

ŌTAKI TODAY

Ngā kōrero o Ōtaki

HANUERE/JANUARY 2026

otakitoday.com

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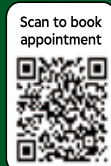
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Sir Chris, first Ōtaki knight

By Bruce Kohn

The Otaki College old boy knighted in the New Year Honours, Sir Christopher Parkin, KNZM, has left his mark in the capital along with the scholarships that bear his name at his old school.

Entrepreneur, philanthropist, collector, patron of the arts, former hotelier and three-term Wellington City councillor, Sir Christopher is believed to be the first person raised in Ōtaki to become a knight or dame.

He developed a career of variety that demonstrated education in a small Kiwi town was no barrier to success in the wider world.

In May 2018, when he was inducted into the Ōtaki College Hall of Fame, Fraser Carson noted at the ceremony: "... he is an exceptional New Zealander, a true Wellington patriot and someone that Ōtaki and this college should be very proud of".

Fraser quoted an old friend of Sir Christopher, Wellington developer Rex Nichols, who said: "Chris is an extremely excellent choice as a distinguished member of Ōtaki College's Hall of Fame. He sets a fitting example for future Ōtaki students and graduates and would be a valuable person for Ōtaki to use as one of its examples of what can be achieved by a student from a small provincial town."

The inscription for his New Year honour as a Knights Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit read: "For services to philanthropy and the arts."

Sir Christopher, when interviewed by *Otaki Today*, reflected that the honour was definitely a surprise, "but you do get plenty of warning. And when you look back over your career and what you have done it is very satisfying."

He said his approach to philanthropy was to get involved where he could see results directly, rather than with buildings or objects.

"I am working with the principal of Ōtaki College [Andy Fraser] and will do some more, seeing how we can raise achievements. I like to achieve results.

"It is a long time since I've been a student,

but the character you form in a small town stays with you and moulds the rest of your life. But what you eventually do depends on tenacity and drive. A better education certainly helps."

Sir Christopher was born in Doncaster, England, in 1948 to George and Olive Parkin. His family moved to Ōtaki four years later, where accountant George, along with Keith Knox, formed Knox and Parkin accountancy firm. Sir Christopher graduated from Ōtaki College in 1966.

He bought his first property at the age of 23 while still a student at Victoria University. He paid \$12,500 for it and sold it a few years later for \$30,000. Following graduation, he worked with a manufacturing business before joining the then Development Finance Corporation as a financial analyst. The DFC opened an office in San Francisco, and he moved there for four years, marketing New Zealand business advantages to American companies.

It was on his return in 1983 that he moved heavily into property development. Blocks of apartments were bought, renovated, and then sold. A decision in 1992 when he bought the Michael Fowler Hotel from the government brought him headlines.

The following year he moved the hotel across the road along a specially constructed rail line from its location to make way for Te Papa Tongarewa – the Museum of New Zealand. The hotel was at that time the largest building in New Zealand to be relocated and was renamed the Museum Hotel.

He sold the hotel in 2015, but it retains the name and continues to house his large private collection of contemporary New Zealand art – more than 110 items collected over about three decades.

continues page 4



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Anam Cara Gardens, 150 Rangiuu Rd. Thursday, January 15 to Monday, January 19. Adults \$5, children (under 16) free: Door sales only.

HOROWHENUA AP&I SHOW

Saturday-Sunday January 17-18. Levin Showgrounds. (See page 11 for details.)

KĀPITI COAST HERITAGE CLUE HUNT

Nine museums, nine clues. Calling budding detectives of all ages and those looking for something free and fun to do with the family, over Wellington Anniversary Weekend, January 17-19. You'll discover local Kāpiti heritage along the way and be in to win prize packs donated by generous local Kāpiti businesses. How to enter: pick up your clue hunt entry form at the first museum you visit. Drop your completed entry form in the entry box at the last museum you visit. It's that easy. One prize draw entry for each correct clue answered. Visit Ōtaki Heritage Museum, Ōtaki Health Camp Rotunda, The Kilns at Te Horo, Kāpiti Coast Museum, Toi Mahara Art Gallery, Kāpiti Aviation Museum, US Marines in Kāpiti, Wellington Tramway Museum. Paekākāriki Station Museum.

WAIKANAĒ LIONS GARDEN TRAIL

Saturday and Sunday January 24-25. Tickets from Waikanae Lions Ticket Kiosk (\$34.05), David Reid Showhome, Ngarara Road, Waikanae. Celebrating three decades of garden creativity. From coastal retreats to native sanctuaries and formal landscapes, the trail invites you to explore, enjoy, and be inspired. The two-day pass allows you to enjoy a wonderful selection of 16 gardens at your leisure.

TOI MAHARA LIVE ART MARKET

Mahara Place, Waikanae, noon-4pm, January 31. See page 18 for details.

PGA GOLF New Zealand PGA Championship, Paraparaumu Beach Golf Club, February 19-22.

ŌTAKI KITE FESTIVAL Saturday-Sunday, March 14-15, Ōtaki Beach. International and New Zealand flyers, including the return of the Phoenix Collective, the stunt kite flyers from Queensland. On-stage entertainment, food trucks, craft stalls, Kelly & Co big dig – and lots of kites.

MĀORILAND FILM FESTIVAL March 24–28, celebrating storytelling with screenings, art, and talks for its 13th annual event. Now the world's biggest Indigenous film festival – right here in Ōtaki. See maorilandfilm.co.nz

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ŌTAKI MUSEUM

49 Main St. 06 364-6886. *Mai i te Kāinga Tāone Iti – Wāhanga 1: 1843-1920* (From Kāinga to Village – Part 1: 1843-1920). This is the third in a series of exhibitions focusing on the township of Ōtaki, and its development over the past 200 years. Visitors can also play the old theatre pianola while at the museum. The Anne Thorpe Reading Room is open at the same times as the museum. Museum open 10am-2pm Thursday to Saturday, except public holidays.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

ŌTAKI STROKE SUPPORT GROUP & WELLNESS CENTRE:

Meets for Sit and Be Fit classes, 10am Friday mornings at Senior Citizens' Hall, Rangitira Street. All welcome.

ŌTAKI LIBRARY – ALL SESSIONS FREE:

JP service every Monday 10.30am-12.30pm;

Age Concern every 2nd Thursday 10am-noon

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

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

WAIKANAĒ BEACH INDOOR SPRING MARKET:

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

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

Peters fires opening election shot

THE ŌTAKI and Horowhenua regions with prolific horticulture plantings have a significant stake in the outcome of the moves by NZ First and Winston Peters in the Game of Thrones that is poised to begin within the NZ Parliament this year.

Peters' decision to withdraw support for the India-New Zealand Free Trade Agreement (FTA) as proposed was an opening shot in the competition for voting support at this year's General Election.

He has worried for several months that New Zealand would not get adequate dairy access and felt concerned about the prospect of a rise in Indian migration here, especially in regard to the repatriation of earnings back to families in India.

