

ŌTAKI TODAY

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NOEMA/NOVEMBER 2025

Ngā kōrero o Ōtaki



No respite for 'cone town'

By Ian Carson

Anyone seeing the road works around town progressing to what they hope will be completion will be disappointed.

In what Kāpiti Coast District Council says is “next construction season” – with no definite timeline but “early 2026” – Mill Road will be resurfaced from Raukawa Marae to old State Highway 1, perpetuating Ōtaki’s “cone town” reputation. There’s no doubt the work needs to be done. Road users are currently enduring a bumpy ride that strains the endurance of vehicle suspension and human spine in equal measure.

With the laying of essential new pipes from Aotaki Street through to the BP roundabout, which began 16 months ago, both roads have become littered with potholes and uneven surfaces as contractors refill the trenches.

The project has involved digging a trench in the road, laying the new wastewater pipe, installing 44 new manholes, backfilling and spot resealing the road surface. New wastewater pipes have also been connected to several homes and a new water main has been laid along a section of Mill Road.

The council says for several reasons – including the need to build the road during the winter months – the replaced road surface has become uneven in places and deteriorated. Repairs will be staged, and already resurfacing work has begun on Aotaki Street.

On Mill Road, a harder-wearing asphalt surface will be installed at high-traffic-volume areas, such as intersections.

“This will provide a superior and longer lasting road surface,” the council says.

Into the second week of November, road workers in the township were continuing to lay a pipe from the centre of the Mill Road/Aotaki Street roundabout heading onto the northern section of Aotaki Street. Work was well under way to finish the roundabout concrete works – many in Ōtaki will be pleased to see it completed.



Recent work at the BP roundabout at the intersection of Mill Road and old State Highway 1.

Photo Ōtaki Today

On Mill Road, the crew has trenched up to the Rāhui Road side of the BP roundabout, progressing towards the expressway overbridge. The roundabout will be resurfaced.

As of early November, the Mill Road crew was completing road surface repairs and sewer connections to homes and properties.

Traffic management layout will vary during the next couple of months as work progress through the BP roundabout upgrade. Rāhui Road will remain closed until mid-to-late December.

Workers will continue laying the new pipeline along Rāhui Road. The council is in the planning stages for the last section (under and east of the expressway). The works will be

in two parts, to begin some time in 2026.

The council is about to go to tender to find a contractor to tunnel under the expressway and in the new year it will tender for a contractor to lay the new pipe. The pipe will increase capacity to serve the existing community and proposed development in the area. The exact route and length of the pipe is yet to be confirmed.

The council could not say whether the pipe was intended to go into Te Roto Road. It’s notable that about 500 residential units are planned at the Ōtaki-Māori Racing Club – Te Roto Road is on the western boundary.

In revocation works (where NZTA is upgrading old State Highway 1 before handing it over to the council), the contractor has

finished the footpath works from the northern end of the Railway through to the pedestrian crossing lights. In early November they were working to replace the kerb and channel into Arthur Street.

While a new footpath is being laid, pedestrian access to the doors of all shops in the Railway area is being maintained. The work is being done in small areas with crews working longer hours to speed it up.

Most of the civil work at the Riverbank Road intersection, including new road pavement is finished. The nearby stormwater network upgrades have been completed. Electrical work will need to be done before the traffic signals can go live.



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WHAT'S ON

TE HORO GARDEN TRAIL Te Horo gardens open on Saturday-Sunday November 15-16. Also a garden-inspired market, café and information hub in Te Horo Hall. Tickets \$35, online at tehorohall.org.nz or at local garden centres.

SERENADES ACROSS CULTURES 7.30-9pm, Friday, November 21. Ōtaki-Waikanae Presbyterian Church, 43 Ngaio Rd, Waikanae. Join Lala Simpson (vocals), Dayle Anderson (piano), Richard Hardie (double bass), and Jonathan Berkahn (accordion) for an enchanting evening of music, where the soulful melodies of French chanson legends like Edith Piaf and Jacques Brel blend seamlessly with the haunting rhythms of Malagasy icons such as Bessa and Fanja Andriananantena. Tickets 0800 BUY TIX (289 849) \$23.25 each (\$20.00 + \$3.25 fees). See lalasimpson.com

THE CRIMSON CLUB 4pm Sunday November 23, Firebird Cafe, Levin. Kāpiti Coast Mayor Janet Holborow is part of the irreverent comedy and crazy cabaret antics of The Crimson Club. Their line-up of vocals and violin, accordion and high-hat, cello and kick drum (simultaneously), with a splash of theremin brings an original take on some great classic tunes. Shona Jaunas wields a magical bow and rage violin, Janet shows she is just as at home on a cello or a flute, so why not throw in a kickdrum; Mel Garbor is an accordionist extraordinaire; joined by Delia Shanley on percussion. Entry \$10, contact Shona Jaunas 021 905886

RAKU DAY 10am-1pm Saturday December 6. Ōtaki Pottery Club, Ōtaki Race Course, Te Roto Road. Experience the magic of pottery by choosing from a selection of bisque ware pieces starting at just \$3 each. Apply vibrant Raku glazes and watch your creations come to life as they are fired on-site. Last sale 1pm (pieces take up to 1.5 hours to fire). A family-friendly event with live music, face painting, and plenty of space to picnic on the grass. Food and drinks available.

ŌTAKI KIDS CHRISTMAS MARKET 10am-2pm Sunday, December 7. A festive day full of fun, creativity, and Christmas cheer as young entrepreneurs showcase their handmade gifts, tasty treats, crafts, and festive goodies. Help to support local kids with big ideas. Old Main Highway opposite New World.

COMMUNITY BOARDS The next Waikanae Community Board meeting is at 6.30 Tuesday, December 9, at Te Horo Hall, 56 School Road. The Ōtaki Community Board had its first meeting of the triennium on November 11. 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

ŌTAKI CHRISTMAS MARKET 10am-2pm Sunday, December 21. Bring the family for a fun day and support local sellers by shopping locally for Christmas. Free photo with Santa, Christmas trees, stalls and kai. Old Main Highway opposite New World.

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. Third in a series of exhibitions about the township of Ōtaki, and its development over the past 200 years. Open 10am-2pm Thursday to Saturday, except public holidays.

ŌTAKI BUZZ CLUB meets 7pm third Wednesday of the month at Waitohu School hall. Come along if you're interested in beekeeping.

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

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 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.

LET'S SING ŌTAKI Tuesdays 2-3pm at Hadfield Hall. Kāpiti Women's Choir, Mondays 1.30-3pm, Baptist Church, Te Moana Rd, Waikanae. Enquiries to Ann-Marie Stapp 021 492 127.

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

Strikes test union relevance

The trade union movement in New Zealand is faced with a need to reconsider its rationale for ongoing public service work stoppages.

Increasingly, these actions are met with indifference, often escalating to public frustration and anger over continuous disruptions. The expectation that the nation might unite during tough economic times has faded. Union leaders now seem intent on positioning themselves as stronger voices against the government than their preferred political party.

Frequent calls for industrial action, particularly from Angela Dalton of the health sector, Fleur Fitzsimons of the Public Services Association, and officials of educational organisations, have become routine features of national breakfast radio news. This regularity may partly explain why many listeners have migrated to alternative stations, such as Mike Hosking's programme.

For overseas visitors, the prominence of these disputes might suggest an economic utopia, especially when public service employees complain about the loss of entitlements, such as the right to work three days a week from home. The situation is further highlighted by reports from Fitzsimons regarding the Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC), which reportedly advertised positions offering such flexible work arrangements, potentially adding to the impression of utopia.

Unlike resource-rich countries such as Saudi Arabia, New Zealand does not possess vast government reserves to fund policies of unarguable value to working mothers, but questionable value to productivity in the workplace. Many working families and young professionals not involved in industrial action are struggling to maintain financial stability. The country's priority must be to restore its finances, reduce debt, and increase productivity, thus enabling higher wages and salaries that provide families with genuine choices about work-life balance.

Treasury Secretary Ian Rennie has cautioned:

"None of the choices are easy, but if we do not close the structural deficit in the shorter term, it will tighten policy constraints over time. This could involve more drastic policy adjustments in the future than necessary." His words underscore the urgent need for prudent fiscal management to avoid harsher measures down the line.

Ironically, the minister responsible for resisting excessive public spending, Finance Minister Nicola Willis, faces criticism from the political right for allegedly being too lenient.

The Taxpayers' Union claims to have identified \$35 billion in potential savings, insisting that "she has to start somewhere because we are still spending more than when Labour was in office".

Right-wing commentator Matthew Hooten, writing in the *New Zealand Herald*, argues that government leaders have ignored Treasury warnings, opting instead to increase spending and push the nation towards financial hardship and declining living standards.

In attempting to strike a middle-ground balance between left and right, Willis is helping Prime Minister Christopher Luxon hold together the coalition their party leads. It is not an easy task. But the increasing resort to work stoppages by the PSA, in particular, will probably be a bonus toward keeping NZ First on-side with the coalition. Its reading of electorate moods is first rate and disenchantment with union tactics is apparent.

Do not, however, expect the ACC to emerge unscathed. At the very least a "please explain" might be requested from the chief executive. But more likely will be close scrutiny of the operational decisions made since the CE came into her position from the Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment (MBIE) under the Ardern/Hipkins government. She had been involved in administration of the Covid restrictive regime.



BRUCE KOHN

Many Kiwis will not consider the prime minister's brief discussions with US President Donald Trump in South Korea as a moment to be celebrated. Nevertheless, the manner with which Christopher Luxon established a rapport, avoided any embarrassing moments, and came through to greet the meeting host with humour must have been the envy of fellow heads of government. Others in similar circumstances have been berated by the president, humiliated by a resort to obsequiousness or put down by a presidential comment.

It was a personal plus for the prime minister, albeit one that may subsequently come to "haunt" him should a presidential visit to play golf eventuate, with all the rigmarole and cost involved in hosting the Secret Service detail and accompanying White House team of officials and reporters.

But Trump did not return home to cheers across the political spectrum of the US. Democrats pointed out that according to Yale University's Budget Lab, effective American tariff rates on imports have seen China's rates come down from above 100 percent in April to 20 percent now, and those of the rest of the world to just below the 20 percent mark.

Columnist Paul Krugman reported on Substack that basically Trump has backed down on his confrontation with China. "If this was a trade war China won. Why? A large part of the answer is that the Chinese had more leverage over us than we had over them."

Krugman pointed out that Trump did not cause the trade imbalance but said China's limits on rare earth exports to the US were a much bigger problem for America than Trump's tariffs were for China.

He pointed out that Trump had also proved willing to be moved by China's promises to resume purchases of US soybeans: "You might say that he ceded the future to China in return for a hill of beans."

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

Duo set for Stationhouse Christmas special

The Stationhouse Social Club is hosting musicians Janet Muggeridge and Dave Murphy on December 4 for the club's Christmas special.

Dave and Janet play their own brand of Americana, blues and originals, underpinned by Dave's driving fingerstyle acoustic guitar, and huge earthy vocals. Janet adds to the mix shimmering harmonies and mandolin played in her own style. Together they have a formidable skill set, and present a repertoire that will have your emotions tugged in every way.

Dave is considered a master of fingerstyle blues guitar, and a fine interpreter of the blues. Nic Bollinger considers him "an icon in the NZ music scene".

Janet is a founding member of Gumboot Tango, and often finds herself adding harmony and mandolin as a guest player.

■ *Ōtaki Golf Club, 6.30-9pm, Thursday, December 4. Two-course meal and entertainment from two bands. For tickets and information, email Anje@gregandanje@xtra.co.nz*



Janet Muggeridge and Dave Murphy.

Photo supplied

ŌTAKI TODAY *Ngā Kōrero o Ōtaki*

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Dux Yilin Lyu.



Runner-up to dux Cruize Lambert.



Chairperson's award winner Harriet Georgetti.



Everiss Scholar Keita Broughton-Alp.



Sportsperson of the Year Manase-Jamez Bailey.

Yilin Ōtaki College dux for 2025

Yilin Lyu is Ōtaki College dux for 2025.

