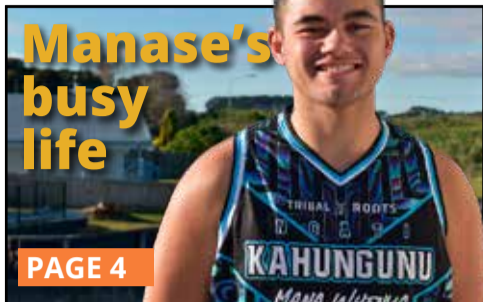


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Merit for Katera's resolve

By Ian Carson

Katera Rikihana-Tukerangi is now a qualified teacher, but earning the qualification has not been easy.

Working full-time at Ōtaki College, raising five tamariki, supporting her whānau and balancing study commitments both online and away from home, the path to becoming a qualified teacher demanded resilience, sacrifice and determination.

Now, Katera (Ngāti Raukawa ki te Tonga) has achieved something that's a first for Ōtaki College – completing her teaching degree while continuing to work at the school.

Katera graduated in April with a postgraduate diploma in teaching with merit through the Ako Mātātupu secondary teaching programme, a two-year course designed to help grow Māori and Pacific educators in schools. Her achievement is especially significant because she remained in the classroom while studying, balancing online learning, off-site noho (courses) and practical teaching responsibilities at the same time.

"It was definitely a juggle," Katera says. "I was working here full-time, studying online, travelling away for courses and still managing whānau life. It was full-on, but I just kept going."

Her teaching journey began unexpectedly in 2023 when Ōtaki College principal Andy Fraser approached her to help support the Māori department for 10 hours a week.

Katera had already built a strong career in the social services sector, working with organisations such as Raukawa Whānau Ora, Te Puna Oranga o Ōtaki, Stand Children's Services, and Te Rūnanga o Raukawa. Teaching had not been part of her long-term plans.

"I came in just to help out," she says.

Soon after, the school's reo Māori kaiako (teacher) resigned. Katera stepped in under a Limited Authority to Teach (LAT), suddenly finding herself teaching te reo Māori to students from Year 7 through to senior levels.



Katera Rikihana-Tukerangi, who's now a fully qualified teacher at Ōtaki College.

Photo supplied

"I honestly thought, what am I doing?" she says. "But I already knew a lot of our rangatahi through community work, so that made a huge difference."

Recognising her natural ability in the classroom, Andy and head of Te Tari Māori Keremihana Heke encouraged her to formalise her teaching path. That led her to enrol in Ako Mātātupu – a programme combining online study, off-site residential learning and school-based teaching.

Unlike many tertiary students, Katera did

not step away from work to study. Instead, she remained embedded in the school environment, teaching every day while completing assignments, attending virtual learning and travelling for noho-based courses.

It made her, she says, both a learner and a teacher at the same time.

"I was learning how to teach while actually teaching."

The demands of study became even heavier when personal tragedy struck. At the beginning of her course, Katera's mother, Rangiwehea

Rikihana, became critically ill. While attending her first noho in Auckland, she learned her mother had only weeks left to live.

"I was devastated," she says.

After returning home to be with whānau and later farewelling her mother, Katera faced a difficult decision about whether to continue.

"I thought about stopping, but Mum really wanted me to do this."

So she carried on. It was a tough time in her life. But in April, all of it paid off.

Katera graduated with merit, an achievement she says reflected not only hard work, but strong support from whānau, colleagues and the school.

"I didn't realise I had graduated with merit until afterwards," she says. "I probably would have got an 'excellent' if I got all my assignments in on time, but I had a lot of personal stuff going on at the time."

"It was still special to get a merit though."

Her qualification also represents something larger for Ōtaki College.

As the first staff member to have completed a teaching degree while remaining employed and teaching throughout the process, Katera's journey highlights a new pathway for aspiring educators already working in schools.

Now a fully qualified kaiako, she teaches te reo Māori, emerging te reo Māori and Te Ao Haka, while continuing to inspire rangatahi through language, culture and identity.

She has also re-established Te Kapa Haka o te Kāreti Ōtaki, bringing kapa haka back to the school after more than two decades.

For Katera, earning her degree was never just about a qualification.

It was about proving that with determination, support and belief, it is possible to study, teach and grow – all at once.

"It's probably the best thing I've done," she says. "Now I know I'm exactly where I'm meant to be."

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Opponents navigate new world order

A POTENTIALLY historical political contest looms over the direction New Zealand foreign policy should take in dealing with the ongoing change in global relationships.

In the blue-black corner stands veteran political master Winston Peters representing the pragmatic, art of the possible school of foreign policy. In the red corner sits Vanushi Walters, a human rights lawyer who is the newly appointed foreign affairs spokesperson for the Labour Party. Oxford educated and articulate, she is a true believer in the existence of "international law".

Her background of work for Amnesty International, Greenpeace, YouthLaw Aotearoa and the Human Rights Commission places the 44-year-old Sri Lankan-born MP on a different platform to Minister of Foreign Affairs Peters. His grasp of local, national, and international politics springs from practice of survival pragmatism.

To date, debate between the pair has centred on the position the government has adopted toward American attacks on Iran. To the prime minister and his foreign minister these represent evidence of a shift in global politics from general observance of civilised behaviour, as captured in the United Nations charter, to one of "might is right".

Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Israel's occupation of Gaza, China's building of military bases in the South China Sea, and America's foray into Venezuela underline the extent to which the exercise of power has diminished the relevance of the UN charter and de facto acceptance of a rules-based order.

For the PM and the foreign minister, the situation demands pragmatism – keep upsets of any of the parties to a minimum; work with nations having similar interests and, most of

all, try to hold open potential markets for our export products beyond the period of conflict. Mercantile needs dominate over foreign policy ideals.

Walters, however, would reverse this approach. She does not see what PM Luxon does – that rules are giving way to power.

"The rules are still there," she says. "They require states to stand up for them; to defend them. We're not seeing a New Zealand government that is doing that any longer and I think that should be hugely concerning for New Zealanders."

Questions that can be asked of the differing approaches to the "might is right" new world need to take into account that a potent player in White House politics is the high-tech industry – the deliverers of social media platforms, AI and our everyday internet system that keep us connected to local and global audiences.

The changed focus of American foreign policy under President Donald Trump from a position of support for the European Union and democracy to one of resistance to the EU's unity, is often attributed to the influence they wield. Political movements in Austria, Hungary, Poland, and Italy have all been subjected to persuasion that a better future awaits in independence from Brussels.

That this policy fits alongside Russian aspirations to see a weaker EU and Nato while it seeks to force Ukraine back under its control, can be seen as an indicator that the mercantile pressures of the American high-tech industry outweigh global respect for democratic values in the eyes of the White House.

Fear that the EU as a collective grouping of nations might choose to use its capability to reject the dominant place that American high-

tech has assumed in their economies is cited as a reason for this positioning.

Individually, EU countries would not have the power or ability to challenge American hi-tech supremacy. Collectively, however, they can muster the financial, entrepreneurial, innovative and market power to challenge. And they can restrict access to their combined markets for American products. Were their collective capabilities to be exercised, the existence of alternatives to the US tech systems that don't have the taint of power politics associated with Chinese hi-tech products would be attractive to other Western and neutral aligned countries.

New Zealand society and the government would be in a much stronger negotiating position to deal with the likes of Meta, Google, Microsoft, and Instagram were there to be genuine alternatives of similar quality available.

Walters is in tune with what most New Zealanders would like to see – a rules-based international order that consistently protects national sovereignty, upholds its declarations of human rights, and follows agreed trade rules.

But, as Ukraine, Tibet, Venezuela, and Cuba have found, a rules-based order means nothing when "might is right" and human rights are ignored. Pragmatism and decisions based on case-by-case national interest seem more appropriate for countries impacted by a changing world order.

A reflection of changing world order: 1943-44 Allied prisoners build a bridge over the River Kwai in Thailand for their Japanese captors. In 2026 Japanese Ambassador to New Zealand Makoto Osawa writes in the NZ Herald: "To maintain peace and stability in this region, enhanced co-ordination among Japan, New Zealand and Australia, and increased operability for that purpose, is crucial."

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



POLITICS

BRUCE KOHN

ŌTAKI REPAIR CAFÉ Ōtaki Memorial Hall, 10am-2pm Sunday June 7. Repairs, skill shares, cakes and coffee. Bring your broken bits and learn how to fix bikes, household electronics, bric-a-brac, jewellery, clothing and more. Fix-it wizards might even 3D-print replacement parts. Register your item at energiseotaki.nz/otaki-repair-cafe-form. Or just come along! Koha appreciated.

WAIKAWA PLANTING Horowhenua College students and Horizons science staff wetland planting, 554 Waikawa Beach Road, 10am-noon June 5. Final community wetland planting day 554 Waikawa Beach Rd, 10am-noon June 13. See the Waikawa Beach Environment Group Facebook page for updates.

WEA TALKS Promoting human rights internationally and in New Zealand. Speaker Marianne Elliott. 10am-1pm Saturday June 6. Marianne is a writer, researcher and human rights and environmental advocate, known for using narrative and storytelling for social change. **Conquering cervical cancer.** Speaker Dr Margaret Sage. 10am-1pm Saturday June 20. Margaret is a cytopathologist with a focus on gynaecological cytology and cervical cancer prevention. **Finding the voices we rarely hear.** Speaker Adrienne Jansen. 10am-1pm Saturday June 27. Adrienne has a background in writing and teaching, and founded the Porirua Language Project, and the Whitireia Polytechnic creative writing programme. Venue for all talks: Waikanae Presbyterian Church Hall, 43 Ngaio Rd, Waikanae. See kapitiwea.org.nz

ŌTAKI WOMEN'S COMMUNITY CLUB Meeting at the Family Hotel, 30 Main St, Ōtaki, 5.30-8.30pm Wednesday June 10. Keen to join the club? Meet amazing wāhine, share a few laughs, feel inspired, and learn together in a warm, welcoming, and safe space with like-minded women. Women get together for a club meeting, then have dinner. Email: otakiwomensclub@outlook.com

COMMUNITY BOARDS The next **Ōtaki Community Board** meeting at the Gertrude Atmore Supper Room is 7pm on Tuesday, July 21. The next **Waikanae Community Board** meeting is 6.30pm on Tuesday June 23 at Waikanae Community Centre, 28 Utauta St. 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

MATARIKI RACING Ōtaki-Māori Racing Club, Te Roto Rd. Friday July 10. See page 12

STAR GLAZE At Ōtaki-Māori Racing Club, 10am-4pm July 10-11. See page 13

ŌTAKI MUSEUM 49 Main St. 06 364-6886. New exhibition – *Te Tāone o Ōtaki: Ōtaki Town: 1920-1989*, which presents the town's changes during the years of Ōtaki Borough Council. Museum open 10am-2pm Thursday to Saturday, except public holidays. See page 7

ŌTAKI MARKET 58 Main Highway, Ōtaki. Open Sundays 10am-2pm.

TOTE MODERN GALLERY The Ōtaki Pottery Club's gallery at Ōtaki-Māori Racing Club, Te Roto Rd. Open 10am-3pm Friday to Sunday. See page 13 for June exhibition.

OLD COURTHOUSE GALLERY 239 Main Highway, Ōtaki.

TOI MATARAU GALLERY Māoriland Hub, Main St, Ōtaki. Open Monday to Saturday 11am-4pm. See toi.maorilandfilm.co.nz

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

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

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

FAMILY HISTORY Join Ōtaki Family History Inc for monthly group meetings, 7.30pm 4th Tuesday of the month (Feb to Nov), at the Gertrude Atmore Supper Room.

POETRY IN ŌTAKI Third Friday of each month, 10.30-11.30am, Gertrude Atmore Supper Room. Call 021 050 1904 for details.