Nevertheless, it came as a surprise to National Party members and the Labour Party that NZ First would take the stand that it did. Labour's Damian O'Connor maintained a position that promised close scrutiny before any commitment.

It may be that by the time this edition of *Ōtaki Today* goes to print that some shuffling of positions has taken place. But at the time of writing, the arrangement is problematic, even though it is seen by many in the business community as an excellent step forward to raising the income level of Kiwi horticultural exports.

It should not be a political bargaining point. For New Zealand to have a free trade arrangement with the world's most populous

nation is a natural progression that fits with our development of trade deals since we lost our special arrangements with Britain in the 1970s.

Producers of kiwifruit, apples, berries, flowers, and vegetables seem big winners from the agreement as it stands awaiting parliamentary scrutiny. Dairy industry whining that the proposed arrangement does little to increase its sales seems unreal against the backdrop that it knew India was never going to open its markets fully to offshore traders. The Indian dairy lobby is powerful; cows have a unique place in the country's cultural life; and small farmers are the economic backbone of thousands of Indian villages.

Peters would have been well aware that "dairy" was not going to come out of negotiations well. So why the song and dance of objection? The answers seem to lie

in the two areas mentioned above – minimum improvements in trading conditions for dairy and a further increase in migration here from India, plus the opportunity to reflect the claimed patriotism of his party.

The NZ First approach is to appeal to fringe middle-ground National and Labour supporters alike. The surge of Asian migrants into the country disturbs these voters who feel ill at ease in a New Zealand multi-cultural setting. His positioning and that of Labour, does, however, confirm to a majority of Asian voters that National is their natural party of choice as the more outward looking entity.

Closing stages of Parliament almost always provide entertainment with rhetoric reaching

humorous and frequently outrageous heights. Peters, as has almost become customary, led the way. Among his verbal forays:

"We are going to turn the polls into confetti. We are socially conservative, patriotic, we bring balance. We intend to turn this election on its head. Labour is no longer the party of the workers. Old school Labour voters have only one place to go. The Greens have gone through more MPs than protests. They are not a Green Party any more."

On Te Pati Maori: "They want a totalitarian race-based country. I said in my speech at the start of the year that I know a bunch of losers when I see it."

To the media: "Get out of my way and watch this space."

The rhetoric suggests there is little prospect of NZ First teaming up with Labour following the year-end election. But few expected he would become a pivotal figure in the Ardern administration.

It is frequently said that a week is a long time in politics. Unless dragons in the form of a dramatic withdrawal from the ruling coalition intervene, the NZ First leader has almost a full year to play his political cards pre-election, with an intense post-election phase likely to follow.

The machinations of NZ First in Parliament are the equal of political skulduggery between the knights, dames, and Masters of the Dragons on TV's *Game of Thrones*. That the potential boost to Ōtaki horticulture was placed in jeopardy as a result of Peters' FTA stance seems a price the party is prepared to pay to achieve the prize – a place in government at year's end.

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

POLITICS



BRUCE KOHN

CARTOON OF THE MONTH

By Jared Carson

ŌTAKI TODAY *Ngā Kōrero o Ōtaki*

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Modern new home for local vets

By Ian Carson

Vets on Riverbank is to open its new much expanded facility in Ōtaki on February 16.

The new vet clinic will have state-of-the-art equipment and modern, more user-friendly facilities such as spacious operating theatres and dedicated intensive care spaces.

It's a big upgrade for the local veterinary practice, which emerged from a small clinic begun by Graham Carthew in 1974. He retired in 2017, but the practice, now owned by vets Ray Lenaghan, Erin Simpson, and Charlie Georgetti, has grown steadily since, along with population growth in the region and the proliferation of lifestyle blocks.

"We've just outgrown our current building," Charlie says. "We needed to get something bigger to offer the standard of care our clients needed."

The current clinic is about 500 square metres – the new one just a few hundred metres west along Riverbank Road is 2000 square metres.

Local businesses have been used where possible, including Multibuild, GilPlans, Stones, Steve Thomas Plumbing, Land Matters, and Pritchard Civil.

The new complex will enable multiple, simultaneous procedures and better workflow. There will be an increase from five to 13 anaesthetic systems, supporting multiple surgeries, ultrasounds, and X-rays that can be performed at the same time. An additional sterile operating theatre takes the number to three, with additional non-sterile procedure rooms.

Dedicated equine treatment rooms will bring equine dentistry and minor procedures on-site, reducing travel costs for clients and consolidating services under one roof. There is



also a lifestyle block animal consult room, and wards for other large animals.

New ICU cages will provide an oxygen-enriched environment to help patients with breathing difficulties. The cages also provide temperature and humidity control as well as the ability to monitor heart rate, temperature, blood pressure, ECG and oxygen saturation of red blood cells, all without having to touch the patient, which reduces stress.

A lot of thought has gone into the design of the facility. It will have eight consulting rooms, including two cat-only rooms that dogs will never enter. Lighting will have dimmers to ease the stress on animals. And there's even a

comfortable bereavement room for families when they lose their beloved pet.

"These are not technical things, like the ICU cages," Charlie says. "They're very simple things that we haven't been able to do in the old clinic."

"Coming to the vets can be stressful for the animal and we want to make this process as stress-free as possible."

A 24/7 emergency service will be offered, operating as Kapiti Emergency Vets. It will have a vet and nurse on-site after hours, seven days a week, and be available to everyone – they don't need to be registered with Vets on Riverbank.

Charlie says this will improve access to urgent care across the region.

"This after-hours model is rare in rural New Zealand," he says. "Not many clinics offer continuous on-site care."

Although additional staff will be needed for Kapiti Emergency Vets, a boost in staff numbers for Vets on Riverbank is not anticipated.

"It's really important for us to maintain that family and community feel to the practice," he says. "It's harder to do that with a big team.

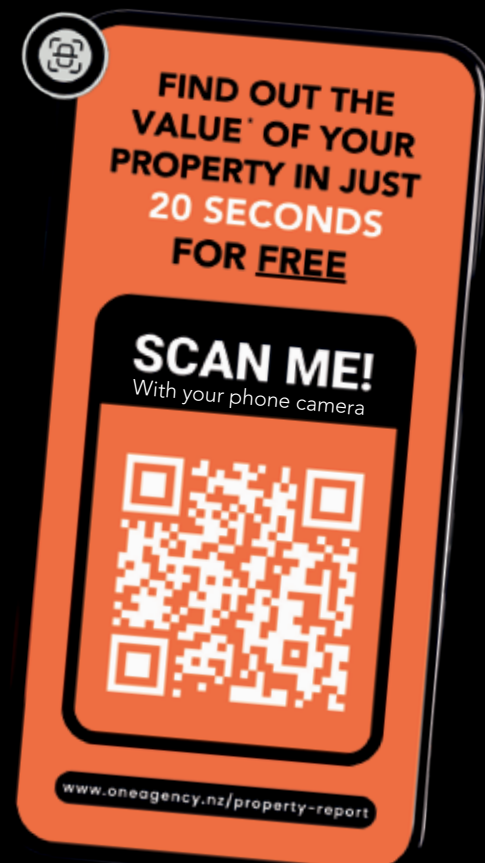
"We want to maintain that small-clinic feel, but improve the standard of care."