Yilin received the Fun Zone Scholarship, the Wakefields Lawyers Scholarship and the Andrew Philips Cup for dux. She also received the MI Turnbull Award for top year 13 student.

She intends to study for a bachelor of science at Waipapa Taumata Rau, the University of Auckland, majoring in biomedical science, and hopes to continue on to study medicine. To help with her studies she has received a University of Auckland top achiever scholarship of \$25,000.

Cruize Lambert was runner-up to dux. He received the XŌtaki College Alumni Trust

Award for Proxime Accessit, together with the MI Turnbull Award for second in Year 13. He also received the XŌtaki Carla Hepplethwaite Scholarship.

As with Yilin, in 2026 Cruize will be studying biomedical science at Waipapa Taumata Rau, the University of Auckland, with a view to a career in optometry. Cruize has received a University of Auckland Vakamoana Scholarship worth \$23,000.

The chairperson's award for best all-round excellence was Harriet Georgetti. She will be studying environmental science at Te Whare Wānanga o Waitaha, University of Canterbury.

This year's Everiss Scholar is Keita Broughton-Alp. Keita will spend three weeks in England and Scotland early in 2026 representing Ōtaki College. She will visit Robert Gordon's College in Aberdeen, home of the Otaki Scholar. On her return, Keita will begin a degree in law and commerce at Te Herenga Waka, Victoria University of Wellington.

The 2025 Sportsperson of the Year is Manase-Jamez Bailey, who receives an XŌtaki scholarship donated by the Philipp Family Foundation. Manase is a high-achieving basketball player whose skill and commitment has been recognised at regional, national and

international levels.

Top scholar in Year 12 this year was Giorgio Bevan; second was Pearl Glanville Hall. Top Year 11 scholar was Ailie Ironside with Elsie O'Sullivan second. All four students receive MI Turnbull awards.

Also announced at the college prizegiving was the 2026 ngā ringa where – heads of school team. Next year they will be Mau-Atua Edwards and Giorgio Bevan, with ngā ringa tauawhiawhi (deputy heads of school) Turtle Lindberg and James Auld. Ngā kaingārahu (associate heads of school) are Jeana Bevan, Pearl Glanville Hall, Arnyah McLeod and Eddy Vidulich.

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Appeal aimed at restocking foodbank

The Friends of the Ōtaki Foodbank is holding its annual appeal on Saturday, November 29, aimed at restocking the supplies much-needed in the community.

It will be delivering a flyer soon to all letterboxes in the region, outlining how donated items can be collected. The response to this appeal has always been generous, helping to ensure the foodbank has enough supplies of food and other materials right through the festive season.

Foodbank Trust chair Graeme Baumgart says the costs of running the foodbank are considerable and rising each year.

“We get some funding from community grants, but in the present economic climate these grants are becoming increasingly difficult to obtain,” he says. “The trustees thank all who have given donations throughout the year. Your support is deeply appreciated.”

Many local residents donate regularly to the foodbank, thus enabling us to meet the demand.

Several community groups also donate goods or money. A much appreciated cash donation from the Ōtaki Boating Club was received recently, as were food donations by Ōtaki College students through their mufti day. Ōtaki Promotions Group also donates takings from its Christmas Wonderland event.

Libby in business hall of fame

Ōtaki storyteller, filmmaker, producer, and director Libby Hakaraia has been honoured with induction into the Kāpiti/Horowhenua Business Hall of Fame.

At the Electra Business & Innovation Awards on October 23, Libby was recognised for her outstanding contributions to Māori storytelling, film, and the Ōtaki community.

Her journey began at just 17, when she started her broadcasting career at Radio Waikato. Her early work as a journalist sparked a passion for Māori affairs and the untold stories of her people. Over the next 14 years, she honed her skills in journalism, working both in New Zealand and abroad, alongside some of Aotearoa’s Māori broadcasting legends.

Transitioning from journalism to filmmaking, Libby founded Blue Bach Productions in 2004. Her documentaries have covered a diverse range of subjects, from the wildlife sanctuary of Kapiti Island to the European tour of Fat Freddy’s Drop. In 2012, she created the short film *The Lawnmower Men of Kapu* in her home town, featuring many of her own whānau. The film won the people’s choice award at the Wairoa Māori Film Festival and was selected for 32 film festivals worldwide.

Inspired by this success and conversations with her whānau, Libby spearheaded the creation of the Māoriland Film Festival in Ōtaki. Launched in 2014, the festival has grown to become the largest Indigenous film festival in the Southern Hemisphere, attracting visitors from around the world and delivering cultural, social, and economic benefits to the local community.

Under Libby’s leadership, the festival’s success led to the formation of the Māoriland



Libby Hakaraia at the Electra Business & Innovation Awards. Photo: Captured By Friday Photography

Charitable Trust in 2016 and the opening of the Māoriland Hub in 2017. The Hub is now a centre of excellence for Māori and Indigenous film and creativity, hosting the Toi Matarau Gallery, the Māoriland Tech Creative Hub (M.A.T.C.H), youth filmmaking programmes, performing arts, and live music and theatre.

Libby’s work has earned her international acclaim. She has served as a jury member at ImagineNATIVE, been an executive member of industry associations, and was a finalist in the 2014 Women of Influence Awards. In 2022, she was appointed a Member of the New Zealand Order of Merit, and in 2025, Māoriland Productions & Film Festival won the economic and social impact award at the Global

Production Awards in Cannes. Throughout her career, Libby has uplifted others, nurtured emerging talent, and championed kaupapa Māori storytelling. Her vision and commitment continue to open doors for Indigenous filmmakers and enrich the Ōtaki community. Her induction into the Hall of Fame is a testament to her leadership, creativity, and enduring impact.

Libby joins nine other people with strong associations to Ōtaki who have been inducted into the business hall of fame since 2008. They include John Barrett, Ruth Pretty, John Mowbray, Peter Housiaux, Carl Lutz, George Sue, Collis Blake, Selwyn Hyde, and David Pritchard.

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Whānau and staff of Kāpiti Island Nature Tours celebrate their winning of the Māori Tourism Award at the New Zealand Tourism Awards in Wellington on October 31. *Photo supplied*

Island business takes tourism award

Within the space of a week, Kapiti Island Nature Tours scooped two big awards that put it at the forefront of New Zealand’s Māori tourism business.

On October 23, the Ōtaki-based operation won the Hospitality, Entertainment and Tourism Award at the Horowhenua-Kāpiti Electra Business & Innovation Awards dinner at Southwards in Paraparaumu. The judges said the tourism business blended Māori heritage, conservation, and innovation to create unforgettable, authentic experiences.

“From global storytelling partnerships to deep local roots, they’re showing how tourism can protect and celebrate what matters most,” the commendation said. “Congratulations to Kapiti Island Nature Tours – guardians of the land, storytellers of the future.” On October 29, Kapiti Island Nature Tours (KINT) picked up the prestigious Toroa ā-uta, Toroa ā-tai Māori Tourism Award at the New Zealand Tourism Awards in Wellington. The judges commended how the tourism operator continued to operate at a high level, while maintaining a strong focus on community

outcomes, showing positive change in the communities it engaged with. “By stretching beyond its comfort zone and leveraging international connections, Kapiti Island Nature Tours exemplifies how Māori tourism can deliver outstanding experiences that are culturally authentic, community centred and globally influential.” KINT is a Barrett whānau business operating on Māori-owned land on Kapiti Island for eight generations, integrating conservation and cultural immersion into their unique tourism experience.

BRIEFS

Community Trust grants
Ōtaki Surf Life Saving Club has received a \$16,000 grant from NZ Community Trust to pay for a bi-fold shed door. In the latest funding round, Big Bang Adventure Charitable Trust, which organises the Big Bang Adventure Race, received \$8000 for event costs.

House average \$625,000
The price of an Ōtaki home in October was \$625,000, down 1.3% on a year ago, according to homes.co.nz.

Brigade attends 24 call-outs
Ōtaki Volunteer Fire Brigade attended 24 incidents in October, nine of them for medical emergencies. Four each were for rubbish, grass or scrub fires; and property fires. Three each were to attend private fire alarms; and “special services”, including to help with a tree felled in one of October’s wild winds. One call-out was to assist the Levin brigade.

Halloween with a difference
A Halloween of a different kind was held at Hadfield Hall on October 31, traditionally Halloween night. All Saints Anglican church children’s minister Laurie Ann Engels offered an alternative celebration in a safe place. Ōtaki whānau of all ages enjoyed bright lights, music a scrumptious feast. An award for best dressed were Liz Argus and daughter Kiara Arcus-Page. The evening was supported by the Ōtaki Community Board, Julita Manning of Property Brokers, Kowhai Eatery and the parishioners of All Saints Church.

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REALTY

Bag some organic, spray-free veges

Anyone keen on fresh, locally grown, organic and spray-free vegetables can tap into the Ōtaki Vege Bags co-operative.

The co-operative includes Ahoaho māra kai, a spray free māra at Ōtaki College, and Crooked Vege, an organic certified farm on Waitohu Valley Road.

ÖVB supplies vegetables to locals who can sign up as members and pick up a bag for \$37.50 (more or less depending on what works for you) from the Ahoaho māra kai at the college on Saturday mornings. It presents an opportunity for members and growers to meet. Members get to know where their kai comes from and growers get to see where it goes.

Delivery is also available for \$47.50 weekly, which covers the cost of both the veggies and delivery. And if you can't make it to the Saturday pick-up, you can collect veggies on Monday from the Crooked Vege farm

on Waitohu Valley Road. Payments are by automatic direct debiting (GoCardless).

The Ōtaki Vege Bag kaupapa started two years ago, from a belief that everyone deserved access to fresh, local kai that didn't cost the earth. It operates a pay-what-you-can or pay-it-forward vege bag kaupapa, where members can pay what works for them.

The two farms are built around community involvement and regenerative growing practices with the aim of giving back to the planet while also giving people access to locally and ethically grown kai.

The pay-what-you-can kaupapa is kept alive by people who can pay it forward, allowing for those in need to pay what they can – it's community supporting community.

The summer vege bag season starts on Saturday, November 15, and runs for 13 weeks.

■ To learn more, or to become a member, see crookedvege.co.nz/otaki-vege-bag



Tree planting tops 16,000

Ōtaki Carbon Forests is celebrating the planting of 16,304 trees.

These trees are now filtering air and water, boosting soil vitality and providing habitat for flora and fauna. A conservative formula of 4000 trees per hectare means it's the equivalent of 4 hectares of new native forest in the rohe/region.

Through ŌCF, Te Kura Kaupapa Māori o Te Rito, Hayden and Jemma Neill, Mark Minnard, and Ngāti Huia ki Katihiku Marae all planted more than 1000 trees each. Friends of the Ōtaki River planted 3654 trees. Eco corridors – wildlife passageways – are forming along the planted land between the sea and the Tararua Range, and between north Ōtaki and Te Hapua. By facilitating birds' travel, seeds are spread for better biodiversity.

Two years ago the Ōtaki Carbon Forests working group set a planting target of 32ha to help offset Ōtaki climate crisis-causing carbon emissions. With 18ha worth secured, the target is now 40ha.

"The stakes are high," says project leader Di Buchan "As a country, we're risking a lot with how we're using our land and energy. But it's important not to think we can plant our way out of this looming crisis, we have to also radically change our behaviour.

"Planting trees doesn't mean we get to keep using fossil fuels and keep polluting: we must reduce our emissions by getting our energy from clean sources, like solar and wind."

Ōtaki Carbon Forests is part of the charity Energise Ōtaki.

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Brett Keno with his Oamaru stone sculptures at Byron Brown Place.

Two happy weekends art trailing

The Kāpiti Coast Art Trail lived up to expectations with two fine weekends drawing locals and visitors to artists and galleries throughout the district.

In Ōtaki, artists reported numbers down slightly on last year, but sales were better. All said visitors were enjoying the opportunity to look at what Ōtaki artists had to offer.

The 25th annual trail was on the first two weekends of November. Ōtaki Today took the camera to capture some of the local artists.



Ruth Burke, 85, and her younger sister, Pauline Hawley, 81, were part of the Ōtaki Market Collective selling their art on Riverbank Road Extension.