ŌTAKI STROKE SUPPORT GROUP: Meets for Sit and Be Fit classes, 10am Fridays at Senior Citizens' Hall, Rangitira Street. All welcome.

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

ŌTAKI BUZZ CLUB for beekeeping enthusiasts. Meets every 3rd Wednesday 7pm at Waitohu School hall, Te Manuao Rd.

TOI MAHARA Mahara Place, Waikanae, Kāpiti Coast's public art gallery. See *Brent Wong exhibition*, page 12

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



CARTOON OF THE MONTH

By Jared Carson

Locals look for alternatives as fuel crisis bites.

ŌTAKI TODAY *Ngā Kōrero o Ōtaki*

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Days of cheap fuel over, Leigh says

By Ian Carson

Rising fuel prices and growing global instability could become the “new normal” for New Zealanders, says Energise Ōtaki chair Leigh Ramsey.

He believes the country is entering a prolonged period of energy uncertainty that will hit households, businesses and communities alike.

Leigh is New Zealand’s leading expert on alternative fuels, the founder of Ōtaki-based Blended Fuel Solutions Ltd NZ and Nufuels, and a long-time advocate for renewable and locally produced fuels and energy. He says the current oil crisis is not simply a temporary spike caused by conflict in the Middle East.

“This is a structural shift,” he says. “People think fuel prices will come back down and we’ll get cheap petrol again, but there are too many global pressures now. Even if things settled tomorrow, the supply chains have fundamentally changed.”

Leigh points to two key reasons he believes high fuel costs are here to stay: escalating geopolitical conflict and the depletion of Strategic Petroleum Reserves held by major powers such as the United States and China.

He says he’s not being pessimistic – and there are opportunities ahead – but realistic, adding that this information is publicly available

“The only reason prices haven’t gone even higher already is because countries are releasing oil from their emergency reserves,” he says. “America has released more strategic reserves recently than at any other time in history, and China is doing the same.

“But those reserves are not endless. Once they get too low, and/or if the wars escalate further, prices could rise dramatically.”

He says damaged refinery infrastructure,



Leigh Ramsey, who sees uncertainty – but opportunities – for the future. Photo Ōtaki Today

rising shipping insurance costs and global competition for supply are all adding pressure to the market.

For New Zealand, the consequences could be severe because of the country’s heavy reliance on imported fuel.

“We’re extremely vulnerable,” he says. “We’re isolated, we import most of our hydrocarbons, and we use a huge amount of diesel for agriculture and transport. Fuel is a strategic asset now, not just a commodity – and it has been for years.”

He warns that higher fuel prices will flow through into nearly every part of daily life, from groceries and freight to electricity and public transport.

“For families, it means less disposable

income. People will have to think harder about travel, combining trips, using public transport, carpooling, or riding bikes. The days of cheap and abundant energy are gone.”

Ōtaki residents are already feeling cost-of-living pressures, he says, and sustained fuel prices could make that worse for households already struggling.

Businesses with large transport or energy costs will also face difficult decisions.

“If your business relies heavily on fuel, eventually you either put your prices up, absorb the costs, or close down,” he says.

Despite the grim outlook, Leigh believes there are opportunities for communities like Ōtaki to become more resilient through

renewable energy, local initiatives and reduced dependence on imported fuel.

That is where community group Energise Ōtaki is making a difference. Energise Ōtaki has supported projects including bike refurbishment, curtains for homes, electric vehicle charging infrastructure, solar initiatives and community sustainability projects aimed at reducing energy use and transport costs, plus advocating for better public transport.

“We’re trying to help people adapt,” Leigh says. “Everything from repairing bikes to rooftop solar is part of the solution. It’s about resilience and using less imported expensive energy.”

Energise Ōtaki has refurbished and distributed hundreds of donated bicycles to local families and schools, while also advocating for renewable energy and local solutions to reduce fuel dependence.

Leigh says that as biofuels become more competitive with diesel to produce, they could also become increasingly important – especially for heavy transport and industry where battery technology remains limited.

“New Zealand actually has the potential to be far more energy independent than most countries,” he says. “We’ve got forestry, agriculture, renewable electricity and the ability to produce biofuels locally. Every litre we produce here creates jobs, improves fuel security and reduces our trade deficit.”

However, he says meaningful change will require long-term planning and political cooperation.

“We need governments to think beyond three-year election cycles. The reality is energy is becoming more expensive, and we must prepare for that rather than pretending things will just go back to normal.”

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Manase breaks teen stereotypes

By Ian Carson

At just 16, Manase-Jamez Bailey is already balancing more responsibilities than many adults – and doing it with humility, determination and a strong sense of purpose.

The Ōtaki College Year 12 student is a standout athlete, community leader, dedicated older brother and someone his mother, Tracey Bailey, describes as “one of the most reliable people I know”.

“He’s always my number one person that I know can handle stuff,” she says.

For Manase, life is busy, often starting before sunrise. Most mornings, he wakes about 5am to head to the indoor court at Ngā Purapura, where he shoots hoops before school. By 7.30am, he is at Manukura GPS, a leadership and mentoring programme at Ōtaki College that has played a major role in shaping the young man he has become.

Manase joined the programme in Year 9, initially attracted by the camaraderie and school pride.

“I heard they played games in the morning and had matching hoodies and ties,” he says with a smile. “I thought, I wouldn’t mind a tie.”

But what began as curiosity quickly became something much deeper. He admits that before joining Manukura GPS, he was “the wannabe cool kid”, coasting through school and not fully applying himself. Then came a turning point.

“I learned it’s not cool to not try. It’s not cool to be late. It’s not cool to have low self-respect. What is cool is to hear your name called out at prizegiving.”

That shift transformed his mindset. Since then, Manase has thrown himself into



Manase-Jamez Bailey – standout athlete, community leader and “number one person”.

Photo Ōtaki Today

leadership, sport and service.

He is a member of the student council at Ōtaki College and is on the Kāpiti Coast Youth Council. Through Manukura GPS, he takes part in leadership activities, fitness training, kapa haka and community service, including rubbish clean-ups around Ōtaki.

He always has ambitious goals. This year, he hopes to become head boy at Ōtaki College.

Sport is another major focus. Last year, Manase was named Ōtaki College Sportsperson of the Year, recognition of his commitment and talent in basketball. He plays across multiple teams, travelling throughout the Wellington region for games and tournaments.

Soon, he will take one of the biggest steps

in his sporting journey yet – travelling to the United States in July with a Polynesian basketball team to compete in tournaments in Las Vegas and Los Angeles.

The opportunity is exciting, but costly – about \$13,000 for the trip and associated costs. It’s a tall order for a single-parent family.

But typically, Manase isn’t fazed. He’s been taking on odd jobs, mowing lawns, shifting firewood, fencing, gardening and helping locals with labouring work whenever he can fit it around school and sport.

“He doesn’t want hand-outs, he wants to work for any money he gets,” Tracey says. “He doesn’t mind hard work. He’s always had that work ethic.”

That resilience has also been evident at home.

As a single mother who has undergone multiple surgeries and ongoing health challenges, Tracey says there have been times when Manase has quietly stepped up in ways few teenagers would.

During a recent hospital stay, he helped care for his younger sister, got her to kindy, managed buses, attended school and kept things running.

“He’s been cooking since he was 8,” Tracey says. “He knows how to clean, do laundry, mow lawns – all those life skills.”

Still, she says what stands out most is his kindness.

“He doesn’t have a bad bone in his body.”

Tracey has long encouraged her son to challenge expectations. She says she has been determined that he should never feel limited by the stereotypes of a young Māori-Tongan male raised by a single mother.

“I’ve always told him people might already make assumptions, so it’s up to you to change that.”

Despite his achievements, Manase remains grounded and thoughtful about the future.

While he jokes his dream career is to be “rich and lazy”, he says what really matters is helping others.

Social work is one career he has considered, though his mother encourages him to first experience life beyond Ōtaki. She hopes he will travel, study or pursue a trade, before one day possibly returning home.

For now, Manase remains focused on school, basketball and making the most of every opportunity.

In a time when young men are too often seen as morose and disrespectful, Manase is a reminder that many are quietly doing the mahi, and showing leadership, compassion and determination along the way.

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Nothing lost in translation for Alison

By Ian Carson

A career spent helping people navigate change has earned Alison McDonald one of New Zealand's highest honours.

The Te Horo resident has been appointed a Member of the New Zealand Order of Merit (MNZM) for services to translation and interpretation services. The award recognises her pivotal role in transforming the country's interpreter accreditation system, thereby improving the quality and quantity, and availability of access to public services for migrants and refugees where English is not their first language.

Although the award recognises translation and interpreting services, Alison says her work has been less about languages themselves and more about creating systems and professional standards.

"I'm hopeless at languages," she says. "This was really about process and helping create a profession."

Working as a contractor for the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) from 2015, Alison was asked to review reports into the quality of public sector interpreting services with a focus on standards. At the time, there were no nationally recognised standards for interpreters working in courts, hospitals or government agencies.

There was a small number of private sector interpreting agencies who provided interpreters to both private and public sector clients and

some of these also provided in-house training. Interpreters were often found informally through community networks, with little assurance around qualifications or accuracy.

"There were some serious problems, particularly in legal and health settings," she says. "People with limited English proficiency were often relying on untrained interpreters in situations that could be life-changing."

Her recommendation was that New Zealand adopt the internationally lauded Australian National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters certification model, rather than attempt to build a system from scratch.

That work eventually evolved into the Standards project, co-led with the Department of Internal Affairs. It was part of the MBIE's Language Assistance Services Programme, a nationwide effort to identify, train and provide professional credentials for interpreters throughout New Zealand.

Alison returned between 2021 and 2024 to help implement the programme – during the height of Covid-19 disruptions.

The initiative exceeded expectations. Originally designed for about 1500 interpreters, more than



Alison McDonald at her Te Horo home. She has received an MNZM for services to translation and interpretation services. Photo Ōtaki Today

3200 people registered, covering more than 80 languages.

Many were refugees or migrants who had been informally helping their communities for years, but had never sat formal exams or undertaken tertiary study.

"The courage of these people was extraordinary," she says. "Some were in their 50s and 60s and hadn't studied for decades. Many had fled wars or spent years in refugee camps,

and suddenly they were sitting very tough professional exams, sometimes failing and needing to put themselves through the process again."

Universities – including the Auckland University of Technology and Victoria University of Wellington – adapted or developed flexible on-line and distance learning programmes and postgraduate qualifications to support trainees. The University of Canterbury established

programmes that gave educational access to interpreters in the South Island for the first time.

"There was a real recognition that the South Island needed better language support services," she says. This was highlighted through the 2019 mosque attacks and large numbers of international visitors and migrants.

The New Zealand Society for Translators and Interpreters was also heavily involved in supporting the efforts of the interpreters through training and networking.

Before her interpreting work, Alison built a long public service career focused on organisational change and community resilience. She worked at the State Services Commission during the sweeping government restructures of the mid 1980s, helping rural communities adapt to forestry sector reforms and job losses.

Originally born in Kenya to British parents, the newly married Alison moved to New Zealand in 1973 and later studied at Victoria University of Wellington before entering the public sector. Now fully retired after finishing her final contract in August 2024, she says the interpreting project was a fitting final chapter.

"I absolutely loved it," she says. "It exposed me to communities and people I'd never worked with before, and the resilience and determination of those interpreters was incredible."





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Small-home workshops

Two free workshops in Ōtaki are aimed at sharing information about building granny flats and other small builds as a solution to the housing crisis, especially for older people.

At the workshops – from 2.30pm-4.30pm and 5-7pm on Monday, June 22 – attendees will learn about design best practices, council processes, and recent changes to the Building Act that make it easier to build smaller homes. Some small-home providers will introduce people to their services and products.