- The public will be able to view the new clinic on Te Hana Way (off Riverbank Rd) at an open day from noon-2pm on Sunday, February 1. Face painting, bouncy castle, BBQ and giveaways.

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First knight

from front page

An incursion into politics in 1994 saw him become a branch chair of Act, but a year later it was local body politics that captured his attention and he served for three terms on Wellington City Council, from 1995 to 2004, before standing down.

Sir Christopher is reported in Wikipedia as having left wing views when he started university but after studying economics moved to the right, saying in 2020 that he was a socialist until he understood more about human nature – “you realise the futility of any political system that depends totally for its success on the goodwill of people toward each other. It is human nature that stops socialism from ever succeeding.”

He served on the board of Te Papa, as well as on several charitable organisations and a list of arts trusts that included the St James Theatre, the Hannah Playhouse and New Zealand Affordable Arts. Along with Ōtaki College, the New Zealand Drama School, Wellington Sculpture Trust, and the New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts have been beneficiaries of his generosity, with the Parkin Drawing Prize being a national art competition open to all New Zealanders. Another is Boosted, a crowd-funding platform for artists.

Awards and honours came his way through the 1990s and on into the new millennium. He was Wellingtonian of the Year in 1993 after his success moving the Museum Hotel. In 1995 Victoria University, from which he had graduated with a master’s degree with honours and a bachelor of commerce, gave him an award for an outstanding contribution to the advancement of the institution.

RSA in positive mood as it

By Ian Carson

Ōtaki’s RSA is entering 2026 under new management, with fresh leadership promising change, transparency, and a renewed focus on community connection after the club narrowly avoided financial collapse.

With more than 840 members and in its 107th year, the RSA remains one of Ōtaki’s longest-standing community institutions. But behind the scenes, it has faced significant challenges that have threatened its survival.

At its AGM last year, the club was revealed to be in financial difficulty, despite owning a freehold building valued at about \$1.3 million. At the time, the RSA was carrying a significant amount of aged payables and lacked sufficient cash to meet its obligations. A big loss in the year to March 2025 followed a notable loss the previous year, signaling a deteriorating financial position.

But that’s turning around. The RSA is now operating profitably, debt is being repaid, and it’s hoped the 2026 financial report will be positive.

The turnaround is largely due to the involvement of business recovery specialist Te Hau, who joined the board last year and identified several issues that needed to be addressed urgently. She embarked on a business assessment and uncovered extensive operational inefficiencies, including overstaffing, poor stock management and a need for tighter financial tracking.

After this discovery phase was complete, she stepped aside from the board but continued to volunteer, working closely with staff and management and taking a hands-on approach to understand day-to-day operation improvements.



Indoors at the Ōtaki RSA, above, and (far right) the outdoor space. Photos Ōtaki Today

“The club’s finances began to turn around quite quickly once improved practices were put in place,” says Te Hau, who was recently appointed in a new role as general manager. “It’s about listening to the members and community needs, rebuilding trust and making a plan to ensure recovery.”

Operational changes have been introduced, alongside tighter financial controls and better communication. Members have taken over from the cleaning contractor, working voluntarily for an hour a week. A switch to online music has saved several hundred more dollars every month.

At the same time, the RSA has signaled a shift in direction – from simply surviving to becoming a more inclusive and vibrant community hub.

“We’re actively encouraging more locals to join and make use of its facilities,” Te Hau says. “Families are welcome, and we’ve even got a new children’s area. If you want parents here, there has to be somewhere for the kids.”

The RSA also boasts a popular outdoor area, where members can relax under umbrellas, park e-bikes and enjoy a drink while catching up with friends. Regular activities include snooker, eight-ball pool, darts, housie, indoor bowls and the Amicus social group, which organises outings and hosts guest speakers. Attracting more groups to the RSA for their meetings and functions is part of the new strategy.

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“We can even do full funeral services,” Te Hau says. “We’ll work with funeral directors to organise the service, do the catering – the whole thing. We’ve got the space and the facilities.”

More activities are planned for 2026, including weekend ukulele lessons, weeknight bingo, art and dance classes, and the introduction of card groups for 500 and euchre. Anyone interested in joining these groups is encouraged to contact Te Hau.

Live music will be a weekly fixture every Friday night, showcasing a range of genres and local musicians. Monthly Saturday events are also planned, including bands, tribute acts, dance performances, a professional casino night and a black-tie fundraising ball.

While the Abel So caterers at the RSA



restaurant have gone, a new operator is being sought. Te Hau says that could be a fully contracted operation, but a qualified chef hired by the RSA would be considered.

Te Hau has a corporate background, but also understands hospitality – her father was a hotelier in Wainuiomata when she was growing up. She chose to settle in Ōtaki a few years ago because of its strong Māori identity and values of manaakitanga. She believes inclusivity is essential to restoring trust and relevance at the RSA.

“RSAs have always played a vital role in small towns,” she says. “If we want younger generations and a broader cross-section of the community to engage, we need to reflect what Ōtaki is today.”

Membership fees, which have not increased in more than eight years, will rise slightly in 2026. Annual fees will be \$50 for members aged 65 and over, \$55 for those under 65, \$45 for returned service members, and free for currently serving defence force personnel and members aged over 90.

Te Hau says that despite the challenges, the mood at the Ōtaki RSA is optimistic.

“We’re evolving. This is about honouring our past while building a sustainable future. We want people to feel welcome, connected and proud to be part of this place again.”

■ For membership, bookings, or information about how to be involved in RSA activities, contact Te Hau on 021 934 537. Also keep up on Facebook under Ōtaki RSA.

Rāhui Rd closed again for pipe works

Rāhui Road will remain closed for at least four weeks after opening briefly during the Christmas break.

The closure will allow for the final two phases of a wastewater upgrade involving tunnelling the Rāhui Road pipe under the train track and expressway, then installing the pipe along Rāhui Road to Freemans Road, and along Te Roto Road.

Work crews are finishing the kerbs and drainage around the new BP roundabout, and the last two wastewater manholes will be completed before the road is permanently resealed.

Quality testing of the new pipeline along Mill Road will continue.

Meantime, Kāpiti Coast District Council’s summer chip-sealing programme will see the road surface refreshed on Waitohu Valley Road, Riverbank Road and Aotaki Street during the next few weeks.

Also on Waitohu Valley Road, contractors have started laying a new drinking water pipeline between the existing Waitohu Reservoir and the new Ōtaki Reservoir at the top of Te Manuao Road. This pipe will replace an ageing pipe and future proof the area for a possible second new reservoir.