Ceramacist Paula Archibald had two busy weekends at her Bell Street gallery/workshop.



Artist Finley McLuckie with one of her paintings at Kirk Street.



Father/daughter duo Rod and Charlotte Graham had their pottery out in the sunshine in Norfolk Street.

Tim Costley MP for Ōtaki



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

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Wed: 10am - 3pm
Thurs: 10am - 3pm
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kapiti@parliament.govt.nz

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Markets bring Christmas cheer



The festive spirit is set to shine in Ōtaki this December with two special markets bringing Christmas cheer.

First up is the Ōtaki Kids Christmas Market – from 10am-2p on Sunday, December 7. Shoppers will be able to explore a range of handmade gifts, delicious treats, and creative crafts – all made and sold by talented young stallholders.

Adding to the fun, families can join in the Elf on the Shelf competition. A mischievous elf will be hiding at the market, offering the chance to win festive prizes. It's the perfect day out for families to support young makers and soak up the holiday spirit.

Ōtaki Christmas Market is on from 10am-2pm on Sunday, December 21, just in time for those last-minute gifts. The market will have plenty of festive stalls, local art, food, and crafts. Shoppers can enjoy a cheerful community atmosphere – and best of all, a free photo with Santa, complete with Santa's sleigh.

Bring the whole whānau to enjoy the celebrations, support local businesses, and make the most of the holiday season.

Both markets will be held along Main Highway, Ōtaki, and are hosted by the Ōtaki Women's Community Club and the Ōtaki Market.

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We welcome gifts of tinned food, non- perishable
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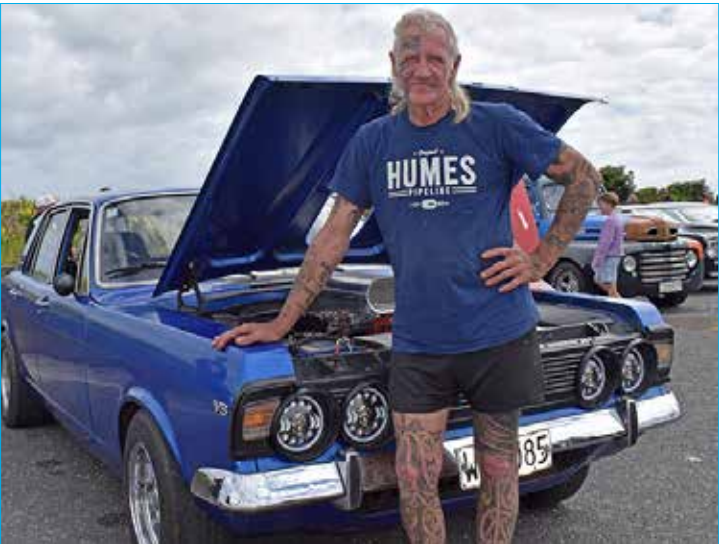
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On the Main Stage





Petrol heads old and young were at the Ōtaki Beach car park for a beach hop on Sunday, November 2. Organiser Sy Rei said it was a first for Ōtaki. “The idea got onto social media and it just grew,” he said. About 100 cars of all makes and model were on display, plus a few motorcycles.
Above: Retired Ōtaki electrician Graham McHattie with his 283cu 1957 Chevrolet imported from the United States.
Below, Shane Peck of Ōtaki with his 1973 V8 Ford Zephyr Zodiac.
Below right: A 1886 5735cc Chevrolet Corvette was one of the cars on show.

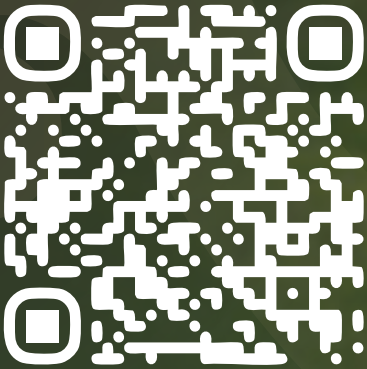


ALFIE LEEN, 7 (nearly 8, he says), tried his luck at the annual Kids Fishing weekend on November 1 and 2. His father, George, was on hand to help out. Alfie was one of more than 70 tamariki who came to the Winstone Lakes by the Ōtaki River to try their luck catching rainbow trout recently released for the weekend by the Kāpiti Fly Fishing Club. While about 60 fish were caught on the Saturday, Sunday proved disappointing. When Ōtaki Today visited about midday, only six had been caught. Veteran anglers were wary of giving a reason for the poor take – perhaps the weather conditions, murky waters, or fish stressed after their road trip from the Wednesday a few days before. As one angler said, however, the kids learned how to be patient. Those left of the several hundred trout released will help stock the larger lake.

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Ōtaki Update

November 2025



Left to right: Cr Glen Cooper (Paraparaumu), Cr Bede Laracy (Paekākāriki-Raumati), Cr Liz Koh (Districtwide), Cr Rob McCann (Districtwide), Cr Janet Holborow (Mayor), Cr Steven Botica (Waikanae), Cr Jocelyn Prvanov (Waikanae), Cr Martin Halliday (Deputy Mayor/Paraparaumu), Cr Heniti Buick (Ōtaki), Cr Hemiona Nehua Grace (Kapiti Coast Māori Ward), Cr Glen Olsen (Paraparaumu).

Meet your new elected members

Thank you to those who put their hands up to represent their community and to the **46.9 percent of eligible voters who voted during our recent local elections.**

The Kāpiti Coast District Council was officially inaugurated at their first Council meeting on Thursday 30 October.

Mayor Janet Holborow made her formal declaration of office, followed by declarations from the district's ten Councillors.

The Ōtaki Community Board's first meeting was held on Tuesday 11 November, where Community Board members made their formal declarations of office.

Elected members roles and responsibilities



Your Ōtaki Councillor for the 2025–28 triennium is Heniti Buick

Councillors help set Council direction by evaluating advice and recommendations from staff and considering them through the lens of the communities they represent. Council makes decisions and then monitor the delivery and effectiveness of those decisions.



Your Ōtaki Community Board members are Cam Butler, Rhyna Taratoa, Jackie Elliott, and Simon Black

Community Board members main role is advocacy, but they have some powers to make decisions about issues within their boundaries. For example, Boards can make submissions to Council and other statutory agencies. And in some cases, they are delegated certain decision-making powers like the control of local funds for making grants to individuals and groups for community purposes.



Learn more about Council and Community Board meetings and how to get in touch with your elected members: www.kapiticoast.govt.nz/AboutCouncil



Ōtaki wastewater upgrade making good progress

The Aotaki Street/Mill Road section of the wastewater upgrade has been completed, and our crew's focus is now on the last part of the project at the Mill Road/old State Highway 1 roundabout at Rahui Road.

The two manholes on Rahui Road are very deep, so it'll take some time and a lot of careful work to install them. Our crew will also rebuild the roundabout with new kerbs and road markings.

We expect to be working in this area until February, with a Christmas work break from 12 December to 5 January. Traffic arrangements, including detours, will change as the work progresses.

We know there's a lot of work going on in Ōtaki causing delays to travel times. We really appreciate your patience and cooperation as we work to deliver high quality infrastructure to support our current and future communities.

► [Read more about the Ōtaki wastewater gravity main projects:](http://www.kapiticoast.govt.nz/WastewaterGravityMain)
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Have you visited Ōtaki Pool lately?



While roadworks might make it appear access to Ōtaki Pool is closed, this is not the case! We're very much open to residents, pool users and visitors to the wider Haruātai Park – so drive on up and come for a swim!

- Our SPLASH! sessions run 12–4pm Saturdays and Sundays during term time and in the holidays between 1–4.30pm, offering loads of inflatable fun.
- Our Aquafitness programme provides low impact fitness to improve your overall health and fitness with classes available for all levels of fitness.
- Our pēpi time is a fantastic way for your under five-year-olds to build confidence in the water. Drop-in anytime between 9.30–11am on Wednesdays during term time.
- The splash pad is also open for summer, add our bookable poolside room and use the onsite BBQ and nearby park and make a day or party out of your visit.

► [Learn all that Ōtaki Pool has to offer:](http://www.kapiticoastaquatics.co.nz)
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HUATAU/Opinion

HE TIROHANGA HOU: HENITI BUICK

Bringing Ōtaki’s voice to the table as the gears of council turn

It’s been a full-on few weeks stepping into life as Ōtaki’s new ward councillor – and honestly, I’m loving it.

We kicked things off right here in Ōtaki with an induction focused on whanaungatanga – getting to know each other, building trust, and learning how we can work together as one team for our district.

We’ve already dived into legislation, how decisions are made, and the expectations that come with the role. There’s more training lined up through November and December, and I’m looking forward to it. Every session so far has helped me see how the gears of council actually turn – and where I can best bring our Ōtaki voice to the table.

One thing that caught my attention early on was the question of how council and iwi frameworks fit together.

The creation of a Māori ward is a big step, but it doesn’t automatically mean iwi are represented. That partnership still has to be built intentionally. It’s something I’m really interested in exploring further, alongside intensification and growth, and how these changes impact us all.

Another key learning has been how central government can instruct councils to intensify through affordable housing policy, without fully assessing the impact this has on infrastructure, health, social services, and education. It can also create real disappointment in communities



where high-density development isn’t wanted or doesn’t fit the local character.

These are complex conversations, but they’re vital ones if we’re to grow in a way that genuinely

serves our people.

Being sworn in at our first official council meeting was something I’ll never forget. My 90-year-old grandmother (AKA Gram), Janet Heniti Tare Te Heipiwhara, was there with my mum, husband, siblings, aunties, uncles, and friends – a huge moment for our whānau and one that really reminded me who I’m doing this for.

Like any new team, we’re still finding our

rhythm. Everyone brings different experiences and perspectives, and that’s a good thing.

Healthy debate makes for better decisions. One of our facilitators asked me during a break: “Have you considered writing yourself a mission statement this triennium?” I hadn’t thought about it, but it’s stuck with me ever since.

For me, it’s simple: to make sure Ōtaki’s voice is heard and reflected in every decision we make as a district – that no decision is counterproductive to the wellbeing of our people. Ōtaki voices matter, and I’ll be doing everything I can to make sure they’re front and centre in council conversations.

It’s an exciting time for our community and a privilege to serve. I can’t wait to see what we achieve together over the next three years.

■ *Heniti is the Ōtaki Ward councillor*

CITIZEN POLITICS: PHIL MALPAS

Left or Right – a collective stupidity

For generations, politics in much of the world, especially in English-speaking countries, has been dominated by the divide between Left and Right.

The origins of this demarcation are murky, yet we continue to cling to it as if it were natural law. It has become an unquestioned habit, embedded so deeply in our political culture that we seldom ask whether it still serves us.

Across nations, political parties and media outlets are locked in ideological combat, showing little effort to understand opposing views. What passes for debate has become little more than aggression and defensiveness – a cycle of attack and retreat.

That is not politics. It is perpetual opposition. And it bears little resemblance to what people actually need to survive and prosper.

This Left–Right contest ignores the most basic human requirement: cooperation. Instead of building systems that serve collective wellbeing, we maintain ones that reward conflict. When politics becomes a battle for domination rather than understanding, citizens are reduced to spectators, manipulated into outrage and fear.

Media organisations, often more interested in conflict than comprehension, reinforce this polarity. Modern propaganda – supercharged by digital algorithms – shapes perception and behaviour with a precision that past political strategists could only dream of.

It is a collective stupidity that we persist in



such a destructive pattern. And it is sustained – even celebrated – by political parties, the media, and economic systems that profit from division.

The supposed difference between Left and Right politics often comes down to one thing: money. For the Left, money has traditionally been seen as an instrument of exchange – a practical tool for trade and cooperation. For the Right, it has become a symbol of domination – a means to measure superiority and control.

This difference in perspective defines much of our dysfunction. When money is treated as a motivator for domination rather than a mechanism for interaction, societies fracture. We end up with economies that serve wealth rather than people. History shows that domination never lasts. People always find ways to overcome those who control them. The simple fact that human lives are finite ensures that no leader, no ideology, no economic system lasts forever. What matters is whether we use our brief time to strengthen domination — or to build cooperation.