Kāpiti Coast District Council staff and other presenters will answer questions, and the council's latest *Additional Dwelling Guide* will be available.

"We're inviting potential new and existing homeowners, builders, real estate professionals, and anyone interested in additional housing solutions to join us," says Robin Gunston, Homes for Good Trust secretary. "We have had good feedback from the previous workshops that people considering such an additional dwelling have found it good to see the entire end-to-end process laid out in a simple way, with the chance to answer some curly questions, too."

KCDC and Homes for Good have combined forces to run the workshops. They are encouraging people to consider how an additional dwelling could house family members or be used as a rental for people needing well designed, warm, dry, affordable, and accessible homes.

With a rapidly growing population, the Kāpiti Coast more housing. Additional dwellings – smaller 1-2 bedroom homes usually built on land that already has essential services – offer flexible options for families, seniors, and renters. Homes for Good Trust chair Peter Ryan says the public meetings and extensive local research is revealing hard questions for policymakers.

"Who will provide affordable 1-2 bedroom homes for seniors with limited capital and high reliance on superannuation? In the current rental market, there are only one or two smaller houses for rent and these average about \$450 per week," he says. "This is often out of reach for many seniors. However, all predictions indicate the number of seniors having to rent their 'forever home' will double over the next 20 years."

■ The workshops are at The Hub, 157 Tasman Road, Ōtaki. Light refreshments served.



RIGHT: The Additional Dwelling Guide



Barbara Aires and Len Nicholls look at a display in the new Ōtaki Museum exhibition. Photo Ōtaki Today

New museum exhibition

A new exhibition that continues a series of stories about Ōtaki's township has opened at Ōtaki Museum.

Te Tāone o Ōtaki: Ōtaki Town: 1920-1989 is an exhibition highlighting the changes the township has seen during the years of the Ōtaki Borough Council.

It covers significant events from the time Ōtaki moved from its town board status to become a borough in 1920. Ōtaki was absorbed into the new Kāpiti Coast District Council in the local government reforms of 1989.

As the exhibition notes, the town was "shaped by changes, large and small... some originated from local decisions and circumstances, some from national factors and others from circumstances arising outside of New Zealand".

Noted in the exhibition are many of the physical changes – from new shops to the building of a new wharenui at Raukawa Marae in the 1930s – but also events such as the centenary for Rangiatea Church in 1950.

The contribution of notable town identities is also included – kaumātua Matenga Baker (1902-1988) and pilot officer Kingi Tahiwī, who died in the Second World War, among them.

Aside from the wall displays, the exhibition also includes display cabinets and new audio-visual consoles.

■ Ōtaki Museum is open 10am-2pm Thursday to Saturday. See otakiheritage.org.nz

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Supermarket refurb complete

By Ian Carson

After months of work both inside and outside Ōtaki's New World supermarket, owner-operator Raj Singh can't be happier.

Shoppers are seeing the results of the \$6 million refurbishment – backed by Foodstuffs North Island. There are new refrigeration units, new shelves, new flooring, a new layout and even a freshly sealed car park.

Raj says that despite the disruption, the response from customers has made it all worthwhile.

"This investment is about setting the store up for the long term and making sure customers have a better, easier and more wonderful shopping experience," he said.

The refurbishment has included replacing all refrigeration with modern CO₂ systems to improve energy efficiency and reduce the store's carbon footprint. New refrigeration cases have been installed in produce, butchery, deli, seafood and frozen food departments, while air conditioning systems have been added throughout the store.

Polished concrete flooring replaces the old vinyl tiles, and there are upgrades to the main entrance, including relocation of the Lotto kiosk. Behind the scenes, fresh food preparation areas have been modernised with updated equipment and a new bakery oven.



Raj Singh in the aisles of the refurbished New World Ōtaki store.

Photo Ōtaki Today

Although some minor work is still to be done at night, Raj says the visible work is now complete.

"It's all done as far as what customers will notice," he says.

The final piece of the project has included improvements to the car park, where additional accessible parking spaces have been added after customer feedback.

"We had people asking where the disabled parking was and we realised we could do better," Raj says. "We had

two parks and we've added a third. If customers ask for something and we can do it, we love to do it."

He says feedback throughout the refurbishment has been overwhelmingly positive, despite the inconvenience caused by construction work over several months.

"I'd say the feedback has been 99.9 percent positive. People come up and say 'thank you' and tell us how beautiful it looks."

For Raj, the supermarket is more than just a business.

"Yes, I have a tag saying this is my store, but actually it's a community store," he says. "It's their building. It's ready now to do business for another 30 or 40 years."

He describes the refurbishment as an opportunity to not only modernise the store, but also tailor it more closely to the needs of local shoppers. Some product layouts have been changed based on customer habits,

including grouping meal solutions together and moving bacon products closer to the butchery section to make shopping easier.

Having operated Auckland stores, Raj says customer feedback is quite different in Ōtaki.

"People here have a greater connection with the store. They want to see you succeed."

The support has included staff, which was especially noticeable during the most difficult stages of the refurbishment.

"There was disruption everywhere – smaller loading doors, pallets being moved in the rain and wind – but customers and staff stayed loyal and kept supporting us."

Raj, who moved to Ōtaki with his family in August last year, says he has embraced the town's slower pace and strong sense of community.

"I love it here," he says. "You can feel the peace compared to Auckland. People support each other."

He also believes the upgraded supermarket plays an important role in shaping visitors' impressions of Ōtaki.

"We want people coming here for things like the kite festival to have a great experience and keep coming back," he says. "If someone shops here and enjoys it, that helps the whole town."

While the big refurbishment is complete, Raj said improvement will continue – "We can always do better."

Contact me at my Kāpiti office

020 438 8462

kapiti@parliament.govt.nz

6 Te Roto Dr, Paraparaumu

Tim Costley
MP for Ōtaki

National



Authorised by Tim Costley, Parliament Buildings, Wgtn.





Tasman Road bore drilling location

Ensuring a sustainable water supply for Ōtaki

Work to strengthen Ōtaki's drinking water supply continues with a new bore being drilled to access clean groundwater at the Water Treatment Plant on Tasman Road from early June.

The 12 to 14 week project will replace an ageing bore nearing the end of its life, helping ensure a reliable supply for the community.

While construction may cause some disruption, Tasman Road will remain open both ways. Reduced speed limits, an altered lane layout and safe pedestrian access will be in place.

This work forms part of a wider \$50 million investment in drinking water, wastewater and stormwater services to support both current and future generations.

Find out more at: kapiticoast.govt.nz/OtakiProgressUpdate



Progress for Waitohu Valley drinking water main upgrade

We're laying new pipeline between the existing Waitohu Reservoir and the new Ōtaki Reservoir. This work replaces an ageing pipe and helps prepare the area for a new Waitohu Reservoir, planned to start later this year.

So far, we've completed a new pump station and installed 75 percent of the new rising main pipeline. Pipe is now being laid from the pump station to Ringawhata Road.

Single-lane traffic lights remain in place.

Soon, crews will work through the narrow section near Waitohu Quarry - please take extra care in the area.

► visit: kapiticoast.govt.nz/pipeline-upgrade-waitohu-valley



Wastewater upgrade reaches new milestone

The wastewater upgrade along Aotaki Street and Mill Road is nearing completion, with all intrusive work due to finish early June. This key infrastructure upgrade was made possible thanks to a contribution from Government's Infrastructure Accelerated Fund.

At a glance:

- 2.4km of new pipeline installed
- 93 connections completed to date

While this phase nears the finish line, major road resealing is planned for summer. The next stage - tunnelling beneath the North Island Main Trunk rail line and Expressway - is expected to begin later this year.

NZTA-led revocation works are also approaching completion, with most physical works due to wrap up in June.

► For more information check out: kapiticoast.govt.nz/OtakiProgressUpdate



Need funding for your 'less waste' idea?

Council offers a range of grants to benefit our community. Our Less Waste Grants are funded thanks to the Ministry for the Environment's waste levy fees.

Small community projects fund

Designed to support smaller practical projects that encourage less waste. Open year-round, this grant should involve your community.

Local business grant

Aimed at helping existing businesses implement practical measures that deliver long-term, measurable waste reduction within their own operations. \$50,000 is available. Applications close 21 June.

Community project grants

This grant supports practical 'less waste' projects encouraging participation, education and lasting behaviour change. \$50,000 is available. Applications close 21 June.

► Apply on our website at: kapiticoast.govt.nz/lesswastegrants



BRIEFS

Kāpiti 'middle' in affordability report

An Infometrics affordability report shows Kāpiti rates are near the middle compared with other Wellington region councils. It shows rates are least affordable in Ōtaki, Waikanae West, Raumati Beach East, Ōtaki and parts of Paraparaumu, where rates make up a larger share of household costs than the district average. Kāpiti-wide, rates account for about 4.8 percent of household income on average – lower than Wellington City, Porirua and some Wairarapa councils.

Whāngai, adoption book launched

A new book on whāngai and adoption is calling for the state to step out of the care of Māori children. The book, *Tākiri mai te ata: understanding whāngai and adoption*, recommends the Adoption Act 1955 be abolished and for whānau to be better supported to whāngai children instead. "Revitalising the tikanga of whāngai means fully supporting whānau to rebuild our knowledge and understanding of the wellbeing principles upon which it rests, and to put them into action," the book says. It was launched at Te Wānanga o Raukawa on Friday (May 29).



Luke a Fulbright scholar

Luke Rowe has received a Fulbright Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga Scholar Award. Luke, from Tokorangi, near Marton, is a clinical psychologist based at Te Wānanga o Raukawa in Ōtaki. The scholarship will allow him to research the intersection of indigeneity, men's mental health, and sport at the University of Hawai'i.

Talk on insects' forest role



A public talk on July 2 in Ōtaki will discuss the role of insects in, and dependence on, abundant and healthy native trees and shrubs. Bug scientist Jim O'Malley (at left) will talk about how insect populations are faring, and how local tree and shrub plantings – such as that facilitated by the Ōtaki Carbon Forest project – can support important insect populations.

■ 7pm Thursday, July 2, Senior Citizen's Hall, Rangatira Street.

Kāeaea women back to winning ways

By Frank Neill

Women's football team Ōtaki Kāeaea won its last two matches, both with a 4-3 scoreline.

Playing in Wellington's first division, Kāeaea defeated Upper Hutt at Haruātai Park on May 31. A week earlier they beat the Petone Flaming Pickles, to record their first victory of the season.

Lou Ruru Donnell, Ngaire Dolman, Chelsea Ferrier and Aimee Porters all found the back of the net against Upper Hutt. Two players – Chelsey Ferrier and Hayley Hall – each scored twice in the match against Petone.

Kāeaea had a closely contested encounter with Wellington United Emeralds on May 17. Neither team scoring in the 0-0 draw.

Both the local men's premier teams – Manakau Hui Mai and Ōtaki Purutaitama – ended with one win, one draw and one loss in their last three matches in the Horowhenua-Kāpiti competition.

The draw came on May 16 in the local derby, when Purutaitama and Hui Mai were level 4-4 at full time.

Alex Jones scored twice for Manakau before he had to leave the field with a dislocated shoulder. Atain Halley and Sam Ward also found the back of the net.

Travis Roberston kicked two goals for Ōtaki, while Te Moana Cook and Tepene Roa also scored.

Hui Mai then went on to defeat Paekākāriki 3-2 on May 23. Atain Halley scored twice for the Manakau team and Hawaki Te Huki netted the other goal.

Hui Mai were not able to make it three in a row on May 30 when they lost 1-2 to Kāpiti Coast United Hearts.

Purutaitama were able to chalk up a 3-0 victory on May 30 thanks to a default by Kāpiti Coast United Bandits.

In a closely contested match on May 23, Purutaitama were defeated 3-4 by Raumati Cosmos. Travis Robertson, Jamal Rautao and Te Haumoana Cook scored for the Ōtaki team.