HAPPY NEW YEAR

20

Welcoming a year of growth and new opportunities - we're excited to support what's ahead in 2026.

26

Kelly & Co
REALTY

Guitar duo at Stationhouse

Club kicks off new year

Ōtaki’s Stationhouse Social Club is kicking off the new year with one of New Zealand’s premier guitar duos.

New Plymouth-based Frank John and Erin Manu play at the Stationhouse home – Ōtaki Golf Club – on February 12.

Frank is originally from Amsterdam, and brings a technical brilliance to the duo’s performance. Erin was born and raised in Taranaki, providing contrast with both driving rhythms and smooth, smokey vocals.

The pair has gained a reputation for breathing life into their interpretations of covers and solid arrangements of well-known standards and hidden gems, including their own compositions.

They have plenty of experience, including folk and music festivals and acoustic clubs – think Festival of Lights, Auckland, Wellington, Canterbury and Tui folk festivals, and at Wellington and Auckland bluegrass clubs – as a duo or alongside Andrew Bicknell and Cameron “Dusty” Burnell, and Rob Greenfield. Rob (double-bass) features on the album tracks to be released by Frank & Erin later in 2026. Erin is a frequent flyer with the folkie ensemble ‘EAGALS’, an all-gal Eagles tribute band.

Whether it’s a sizzling instrumental or the soulful delivery of a ballad, the partnership creates a unique sound influenced by their favourite genres.

“As usual we offer an evening of great music, food and fun – usually on the first Thursday of every second month,” says Stationhouse’s Anje Glindemann.

- Stationhouse Social Club, Ōtaki Golf Club, Old Coach Road
- 6.30-9pm, Thursday, February 12
- Two live acts: The Salty Hearts and Frank & Erin, plus two-course dinner
- Tickets \$60 by emailing gregandanje@xtra.co.nz (no door sales)



Erin Manu and Frank John, who will be playing at Stationhouse Social Club on February 12.

Photo supplied

BRIEFS

Grants for sports groups

Raukawa Ki Runga has received \$5,421.98 for playing uniforms from NZ Community Trust in the trust’s latest funding round. Raukawa Ki Te Tonga Basketball Charitable Trust also received funding of \$5,260.86 for accommodation at an upcoming tournament.

Fire calls up 7pc in 2025

Ōtaki fire brigade volunteers had a busier year in 2025 as the number of call-outs ramped up by 7 percent to 256 from 2024’s total of 239. Twenty-four call-outs were logged in December. Six were to attend private fire alarms; five were for medical emergencies; four for special services, including a large tree felled by high winds; three for rubbish, grass or scrub fires; three to assist Levin and Waikanae brigades; one for a property fire; one for a motor vehicle crash; and one “good intent” – steam from a roof looked like smoke to the caller.

LETTER

Flat Christmas cheer inflated

Two days before Christmas I was delivering over 90 food boxes from 7am and discovered on my very first delivery that I had a slow puncture. I limped into Ōtaki and found Bowler Motors open, though they were officially closed for Christmas. They did not hesitate to help and fixed the puncture within 30 minutes. I offered to pay extra but they flatly refused, saying that I was out working delivering Christmas cheer. I was really moved and I now know where to buy my next set of tyres, even though I live in Waikanae. So refreshing to find such amazing service and kindness.

Dave Mackay
Waikanae

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Clip-on unsafe, unusable, cyclist says

By Ian Carson

Te Horo cycling advocate Gerard Zwartjes is warning it’s “only a matter of time” before someone is seriously injured on the Ōtaki River bridge.

Gerard says the newly built \$6 million clip-on intended for vulnerable road users is effectively unusable for cyclists. The clip-on was installed on the old State Highway 1 bridge as part of the post-expressway revocation works.

But Gerard says it’s been designed in a way that excludes ordinary road and racing bikes, forcing cyclists to continue using the narrow, main road deck alongside traffic. He claims a core design flaw lies in the metal plates covering the gaps between the 15 clip-on sections. The plates are set at an angle of about 10 degrees, which he says is twice as steep as the ramps used on raised pedestrian crossings.

“This creates 16 judder bars over about 200 metres,” he says. “For road bikes, that’s completely impractical and unsafe. It’s ridiculous that a project of this scale results in infrastructure cyclists can’t realistically use.”

He says similar design criteria had been applied to the Waitohu Stream clip-on north of Ōtaki, but not to the Waikanae River bridge clip-on, raising questions about consistency in design standards.

“The clip-on is accessible for pedestrians only,” Gerard says. “Cyclists are still legally allowed to use the main road deck, but it’s an extremely dangerous and unsatisfactory situation.”

He said the problem had been made worse by NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi blocking off the old pedestrian path on the bridge. While narrow, that path had previously provided cyclists with an

alternative to riding on the roadway. “That option has now been foolishly removed,” he says. “Drivers see an empty clip-on and get angry that cyclists are still on the road. We’re experiencing aggressive behaviour and road rage, and that puts lives at risk.”

Earlier this year, Gerard sought clarification from NZTA on the design and consultation process. The response stated the clip-on had been “designed and implemented specifically with all shared path users, including cyclists in mind” and that cycling advocates were consulted through groups such as the Ōtaki Community Liaison Group, iwi, Kāpiti Coast District Council, and local landowners.

Gerard disputes that claim. “No cycling groups were actually named,” he says. “The most appropriate organisations – such as the Kāpiti Cycleway, Walkway and Bridleway Advisory Group, or Kāpiti Cycle Action – were not consulted on the design details. I was a committee member of Kāpiti Cycle Action and never heard anything about this clip-on design.”

He also rejects NZTA’s assertion that both the new clip-on and the old pedestrian path remain available to users.

“That’s simply not true,” he says. “The old footpath is blocked and signed to prohibit use.”

Gerard is calling on NZTA to urgently modify the clip-on so it can be safely used by cyclists, either by replacing the raised plates with flat ones or by removing the signs blocking access to the old footpath as an interim measure.

“I’m not asking for special treatment,” he says. “I’m asking for a functional, safe crossing for cyclists that actually delivers on what this project was meant to achieve.”

Asked for a response by *Ōtaki Today*, NZTA said the type of joiner plate used on the Ōtaki River bridge clip-on ensured there was no gap between the decking boards and the bridge decks.

“This design reduces the risk of tripping on an unsmooth surface, and the height of the joints is considered to be relatively minor and not a safety hazard,” said NZTA regional manager infrastructure delivery Jetesh Bhula. “The difference in the decking joint plates used on the Ōtaki River bridge, when compared to the Waikanae River bridge, is due to their different designs.”