If the future is to be worth living, it will not come from one side defeating the other. It will come from learning to cooperate across false divisions. The world does not need more ideology; it needs more integrity.

Our systems are not beyond repair. But they will not fix themselves. It is collective action — not political allegiance — that will determine whether we continue down the path of decay or begin to build something genuinely human.

■ *Phil is an independent writer and advocate for cooperative systems and sustainable energy.*

CITIZENS ADVICE: MARIA FYVIE

Beware buy now, pay later

The holiday season is nearly here and it’s a great time for spending time doing things we love with people we love.

It’s also a great time for spending more money than we’d planned – and plenty of businesses are trying to make it easy for us to give them our dollars. So what are your rights and obligations when it comes to buying now and paying later?

Buy now pay later (BNPL) logos like Afterpay, Zip, and Laybuy by Klarna are common at the online shopping checkout and increasingly in-store, too. They offer the ability to spread the cost of goods or services over a period of time while having already received the goods or services – essentially you’re taking out a short-term, interest-free, loan.

When you enter a BNPL agreement, the lender is required to:

- help you (the borrower) make an informed decision
- treat you fairly – at the beginning of the process as well as if you become unable to make payments
- tell you about any default fees, including how much the default fees are and when they will be charged – they can’t charge you unreasonable fees if you find you can’t keep up payments. You need to:
- read the lender’s terms and conditions – know what you’re signing up to
- keep paying the agreed amount each cycle (weekly, fortnightly or as agreed) – this means keeping an eye on your bank account balance



so you have enough money for payments to go out

- let the lender know if your circumstances change and you can no longer afford payments – the sooner the better. You can request

changes to the contract if unforeseen circumstances such as illness, loss of employment or the end of a relationship cause you hardship.

If your lender goes out of business, as some have in the past, you must maintain your payments – the debt you have still exists.

If the goods you bought when taking out the BNPL agreement are faulty, you’re still covered under consumer law. Start by getting in touch with the store you bought the goods from and have a chat to them about what you’d like fixed.

If you’re finding your BNPL payments hard to manage, or would like any budgeting help, you can contact CAB Ōtaki and we can make an appointment for you to see Levin Budget Services. They can see you in our Ōtaki office – you don’t have to go to Levin. It’s a free and confidential service available to anyone who would like help with family and household budgeting.

• *Pop in to see our Citizens Advice Bureau volunteers at 65a Main Street between 10am and 1pm Monday – Friday, call us on 364 8664 or email otaki@cab.org.nz*

■ *Maria is secretary of Kāpiti CAB*

THE ELECTORATE: TIM COSTLEY

Kāpiti – aiming to be the next major destination in New Zealand

I love the Kapiti Coast. It’s where I chose to bring up my family, and I just believe it has so much more potential to be one of New Zealand’s best regions.

We have this unique mountain-to-sea experience where you can be in the heart of the Tararua Range one minute and in the ocean an hour later. Our beaches, like Ōtaki, are safer than St Clair in Dunedin or Marine Parade in Napier, and I would argue they’re the best of the entire greater Wellington region.

We host great events, from the Kite Festival to Māoriland, the Food Fair to the Strawberry

Festival. Recently I enjoyed the Kapiti Art Trail and the Plimmerton Garden Trail. We have so much to be proud of here.

Our entire region should be pumping. Domestic tourists, visitors from overseas and day-trips from cruise ships – they should all be stopping here in Ōtaki. Ōtaki shops, cafes and restaurants should be going gangbusters, and our beaches should be a hive of activity. We are better than Dunedin or Napier.

I believe we can achieve this but we need to do more to get there.



It’s great to see council, the chamber of commerce and business networks all talking about going for growth, which is our mantra in the National Party. With some bold ideas, some strong investment, and the willingness for all decision-makers to say yes, that future is absolutely on the table.

Infrastructure is critical here. People throw that word around, but I’m talking about a functioning airport with regular services, the new electric trains National has funded that are coming to Ōtaki, and importantly Kapiti hotels for people to stay in: a destination in our own right.

Then, how bold can we be? Could we have a gondola and luge on the hills over-looking the Kapiti Coast. Someone will laugh but the near future will have electric aircraft that land on water and our sheltered Paraparaumu coast is perfect as a Cook Strait hub. Someone even suggested a purpose-built marina.

These may seem a bit far-off, but why shouldn’t we be the next major destination in New Zealand? We are worthy of it. It’s that kind of growth that will create local jobs and lift the incomes of local families. More tax and higher rates won’t do it. We need to grow, and we’re going to have to be bold in doing that.

■ *Tim is the Ōtaki electorate MP*

How disaster-prepared is your community?

New Zealand is breathtakingly beautiful, but it's also breathtakingly vulnerable.

A recent study in the *New Zealand Medical Journal* revealed that none of our 10 most commonly prescribed medicines can be manufactured locally. In the event of a global catastrophe, our pharmaceutical supply could vanish overnight.

If that sounds alarming, it might be the least of your problems if a disaster strikes your community.

JUST A THOUGHT



FRASER CARSON

Our daily lives give us much we take for granted – cooking facilities, a comfortable bed and a flushable toilet. But imagine your home flattened by an earthquake or flood. Chances are, your neighbours' homes will be, too. Roads are impassable, power lines are down, water, food, sewerage, and shelter – gone. Medical emergencies go unanswered, opportunistic crime spikes, scavenging animals roam the streets.

And help? It might be days, weeks, or even months away.

If you're among the first to receive aid, it's not because you're lucky – it's because your area is in crisis. Thousands of others will still be waiting.

Disasters don't wait and neither should we. They strike without warning and don't just



destroy infrastructure – they seriously disrupt people's lives and the social fabric.

Communities must be ready to fend for themselves, often for extended periods. Helicopters won't be buzzing overhead with supplies. Instead, it'll be your marae, your neighbours, your local leaders doing their best to help.

That's why every community needs a plan. Not just a vague idea, but a clear, actionable strategy that includes:

- long-term food and water storage
- emergency shelter options
- assembly points and agreed meeting places
- communication plans for separated families
- information about where resources can be available
- education and drills in homes, schools, and workplaces.

I've been working with several communities

where leaders are stepping up to prepare their neighbourhoods. They're not waiting for government directives – they're building resilience from the ground up.

Yes, central and local governments have contingency plans and capabilities. But top-down responses can go only so far.

Real preparedness starts with empowered communities. It's people helping people. It's local knowledge, shared resources, and collective action. That includes people thinking about how they might assist others, especially those most vulnerable – people with disabilities, children and older people.

The biggest hurdle? Apathy. Some deny the possibility of disaster. Others feel overwhelmed by the thought of its disruptive scale. But recent events – Christchurch's earthquakes, Cyclone Gabrielle, and the increasing frequency of severe weather – prove that the threat is real and

growing.

Naturally enough, the way forward is to build local resilience well before it's needed. Planning inertia can be overcome by imagining a major event will hit in six-months' time – what are all the things a community can do in only six months to be better prepared? Then, in five or 10 years, a community could be extraordinarily resilient.

Disaster preparedness isn't paranoia – it's pragmatism. It's not just about survival – it's about building community cohesion in the face of inevitability.

Disclaimer: Flightdec is working with local communities, using specialised online capabilities, alongside Hono – Māori Emergency Management Network and the Natural Hazards Inc (capability cluster).

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

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MAHI MĀRA/Gardening

It's time to plant some kumara

You've nurtured your mother kumara all spring long, and now that the shoots are 20cm or so they are ready to leave mum, and go make their own babies.

Kumara planting time is upon us!
Prepare the soil

The key to a boomer crop of kumara is warmth. The soil must be at least 18C and better yet 20C, and a long growing season – 120-150 warm days and nights.

If the soil is still too cool at your place, no worries. Fake up some heat so you can get them in the ground. I do this by making ridges to plant into, and then covering them with black plastic on top of the soil.

Hold the plastic in situ with a few lumps of wood or planks until the foliage covers it and weights it down.

If soil needs warming, get going a few days before planting. Check with your thermometer to be sure you've reached the magic 20C. If you don't have one, you'll know it's warm enough by feel – nice and cosy, or as folklore goes, you'd happily sit your bare bottom on it!

Kumara also grow well in containers, which



is awesome for small backyards, poorly drained soil, or loose soil where roots can run easily for miles. Sounds great – yay, big plants! But they just result in lots of tiny tubers, or not many good-sized ones.

Find the Goldilocks point between free draining soil to grow the crop in, but a firmer base so the roots don't run away. Ridges of compost atop a heavier soil is a great combo. So don't dig! Simply spread compost on top of your existing beds.

Plant out
Choose the strongest shoots, and plant them into your prepared bed at 40cm spacings by bending the bottom in the shape of a "j".

A bit of kelp in the base of your planting hole is a bonus. Sit the shoot in with the front of the "j" facing north. And cover in soil, right up to the base of the leaves.

Give the seedlings a water with liquid seaweed. Pile up mulch if you aren't using black plastic.

A natural slugbait is smart – slugs love young kumara shoots! Or get out at night with a torch and drop your finds into a bucket of limey or salty water, until plants are big enough to handle some nibbles.

■ 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.

Kath's new book **Homegrown Fruit: A practical guide** takes readers step-by-step to an abundant, naturally healthy home orchard, along the way teaching all the skills needed to be an epic fruit gardener. Buy via ediblebackyard.co.nz or in bookstores.



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TARATA

Forest fragrance



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

Tarata (*pittosporum eugenioides*) has yellow-green, lanceolate leaves with a strong lemon fragrance when the leaves are crushed.

The yellow and cream flowers are highly fragrant and are in flower right now. The flowers appear in spring and are followed by small green capsules that take about a year to ripen.

You have only a short window of opportunity to catch it in its full splendour, so be sure to keep an eye out for it. The flowers are an important food source for our bee population. It is abuzz with bees and other tiny insects making this rākau a wonderful addition to regenerating forests.

Traditionally, Māori used tarata for its scent and would mix the crushed leaves and resin from the trunk with hinu, or oil, from bird fat to preserve it. A simpler way was to just crush the fresh leaves and rub over the body. Such a beautiful and natural way to perfume the body and surroundings by having highly fragrant trees accessible to use.

Tarata also held medicinal value. Its resin, rich in antiseptic oils, was used to relieve toothache and freshen the breath. When combined with the sap of pūhā, it formed a chewing gum known as pia.

The sap was extracted from the pūhā stalk and leaves, allowed to harden, then mixed with tarata resin. This ancient practice of chewing natural gums for oral health was common among indigenous peoples worldwide. The gum served as a cleanser for the mouth, a thirst quencher, and sometimes even as a small meal substitute.

Tamariki would chew the gum after it had first been softened by their elders. Considered a taonga, this gum was sometimes passed down through generations – the antiseptic properties helping preserve the DNA contained within their saliva.

The resin itself is the tree’s natural band-aid, forming a protective layer over wounds in the bark while acting as an antiseptic sealant – a simple yet profound expression of nature’s healing intelligence.

For oral hygiene, you can harvest a small tarata stem and carefully shave away the outer bark until you reveal the white wood beneath. This stem can then be used as a natural breath freshener, thanks to its antiseptic and lemony oils. The scent lasts for up to an hour, and the same stem can also be used to gently perfume the skin.

The flowers, root, bark and leaves are used as anti-inflammatory, antiseptic and in rheumatic disorders.

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Navigating the move to retirement village living



Choosing where to spend your retirement is one of life’s most significant decisions. For many New Zealanders, retirement villages offer an appealing blend of independence, community, and security.

These communities are designed to evolve with residents’ needs, providing not just housing but a vibrant lifestyle. As this sector grows, the legal framework that supports it is also evolving to better protect and empower residents.

In this article we explore the essence of retirement village living and the promising legislative reforms on the horizon for the Retirement Villages Act 2003.

What is a retirement village?

Under New Zealand law, a retirement village is a place with two or more residential units providing accommodation and services or facilities predominantly for people in their retirement.

