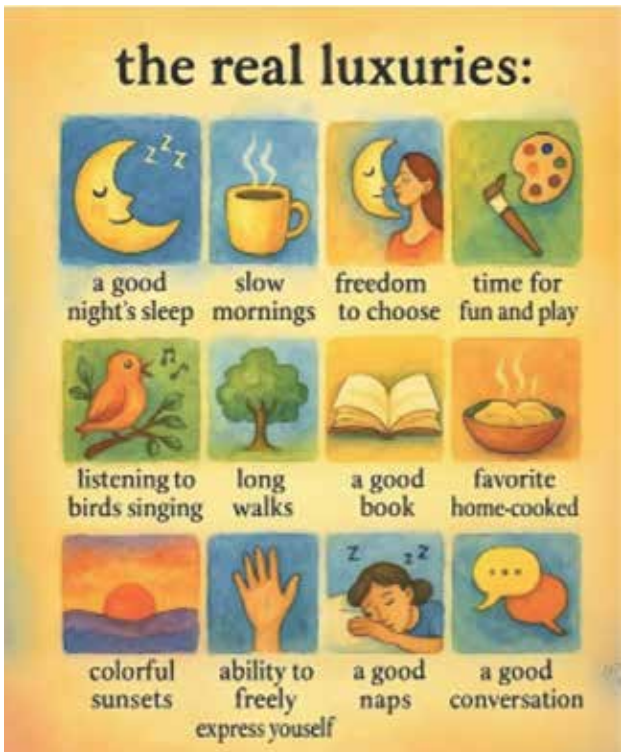
- ADRIAN HAILWOOD
ADRIENNE WHITEWOOD
ANNIE BONZA
BOBBY LUKE
COLIN COLE
DORIS DE PONT
KAREN WALKER
- KIRI NATHAN
KATE SYLVESTER
JEANINE CLARKIN
JULIETTE HOGAN
NICHOLA TE KIRI
TRISH GREGORY

WOW QUIZ ANSWERS: 1. World of Wearable Arts. 2. 1987. 3. Nelson. 4. 2005. 5. Nelson sculptor Suzie Moncrieff conceived the idea to challenge designers to take art off the wall and adorn the body. 6. 2015 to 2019. 7. Australia, Hawaii, USA & Russia. 8. An exhibition was created in its stead: WOW Up Close at Te Papa. 9. More than 63,000 attended. 10. Ōtaki designer Jan Kerr, for her garment Beeing Mary Bumby, a celebration of NZ's earliest bee keeper.

WOW QUIZ

Did you go to WOW this year? Were you WOWED?.
Answers below.

1. What does the acronym WOW stand for?
2. What year did WOW start?
3. Where was it first held?
4. When did WOW move to its current centre?
5. Who created WOW?
6. WOW toured an international exhibition of 32 award winning garments in what years?
7. Which four countries did this international exhibition visit?
8. After the 2020 WOW Show was cancelled due to COVID-19, what happened to the show that year?
9. WOW held its largest show ever in 2022, How many attended its three week season?
10. Which Ōtaki artist won The 2025 Dame Suzie Moncrieff Award?



SUDOKU SOLUTION #96H

WORD SEARCH ANSWERS
NZ FASHION DESIGNERS

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ZERO WASTE ŌTAKI AGM

November 12
6.30pm start
Memorial Hall Supper Room

Meeting will include the presentation given to the recent ZWO Aotearoa national conference and a Q&A session, followed by a light supper. **PUBLIC WELCOME**

PUBLIC NOTICES

Friends of the Ōtaki River

26th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
Wednesday October 22, 2025 at 7.30pm
Rotary Lounge, Aotaki Street, Ōtaki

- Formal reports and general business
- Election/appointment of Executive Committee
- Report from Greater Wellington Regional Council (river management)
- Light supper

At the conclusion of formal business there will be an address by Linda Kirkmeester, President of Friends of Mana Island. The topic of the presentation is: "Mana Island: How to Restore an Island - One Species at a time" Linda has been volunteering with Te Mana o Kupe/Mana Island for around 25 years, the last 12 years serving on the FOMI executive committee where she is currently acting President. Her volunteer work has included numerous planting trips on weekend work parties, endangered species monitoring and acting as a Guide for visitors to the island.

All FOTOR members and interested parties are invited.
Secretary Ian Hoare • 022 033 7321 • friendsototakiriver@gmail.com

Rāhui women’s rugby champs

Rahui’s wāhine rugby team has won the Horowhenua-Kāpiti championship. The team played the final at Playford Park, Levin, on Wednesday, October 8. They beat Levin’s Athletic 54-39. The season was considered a time of development, with only Rāhui and Athletic entering the competition. After the final whistle, both captains spoke of their hope that more wāhine will join the game and make for a more competitive season in 2026.

Photo Ōtaki Today



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