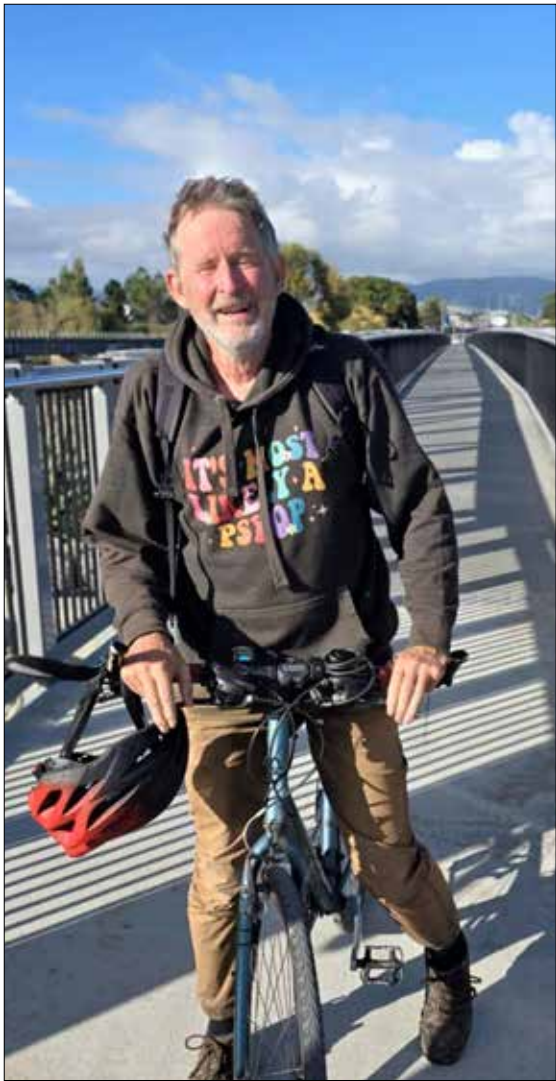
“It means alternate deck joint plates had to be used on the Ōtaki River bridge.”

Jetesh said the design of the Ōtaki River bridge clip-on was subject to a safety audit and was signed off by a chartered engineer.

“If there had been safety problems regarding the height of the joint plates, they would have been identified as part of this work. No such issues were raised.”

He said a wide range of stakeholders had been consulted during the project’s design phase, including cycling advocates who were part of the council and liaison groups.

“The clip-on shared path is the best and safest option for pedestrians and cyclists as it removes any chance of them being at risk from live traffic lanes,” he said.



Gerard Zwartjes on the Ōtaki River bridge clip-on.
Photo Michael Moore

Tim Costley MP for Ōtaki



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✉ Tim.CostleyMP@parliament.govt.nz
I look forward to meeting with you soon.



HUATAU/Opinion

HE TIROHANGA HOU: HENITI BUICK

Tough decisions with outcomes not what many would hope for

As the year closed out, December seemed to pass in a blink.

Between finishing end-of-year mahi at Te Puna Oranga o Ōtaki, another study paper, and council hui, the pace was full-on right up until the break. It was a good reminder of how much work happens behind the scenes in community and local government roles – and how important it is to slow down when you can.

One of the more difficult moments before Christmas was the High Court decision relating to Moy Place. The outcome was not favourable for residents, and I know it caused real disappointment.

These decisions are never taken lightly. As elected members, we are required to administer the legislation we have sworn an oath to uphold.

That means making decisions based on the law, even when the outcome is hard and not what many would hope for.

Balancing that responsibility while still caring deeply about the people affected is not easy.

I would also like to acknowledge Phil and sincerely thank him for inviting me to his home prior to the Moy Place vote. The kindness shown, and the genuine, respectful nature of those conversations, were very much appreciated. Moments like that matter, especially when navigating complex and emotional issues.

Over the summer break, my whānau and I hosted Christmas at home in Ōtaki, and it reminded me just how much I love being here.



There is something special about slowing down and appreciating what we already have – the river, parks, beach, walking tracks, domain, time outdoors, and the comfort of familiar people and places.

Ōtaki offers a kind of pause that can be hard to find elsewhere, and I felt grateful to experience that this summer. I hope the summer break gave many in our community the chance to slow down and spend time with family and friends.

While many people enjoy a well-earned rest over the holidays, community need doesn't stop. At Te Puna Oranga, we kept our GP surgery

open between statutory days so people could still access care when needed.

It wasn't about recognition - it was simply the right thing to do. While working in the clinic, it was encouraging to see the doctors not overly busy, which we hope reflects a positive outcome for the community.

As council resumes later this month, we will begin work on the Annual Plan and set priorities for the year ahead. There will be opportunities for community input, and I encourage people to take part when those conversations open.

With the break behind me, I begin the 2026 year refreshed and ready to get back into the work ahead, continuing to do what's needed for our community.

■ *Heniti is the Ōtaki Ward councillor*

CAM'S CORNER: CAM BUTLER

On home stretch with pipes work

Tēnā koutou i te whanau. Happy New Year (Pākehā).

After a rather windy New Year period it is nice to see some settled summer weather – of course when some of us are heading back to mahi/work.

However we have to pay off the holidays. Anyway, welcome to 2026!

The end is nigh

The wastewater pipe work has resumed and Rāhui Road is closed once more, BUT we are in the last two months of that work so have some patience with the final works. The tender is out for the pipe to head under the expressway and along Rāhui Road up to Freemans Road, so sorry residents along there, you will have further disruption this year.



The Old SH1 revocation is on pause for January to give the shops a break from the works and will recommence in February with work around Hunting & Fishing/RiverStone Cafe area, and footpath work near the Yard coming up first. With the resealing and linemarking work done near the BP you can see how good the final result will be.

The designs are primarily trying to make the shops area much nicer and safer to walk around so no apologies are made if it takes a little longer to drive along that stretch.

Riverbank Road lights had a glitch where a sensor faulted and it thought there was always a vehicle at Riverbank Road. That has been sorted and all is working well.

All community boards up and running

While the Ōtaki Community Board was the first to have a meeting, the other four boards in

Kāpiti had their initial meetings, elected their chairs and deputies plus assigned what members would attend the various council meetings.

These meetings are full council, community and environment, strategy and finance, Te Whakaminenga ki Kāpiti etc, and can take up a considerable amount of time, so thank you to all the community board members who put their time into attending council meetings.

Ōtaki Beach

The Kāpiti district has 40 kilometres of coastline that people make the most of during the summer season, and year-round there are designated areas for freedom camping and boat-launching. From December 1 until April 4, 2026, there are dedicated zones for activities such as dog walking, horse riding and fishing.

The KCDC Beach Bylaw prohibits vehicles, including motorbikes, on most of our beaches to help protect our special environment and to keep people safe. In the first instance of an issue with a vehicle on the beach, please contact the police as enforcement is a police issue.

Ōtaki Awa swimming spot

With the river flow changing away from the bridge swimming spot there is a marginal flow and lower water level so please be careful jumping in, and look for and avoid black algae as well.

- Like our Ōtaki Community Board Facebook page.
- Next Ōtaki Community Board meeting is 7pm on Tuesday, March 10.

■ *Cam is chair of the Ōtaki Community Board*

PEOPLE'S POLITICS: PHIL MALPAS

When politics replaces government

Reality doesn't care about spin.