■ [More sport back page](#)

LEFT: Darcey Taylor in action for Manakau Hui Mai during their win over Paekākāriki.

Photo: Frank Neill.



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HUATAU/Opinion

HE TIROHANGA HOU: HENITI BUICK

Time for everyone in our community to have their say on plans

May has been another busy month across Ōtaki, with plenty happening both in the community and around council.

On May 26, the council held an engagement day for the Annual Plan, which also gave people an early opportunity to start thinking about the Long Term Plan (LTP) consultation process kicking off properly in June for one month. These conversations are important. The LTP helps shape priorities, projects, and investment decisions for the next 10 years.

I know many whānau are feeling pressure from rising costs, and rates affordability remains a real concern. Council do not have endless revenue, which means we need to

focus on core services, make careful decisions, and listen closely to what our communities think we should be doing more of, less of, or differently.

One thing I would love to see during consultation is a more diverse range of people contributing. If only the same voices show up, we risk missing what matters most to other parts of our community. Ōtaki has strong views, great ideas, and unique needs – June is the time to help shape them. Check out the council website for ways to have your say (kapiticoast.govt.nz).

Back at council, the previously approved upgrade to the Ōtaki Pool will be returning for further discussion. This work is focused on renewing ageing plant equipment that has



been causing ongoing breakdowns and pool closures, while also investing in upgrades such as degassing technology to reduce operating costs and a changing room that no longer meets code. I've heard from many people about the impact prolonged closures have on clubs, lessons, programmes, and whānau, and we will need to keep working together on how we support these groups while upgrades occur.

Outside the council chamber, we at Te Puna Oranga o Ōtaki on May 13 joined Friends of the Ōtaki River for a planting day, where about 600 plants went into the ground to support

flood protection and improve the health of our environment. It was an awesome day with new relationships formed and plenty of learning shared with our rangatahi.

The Ōtaki River walkover was on May 15, alongside regional and local partners to better understand river works, flood resilience efforts, and how we continue protecting both our community and the species that rely on our awa.

And finally, as a mum, it has been awesome seeing junior Rāhui rugby back under lights some evenings. There is something special about seeing our kids, whānau, and volunteers all coming together – those moments remind me why community matters and why Ōtaki feels like home.

■ *Heniti is the Ōtaki Ward councillor*

CAM'S CORNER: CAM BUTLER

Revocation works nearly done

Revocation 99% done

The revocation work down Old SH1 is so close to being finished with the last section of kerbing and footpath replacement under way near Arthur Street. Once that section is finished then the resealing and line marking of the balance of the road is the final act of the revocation. Then machines, workers and road cones disappear and we are left with a pedestrian/shopper friendly retail strip. Just need all the shops filled!

I met with KCDC staff and OTHBA committee members recently to discuss the final bits and pieces of the revocation process. A couple more seats, moving rubbish bins, better filled gardens and signage were among the items discussed as still needing work and KCDC staff will be working on those.

Are we happy?

While we have a lovely refurbished and clean shopping strip on Old SH1 – thank you, Waka Kotahi – there is something that really bugs me about it. There is nothing that says that this is Ōtaki! The whole area could be lifted up and placed in any town in Aotearoa and you wouldn't miss a beat. I think there is potential for us to make it our own with some Ōtaki flavour. I haven't got this fully formed in my head yet, so it will be a future project.

The wastewater pipe part 2 – Rahui Road

No further news on this front.

General Election year

Yes, it is that time again and Ōtaki is at

the north end of a new Kāpiti electorate which runs down to Mana/Paremata way. Levin has been chopped off the top of our electorate and is now part of the Rangitikei electorate. We are seeing current and hopeful politicians trying to raise their profile with visits, meetings and raising issues on social media. Some are non-issues just to get attention, so make

sure you put your time and thoughts into what is truly useful to Ōtaki.

Please note that while the Ōtaki Community Board may engage with political candidates, we are neutral and will not back one candidate over another.

Community grants

While KCDC's Major Events Fund is being trimmed to bring down rates, to the detriment of the Ōtaki Kite Festival, the Ōtaki Community Board community grant amount has remained the same. With our last meeting of the financial year on June 2 we are over-subscribed with funding applications. While we have raised the amount that can be applied for, we have also noticed an increase in applications and this is likely a sign of the tougher times we find ourselves in. However we will do our best to help as many Ōtaki people and groups as we can.

- Like our Ōtaki Community Board Facebook page.
- Next Ōtaki Community Board meeting is 7pm on Tuesday, July 21.
- *Cam is chair of the Ōtaki Community Board*



EYE ON WAIKANAĒ: MICHAEL MOORE

A better way to contact council

Most of us have needed to contact Kāpiti Coast District Council at some point.

It might be to report a pothole, blocked drain, damaged footpath, illegal dumping, graffiti, a broken streetlight, or simply to ask for advice about a local issue.

Usually, people pick up the phone and try to call council directly. This can sometimes become frustrating. You might be transferred between departments, leave voicemail messages, send emails, or spend time trying to work out which staff member handles a particular issue. For relatively routine matters, this can be inefficient for both residents and council staff.

Fortunately, there's a much easier option – the Antenno app. Some also use Snap Send Solve, which I find a much better interface. A lot of other councils across the country use this in conjunction with other online reporting tools.

Antenno is a free smartphone app that allows residents to report local problems directly to council within just a few minutes. The process is straightforward and user-friendly, even for people who are not particularly technical.

One of the app's biggest advantages is the ability to attach photographs. Often a photo explains a problem far more clearly than a verbal description. Whether it's flooding, rubbish dumping, vandalism, overgrown vegetation, or road damage, council staff can immediately see what the problem is and where it's located.

Once a report has been submitted, the user receives confirmation that council has received it. That reassurance is important. You know the issue has entered the system properly rather

than wondering whether a phone message was passed on to the right person. The app also allows residents to follow up later if needed. Instead of repeating the same story several times to

different departments, you can simply check the status of your report and provide additional information if required.

For council staff, digital reporting systems like Antenno also improve efficiency.

Reports arrive with location details, photographs, and written information already attached, allowing them to be directed quickly to the correct department. This reduces delays and helps avoid confusion.

Of course, there will always be situations where speaking directly with a council officer is necessary, particularly for urgent matters or more complicated concerns. However, for many everyday community issues, this method is probably the quickest and most practical way to communicate with council.

Technology can't solve every problem, but it can certainly improve communication. The easier residents can report issues, the faster those issues can often be logged and addressed.

You might not yet realise how useful Antenno can be. It's worth downloading and trying. The next time you notice a local problem, you might find it takes less than two minutes to report – far less time than sitting on hold on the phone. To get the app, go to: tinyurl.com/KapitiAntenno

- *The next meeting of the Waikanae Community Board is at 6.30pm on Tuesday June 23, at Waikanae Community Centre, 28 Utauta St.*

■ *Michael is a member of the Waikanae Community Board*



THE ELECTORATE: TIM COSTLEY

Budget delivering significant funding for Ōtaki community

This year's Budget contains significant funding for new local initiatives.

National is delivering for local families, like the new classrooms that Paraparaumu College has been crying out for, and funding to develop the new cancer clinic in Kāpiti. We've doubled the number of places in trade training academies, and we've opened up funding for social housing to local community housing providers.

Health is a big focus, and the biggest local issue I hear about as our local MP. This year's Budget has over \$5.5b in extra funding, including paying for three-day stays in hospital for every Kiwi mum, because that time is so important for those who choose or need to take it. That's especially

important for Ōtaki whānau where the nearest hospital is an hour away. Giving local mums that certainty is important in those special first few days.

There's more. We have expanded the age bracket for free bowel cancer screening, and have again increased Pharmac's funding so we can pay for extra medications. We're also increasing the number of ambulances and crews, along with upgraded technology, and stronger frontline support to strengthen ambulance services across New Zealand. This is all part of our plan to deliver faster healthcare closer to home.



Education is another key focus. There are new classrooms for Paraparaumu College, but there's also a 50% increase for every school in their next property budget. Ōtaki and Waitohu schools will get theirs in this Budget on July 1. And there's an increase to their "ops grant" (day-to-day operational funding) and that of Ōtaki College, and every teacher at the college is getting professional development over five days to support them to transition to our new Certificate of Education, which is replacing NCEA.

There are new learning support coordinators for primary schools. Some started in January, but this budget funds another round for January

2027, because we want every child to achieve their best at school, learning the basics brilliantly.

New road and rail projects continue. Construction began last year on the new expressway to Levin and funding of this continues in this Budget. Our government has funded 90% of the cost of the new electric trains that will connect Kāpiti with Ōtaki and Manawātū. These remain on schedule for late 2028.

This is a Budget that gets the books back in order, back in surplus from 2028, and delivers more than ever before into our health and education systems.

I'm proud of what this means for Ōtaki.

■ *Tim is the Ōtaki electorate MP*

Liar, liar, pants on fire – the crass art of fibbery

The kid who told the most lies was often the most popular. They had imagination, tall stories to tell and reckless charisma to burn.

Other kids could be as allured to the endless stories of daring-do and fantastical adventure – much like many of my generation at Waitohu School loved Maurice Sendak’s illustrated book *Where the Wild Things Are*.

Vivid imagination is one thing – we should all

JUST A THOUGHT



FRASER CARSON

have it if we wish to achieve anything and influence others. But what happens when it’s not concocted, as Sendak did so beautifully, to stimulate possibilities at the outer edges of our realities? What happens when

nonsense actually becomes our reality?

Take the story of Misha Defonseca. Misha was the daughter of French Catholic parents who were arrested, deported, and murdered by the Nazis for being resistance members.

One might surmise that Misha was so traumatised by her family story that she could be forgiven for a little excess. She certainly had an imagination and could write a good story. So, little surprise that in her 1997 bestseller, *Misha: A Memoir of the Holocaust Years*, she claimed that as a Jewish child, she trekked across Europe, killed a Nazi soldier, and was taken-in and protected by a pack of savage wolves. Then in 2008, she admitted she was not Jewish, had spent the war in the comfort of a Belgium town,



and the wolf bit was a piece of total fiction.

Misha would have been on perfectly safe ground had she written a fictional novel, but instead created an exotic but “factual” story about herself.

Sadly for Misha, she was ordered by a court to repay her US publisher \$22 million that she’d been awarded in an earlier legal suit against the same publisher.

Much worse is the ludicrous Asa Earl Carter. He was a notorious Ku Klux Klan leader, violent white supremacist, and barbaric speechwriter for the racist segregationist politician George Wallace. But Asa, writing as mild-mannered Forrest Carter, penned the 1976 top-selling memoir *The Education of Little Tree*, claiming to be an orphaned Cherokee child raised by native grandparents.

Substitute the Jewish girl for a Cherokee boy and the native grandparents for a pack of wolves, and we seem to get some kind of delusional pattern.

Make no mistake, we’re all given to a bit of fibbing, and we’d be hypocrites if we lied to ourselves about that. But what happens when

untruthfulness is widely accepted as normal?

What happens when it creeps into politics and the belief systems that drive how we individually and collectively make decisions?

As I have opined in past columns, the United States is a prime example of this malaise. Currently run by a political majority in all key areas of government – the Executive (President); Congress (US Parliament); and Judiciary (Supreme Court) – the Republican Party and Donald Trump are controlling most of the essential levers of power.

So, what do most Republicans believe that determines the decisions and direction of the most powerful nation on Earth?

Let’s start with three absolute facts, easily verified through reputable experts and numerous academic articles:

1. Solar power is now the cheapest alternative form of electricity in most parts of the world.
2. Tariffs, imposed by Donald Trump, are paid for by US consumers, passed onto them by importers.
3. Illegal US voting by non-citizens is extremely rare.