Residents typically pay a capital sum for the right to occupy a unit, which can be secured through various

means, such as a licence to occupy, a lease, or a freehold title. This structure is specifically designed to cater to the needs of older people, often including shared amenities and varying levels of care.

The appeal of a modern village

Today’s retirement villages are a far cry from the institutional models of the past. They are dynamic communities designed to foster social connection, security, and convenience. Operators are increasingly aware that the new generation of retirees has high expectations, seeking modern, well appointed homes and a wide range of facilities.

MATTERS OF LAW

CORINNA SIPPEL

Key drivers that make village life so attractive include security (many villages offer 24/7 surveillance), socialisation (strong social engagement through communal amenities and organised events), convenience (on-site access to recreational facilities, medical services and other amenities), and a continuum of care (different levels of care can be offered within the same community).

Proposed reforms

To ensure the law keeps pace with the evolving sector and the needs of its residents, the government has been reviewing the Act. Following extensive public consultation in late 2023, several priority areas have been identified.

The proposed changes aim to strengthen consumer protections and improve the day-to-day experience of living in a village. The key focus areas are:

- 1 Fairer maintenance and repair costs:** Clarifying the financial responsibility for repairing and maintaining operator-owned chattels and fixtures within residential units. This addresses a common point of confusion and dispute, aiming for a more equitable arrangement for residents.
- 2 Improved complaints and dispute resolution:** Introducing simpler, more accessible processes for residents to raise concerns. This includes refining the role of statutory supervisors and ensuring disputes are handled efficiently and fairly.
- 3 More timely repayment of capital sums:** Exploring options to require or incentivise operators to repay a resident’s capital sum more quickly after they vacate a unit. This is a significant issue for residents and their families who need the funds for their next move or to manage their affairs.

Navigating a move with confidence

Finding the right retirement village is one of the most important decisions you will make. It will affect your lifestyle, finances, and future security.

While it marks an exciting new chapter, it also involves navigating a complex legal framework designed to protect you. A legal team like such as that at Wakefields is expertly positioned to guide you through this process, ensuring you are well informed and advising on the best way to protect your interests.

The goal is to remove the legal stress and uncertainty from the process, allowing you to focus on choosing the community that’s right for you and ensuring a positive experience.



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■ Corinna is a solicitor at Wakefields Lawyers – 04 9780 3600 or info@wakefieldslaw.com

HAUORA-PŪTAIO /Health-Science

DNA contamination – let’s look at the science

There has been considerable talk on social media and websites that the Covid-19 mRNA vaccines are contaminated with excessive amounts of undisclosed DNA that could integrate into our DNA and cause cancer.

This has moved well past casual chatter among people “doing their own research”. The problem has been raised in the US Senate, and Joseph Ladapo, Florida’s State Surgeon General, has called for halting the use of mRNA Covid-19 vaccines, citing concerns about the DNA contamination.

These allegations of dangerous levels of DNA

HEALTH SCIENCE



DR STEVE HUMPHRIES

contamination have been widely promoted by anti-vaccine groups without any critical scrutiny. It’s time to look at the science.

The issue traces back to 2023, when scientist Kevin McKernan released findings that purported to show

DNA levels in mRNA vaccine vials orders of magnitude higher than the regulatory limit of 10 nanograms (10 billionths of a gram) per dose.

In fact, using the gold-standard method of quantitative PCR, McKernan’s own data confirmed that every vial he tested met regulatory standards. It wasn’t until he used Qubit fluorometry as a follow-up test that he observed the high DNA concentrations.

But, as researchers were quick to point out, the Qubit test will give falsely high DNA readings in the presence of a large excess of mRNA – such as you find in mRNA vaccines. In these situations, best practice calls for eliminating the mRNA enzymatically before conducting the Qubit test, but that standard protocol was not followed.

Why was such an obviously flawed test result reported?

As some researchers observed, the McKernan report appeared to be written not for the scientific community, but for an anti-vaccine audience to spread fear and doubt about the vaccines – which would explain McKernan’s appearances on Rumble, and anti-vaccine platforms such as Reality Check Radio (RCR) and New Zealand Doctors Speaking Out with Science (NZDSOS).

Pfizer synthesises mRNA from a DNA template, then enzymatically breaks down and removes the DNA, so any remaining DNA fragments fall below established safety limits. Decades of research and manufacturing have established regulatory safety thresholds and reliable tests for residual DNA – including other vaccines (hepatitis B and HPV), insulin, anti-cancer drugs such as Herceptin, interferons, and many health and beauty ingredients such as amino acids, vitamins, hyaluronic acid and Coenzyme Q10.

Before release, every batch of Pfizer vaccine undergoes testing for impurities, including assays for residual DNA, and results are verified by independent testing laboratories around the world to ensure regulatory compliance.

Appearing to pander to an anti-vaccine audience, McKernan describes the residual DNA he found in terms of billions of molecules per vaccine dose. A large number that sounds scary – as I believe it’s intended to – but that amount of DNA is miniscule. Most people aren’t used to thinking in numbers on a molecular scale: for instance, I tested our Otaki drinking water for nitrate levels last week and in a glass of water detected 16 million trillion molecules of nitrate – in other words, meets safety standards with room to spare.

Some other labs have also reported elevated levels of DNA in mRNA vaccines, but they have also been criticised for their flawed sample



Image by spencerbdavis1, Pixabay

preparation and analytical methods. A flawed study doesn’t provide credible, trustworthy data, and neither does multiple flawed studies.

A systematic review found that repeating their flawed methodology did indeed result in high levels of measured DNA, but those results disappeared when the samples were re-analysed using proper analytical protocols. Tellingly, actual vaccine batches previously reported to contain high levels of DNA were, on reanalysis using correct procedures, found to be within regulatory limits.

In sum, there is no credible evidence vaccine batches exceeded residual DNA thresholds, while extensive reliable data confirms they remained within the approved regulatory limits. But, of course, anti-vaccine information sources focus only on the flawed studies that fit their agenda.

Pharmaceutical companies and health authorities do need to be held to account, but factual evidence-based criticism is required – not anti-vaccine misinformation.

Reports of high levels of residual DNA in the Covid mRNA vaccines are combined with anti-vax claims that this DNA can integrate into our own DNA and cause cancer. But there is no peer-reviewed evidence demonstrating that this “insertional mutagenesis” occurs with Covid-19 vaccines, and the likelihood of such an event is considered so remote that experts deem it biologically implausible.

Anti-vaccine rhetoric poses a serious threat as it erodes trust in scientific consensus, undermines public health and confidence in vaccines. Vaccine hesitancy is increasing in New Zealand, immunisation rates are falling, and the consequences are inevitable; there will be more vaccine-preventable illness – such as measles – and increased burden on our health care services.

Societies that follow the science will always do better than those that don’t.

■ 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.

Measles concern

Health NZ is concerned about a recent outbreak of measles, urging people to check their immunisation status.

It’s a serious, highly contagious illness that can affect adults and children. Immunisation is the best protection against measles. When given from 12 months of age, two doses of the measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine protects about 99 percent of people from getting measles.

Health NZ urges people to contact their healthcare provider to check on their immunisation status (see info.health.nz/measles-immunity or call the Vaccination Helpline free on 0800 28 29 26).

Immunisation clinic schedules can be found at info.health.nz/immunisations/immunisation-clinics. Many clinics don’t require bookings or enrolment. You can also call your GP to make an immunisation appointment, and many pharmacies offer walk-in immunisation services.

- Measles symptoms can include:
- an illness that begins with high fever (over 38 C), cough, runny nose, and sore red eyes (conjunctivitis)
 - a rash, beginning on the face and gradually spreading down the body to the arms and legs, which can last up to a week.



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Let’s stop confusing equality with excellence

Let’s be honest: New Zealand keeps pulling the wrong lever.

We talk a lot about equity, fairness, and giving everyone a fair go. Those are noble ideals – part of who we are.

But somewhere along the way, we started confusing equality of opportunity with equality of outcome. We began believing that lifting the minimum wage was a silver bullet for progress.

It isn’t.
Not on its own.
Not even close.

Yes, raising the minimum wage can improve living standards for some workers, especially in a high-cost country like ours. But those increases come with real trade-offs:

- costs rise for business
- margins get squeezed
- prices go up for consumers
- employers automate or reduce hours.

And here’s the uncomfortable truth: most of those increases aren’t driven by higher productivity – they’re driven by regulation.

That’s not wealth creation. It’s wealth redistribution. And when wage growth outpaces productivity growth, the system starts to strain.

The real problem: Our productivity crisis

We don’t talk about this enough, but New Zealand has one of the worst productivity records in the developed world. The Productivity Commission has said it plainly: “We work harder but produce less than most of our OECD peers.”

This isn’t a short-term issue, it’s a 40-year trend. Our economy rewards sameness over scale, consumption over investment, and compliance over innovation. We’ve relied on

YOUR BUSINESS



CHRIS WHELAN

population growth, property inflation, and redistributive policies, while neglecting the true engine of prosperity: productivity.

What productivity actually means

Productivity isn’t about working harder, it’s about creating more value per hour, per person, per dollar invested.

When productivity rises:

- wages rise naturally
- businesses grow sustainably

- people gain dignity, not dependency
- the nation becomes globally competitive.

Productivity is what allows fairness to exist sustainably. Equity without productivity is sentiment without substance.

The mindset shift we need

This is not just an economic issue, it’s cultural. We’ve become too comfortable blaming the system and too reliant on government to fix what only personal responsibility, innovation, and leadership can.

Productivity starts with us.

It’s the owner who invests in better systems.

The employee who takes initiative.

The leader who lifts standards.

Every act of excellence compounds. Every improvement adds value. That’s what builds nations – not subsidies, slogans, or shortcuts.

We can’t keep rewarding mediocrity and expecting excellence to follow. Fairness should never mean lowering the bar. It should mean helping everyone reach it.

Excellence is not elitism

Some hear “meritocracy” and think “elitism.”

Our economy rewards sameness over scale, consumption over investment, and compliance over innovation. We’ve relied on population growth, property inflation, and redistributive policies, while neglecting the true engine of prosperity: productivity.

But that’s wrong. A true meritocracy is about performance, not privilege. It says if you work smarter, create more value, and deliver results, you deserve to get ahead.

That’s not inequality. That’s justice.

Excellence doesn’t exclude people. It invites them higher.

But it requires courage – the courage to set standards, to measure results, to tell the truth about what works and what doesn’t. We’ve become too afraid of standing out, too polite to demand performance. Yet every strong society has been built on people who refuse to settle for average.

A new story about success

If we want a thriving, future-ready New Zealand, we need a new story about success.

One that celebrates freedom over dependency, productivity over politics, and value creation over regulation.

Here’s what that looks like:

- 1 Stop treating the minimum wage as strategy. It’s a patch, not a plan.
- 2 Invest in business capability. Especially in SMEs, where most Kiwis work.
- 3 Lift capital investment per worker. Smarter tools, better tech, higher output.
- 4 Reward value creation, not compliance. Simplify red tape that chokes innovation.
- 5 Reframe fairness. True fairness is giving everyone the chance to rise - not pulling everyone down to the same level.

When we shift the conversation from “helping people survive” to “equipping people to thrive”, everything changes.

Equity matters, but productivity sustains it

Equity without productivity is like compassion without competence – heartfelt but hollow.

If we want real fairness, we have to build stronger foundations. That means cultivating responsibility, mastery, and merit – not dependency, complacency, and entitlement.

We can’t build a first-world lifestyle on third-world productivity. If we want higher wages, better opportunities, and lasting prosperity, we must create more value – not just move it around.

It’s time to stop papering over the cracks.

It’s time to rebuild the foundation.

Because the true path to fairness is not regulation – it’s responsibility.

Not minimum standards, but maximum performance.

And that starts with us.

■ Chris Whelan is a business and leadership coach based in the Wellington region, helping ambitious business owners who’ve built something solid take it to the next level. Visit www.chriswhelancoaching.com

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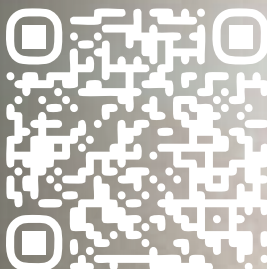
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This series of profiles on local businesses is supported by Land Matters and Pritchard Civil



The team behind Ōtaki-based Gardner Homes.