Every living thing survives by balancing needs with what the environment can supply. When that balance breaks, nature corrects it – sometimes gently, sometimes brutally. Humans are not exempt.

Yet we're increasingly living in a different world: a virtual one. The internet has become our main arena for information, identity, and "truth". It records everything, amplifies emotion, and rewards attention. In that world, what matters is not what is real, but what is repeated. And that shift is being exploited.

Scams are no longer just emails from a fake bank. They are policies dressed as solutions, ads disguised as news, and promises designed to expire after election day. They are funded, targeted, and A/B tested like products.

If we don't train ourselves to tell reality from virtuality, we will be manipulated by other interests. That manipulation is not accidental. It is built into the modern economic and political machine.

Capitalism is excellent at one thing: winning. It pursues profit, growth, market share, and returns. It extracts, expands, and optimises. But those objectives are fundamentally incompatible with good government, because government's job is not to win – it is to balance, restrain, and protect shared systems over time.

Capitalism measures success by private gain. Government must measure success by collective survival.

Here is the scam we've accepted: we've been sold the idea that politics and government are



the same thing. They are not.

Politics, at its best, should be a civic tool: representation, debate, negotiation, and accountability. But politics as practised today has become permanent campaigning – a contest for domination, run through marketing, media management, and tactical advantage. The incentives reward narrative over competence, outrage over policy, and short-term victory over long-term stability. In the virtual world, clicks beat outcomes every time.

Government is different. Government is housing. Water. Power. Health care. Education. Transport. Environmental protection. Public safety. It is the hard work of managing real resources in the real world. It is measured in functioning systems, not applause.

When politics takes control of government, decision making becomes theatre. Budgets become signals. Institutions become weapons. Projects get launched for headlines, cancelled for optics, and redesigned for polling. Meanwhile the physical problems worsen: unaffordable housing, stressed hospitals, degraded infrastructure, polluted waterways, fragile energy security, and widening inequality.

This is not a shortage of intelligence. It is a failure of incentives. The virtual world rewards performance; reality demands management.

New Zealand is small enough to see this clearly. We can either treat government as a shared responsibility – or keep letting politics turn it into a marketing game.

■ *Phil has worked in IT consulting and lectured in management accounting and computer studies*

PLAIN SPEAKING: IAN CARSON

Time for the community to step up and support its local RSA

The news that the Ōtaki RSA has plotted a new path forward after at least two difficult years (story pages 4-5) is encouraging.

The local RSA has a history that goes back to 1919, just a year after the end of the First World War. It has throughout subsequent years garnered support from the community, including gifting of the land on which the current RSA building stands from businessman Harry Edhouse – he of the Edhouse department store fame.

In recent times the relevance of RSA clubs throughout the country has been questioned. Originally formed to support returned servicemen

– and often recognised as places where booze was cheap and talk cheaper – some RSAs failed to adapt to the rapidly diminishing numbers of service personnel.

To survive they needed to recognise that they had to cater for a much wider and more diverse market. And like the traditional pubs – especially those in rural areas – there were pressures brought about by tougher drink-driving laws, and stay-at-home entertainment such as videotapes at first, then live-streamed sport and movies.

RSAs, of course, are not the only casualties of modern trends. Racing clubs, golf clubs, sports



clubs, churches, community organisations and arts groups have had to adapt or die.

Many small towns like Ōtaki have few of these clubs and organisations. That we still have the big three – Ōtaki RSA, Ōtaki-Māori Racing Club and Ōtaki Golf Club – shows we can adapt if we have the right people driving change, the willingness to change, and the support of the community.

The RSA has been fortunate to have current general manager Te Tau recognise it had some inherent problems. With her skills as a business recovery specialist in the corporate world she

has brought a new set of operational efficiencies and focused governance to the club.

As a relative newcomer to Ōtaki, it would be easy to suggest she's a blow-in trying to tell everyone here what to do. So it's a credit to the RSA board that they have largely had the foresight to recognise her skills had value.

The reality of the local RSA's financial position, revealed at last year's AGM, could not have been more stark. In the circumstances, revenue had to increase and costs reduce.

The RSA isn't yet out of the woods, but it looks to be on the right path. It's now up to the community to once again step up and support this great local institution.


■ *Ian is editor of Ōtaki Today*

Wayfinding a path to stronger communities

A CHRISTMAS BREAK is perfect for reflection.

For me it meant sitting beneath a giant oak tree in Waikanae, contemplating everything from the wonders of the universe to a more unsettling question: could Donald Trump undo thousands of years of humanity building in just four years?

JUST A THOUGHT



In recent columns I've circled around what might seem like a sub issue to these global anxieties: our abject lack of community preparedness for the civil emergencies we know are coming. But the more I've written, the clearer two things have become.

FRASER CARSON

1. We have the means – but not the motivation. New Zealand is not short on capability, resources, or knowledge. What we lack is the collective will and leadership to make the shift toward genuine community resilience.
 2. Resilience is not a niche concern – it's the antidote to declining social cohesion. If we reframed emergency resilience as a central pillar of community life, rather than a side project, we'd find it also strengthens the everyday fabric of society – things like safety, belonging, youth wellbeing, food security, and trust. In any crisis, people respond in wildly different ways. Some freeze. Others step forward. The difference often comes down to



Image Pixabay.com

confidence – knowing what to do and knowing that others around you know, too. That confidence doesn't appear magically in an emergency; it's built long before one arrives. And here's the uncomfortable truth: civil emergencies are best managed when communities themselves are empowered to act. The same is true for everyday challenges like loneliness among older people, youth delinquency, or neighbourhood safety. These issues are solved most effectively when communities have the authority, resources, and trust to respond as they see fit. So why, then, are central and local governments so reluctant to let go of power? Why is public funding still used as a mechanism of control rather than empowerment? If we want resilient communities, we must

stop treating these communities as passive recipients and start recognising them as capable leaders of their own destiny. The blueprint already exists. Years ago, I came across a book that offered what felt like the perfect model for resilience and social cohesion: *Wayfinding Leadership* by Dr Chellie Spiller (Ngāti Kahungunu, Pākehā), Hoturoa Barclay Kerr (Tainui), and John Panoho (Parawhau, Te Uri Roroī, Ngāti Whātua, Ngāi Tawake ki te Moana, Ngāpuhi Nui Tonu). The authors draw on the extraordinary feats of ancient waka navigators – wayfinders who crossed vast oceans to discover islands no one had known existed. Their success depended on skills that are just as essential today: reading the environment, pausing to interpret changing

Civil emergencies are best managed when communities themselves are empowered to act. The same is true for everyday challenges like loneliness among older people, youth delinquency, or neighbourhood safety. These issues are solved most effectively when communities have the authority, resources, and trust to respond as they see fit.

conditions, leading with intention, and staying anchored in values even when the horizon disappears. These are precisely the qualities we need in modern community leaders. An emergency is the worst possible time to discover whether those qualities are present. But even outside crisis, our communities would be immeasurably stronger if more of our leaders embodied them. *Disclaimer: Flightdec is working with local communities, using specialised online capabilities, alongside Hono – Māori Emergency Management Network and the Natural Hazards Inc (capability cluster).* ■ Fraser is founder of the community-building websites flightdec.com, redoor.net and inhub.org.nz

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New job? Get employment agreement sorted

NGĀ MIHI o te tau hau!
Happy New Year from all of us at Ōtaki Citizens Advice Bureau – we hope you and your whānau had a safe and happy holiday season.