Oddly US polling shows that substantial numbers of Republican voters and elected politicians simply don’t believe these facts. For example, a recent Pew Research poll found 43 percent of Republicans said solar power was more expensive to households and industry than most other energy types, while a mere 24 percent said it was less expensive.

Then there’s Trump’s insistence that foreign countries pay US tariffs, or his constant fictional arguments about voter fraud that have led lawmakers to attempt curbs to mail-in voting and to introduce restrictive voter ID requirements.

Just like the kid in school who told the most lies and gained popularity for his hotspur, Donald Trump got himself elected by hoodwinking a majority of voters on such things.

One of the lies was that only he (Trump) could improve the economy by creating more jobs, bringing the cost-of-living down and doing things like creating more high-tech and manufacturing jobs.

He was successful at the ballot box but is miserably failing at the reality box. Paradoxically the harsh dawn now confronting the US is the need to deliver things like solar power, improved international trading conditions, and a return to a much less restrictive immigration system.

For all those elected officials who got where they are on convenient myths, they now see themselves excluded from any meaningful solutions because too many in their own ruling party refuse to believe in the facts that can lead to their own salvation.

As always, voters will end up deciding. But that all depends on what they believe.

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

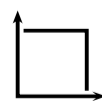
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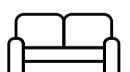
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1

ŌTAKI STREET SCENE



Autumn snow on the Tararua Range, seen from Robert McKeen Street. Photo Ōtaki Today

ŌTAKI DISTRICT ARTS, ATTRACTIONS AND EVENTS

Hōtoke/Winter 2026

Matariki racing returns to historic club

The world's only surviving Māori racing club is preparing to host what has rapidly become one of the most distinctive events on the New Zealand calendar as the annual Matariki meeting returns to the Ōtaki-Māori Racing Club on July 10.

First held in 2022, the Matariki race meeting has grown steadily in popularity, combining thoroughbred racing with Māori culture, history and community celebration.

Ōtaki-Māori Racing Club general manager Ben Jamison says the idea originally came from the club itself, which approached New Zealand Thoroughbred Racing about hosting a dedicated Matariki meeting each season.

"It goes hand in hand with what we stand for," he says. "It's good to see the importance of the day recognised and it's probably our biggest day now."

The day includes a mihi whakatau and an explanation of the significance of Matariki, while live music, hāngī and traditional Māori kai stalls will feature throughout the meeting.

"One particular kupu we focus on at the Ōtaki-Māori Racing Club is manaakitanga – which embodies kindness, generosity and support," Ben says. "It's about being kind to people, and they will be kind in return."

The club is unique within world racing. Committee members whakapapa to iwi within the club's rohe – Ngāti Toa, Ngāti Raukawa and Te Āti Awa – and governance traditionally reflects representation from all three iwi.

While other Māori racing clubs once existed around the country, including the Akura Māori Racing Club in Wairarapa and clubs in Gisborne and Poverty Bay, none survived beyond the 20th century.

Horse racing has deep roots within Māori communities. Missionary Samuel Marsden introduced the first horses to Aotearoa in 1814, and Māori quickly became renowned riders as racing grew throughout the country.



Although the Ōtaki-Māori Racing Club officially formed in 1886, race meetings had already been taking place for years along nearby beaches and around Katihiku pā south of the Ōtaki River.

Historical newspaper reports describe the club as one of the country's premier racing organisations. *The Evening Post* wrote in 1890 that "the most pretentious racing club in the colony could not have managed a meeting more satisfactorily".

Other reports before the turn of the century described brass bands, cultural performances, picnics, bars and bustling crowds. The club reportedly broke national betting turnover records and expanded tote facilities to cope with demand.

The *Weekly Press* wrote in 1898 that the club's meetings had "won the admiration of visitors", praising both the organisation and enthusiasm surrounding the events.

Much of the club's early history survives through oral tradition, although journalist Alastair Bull documented many of its origins during the 1990s.

The longevity of the club is often credited to prudent management dating back to founding president Hoani Taipua.

Today, the club is also looking firmly toward the future. It has secured resource consent for a major housing development of up to 500 homes on land surrounding the course, a move expected to help secure its long-term financial future at a challenging time for regional racing clubs.

The meeting will also include the Star Glaze ceramic arts exhibition at the Tote Modern Gallery behind the public stand, continuing the club's growing partnership with local arts groups (see opposite page).

• From original reporting by Paul Williams, *Horowhenua Star*








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ŌTAKI STREET SCENE



Ceramics, abstract painting in June exhibition

The Ōtaki Pottery Club's June exhibition brings together ceramic sculpture and abstract painting under the title "States of Being" at the Tote Modern Gallery.

The exhibition will feature the works of guest artists Diane Greenwood and Jude Whitcombe, whose pieces explore transformation, curiosity, and the evolving human experience. Organisers say the exhibition is aimed at people who enjoy contemporary art and are willing to engage with the deeper ideas and messages behind the works.

Diane, who has lived in Waikanae since 2020, has developed her ceramic practice through both the Ōtaki Pottery Club and her own studio. Her work for "States of Being" centres on transformation and the shifting nature of identity and emotion.

Her exhibition includes provocative ceramic sculptures and human figures that appear to move between emotional and



Exhibiting at Tote Modern during June are works by ceramicist Diane Greenwood and painter Jude Whitcombe.

Image supplied

physical states. Diane says her work invites viewers to consider change and the many layers of human experience.

She also presents a collection of large asymmetrical ceramic vessels featuring organic forms and experimental glazing

techniques. Using encaustic wax and engobe, Diane creates earthy, textured surfaces that suggest movement, erosion and hidden transformation.

Alongside the ceramics, Jude will exhibit a series of paintings inspired by the abstract artists of the 1940s and 1950s.

Her work explores humankind's survival and evolution throughout history, and the relationship between science and the arts. Through layered colour, movement and abstraction, Jude examines how people continually reshape their understanding of themselves and the universe. The exhibition also reflects her fascination with curiosity as a driving force behind human progress.

Jude references writer Dorothy Parker's well-known quote: "The cure for boredom is curiosity. There is no cure for curiosity."

■ Tote Modern Gallery, Ōtaki Pottery Club, at Ōtaki racecourse, Te Roto Road. Open 10am-3pm Friday to Sunday.

Artists gather for Star Glaze

Ceramic artists from across the lower North Island will gather at Ōtaki in July as the Star Glaze Festival returns for a two-day celebration of pottery, Matariki and community creativity.

Held at the Ōtaki-Māori Racing Club on July 10 and 11, the festival combines ceramic art exhibitions, live demonstrations, workshops and family activities in what has become one of the town's most distinctive winter events.

Originally launched by the Ōtaki Pottery Club during the Covid-19 lockdown period after its long-running Festival of Pots and Garden Art was cancelled, Star Glaze has steadily grown into a significant arts event closely linked to Matariki and the wider community.

Now in its fifth year, the festival showcases both emerging and established ceramic artists while giving visitors opportunities to engage directly with pottery through demonstrations and interactive experiences.

Festival organisers say the event is about more than ceramics.

"It's about bringing people together during Matariki to celebrate creativity, community, learning and connection," they say.

The festival begins with a dawn ceremony and shared breakfast marking Matariki, offering a moment for reflection and renewal as the community gathers to welcome the Māori New Year.

Artists from Wellington, Kāpiti, Horowhenua and Manawatū will feature throughout the weekend.



Mug by Hannah Barnes.

Among them is award-winning Wellington ceramic artist Aimée McLeod, whose sculptural work *Alcyone - Bird Woman* recently received a regional Gold Award at the Arts Across Aotearoa Christchurch Art Show. Her work blends native bird forms with powerful female imagery.

Waikanae artist Sarah Bromley will exhibit nature-inspired ceramics using salt firing and organic textures influenced by the bush and coastline surrounding her home studio.

Levin artist Christine Atanoa Fagan will present her Raku-fired owl sculptures while helping lead public activities, including harakeke flower-making workshops and the festival's popular Raku firing experiences.

Lower Hutt potter Ken Ryan will showcase functional stoneware inspired by microscopic algae and Antarctic imagery, while emerging Ashhurst artist Hannah Barnes will debut playful face mugs and experimental recycled underglaze works.

Friday's programme coincides with race day at the racing club (see opposite page), creating a lively atmosphere featuring racing, food trucks, music and free "have-a-go" sessions, including wheel throwing, hand-building and weaving.

Saturday shifts focus to the public Raku experience, where visitors can glaze and fire their own pottery pieces under the guidance of experienced potters.

■ Entry to Friday's race day is \$10, with koha welcomed to support community youth pottery.



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ŌTAKI STREET SCENE



The works of Brent Wong – *Diagram* 1972.



Snowstorm, 1973.



Untitled Interior 1972-77

Ōtaki-born Brent Wong exhibits at Toi Mahara

A rare opportunity to see one of New Zealand's most distinctive painters, Brent Wong (right), famous for his visionary landscapes, is on at Toi Mahara until August 30.

Brent is an Ōtaki-born painter and musician whose distinctive works are often described as psychological and surreal. Many depict landscapes with vast skies, dominated by imagined fragments of architecture, such as decorative cornices and monolithic assemblages of these features.

Mostly self-taught, especially as a painter, Brent began to exhibit in the mid-1960s and became one of the country's most recognised painters. The head of art at Webb's art auction house, Charles Ninow, has said: "Brent Wong's painting style has a unique quality that resists being grouped with any one New Zealand artistic canon – it is his peculiar blend of spiritual ruminations, coupled with realism-turned-surrealism, that makes him a solitary figure."

Brent was born in Ōtaki in 1945. His family moved to Wellington in 1949. They lived with his uncle above his shop on Vivian Street. The architecture that surrounded them, particularly the heavy ornamentation that featured on the



buildings, made an impact on Brent and would later become a recurring motif in his paintings. His older brother and fellow painter, Wong Sing Tai (Harry Wong), is also a well known artist.

Brent studied art in high school and began studying at Wellington Polytechnic's School of Design in 1963, but left after a few months as he was more interested in studying fine arts, and the course had become focused on design just before he began studying.

In 1965 he took up a job at *The Dominion* newspaper. This period introduced him to a cultural circle of writers, musicians and intellectuals – as well as "providing the young painter with inexhaustible supplies of newsprint".

Brent says that when work temporarily waned, he would draw images on the newsprint using a ballpoint pen, some of which became the basis for later paintings.

His finely tuned sense of colour and light was influenced by painters such as Turner, Kandinsky, and Klee. He has also spoken of an interest in the American painter Andrew Wyeth and, like Wyeth, Brent's paintings convey an interest in psychological interiority and feelings of isolation, tension and anticipation.

His paintings were first exhibited at the New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts in 1967 and his first solo exhibition followed two years later, in 1969, with the exhibition of 12 paintings at Rothmans Gallery (later the Wellington Cultural Centre). Reflecting on this debut a decade later, Neil Rowe wrote in *Art New Zealand*: "The impact of these paintings, with their haunting enigmatic quality, highly original imagery and surrealistic bite, coupled with the excellence of their draughtsmanship, excited extravagant critical attention: and overnight established the previously unknown Brent Wong as an important painter in the local context".

■ The exhibition at Toi Mahara, Waikanae, is on until August 30.

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Shigemitsu Ohashi surrounded by the moon and planets in his exhibition *Beyond the sky and at hand*. Photo Kevin Ramshaw

Moon stirs potter's soul

Japanese potter Shigemitsu Ohashi is fascinated by the moon.

His ceramic recreation of it takes centre stage at his new solo show "Beyond the sky and at hand now" at Toi Mahara.

Shigemitsu spends a lot of time watching images from the Hubble Space Telescope, James Webb Space Telescope and the Nasa project.

"I feel the moon is special in the solar system," he says. "I believe that the formation of the moon billions of years ago created our early Earth and led to the emergence of life. When I consider how the planets were created over such a vast span of time, they truly stir my soul."