Photo supplied

Gardner building growth and community

“We believe in open communication, teamwork, and delivering on our promises – values that have helped us build long-lasting relationships with clients, suppliers and local trades.”

– Kylie Gardner

Gardner Homes takes pride in being a locally owned and operated building company based in Ōtaki that delivers exceptional homes, large-scale renovations and commercial projects throughout the Kāpiti Coast and Horowhenua regions.

What began as a small local team with a passion for building quality homes has grown into a trusted and respected company known for its craftsmanship, integrity, and community values. “Our strength lies in our people,” says director Kylie Gardner. The Gardner Homes team is made up of dedicated builders, project managers, sub-contractors and support staff who take genuine pride in every project. “We believe in open communication, teamwork, and delivering on our promises – values that have helped us build long-lasting relationships with clients, suppliers and local trades.” Behind the scenes, Gardner’s success is driven by proven systems and efficient processes that keep every project running

smoothly from start to finish. “We understand that building or renovating can be one of the biggest investments our clients make, which is why we’ve developed structured systems to manage timelines, budgets and quality control with precision and transparency,” Kylie says. “This ensures every build runs efficiently, without compromising on craftsmanship or client experience.” She says Gardner Homes don’t just build houses, but also help to build trust and pride in the local community. “Whether it’s a new home, high-value renovation, or a commercial project, our team combines expert skill, efficient systems, and a commitment to excellence to deliver results that stand the test of time.” Kylie and husband Hadley Gardner began the Gardner Homes journey in Ōtaki 20 years ago – in 2005 – steadily building it into the respected regional building company it is today. ■ For more information on Gardner Homes visit www.gardnerhomes.net.nz

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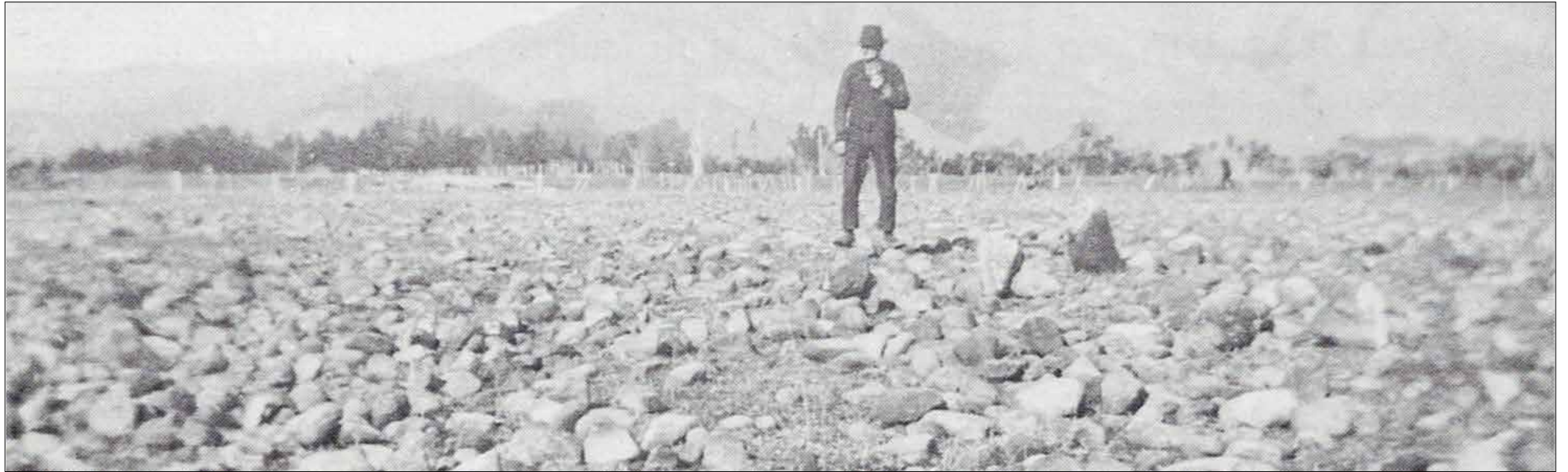
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HĪTŌRIA/History



George Maughan in a field of river stones at Hautere during the Depression. George was foreman of the 80 men whose relief work was to clear the stones from the land. The stones, which became known as “Hautere turnips”, can still be seen today in the form of stone walls and pig-pen structures. *Photo courtesy of Ōtaki Heritage*

When out-of-work men cleared Hautere

This last month the weather was more turbulent across the country than usual. And, despite the red warnings, workers in Aotearoa New Zealand were walking off the job, taking part in the biggest strike this nation has seen for some time.

The economic climate is one of gloom, rising unemployment and living costs, as well as being at the mercy of the toying with international exports and inflation by one of the largest influences internationally. The threat of another world war is not out of the question, either.

And we have been here before. Numerous recessions have occurred in my lifetime, but thankfully, not the Depression that was the result of a very similar chain of events in my parents' generation.

The Depression in the 1930s in this country was a brutal one. Nowhere in the country was spared, including Ōtaki. Triggered by the 1929 stockmarket crash in the United States, by 1930 the economy here was shattered. Unemployment rose steeply, no one wanted our goods, and imports became unobtainable and unaffordable.

For Ōtaki and the surrounding regions, jobs on the farms and market gardens, and in services that supported them, bore the brunt of the steep decline. Relief work was available for some, but not all, and that work was backbreaking.

Two relief schemes were established here, both in the Te Horo area. In her article in the 1979 issue of the Ōtaki Historical Society's journal (issue 2), Kath Shaw notes:

“When export prices dropped and farmers' income suffered as a consequence, a chain reaction set in that affected everyone in Ōtaki. Business declined and jobs grew scarce. By 1931 there was no seasonal work available.”



OUR HERITAGE

NICKY TREADWELL

At that time there was no unemployment benefit and as demand grew, various relief committees were set up to support those who could find some work, with subsidies for their employers. This included work for Ōtaki Borough Council, which used the labour to “construct the beach frontage with spades, shovels and wheelbarrows, to plant 8000 trees at the Health Camp and to raise a stopbank at the Ōtaki River by means of sand bags”.

But it wasn't just physical hardship faced by those men. Kath Shaw also notes: “For a man accustomed to pay his way, a woman trying to feed and clothe her children on a pittance, there was a feeling of degradation and isolation, even when they realised that their situation was shared with thousands of people from all walks of life, skilled tradesmen, teachers, lawyers, doctors and businessmen.”

One of the relief camps was in Shield's Flat, a narrow elevated alluvial terrace about 13km up Ōtaki Gorge Road in the Hautere area. Now an historic reserve established by the Department of Conservation, the area was once used for milling and farming. A significant feature of the reserve is the complex of stone walls and pig-pen structures the relief workers built.

They were built by hand from stones washed down the Ōtaki River that had scattered, over time, across the area. The walls were constructed with smaller stones in the centre, with larger stones creating the “shell” of the structures. The fact these structures are still intact is testament not just to the design, but also to the hard, grinding and ongoing work of the men.

Lower down the gorge is Duggan's Bush, one of the remnants of the original vegetation covering the river terrace that forms part of Greater Wellington Regional Council's Key Native Plan for the area. In private ownership, the remnant is one of four

within proximity to each other on the south side of the river. The others – Tom's or Ainslee Bush, Lumsden Bush and Davis's Bush – are slightly farther away from the river. Within the Duggan's Bush remnant there are piles and walls of stones collected and stacked by relief workers.

The Hautere Work Scheme provided employment to about 80 men who were housed in tents nearby on a site on the Old Hautere Road. The men, who were paid ten shillings for a six-day week, eventually cleared an area of 3000 acres of local farmers' land over several years. The farmers themselves were charged per cubic yard of land cleared of stones that became known as “Hautere Turnips” in the process.

It's believed that the piles have remained owing to the geological nature of the stones. While some were used for other purposes such as drainage, as well as for seawalls and river groynes, the greywacke composition was too soft for roading or other infrastructural purposes. So, they remain as memorials to a difficult time and the heartbreaking circumstances in which they were created.

Despite the inclination of some politicians, workers here have not yet descended to breaking rocks to earn a pittance. But there are parallels in the fall-out of recent global and national policies. The imposition of tariffs on our exports, and our reliance on the global markets, threaten producers in this country. The attacks on the public sector sees our once glowing social support agencies crumbling.

Deliberate strategies threaten peace and democracy across the world and rumblings of another world war become louder. The climatic turbulence sends rocks down our rivers and once again, uncertainty in our minds. The rock walls have stayed secure and strong – hopefully we will, too.

■ Nicky is a former journalist with an interest in local history.

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ŌTAKI HERITAGE

PUTANGA | VOLUME 46: 2025

2025 Journal published

The latest in the long-running series of Ōtaki Historical Journals will be launched at 2pm on Sunday (November 16) at Ōtaki Museum.

It is the 46th journal, produced previously by the Ōtaki Historical Society and more recently by Ōtaki Heritage, which is the result of a merger of the society and Ōtaki Museum Heritage Trust.

The stories in the 2025 journal have been written, photographed and compiled by the people of the Ōtaki community.

For the first time, two articles have been published in both te reo Māori and English. Piripi Walker wrote one article, about 50 years of Whakatupuranga Rua Mano / Generation 2000.

Students of Te Wharekura o Te Rito wrote the other article, interviewing their grandparents about their memories of the Mangapouri Stream.

Journal editor Sarah Maclean says there's a lot of talent in the area.

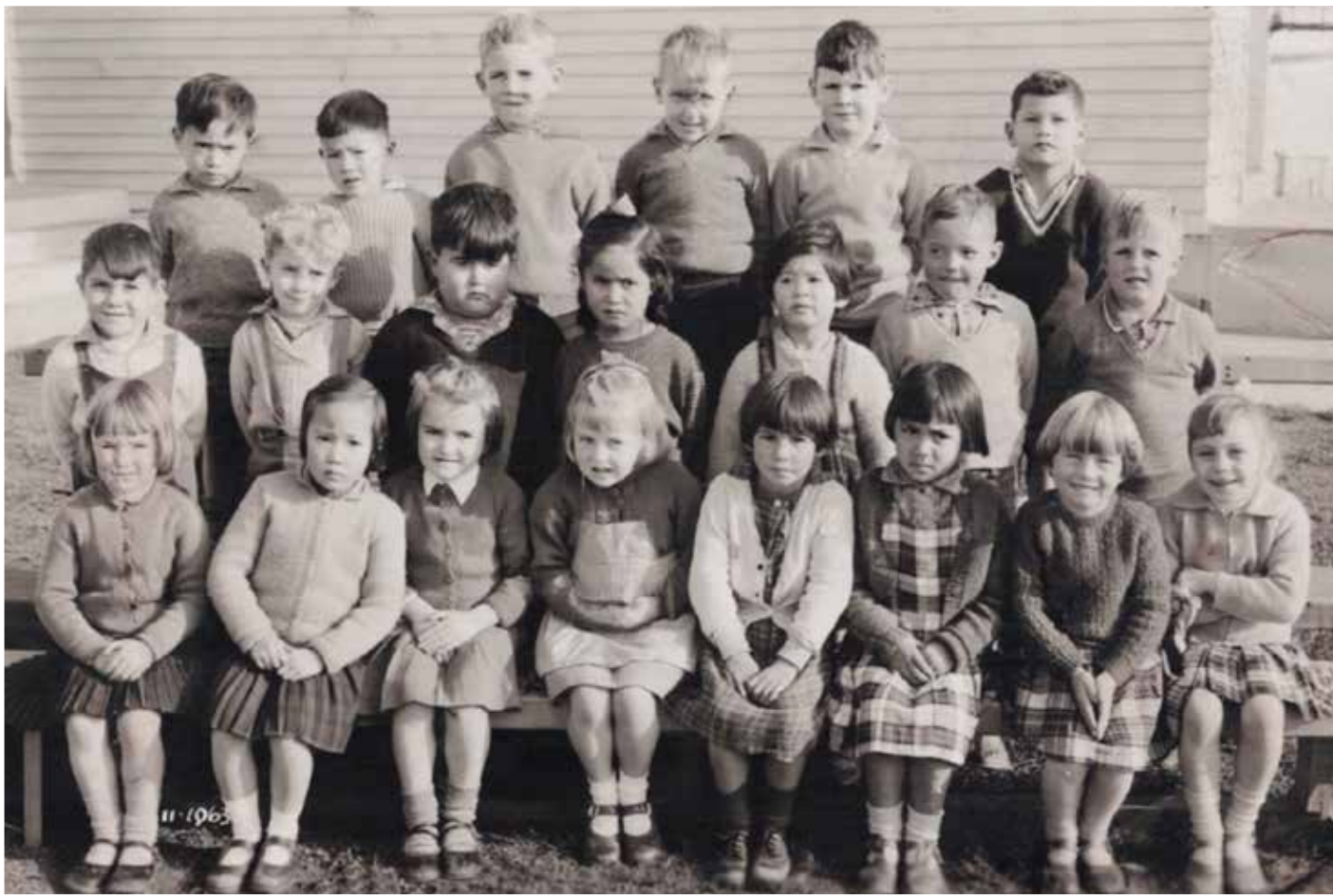
“This journal highlights some of it, along with stories from long ago and not so long ago,” she says. “It's been the same process since the very first journal back in 1978.