One of your new year resolutions might be to find a new job in 2026. Once you’ve gone through the process, you’ll want to make sure you have a written and signed employment contract.

We often get enquiries from people about their rights at work when they don’t have a written contract. If you’re starting a new job, make sure everything is written down and agreed to from the beginning so having chats with your new boss about time off, a pay rise or changes in your job role in the future has a solid foundation.

Legally, every employee must have a written employment agreement that has been agreed to with their employer and signed by both parties. A copy of this should be given to the employee and another copy should be kept by the employer.

The agreement might be a collective agreement if you choose to join a union or an independent agreement if you choose not to or do not have a union at your workplace.

Even if you don’t have a written agreement, you still have employment rights.

There are a number of clauses that by law must be included in an employment agreement, such as your job title, pay rate, entitlements to public holidays, type of

CITIZENS ADVICE



MARIA FYVIE

work – full time, part time or casual – and how to resolve any disputes between the employer and the employee.

Having these agreed to and written down prior to starting your new job helps you know where you stand in the future, even if it can seem a bit tricky to talk about when you just want to get onto the tools!

If you don’t have a copy of your written agreement, you can ask your employer for one – it’s good to do this in writing. There are written templates available on the Community Law website that you can use – you don’t have to write a letter yourself and if you need help accessing these, get in touch with Community Law or CAB.

If you find that your work doesn’t have a copy they can give you, you can contact the Early Resolution Service on 0800 20 90 20 and they can give you and your employer guidance on creating one.

Citizens Advice Bureau Ōtaki office reopens for 2026 at 10am on Tuesday, January 20. If you need to contact a volunteer before then, call 0800 367 222 or by use the chatbot on CAB.org.nz

- After January 20, CAB volunteers are at 65a Main Street, 10am-1pm Monday-Friday. Call on 364 8664 or email otaki@cab.org.nz
- Maria is secretary of Kāpiti CAB

In a land of hazards, insurance isn’t optional

LIVING IN NEW ZEALAND means accepting the reality of our dynamic **Landscape.**

From earthquakes to floods, natural hazards are an unavoidable part of life. While we can’t prevent these events, we can protect ourselves from their devastating financial impact.

Now more than ever, comprehensive property insurance is not just a prudent choice – it’s an essential safeguard for your most valuable asset.

The shifting landscape of risk

The Canterbury earthquake was a stark reminder of the scale of destruction natural disasters can cause. Since then, New Zealand has faced numerous floods, storms, and landslips, highlighting a growing vulnerability across the country.

Events like these can result in “natural disaster damage,” which includes direct physical loss or damage to property from hazards like earthquakes, landslides, and tsunamis. The financial cost of rebuilding without insurance can be crippling, making robust cover a cornerstone of personal financial resilience.

The mortgage connection

For most homeowners, property insurance is not optional – it’s a mandatory condition of their mortgage finance. A mortgage is a charge over property to secure the repayment of a loan; if that property is destroyed, the lender’s security is lost.

Lenders typically require borrowers to

MATTERS OF LAW



CORINNA SIPPEL

maintain comprehensive insurance for the full term of the loan. This is a standard and imperative requirement. You will need to provide your lender with a certificate of currency annually to prove the policy is active. The policy will also note the lender’s financial interest, ensuring that in the event of a total loss, the insurance payout is used to clear the mortgage debt before any remainder is paid to you.

Under the Credit Contracts and Consumer Finance Act 2003, lenders have a responsibility to make reasonable enquiries to ensure any insurance contract linked to the lending meets the borrower’s needs and that the borrower can make the payments without suffering substantial hardship. This protects both parties.

As the cost of insurance rises, particularly in high-risk areas, these premiums are factored into a lender’s affordability calculations, which can directly affect a person’s borrowing capacity. Ultimately, if a property is deemed uninsurable due to natural hazard risk, securing mortgage finance might be difficult.

Are you adequately insured?

The real test of an insurance policy comes when you need to make a claim. It’s vital to ensure your sum insured accurately reflects the current cost to rebuild your home, including demolition, professional fees, and compliance with modern building codes. Underinsurance can leave you with a significant financial shortfall. Some policies contain an “average clause”, which means that if you are underinsured, you may be treated as your own insurer for a portion of the loss and have to share the cost with your insurer.

Don’t wait for a disaster to discover gaps in your cover. Reviewing your policy annually is a critical step in protecting your property – one of the most important financial decisions you will make.

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

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NATIVE MINDS

Khalid Abdalla in conversation with Tainui Stephens

Sat 7 Mar, 2pm, Māoriland Hub, Ōtaki

Thanks to




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Who you are will determine what you have

HERE WE ARE AGAIN, the final stretch of the year, when business owners slow down just enough to realise: “I’ve been going full speed all year . . . but have I actually moved closer to the life and business I want?”

This is the moment every smart owner should stop, breathe, and reflect – not on how busy you’ve been, or how many crises you handled, or how many jobs you squeezed in before Christmas. Those are symptoms.

The real question, the one that will shape your next 24 months, is: Who were you this year? Not what you did. Not what you achieved. Not

YOUR BUSINESS



CHRIS WHELAN

what you hoped for.

Who. Were. You?

Because if you want 2026 to look radically different, the starting point isn’t a goal, a to-do list, or a new tool. It’s identity. It’s mindset. It’s the person you

are becoming.

And nothing captures this more clearly than this simple and most powerful formula:

Be × Do = Have.

This is the life success formula, and now is the perfect time to put it to work. Three words that can change your destination in 2026, if done right.

1. BE

Who you are determines everything you’ll have.

“Be” is your internal operating system. It’s



your standards, your thinking, your beliefs, your identity, and your self-discipline.

Here’s the truth most people avoid: You cannot outperform your identity. You always return to your standards. If you see yourself as the overworked operator, that’s exactly who you’ll be in 2026. If you see yourself as a leader, a builder of people and systems, your business will rise to that level.

January invites a brutally honest reflection:

- Who have you been this year?
- What standards did you accept?
- What beliefs limited you?
- What behaviours did you tolerate in yourself?
- What identity did you default back to when things got stressful?

These questions aren’t comfortable. They’re

not meant to be. They’re meant to set you free. Because if your Be doesn’t shift, nothing else will.

2. DO

Your actions are a reflection of your identity.

“Do” is the visible part. Every result – profit, cashflow, team performance, time management – comes from the habits, systems, disciplines, and actions you take consistently.