Sixteen ceramic works are on display, all of which were created during his time as summer resident artist at The Kilns at Te Horo. The Kilns complex is the former home of celebrated New Zealand ceramicist Mirek Smíšek.

Shigemitsu had a long association with Mirek, whom he met on his first visit to New Zealand. The trip was formative for Shigemitsu and when he became a fulltime potter in 2000, he chose New Zealand as the place to begin that journey. He now travels between New Zealand and Japan.

He has been working on the moon and planets for the past six years, although he also makes utilitarian pieces such as vases and bowls. When asked whether he has a preference for practical or art objects he says: "I always make whatever takes my fancy at the time."

Shigemitsu describes the process of making pottery as one of trial and error – it's a process that he enjoys. He had many unexpected results during the six-month residency at The Kilns, one of which can be seen in the work titled *Disastrous!* *Toi Mahara is open 10am-4pm Tuesday to Sunday. Entry is free.*

ŌTAKI STREET SCENE



MY ŌTAKI KAI

By DEBBI CARSON

ŌTAKI TODAY ONLINE

Don't forget that you can go online every month to read the latest – and archived – issues of Ōtaki Today.

See otakitoday.com

A favourite winter warmer

Deb Shannon is well known in Ōtaki for her Old School Beauty & Electrolysis business in Dunstan Street, and more latterly, as chair of the Ōtaki Te Horo Business Association.

The business group has been operating for about two years, aiming to "Connect-Support-Thrive" with local businesses.

After, the first 18 months establishing its governance, the volunteer association is now down to business.

"I'm really proud of what our team has achieved and there's still more to come," Deb says.

Bi-monthly networking meetings are held for members and to introduce guest speakers with whatever is topical at the time. A new promotion in spring will promote "Ōtaki Dollars", so keep an eye on local papers, radio and social media.

Deb has owned and operated Old School Beauty & Electrolysis at 26 Dunstan Street for the past eight years, during which time she has enjoyed meeting and treating clients near and far.

"I'd like to take this opportunity to thank all you wonderful clients who have supported Old School Beauty – it's been absolutely fabulous," she says.

Her recipe below is a favourite winter warmer for her. She makes a stockpot at a time, eating some and freezing a lot, making it easy to grab for a quick lunch or Sunday dinner.



Deb's pumpkin soup with a twist

Recipe (for a 9-litre stockpot)

- 1 tbsp rice bran oil
- 3 large garlic cloves, cut finely
- 2-3cm fresh ginger, cut finely
- 2 large onions, chopped
- Large pumpkin
- 1½ tbsp chicken stock powder
- Water
- 1 tbsp sweet chilli sauce
- Salt & ground pepper to taste

Sauté garlic and ginger, for a minute add onions and sauté until soft. Peel and cut up pumpkin into chunks, add to the stockpot. Dissolve chicken stock powder in a cup of boiling

water, add to stockpot then cover the pumpkin with water. Bring to the boil, simmer with a lid on. Once pumpkin is soft, turn heat off. Add the sweet chilli sauce (or not, to suit your taste). Stir in and leave to cool. When cool, use a stick blender to blend to a consistency you like.

Serve. I like mine quite thick, with a dollop of sour cream and chopped fresh coriander. Freeze or use the surplus for lunches.

A well known Wellington chef once told me: "Remember, a recipe is but a guide." So tweak the recipe to suit your taste.

You can add coconut milk if you like that flavour, or add extra water to make the soup thinner. Use parsley instead of coriander. or use yoghurt instead of sour cream.

Enjoy!

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MAHI MĀRA/Gardening

Prune right for feijoa delight



Feijoas always fruit on new wood.

Photos Kath Irvine

If you prune your feijoa every year, you'll find there's not much to do. It's a lovely, feet-on-the-ground job.

I like to prune my feijoas right after harvest. Feijoas, like citrus, fruit on new season's wood. That's why, if left unpruned, the fruitful bits get farther and farther away every year.

If your feijoa is a wild woolly monster, you've two options. Instant gratification – chop it off at the knees and start again. Or slow and considered (my preference), and take two or three years to gradually reduce and thin the canopy.

If you choose to whack your tree back, know you won't have feijoas for a few years, and a barrage of new shoots where it was cut. To ensure you don't end up with another tangled canopy, thin the new shoots out the following summer.

For compact and fruitful feijoas you need to use thinning cuts, not heading cuts. Let's look at the difference:

Thinning is the removal of a whole shoot or branch, taking it back to its point of origin. Use thinning cuts whether you are cutting small wood or large. Thinning cuts open a tree to let light in, and they invigorate the tree, stimulating a heap of replacement wood – especially important for trees like feijoas that fruit on new wood. A cycle of fresh wood coming on each season means plenty of future fruits.

Heading is to shorten a shoot, a branch or a leader. Understand this – a headed back shoot will fork next growing season. Lots of heading cuts make your tree canopy dense, twiggy and dark. Heavy-handed heading can stunt your tree.



Your pruning goal is to create good light penetration throughout the canopy, easy access for bird and bee pollinators and a height/width that serves you well. After your prune, you should be able to kind of see through the canopy to the other side, for a vague idea of what's behind.

Use thinning cuts to remove dead or damaged wood. Then remove all the low branches to create a clear trunk, for healthy airflow and easy access to the fallen fruits (which are so much better than the picked ones).

Thinning cuts are a 2-for-1 deal, taking care of height and light at the same time. See if you can

prune your feijoa without a single heading cut!

Walk around your tree and choose the longest or widest-reaching branch. Follow it from its tip until it joins another branch – perhaps you cut it here at this join, or take it to an even lower join, or to the trunk (likely in an overgrown tree). Pull the removed branch out, and do another walk around to identify the next network to remove. Re-assess between each cut. You'll get a better end result with a few bigger cuts, rather than lots of little ones.

Leave plenty of young shoots for next year's fruits.

■ *Kath has been growing food for 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.*



After thinning, you should be able to see through the feijoa tree.

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It is also available at several other outlets, including The Big Egg, Sunlong, Arohanui Op Shop, and The Nest.

Yes, chemists have a sense of humour

More than 200 million distinct organic and inorganic chemical substances have been identified and indexed, with over 15,000 new entries added each day. Every one of them has a name.



DR STEVE HUMPHRIES

The official IUPAC name uniquely specifies a compound's structure, but it's often unwieldy. Some are spectacularly so: the longest systematic name exceeds 180,000 characters and would take hours to pronounce. And

in everyday conversation, no one is going to say β -D-fructofuranosyl- α -D-glucopyranoside when they can simply say "sugar".

It's no surprise, then, that chemists often prefer to use common names. With no strict rules – and no obligation to keep a straight face – these names can drift into the whimsical, the amusing, and occasionally the delightfully ridiculous.

Chemists often draw inspiration from a molecule's shape when choosing a name. Build an eight-carbon alkane shaped like a perfect cube and calling it cubane was almost inevitable. Synthesise a five-carbon alkane that looks like a tiny house and suddenly you've got houseane; add a few extra "architectural features" and you advance to churchane.

And then there's this molecule: two double bonds (a -diene), a distinctive silhouette, and a name that practically writes itself: bowtiediene.



Houseane Churchane Bowtiediene

The world of chemical names is full of shape-inspired whimsy; from dogcollarane to rocketene to pterodactylane.

Chemists often dodge unwieldy



Image mauriciodonascimento, Pixabay

names by turning them into acronyms. Diaminomaleonitrile becomes DAMN, and diethyl azodicarboxylate is reborn as DEAD, a fitting moniker for a shock-sensitive explosive carcinogen. A reagent made from boron (B), an aryl group (Ar), and fluorine (F) inevitably ends up as BARF. And then there's the chemotherapy drug bis-chloroethylnitrosourea, saddled with the unfortunate acronym BCNU ("be seein' you").

Minerals traditionally take the suffix -ite (as in calcite or fluorite) and are often named after the place they're first found. So, when a new silicate mineral was discovered in Cummington, Massachusetts, it ended up with the memorable name cummingtonite.

Chemistry has its musical moments, too. One researcher, an unabashed Puccini devotee, named a whole family of antibacterial and antitumour compounds after the opera *La Bohème* and its characters; including bohemiacid, marcellomycin (for Marcello), and rudolphomycin (for Rodolfo). When a fragment of rudolphomycin was later identified as a new sugar, the naming took a festive detour – it became rednose. The new name neatly fitting a requirement that sugars (for example, sucrose,

glucose) end in -ose.

On discovering a new substance, it isn't always clear what name it should be given. A researcher investigating the properties of a new compound, suspecting it might be a sugar, jokingly proposed the name ignose – from ignoro, "I don't know". The journal editor rejected it, so he tried godnose, which met the same fate. Further work eventually revealed a more suitable name: vitamin C.

One research group gave a newly synthesised hydrocarbon the working name "George". When they later coaxed two George molecules to couple under rhodium catalysis, the lab did the only reasonable thing and called the product "bi-George".

Some names come preloaded with amusement: Sexithiophene, an organic semiconductor composed of six thiophene rings; moronic acid, from the *Morinda* genus; titanic acid, simply titanium-based; angelic acid, from *Angelica*; and diabolic acid, named because it proved diabolically hard to isolate. Extract a ketone

(suffix -one, as in acetone) from a megaphylla plant and you get the anticancer agent megaphone.

Then there are chemical names that dispense with subtlety altogether: the foul-smelling products of decaying flesh, cadaverine and putrescine; draculin, the anticoagulant glycoprotein in vampire-bat saliva that keeps their prey bleeding; and the aptly named fungal poison vomitoxin. Of course, the effects of vomitoxin could always be treated with domperidone, the champagne of anti-vomiting drugs.

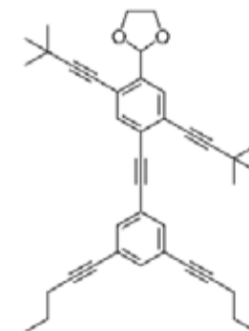
And there is no escaping the toilet humour, from constipatic acid and crapinone to uranium salts known, with admirable seriousness, as uranates. Then there is the paper in the *Journal of Organometallic Chemistry* titled "Studies on the Chemistry of the Arsoles" – an arsole being a cyclic structure (-ole) containing arsenic (Ars).

Scientific naming moves with the times. A key protein in animal embryo development, Sonic Hedgehog, was named after the video-game character because fruit-fly mutants lacking it develop a spiky, hedgehog-like appearance. When an inhibitor of Sonic Hedgehog was discovered, it was named robotnikinin – a nod to Sonic's archenemy, Dr Ivo "Eggman" Robotnik.

No tour of amusing chemical names

would be complete without the NanoPutians – molecular stick figures whose name blends nano with Lilliputian, the tiny people of *Gulliver's Travels*. Created as part of a chemical-education project for young students, the series includes a cast of organic molecules whose structural formulae resemble human figures, including NanoKid, NanoJester, and NanoChef.

It's estimated that the number of possible chemical compounds is effectively limitless, so happily we are in little danger of ever exhausting the world's supply of amusing chemical names.



Nanokid

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

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Authorised by Rob Salmond, 2 Gilmer Terrace, Wellington.



When due diligence is non negotiable

Buying a residential property is often the most significant financial commitment a person will make.

Amid the excitement of finding the right home, it's easy to overlook the critical step of due diligence. However, undertaking a thorough investigation before an agreement becomes unconditional is the most effective way to protect your investment and avoid costly future problems. This process, guided by the expertise of a solicitor, ensures a purchaser knows exactly what they are buying – warts and all.

What is due diligence?

Due diligence is a comprehensive investigation into all aspects of a property. A well drafted Agreement for Sale and Purchase will be conditional upon the purchaser completing this investigation to their satisfaction. This process typically involves scrutinising the property's physical condition, its legal status, and any council-held information that could affect its use or value. Enquiries can cover everything from the building's structural

integrity and the state of the title to financial suitability and zoning implications.