“All this benefits those who want to find out about their whānau and families, or who want to research how people lived and worked in the past.”

Sarah says Ōtaki Heritage gets enquiries about stories in the journals from all over the world.

The 2025 Ōtaki Historical Journal is available at Books & Co, Ōtaki PostShop, Ōtaki Bookshop, and Ōtaki Museum, and can be bought online through otakiheritage.org.nz

ŌTAKI SCHOOL 1963



ŌTAKI SCHOOL 1963: These 5-year-olds are some of the students born in 1958 who went through primary school and college together. Some of them will be at the reunion organised by Roy Chung (see story below). Can you fill in the gaps? We don't know anyone in the back row; only Peter Dawson (far left) in the middle row; and Mary Heney (far left) and Andrea Cootes (far right) in the front row.

Class of 1976 gather for reunion

Roy Chung, who was head boy at Ōtaki College in 1976, is organising a reunion of classmates, who started their school life in 1963 as 5-year-olds.

The event will be in Ōtaki on Saturday, March 7, 2026. Former college teachers and partners have also been invited.

Roy says about 130 former classmates and staff have indicated they will attend the all-day event. Many are coming from overseas.

The day's activities will begin at the Rāhui Rugby Club with a double-decker, electric air-conditioned bus that will take attendees to Ōtaki College. They will be welcomed by principal Andy Fraser after a pōwhiri by kaumātua Rawiri Rikihana.

Current principals of the five primary schools that were the feeder schools into the Ōtaki College have also been invited to attend.

Andy will host a morning tea followed by a tour of the college, showing how it has evolved during the past five decades.

A picnic lunch on the lawn in front of the Pavilion at Ōtaki Beach will follow, weather permitting. Then there will be visits to St Peter Chanel, Ōtaki, Manakau, Waitohu, and Te Horo schools, before ending the tour back at the Domain.

A pōwhiri will open the dinner at the Rāhui clubrooms, and 1976 college dean Bruce Farthing will conduct a roll call of former students and teachers. Roy Chung will MC the evening and present a slide

show to commemorate past students and teaching staff who have since died. There will be speeches and toasts before dinner, then a quick quiz. Local band OTC will play from 10pm until close at 1am.

On Sunday, Fiona Johnstone will host a drinks and nibbles at her Atkinson Avenue home, offering a further opportunity to reminisce.

A class reunion book will be produced that can be ordered online to commemorate the occasion. Photos of the weekend's events, plus photos of old classes, sports events and camps will be available for people to download.

■ For more information, contact roy_chung@yahoo.com



Ōtaki River entrance tides November 12 - December 10

<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 12 NOV	03:55	09:58	16:30	22:49	-
THU 13 NOV	05:03	11:08	17:41	23:56	-
FRI 14 NOV	06:13	12:20	18:47	-	-
SAT 15 NOV	-	00:59	07:18	13:25	19:43
SUN 16 NOV	-	01:53	08:12	14:18	20:29
MON 17 NOV	-	02:39	08:57	15:02	21:10
TUE 18 NOV	-	03:20	09:36	15:42	21:47
WED 19 NOV	-	03:59	10:12	16:18	22:23
THU 20 NOV	-	04:35	10:46	16:53	22:58
FRI 21 NOV	-	05:10	11:19	17:28	23:33
SAT 22 NOV	-	05:44	11:53	18:03	-
SUN 23 NOV	00:09	06:19	12:28	18:40	-
MON 24 NOV	00:47	06:56	13:04	19:20	-
TUE 25 NOV	01:27	07:34	13:45	20:04	-
WED 26 NOV	02:12	08:17	14:31	20:53	-
THU 27 NOV	03:02	09:06	15:24	21:48	-
FRI 28 NOV	03:59	10:02	16:25	22:46	-
SAT 29 NOV	05:00	11:05	17:27	23:46	-
SUN 30 NOV	06:03	12:11	18:28	-	-
MON 1 DEC	-	00:47	07:05	13:14	19:26
TUE 2 DEC	-	01:45	08:05	14:13	20:22
WED 3 DEC	-	02:41	09:01	15:09	21:17
THU 4 DEC	-	03:35	09:54	16:02	22:10
FRI 5 DEC	-	04:28	10:45	16:54	23:04
SAT 6 DEC	-	05:18	11:35	17:46	23:57
SUN 7 DEC	-	06:08	12:25	18:38	-
MON 8 DEC	00:50	06:58	13:15	19:30	-
TUE 9 DEC	01:42	07:47	14:06	20:23	-
WED 10 DEC	02:35	08:37	14:59	21:17	-

GOT OLD PHOTOS?

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

FROM NGĀ TAONGA SOUND & VISION ARCHIVES

Stage Challenge – a blast from the past

Ngā Taonga Sound & Vision, the audiovisual archive of Aotearoa New Zealand, has recently added recordings of *Stage Challenge* performances to the online collection, courtesy of Guru Entertainment Ltd. *Stage Challenge* was a highly popular annual performing arts competition for secondary school students which began in the 1990s and ran for 25 years.

One of the videos, *Stage Challenge 2003 Programme 6*, includes a performance by Kāpiti College themed around the classic *Where's Wally?* children's puzzle books. You can watch this and other *Stage Challenge* performances by visiting ngataonga.org.nz and searching for "Stage Challenge". Tip: select the filter "View or listen online now".



RIGHT: A screengrab from *Stage Challenge 2003 Programme 6*, courtesy of Guru Entertainment Ltd. Collection ref. TZIP276936.



TAMARIKI FUN

Fat Bear Week

A fun and furry competition called Fat Bear Week kicked off at Katmai National Park in Alaska recently, celebrating brown bears as they prepare for their long winter hibernation. Each autumn, rangers at the park watch as the bears eat lots of salmon to gain the weight they need to survive the cold months. Fat Bear Week invites people around the world to vote online for the bear they believe best shows off the size, strength, and spirit of true hibernation success. Top contenders this year included 32 Chunk, a huge male making a comeback after an injury, and 128 Grazer, the reigning champion who has won the crown two years in a row. Fat Bear Week began in 2014 as a one-day event with just 1,700 votes. It is now a worldwide celebration, with more than 1.4 million people from 60 countries voting last year. You can support the park by donating to The Otis Fund, named after the first Fat Bear Week champion. Otis once caught 42 fish in an hour, and is remembered fondly as a true legend.



Ferry Aratere to be recycled

After 26 years of service, the Interislander ferry Aratere is going to India to a specialist ship recycling yard. The ferry's last crossing of Cook Strait was in August, and is being retired to make way for two new ferries which arrive in 2029. KiwiRail says the Aratere was not suitable for other ferry operators, due to its age, and the extensive work it required to be used elsewhere. Instead, it will be carefully taken apart and recycled in an environmentally responsible way. KiwiRail has worked with New Zealand's Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) to make sure the process is safe. Once the ferry is handed over, the new owner will sail it to India, with EPA still reviewing the final journey. Parts from the Aratere, like furniture and equipment, have already been reused on other ferries, and anything still in good condition has been donated.



PLANET: WORD MAKER ANSWERS from above

6-letter words: 1. platen 5-letter words: 2. leapt 3. lepta 4. palet 5. panel 6. paten 7. penal 8. petal 9. plane 10. plant 11. plate 12. pleat 13. plena 14. tepal 15. laten 16. leant. 4-letter words: 17. leap 18. lept 19. nape 20. neap 21. pale 22. pane 23. pant 24. pate 25. peal 26. pean 27. peat 28. pelt 29. pent 30. plan 31. plat 32. plea 33. tape 34. tepa 35. ante 36. elan 37. etna 38. lane 39. late 40. lean 41. lent 42. neat 43. tael 44. tale 45. teal 46. tela. 3-letter words: 47. alp 48. ape 49. apt 50. lap 51. nap 52. pal 53. pan 54. pat 55. pea 56. pen 57. pet 58. tap 59. ale 60. alt 61. ane 62. ant 63. ate 64. eat 65. eta 66. lat 67. lea 68. let 69. nae 70. net 71. tae 72. tan 73. tea 74. tel 75. ten. 2-letter words: 76. pa 77. pe 78. ae 79. al 80. an 81. at 82. el 83. en 84. et 85. la 86. na 87. ne 88. ta 89. te.



SKATEPARK AND MINI ROAD

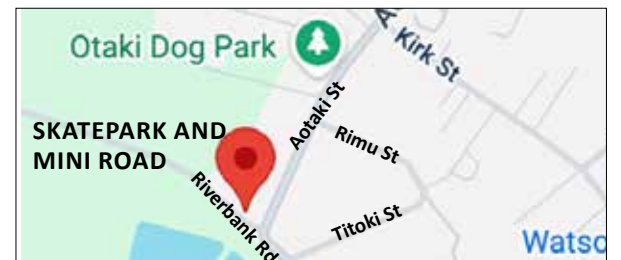
Corner of Aotaki Street and Riverbank Road, Ōtaki. There's a small off-street area to park in or you can park on Aotaki Street. Suitable for all ages

Set away from both the beach and town centre, this is a fully fenced, quiet skatepark and mini road system perfect for a range of ages that want to practise their wheel skills without going onto the 'real' road!

The mini road system is a series of roads with a roundabout, speed hump, road signs and junctions. Great for scooters, balance bikes, real bikes or ride ons.

It's right next to a small skatepark (within the same fenced off area so fine for observing a child at both the mini road and skatepark). There are ramps of differing gradients and rails for practising skateboard and scooter skills on.

There are also two pieces of playground equipment for those who don't have or don't want to be on wheels. There's a spinning pole and climbing structure. There's some grass to sit on (handily elevated so you could potentially see children in different parts of this small area), a couple of picnic tables and a toilet.