Key steps typically include commissioning a pre-purchase building report and obtaining a Land Information Memorandum (Lim) from the local council. A building inspector's role is to identify significant defects, required maintenance, and potential problems that may require further investigation.

This can be crucial, as failing to get a report, or ignoring warning signs within one, can seriously restrict your ability to receive compensation from the vendor to cover your losses, or even claim on insurance. Similarly, a Lim report can reveal vital information, such as potential land contamination, which can negatively impact a property's value.

Crucial role of a solicitor

While a purchaser can coordinate some

MATTERS OF LAW



CORINNA SIPPEL

checks themselves, a solicitor is the indispensable guide through the due diligence maze. Their role extends far beyond simply processing the final transaction; they are the purchaser's primary risk manager.

A competent solicitor begins by ensuring the Agreement for Sale and Purchase includes robust conditional clauses, such as a broad due diligence clause, a finance condition, and a clause for

solicitor's approval of the title and terms. This provides the legal framework for the purchaser to investigate and, if necessary, withdraw from the Agreement without penalty.

The solicitor's core function is to interpret the complex legal information uncovered. They conduct a search of the property's Record of Title to identify any interests, restrictions, or defects, such as easements or covenants, that could limit the purchaser's use and enjoyment

of the land. Their advice on these "legal implications of the transaction" is fundamental. They can review the legal information in the Lim report and building inspection reports and, for unit titles, review the pre-contract and pre-settlement disclosure statements, explaining the practical consequences of any issues found.

By analysing this information, a solicitor provides objective advice, helping the purchaser weigh the commercial risks against the legal realities. They might recommend further specialist reports or advise on renegotiating the price based on discovered defects. Crucially, they ensure the purchaser makes a fully informed decision before committing unconditionally to a property.

Engaging a solicitor early is therefore not an administrative formality, but a strategic necessity for safeguarding what is likely to be your most valuable asset.

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

New map for financial capability

Booster Foundation has released a new interactive map to help people find financial capability resources.

Booster chief executive Anika Speedy says the open-source map makes it easy to find local and national services like financial education, business support and mentoring.

"A lot of people want to grow their financial knowledge and capability, and many organisations across the motu can help," she says. "But putting your finger on where they are and what they offer can take a lot of time. The map makes this much easier."

So far, about 700 organisations can be found by filters like business growth support, workplace development, support and mentoring.

Listed in Ōtaki currently are Citizens Advice Bureau and Te Rōpū Pakihi – the Kāpiti-Horowhenua Māori business network.

■ See boosterfoundation.org and click on "Tools & Resources"

Business resilience is not loud

I recently sat with a business owner I had known for several years.

He runs an established Wellington business, employs a good team, and has built something real over a long time.

He was tired. Not defeated. Not bitter. Just genuinely, honestly tired – in a way that only comes from carrying real responsibility through a sustained period of difficulty.

The past couple of years have been hard for many Wellington businesses, and his has been no exception. And yet, at no point in our session did I see panic. No blame. No catastrophising. No pretending everything was fine either.

Just a quiet, steady statement: "This is how we're going to do it."

I've been a business coach for a long time. I've sat in a lot of rooms with a lot of business owners. And I want to tell you something that often gets missed in the public conversation about resilience.

Resilience is not loud. It doesn't look like the motivational poster version – jaw set, fist raised, ready to conquer. Real resilience, the kind that sustains a business through hard times, looks a lot more ordinary than that.

It looks like showing up to a strategy session when you'd rather not. It looks like giving your team honest information instead of false reassurance. It looks like saying "I don't have all the answers", and then getting to work on finding them anyway.

Later that same day, I was with another Wellington business. Different industry, different challenges, different team. But the same DNA.

In that session, we talked about profit. Someone challenged another person in the room: "All you care about is profit."

That kind of comment usually shuts things down. Instead, it opened something up.

I posed a scenario to the group: "What would you do if the bank balance was zero and wages had to be paid next week?"

The room sharpened immediately.

People stopped talking in abstractions and started thinking in actions. Chase the debtors. Secure the next job. Make the calls you've been putting off. Deal with the reality in front of you, not the theory.

That conversation was one of the most honest I've been part of in a while. And what emerged from it wasn't a choice between caring about people and caring about money. It was a much more mature understanding: without a financially viable business, there is no team to care about.

The owners in that room understood something that many people outside business don't appreciate: carrying a payroll is a form of service. Every week those wages go out, families are supported, mortgages get paid.

YOUR BUSINESS



CHRIS WHELAN

Both businesses have been operating for decades, and both are successful. But that success isn't something that happened to them. It's something they chose, repeatedly, to fight for.

What strikes me about these businesses – and about the best businesses I work with – is they never believe they've arrived. They keep asking: how do we improve?

They keep having the hard conversations instead of avoiding

them. They keep reorganising, adapting, rebuilding because they understand that standing still is its own kind of risk.

We talk a lot in New Zealand about innovation, growth, and building businesses for the future. But underneath all of that, the foundation is something quieter and less celebrated – the willingness to keep going, honestly, when things are difficult.

Not performing strength. Not pretending difficulty away. Not blaming the economy, the government, the team, or bad luck. Just the steady, unglamorous, daily decision to confront reality and keep improving anyway.

That is what resilience actually looks like.

■ Chris is a Wellington-based business coach who works with established New Zealand businesses. He helps owners build businesses that run beyond them. To find out more, visit www.chriswhelancoaching.com

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Herbalist Sarah Beresford Sadek in her apothecary at Tōtara Cottage.

Photo Ōtaki Today

Cottage just the spot for herbalist Sarah

FEW PLACES would be better suited to herbalist Sarah Beresford Sadek than her tranquil home tucked among the trees on Ōtaki Gorge Road.

Known as Tōtara Cottage, the property is home to Tōtara Cottage Apothecary, where Sarah practises what she calls “slow medicine” – a holistic approach to health focused as much on listening and lifestyle as it is on herbs and remedies.

The cottage itself has a long history. Officially dating back to the 1940s, it has served many purposes over the decades, including being part of a former chicken farm and housing an army shelter during the Second World War.

Sarah says she and her family were drawn to both the cottage’s character and the towering tōtara trees surrounding it.

Inside the peaceful property sits a handcrafted apothecary building Sarah designed herself using recycled windows, doors and timber. It now serves as her consultation room, workshop space and drying room for herbs grown on the property.

Sarah’s path into herbal medicine was somewhat unconventional. Originally trained as an anthropologist and social scientist, she spent years working in qualitative research and strategy roles before turning toward herbalism after her own long journey with chronic illness and surgery.

“It all centred around understanding, listening to and trying to help people,” she says.

She trained through the Southern Institute of Medical Herbalism in Christchurch and has spent the past few years building her practice in rural Ōtaki.

Unlike some herbalists who focus heavily on supplements and commercial products, Sarah says her work is grounded in the “vitalist” tradition of Western herbal medicine – an approach that emphasises the body’s natural healing ability and seeks to treat causes rather than suppress symptoms.

“It’s very holistic,” she says. “I’m really into slowing everything down. I think often that’s one of the biggest things we need in life.”

An initial consultation typically lasts about 90

minutes and includes discussions about sleep, diet, stress, mental wellbeing and lifestyle.

Clients are welcomed with tea and encouraged to relax before talking through what is happening in their lives.

“I see myself really as a guide and support person on people’s healing journeys.”

While she does create herbal tinctures, teas and remedies, she says the therapeutic side of her work is just as important.

“It’s not as simple as ‘here, take these herbs and you’ll be fine.’ We talk through what’s going on and work out together what small steps might help.”

Stress is one of the most common issues she encounters, particularly among women juggling work, family and financial pressures.

“There’s a real pressure point at this time,” she says. “People are exhausted and overwhelmed.”

Sarah also works with children, often taking a more creative approach by involving them in herb workshops or letting them help make their own remedies from plants gathered in the garden.

Her extensive herb garden includes everything from lemon balm and rosemary to skullcap, echinacea and tibetan gentian. She grows as much as possible herself, believing people should reconnect with the traditions of growing and making medicine locally.

“Ideally, I want to grow, harvest and make the medicine here,” she says.

Global supply issues since Covid-19 have reinforced the importance of local sustainability and self-reliance.

“Maybe it’s a sign we shouldn’t rely so much on importing everything.”

She acknowledges herbal medicine is not for everyone and says trust and personal connection are essential.

“I’m not trying to tell people what to do,” she says. “I’m trying to help them figure out what’s best for themselves.”

For Sarah, the calm atmosphere of Tōtara Cottage is part of the healing process itself.

“I think we all need a bit more kindness, care and slowing down in our lives.”

■ See totaracottageapothecary.nz



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HĪTŌRIA/History

A key unlocks the chains of office

I received an email from the editor at precisely 12.24pm on Wednesday, May 20. It read: "Sorry to spring this on you. Perhaps a piece on the new exhibition? Copy deadline for June is now next Tuesday, May 26."

The suggestion for a story about the new exhibition at the museum was a sensible one. Covering stories of Ōtaki as a borough from



1920 to 1989, it had opened on the previous Thursday, and I was keen to use any opportunity I had to promote it. I already had the outlines of a story in my mind about the similarities between the borough's early years and the challenges we are seeing in local government today – rising rates, the urgent need for investment in critical infrastructure, project failures, and structural changes.

With this essentially sorted as the storyline, I decided to do some research during my duty at the museum on May 21, a Thursday. As we received only one visitor during the four hours we were open – and he arrived five minutes before we closed – I climbed upstairs to see whether we had sufficient door keys to be issued to a volunteer taking on new responsibilities.



Various keys are kept in a container and as I rummaged through them, I saw a small key with a tag reading "Mayoral Chain Case". It quickly grabbed my attention because while we were putting the new exhibition together, there had been discussion about the mayoral chains and a comment that we had only a photograph of them in our collection.

Given the existence of the key, it seemed that we must have had the chain at some point, and it might still be somewhere in the building.

The logical place to start the search was inside the vault, which is where the most valuable

collection items are stored. After a short search, I discovered two similar looking cases on a low shelf at the rear of the room. In one of them was the Ōtaki Borough Mayoral Chain, the pendant at its bottom with the initials OBC, and the links with the engraved names of borough mayors and blank links which extended beyond the life of the borough, attached to the fabric backing.

The mayoral chain discovered, I turned my attention to the second case. Inside, was a second chain, very much like the first, but this one was the "Women's Division of Federated Farmers (WDFF) Ōtaki-Te Horo President's Chain of Office". This organisation is not covered in the museum exhibition, but its story is interesting.

The Ōtaki -Te Horo branch of the WDFF was set up in 1927, two years after the national body was established as the Women's Division of the Farmers' Union; to improve support systems for rural women. Formed in Northland in 1899, the Farmers' Union became Federated Farmers in 1945, and in 1946 the Women's Division of Federated Farmers came into being.

Following an energetic first few years, in the 1930s the Ōtaki -Te Horo branch struggled to survive, with attendance at meetings generally fewer than 10. However, during the years of the Second World War the members were active participants in the community's war effort, including running stalls for funding parcels for soldiers, and contributing to the national body's successful project to buy a Spitfire fighter plane.

After the war it continued to be active, mirroring success on the national scene where, by 1960, the WDFF had more than 30,000 members. An *Ōtaki Historical Journal* article acknowledged its 40th anniversary: "By 1967... it had become the largest and most prestigious women's organisation in the Ōtaki-Te Horo area."

Standing in the vault, looking at the two chains, and reflecting on the social perspectives of men and women during most of the years covered by the exhibition at the museum, I wondered what the mayor thought about power, status and authority on the occasions when he was wearing his regalia, and saw the WDFF branch wearing hers.



The Ōtaki Borough Mayoral Chain. The pendant has the initials OBC, and the links have the engraved names of borough mayors. The last Mayor of Ōtaki – in 1989 – was Ken Ludlam. Photos Ōtaki Heritage

The Women's Division of Federated Farmers (WDFF) Ōtaki-Te Horo President's Chain of Office. The branch was set up in 1927, two years after the national body was established as the Women's Division of the Farmers' Union.

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Ōtaki from the air in 1947, with the fire station and Raukawa Marae in the foreground. Photo: White's Aviation.

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ŌTAKI CONVENT SCHOOL 1954



ŌTAKI CONVENT SCHOOL 1954: Standards 1&2. Back row, from left: Lawrence Putu, Patricia Wright, Mary Eru, Gay Munroe, Pauline Williams, Diane Gardener, Dawn Nichols, Patricia Picket, Patricia Richards, Lawton Gestro. Middle row: Vincent Monk, Bobby Ransfield, Geoffrey Harper, Lyall Shailer, Simon Matahere, Russell Climie, Donald Oliver, Bill Eru, Tamati Raika, George Richards. Front: Margaret Bishop, Jillian Bourke, Anne Oliver, Josephine O'Connor, Valerie McCormack, Margaret Mary Murphy, Erna Winterburn, Georgina Mason, Prue Neate, Mehegan Stuart, Colleen Doyle, Joan Nichols, Whilemena Brown. *Photo and caption courtesy of Mehegan Goodman (nee Stuart)*

ŌTAKI YESTERDAY
ISSUE 6 • 2025

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Anne Thorpe:
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p7

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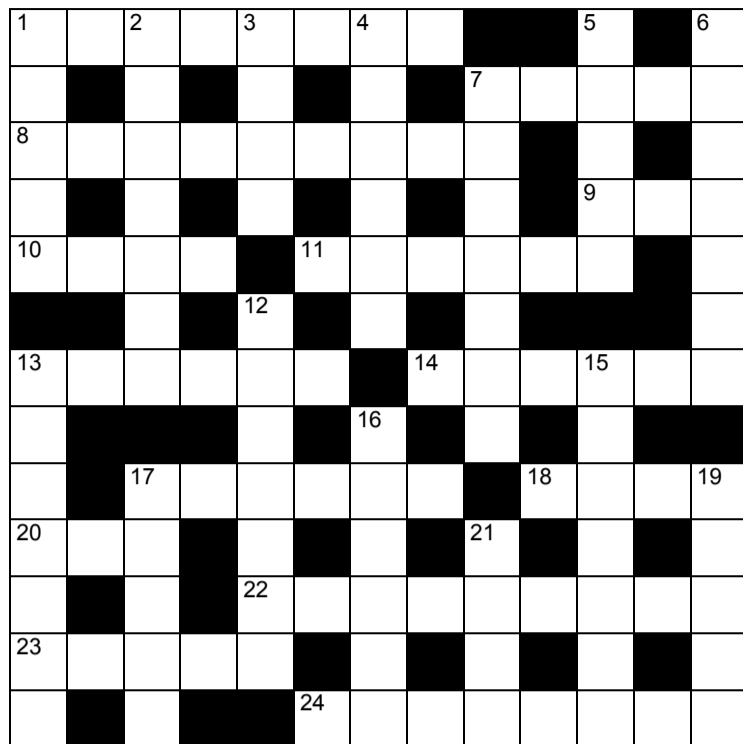


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THE CROSSWORD #NZ1960A (answers below)



ACROSS

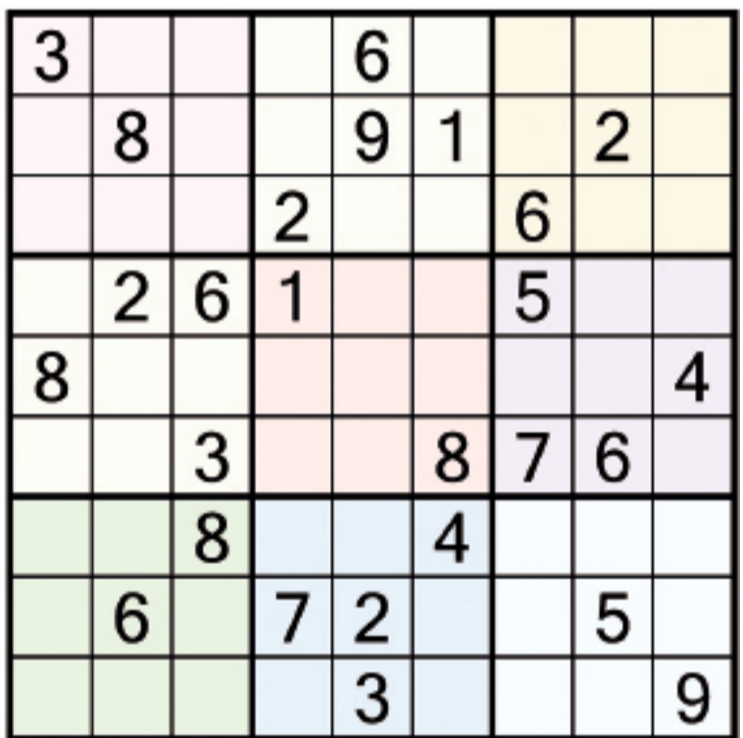
- 1. Electorate held by Winston Peters from 1984 to 2005 by Winston Peters, first for National, then NZ First (8)
- 7. Māori burial ground (5)
- 8. Home of the Golden Shears since 1961 (9)
- 9. New Zealand's newest university, created in 2000 (3)
- 10. Sedate (4)
- 11. City with the suburbs Maitai, Moana, and Monaco (6)
- 13. Infuriate (6)
- 14. In Australia, it's a thong (6)
- 17. Annual pay (6)
- 18. Musical instrument (4)
- 20. Nine (Māori) (3)
- 22. Bees' constructive

DOWN

- 1. Shy (5)
- 2. Rickety (7)
- 3. Prayer ending (4)
- 4. Collect (6)
- 5. Homo sapien (5)
- 6. Distinctive New Zealand bird, pīwakawaka (7)
- 7. Out of the ordinary (7)
- 12. Affluent (7)
- 13. Indigenous people of the Chatham Islands (7)
- 15. Unreliable (7)
- 16. Hair feature called bangs in the US (6)
- 17. Hairstylist's workplace (5)
- 19. Implant (5)
- 21. Sensationalism (4)

SUDOKU PUZZLES thepuzzlecompany.co.nz

HARD #102H 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. Answers opposite page.



SUDOKU SOLUTION #102H

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

CROSSWORD #1960A ANSWERS

- ACROSS:** 1. Tauranga, 7. Urupa, 8. Masterton, 9. AUT, 10. Drug, 11. Nelson, 13. Madden, 14. Jandal, 17. Salary, 18. Oboe, 20. Iwa, 22. Honeycomb, 23. Roomy, 24. Deceased. **Down:** 1. Timid, 2. Unsound, 3. Amen, 4. Gather, 5. Human, 6. Fantail, 7. Unusual, 12. Wealthy, 13. Moriori, 15. Dubious, 16. Fringe, 17. Salon, 19. Embed, 21. Hype.



FOODIES' QUIZ
Answers bottom of page.

1. What is a "rambutan"? a. An Indonesian chefs' hat b. A tropical fruit c. A food festival d. An Asian rice dish.
2. Which of the following wild mushrooms would you NOT eat? a. fairy ring champignons b. panther cap c. pine d. trumpet of the dead.
3. Bechamel, mornay, and soubise are all types of: a. seafood dishes b. chicken dishes c. cheese sauces d. white sauces.
4. Beurre Bosc, Packam's Triumph, and Doyenne du Comice are all varieties of what? a. potatoes b. pumpkins c. apples d. pears.
5. In New Orleans, if you asked for a Po' Boy you would get a French roll filled with . . . : a. shark b. catfish c. oysters d. alligator.
6. What is the vegetable combination known as "the Holy trinity" in Cajun cooking? a. chillies, tomatoes, onions b. tomatoes, parsley, onion tops c. bell peppers, onion, celery d. garlic, tomatoes chillies.
7. Marmite is not only a savoury spread. It is also a . . . ? a. small rodent b. vegetable c. cooking pot d. soup.
8. Persillade is a mixture of finely chopped parsley and ? a. lemon zest b. garlic c. chives d. black pepper.
9. The main ingredient in rollmops is: a. herring b. anchovies c. lobster d. salmon.
10. What is a roux? a. cheese wine variety b. mixture of beaten eggs and sugar c. cooked mixture of flour with oil or fat.



Ōtaki River entrance tides
June 3 – July 3

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

FOODIES' QUIZ ANSWERS:
1. b. A tropical fruit 2. The panther cap is a poisonous mushroom that can cause serious illness if consumed. It often resembles edible mushrooms, making identification difficult for novice foragers. 3. d. white sauces. 4. d. pears. 5. c. oysters) or other seafood such as shrimps). 6. c. bell peppers, onion, celery. 7. c. cooking pot. 8. b. garlic. 9. a. herring. 10. c. a cooked mixture of flour with oil or fat.

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Whiti vanquish Vikings

By Frank Neill

Whiti Te Ra ki Ōtaki scored its second big victory in succession when it defeated the Porirua Vikings 54-4 on May 23.

In their previous match, on May 9, Whiti had a convincing 34-14 win over Toa at Onepoto Park, Titahi Bay.

Playing on their home ground at Ōtaki Domain, Whiti totally dominated the Vikings, scoring 11 tries, while the Porirua team scored just one. They led 28-0 at halftime.

Two players – Levi Kemp and Huston Holloway – dotted down twice. Playing in his 50th premiership match for Whiti, Tawhiri Kereama kicked three goals and scored a try.

Hirini Cooper, Munz Rik, Tungia Cooper, Mason Couchman, Manaia Osborne and Aaron Whikitia also scored tries. Aaron Whikitia kicked three conversions, with Aaron Taiapa kicking one conversion.

In all, 10 Whiti Te Ra players featured on the scoreboard.

Whiti has played just the one match – against the Vikings – in the three weeks leading up to King’s Birthday weekend. They had a bye on May 16 and the Wellington Rugby League competition took a break on the long weekend.

At the end of May Whiti sits at No 3 on the Wellington League premiership table.

Whiti Te Rā’s number 9, Aaron Whikitia, runs around his marker on his way to scoring a try against the Vikings at Ōtaki Domain on May 23.

Photo Frank Neill



Rāhui’s patchy season continues

By Frank Neill

Rāhui’s premier rugby team continued its up and down season with a win, a draw and a thumping loss in its last three matches.

They chalked up a well deserved 36-24 victory over Waikanae on May 23, retaining the He Waka Eke Noa taonga for the fifth consecutive season. The trophy was first contested in 2021, and Waikanae have won it only once, in its first year.

Rāhui ran in four tries, with Leon Ellison, Cameron Graham, Powiki Cook and John Foxall dotting down. Alizay Roach kicked four conversions and two penalties.

A week earlier Rāhui drew 43-43 with Levin Wanderers in a home match at Ōtaki Domain. Two players – Sonson Moananu and Kingston Taula – scored two tries each. Naapi Nikora and Barclay Cribb also scored. Leon Ellison kicked five conversions and Alizay Roach one penalty. Ngarongo Selby-Rickit had an outstanding match.

The Ōtaki team was brought back to earth in its latest match, sorely missing outstanding playmaker Leon Ellison, who had to stand down for a week after chalking up three yellow cards this season.

Up against Paraparaumu, who they had beaten in round one of the Ramsbotham Cup, Rāhui lost heavily, going down 67-7. Morehu Connor-Phillips scored the only try for Rāhui, with Alizay Roach kicking the conversion.

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