CADE'S ROADWORKS WORD SEARCH

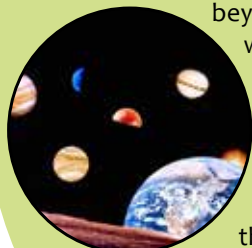
R U G Z B T U N W O C K S S
Y O F L Y R A U J A K C P R
A A T V D Q E R R D K U E I
H X J A B Y M S M L Y R E A
O M T K V E F U Q A V T D P
E N O C D A O R W F C P L E
D O W K D L C E V B N K I R
T A C B X I V X J M D F M Q
I P B C N I D J E G G I I S
I C I K G A S P H A L T T B
T R A F F I C C O N T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



asphalt	cars	excavator
footpath	giveaway	repairs
roadcone	roadmarking	speedlimit
tarmac	trafficcontrol	truck

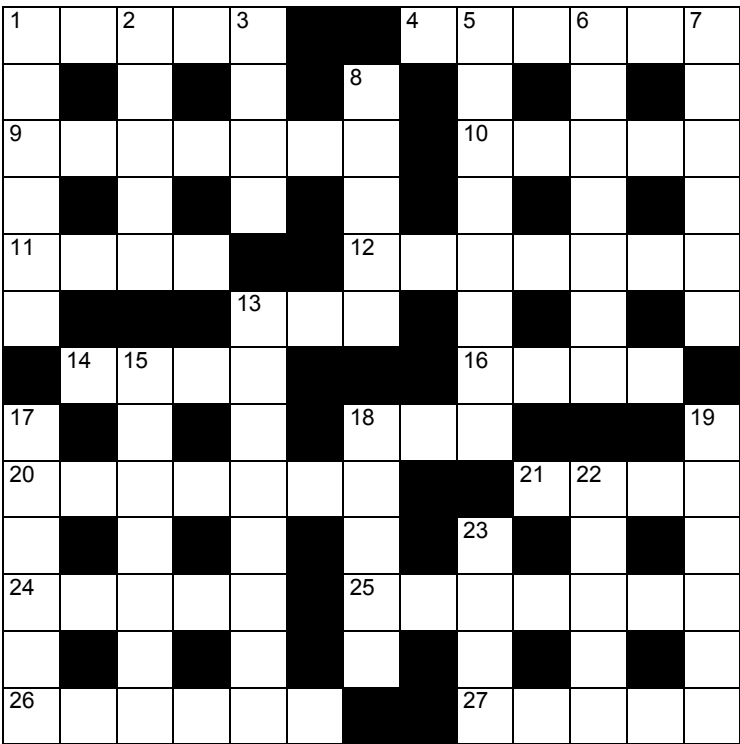
Nasa finds 6000th exoplanet

Nasa has found its 6000th exoplanet – a planet that orbits a star outside our Solar System. This is a huge milestone in space exploration, showing just how many worlds exist far beyond Earth. The first exoplanet found in 1995, was named 51 Pegasi b, and is similar to Jupiter. Since then, scientists have been finding new planets at a fast pace, just three years ago, they had found 5000! Exoplanets are very hard to spot because stars are so much brighter. More than 8000 possible exoplanets are still waiting to be confirmed. Nasa says the search is far from over. The next goal is to find a planet like Earth, one that could possibly support life.



"Each planet teaches us something new," said Nasa's Dawn Gelino. "And maybe, one day, we'll find a world just like ours."

THE CROSSWORD #NZ1954E (answers below)



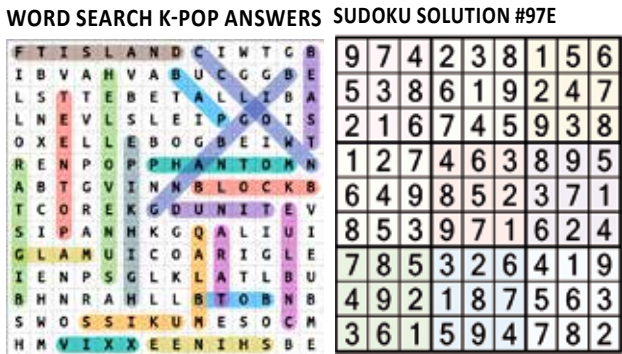
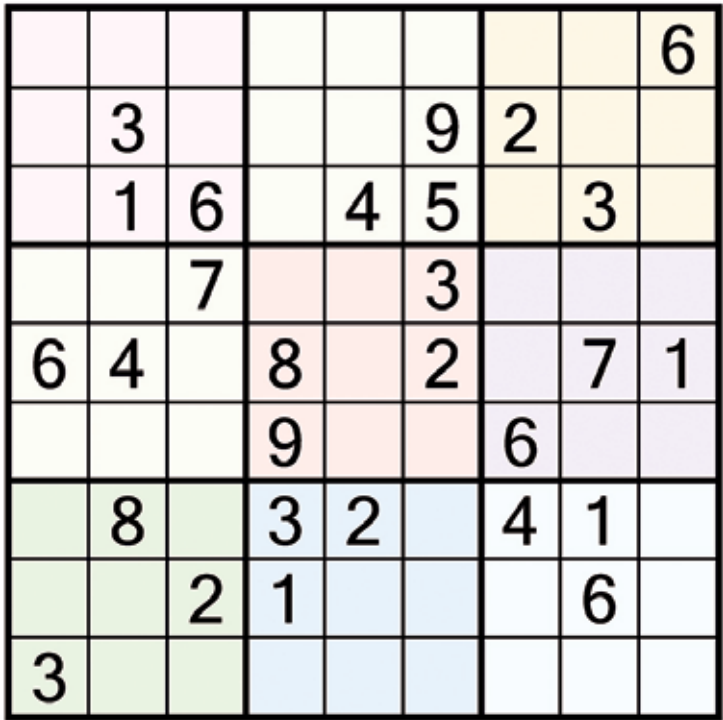
ACROSS

1. Slightly sticky (5)
4. Set to (6)
9. Creature on former 5c coin (7)
10. Deduce (5)
11. Impetuous (4)
12. Outside NZ, it's a drop scone (7)
13. Annual illness (3)
14. Resound (4)
16. Christchurch suburb, home to the University of Canterbury (4)
18. An amusing type (colloq) (3)
20. Electric transport popular in NZ cities (7)
21. Badly behaved child (inf) (4)
24. Theatre attendant (5)
25. Useless person (colloq) (2,5)
26. Snare (6)
27. Golfer's assistant (5)

DOWN

1. Native tree which was used for fence posts and railway sleepers (6)
2. School group (5)
3. A school's annual intake (4)
5. Popular term for a 1980s economic strategy by the Muldoon government (5,3)
6. Sprouting pea (7)
7. Martial art (6)
8. Northland town that has held a Highland games at New Year for 150 years (5)
13. One of NZ's largest companies (8)
15. Handcraft (7)
17. Shrewd (6)
18. Flying device (5)
19. One level of a building (6)
22. Fast-moving section of a river (5)
23. Stylish (4)

SUDOKU PUZZLES thepuzzlecompany.co.nz
EASY #97E 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 #1954E ANSWERS Across: 1. Tacky, 4. Attack, 9. Tuatara, 10. Infer, 11. Rash, 12. Pikelet, 13. Flu, 14. Echo, 16. Iam, 18. Dag, 20. Scooter, 21. Brat, 24. Usher, 25. No hopper, 26. Entrap, 27. Caddy. **DOWN:** 1. Totara, 2. Class, 3. Year, 5. Think Big, 6. Alfalfa, 7. Karate, 8. Waipu, 13. Fonterra, 15. Crochet, 17. Astute, 18. Drone, 19. Storey, 22. Rapid, 23. Chic.

TEST YOUR GRAMMAR QUIZ How well do you know your grammar? Answers bottom of page.

- The first letter of the first word in a sentence should be: a. a large letter b. a capital letter.
- The order of a basic positive sentence is: a. Subject-Verb-Object b. Verb-Object-Subject.
- Every sentence must have a subject and: a. a verb b. an object.
- A plural subject needs: a. a singular verb b. a plural verb.
- When two singular subjects are connected by or, use: a. a singular verb b. a plural verb.
- Adjectives usually come: a. before a noun b. after a noun.
- If an opinion-adjective and a fact-adjective are used before a noun, which comes first? a. a fact-adjective b. an opinion-adjective.
- In American English, a collective noun is more often treated as: a. singular, or b. plural.
- The terms "its" and "it's" have: a. the same meaning b. different meanings.
- Which is correct? a. You're looking good, or b. Your looking good.

WORD SEARCH: K-POP educate yourself!
answers at left

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

HELLO
VENUS
CNBLUE
TEEN TOP
D UNIT
BTOP
C-CLOWN

PHANTOM
GLAM
U-KISS
FT ISLAND
EPIK HIGH
BIG STAR
T-ARA

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TĒNĀ KOUTOU KATOA
We extend our heartfelt thanks and aroha to everyone who supported our recent gala. Your generous contributions, time and presence made the event a great success despite the weather. To our sponsors, donors, volunteers, attendees and behind-the-scenes helpers – we couldn't have done it without you all. Your kindness and community spirit are truly appreciated.
Arohanui
Ngāti Wehiwehi Marae komiti

DEATH NOTICE
HALL, AGNES (ANN) NEE CAULFIELD
Passed away peacefully on Thursday 30th October in Levin. Ann was a loved and loving wife of Jim Hall (dec). A much loved and loving mother, mother-in-law and Grannie to John (dec), Tracey, Neve, Eliza Mason (Tasmania), and James Mason (Switzerland). Stepnum to Robyn, Jamie, Craig and Tony Hall. A loved and loving Aunt of all her nieces and nephews. Ann lived happily in Ōtaki Beach for many years until health reasons brought a shift to Levin. The family would like to sincerely thank the many people who helped and have been friends to Ann over the years. Especially Jeanine and her family from Riverstone Cafe in Ōtaki, and Margaret, Driving Miss Daisy Levin. All the staff and caregivers at Reevedon Home, Levin, and latterly at War Veterans Hospital, Levin. A private cremation has been held in accordance with Ann's wishes. Her ashes will be laid to rest in Invercargill alongside her parents.

DEATH NOTICE
SHARON ANNE BYTHELL, AKA SAH SIMON Born 27.9.67, sadly passed away at Waikato Hospital 7.9.25 due to health issues. Loved daughter of Dianne and Brent, sister of Kim, former wife of Ray, mother of Fern, Hazel and Holly. Nanny Sah to her 10 grandchildren and three great grandchildren. Girl Guide, Venturer Scout, Radio Broadcaster, talented singer and actress, and a hardcase with a wicked sense of humour. We miss her.

e: debbi@idmedia.co.nz or txt 027 285 4720
for details and rates

Juniors shine at Ōtaki Sports Club

The growth of Ōtaki Sports Club’s junior tennis programme has led to it, this season, becoming the largest competitive club in the Kāpi-Mana junior tennis area.

This has helped to give Ōtaki its first player in the New Zealand national junior tennis championships, Max Beauchamp.

The Kapi-Mana tennis area is made up of 10 tennis clubs, from Ōtaki in the north to Tawa in the south.

This season 34 teams have been entered from all the clubs across the five levels of the Kapi-Mana junior interclub competition, with Ōtaki Sports Club (OSC) teams making up just under 50% of the entire competition. Ōtaki’s 16 teams are spread across all five grades, with Whitby Tennis Club the second largest fielding six teams.

OSC’s tennis club captain Adam Shelton says the club’s junior programme was set up to create an environment where children of all ages and abilities could flourish in the sport, and where families were encouraged to join in and support their children.

The growth of the programme showed children were responding positively to it, and that was also being seen in their personal development and in their results on court.

This year the club has had junior player Max, 11, selected for the New Zealand national junior tennis championships, to be held in Christchurch in December. He has been selected for the 12 and under event based on his national ranking.

Max is into his second season playing adult interclub in the Wellington competition where he has been playing at #2 for his Ōtaki Sports Club team.

Last season Max helped his team gain promotion from Men’s 5th grade to Men’s 4th grade. This season the team of three junior and two adult players is top of the table in 4th grade and, with three rounds to play, are eyeing up promotion to 3rd grade.

Max also travels regularly around the lower North Island with his family to play in tournaments, which has seen his national ranking rise to earn him selection into the national junior championships.



Two teams from Sunday morning Kapi-Mana Hot Shots novice interclub. Above left, Ōtaki Storm, from left Adam Doar, Kayden Lang, Ranapiri Edwards, Felix Beach, Lincoln Graham. Above, Ōtaki Fire, with Tom Strahan, Isabelle Watson, Lux Kellaway, and Milahn Howell.

Photos supplied



JUDE BROUGHTON watches as an Ōtaki secondary schools touch rugby team goes through its paces at Ōtaki Domain on Sunday (November 9). The team, coached by Jude and Shay-Marie Peneha, combines players of Ōtaki College, Te kura a iwi o Whakatupuranga Rua Mano and Te Kura Kaupapa Māori o Te Rito. They were training for the national secondary schools touch tournament in Rotorua on December 11-14. Also at the Domain were the Horowhenua-Kāpiti men’s 30s and men’s 40s teams, who were preparing for the Māori Touch Nationals in Rotorua on December 6-7.

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