But here’s what every business owner eventually realises: Knowing what to do is never the real problem. Doing it consistently is.

You already know you should:

- track KPIs
- review the 5 Ways every week
- improve pricing
- systemise the business
- delegate more

- lead the team better
- plan quarterly
- market consistently.

But until your Be shifts, you’ll never do these things reliably. This is why New Year resolutions fail. This is why businesses set goals and then slide back into chaos by March. This is why owners stay busy, but not intentional.

Your Do is always pulled downward or upward by your Be.

3. HAVE

Your results are the multiplication of identity and action.

Everything you have right now, good or bad, is the sum of your identity and your behaviour.

If you want to have:

- stronger profit
- better cashflow
- more time off
- a better Wellington lifestyle
- a stronger, more accountable team
- a business that can run without you
- or simply more peace. . .

then your Be × Do must change.

The next 24 months will not change because of a calendar tick. They will change because you do.

What does this mean for the end of 2026?

Imagine your life and business at the end of 2026. Go there – truly. Picture it.

What must you DO in now to make that vision real? And even more important: Who must you BE to do those things?

Ask yourself: What do I want to HAVE by the end of 2026, what must I consistently DO to get there, and who must I BE to make those actions normal, natural, and non-negotiable?

■ Chris is a business and leadership coach based in the Wellington region. For more, visit www.chriswhelancoaching.com



Horowhenua AP&I Show

Saturday 17 and Sunday 18 January 2026

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- poultry, observe dog trials, enjoy music, food court
- Meet the Clydesdale horses
- Visit the Trade space with business and clubs exhibiting



Info: Jill Timms
06 368 6539
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Entry fees: \$40 for a family of two adults and three children. Individual tickets per day are: \$15 for adults, \$5 for those under fifteen years of age, with preschoolers free.

Membership \$50: free entry for three adults, two children as well as a car pass on both Saturday and Sunday.

MAHI MĀRA/Gardening

The fruit tree to-do list

IT'S SO IMPORTANT to hang out with your trees over summer. Dropping in on them regularly is better than any miracle food or supposed wonder spray.

Keep your eye on developing crops, and on how well the new seasons growth is coming along, especially on young trees that should be boosting away in the warmth. Keep abreast of pests and disease – just in a relaxed, noting way – no need to “do” anything unless the health of the tree is compromised.

One of the most important tasks this month is to check in on newly planted trees. The first three years are the most important ones.

EDIBLE GARDEN



KATH IRVINE

- Check the new growth. You want to see it boost away steadily.
- Check the soil beneath. If its dry, rehydrate it with a lovely slow watering – slow enough so that the water soaks in, rather than running off. Once moisture is restored, top up the mulch.

Leave the grass, weeds and wild herbs surrounding young trees to grow long. They create a protective bubble, softening the blow of wind and heat, but best of all – long tops mean long roots. The bigger the root systems, the healthier the soil, ergo the healthier your fruit trees will be.

Feed citrus – an important feed, especially for young trees, or trees with low vigour. Eschew artificial fert, and use natural stuff like aged manure, compost or vermicasts – you’ll have heaps fewer pests. While you’re at it, thin fruits – there should be waaaaay more

leaves than fruits. Completely remove fruits from 1 to 2-year-old trees.

Summer prune espalier – trim your espaliers as they shoot away. This quick summer prune keeps things fruitful. Go along each branch and reduce long upward shoots back to 2-3 buds. Where there is a cluster of shoots, thin them out so there is about 20cm between each shoot. Sacrifice the puny ones, the enormous ones and the ones heading in the wrong direction. Prune off any suckers coming away from the rootstock.

Birdnet ripe fruit. Plums, berries and the wonderful summer pears will be ripening this month, so be sure to get your fair share by slinging bird net over your trees. One large piece is the ticket – it’s heaps easier to put on and won’t scrunch your trees up. For long-lasting fabric that you can re-use for years to come, buy direct from the industry at places like Cosio Industries or Advanced landscape supplies.

- A few fruity extras:
- Foliar feed any fruit trees that need a pick-me-up.
 - Prune excess foliage from grapevines and kiwifruits to bring light and air to ripening bunches of fruit.
 - Remove strawberry runners. Runners are the shoots that stretch out from the mama plant. Pruning them keeps your strawberry plants energised. You can pot these up and get new plants growing for next year.
 - Summer prune apricots and plums after harvest.
 - Tie new growth of vines or espalier to wires.

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



Pruning upright shoots back to two buds on an espalier tree will keep it fruitful.



Let the grass, weeds and wild herbs around young trees grow long.



Prune excess foliage from grapevines to bring in light and air to ripening fruit.

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HAUORA-PŪTAIO /Health-Science

Roadside drug tests – presence not always impairment

BECAUSE almost a third of fatal crashes in New Zealand involve a drug that can impair driving (excluding alcohol), roadside drug testing has been introduced.

That figure is correlational, so it doesn't prove that drug use caused those crashes – a young, inexperienced, impulsive driver who tests positive for cannabis might have crashed regardless. However, controlled studies show that drug use is an independent predictor of crash severity and fatality, even after accounting for factors such as age, experience, and alcohol use.



The four drugs selected for roadside testing – methamphetamine, THC (cannabis), cocaine, and MDMA (ecstasy) – were chosen because of their high involvement in crashes, alignment with international testing practices, and evidence of being able to impair driving ability. Each drug impairs in its own way: stimulants such as cocaine and methamphetamine can make drivers overconfident, impulsive and aggressive – and the “come-down” fatigue that follows can be just as hazardous. With MDMA drivers can feel alert but judgement, reaction time, and coordination can be impaired, and there is often significant residual fatigue. THC

can impair coordination, reaction time and attention. Polydrug use (for example, cannabis combined with alcohol) is common and magnifies impairment. Understanding public health measures requires looking at epidemiological statistics rather than personal experience. The overall New Zealand road-death rate is roughly one death for every 140 million kilometres travelled. Statistically, that means any individual driver is very unlikely to be involved in a fatal crash – and even if a drug triples that risk, the risk remains small. This can lead people to assume they are “better than average” and not meaningfully impaired. But at the population level, if everyone takes that attitude, those small individual risks accumulate into many additional deaths on the road. Public health depends on people recognizing that collective responsibility is important for the wellbeing of the wider community. While the testing is presented as a road-safety measure, it also has a broader law-enforcement dimension given that all four drugs tested at the roadside are illegal controlled substances. This focus on illegal drugs has been criticised because prescription medications such as opioids and benzodiazepines pose a well-established and serious road-safety risk - often at levels comparable to, or even higher than, cannabis or MDMA - yet roadside drug testing gives drivers impaired by prescription medication a free pass. The roadside saliva test is only a screening tool; it's not reliable enough to provide definitive evidence. This is demonstrated by New Zealand's two-test protocol. When a driver returns a positive result on the first test, a second test is always administered to help guard against the

risk of an inaccurate single result - an implicit acknowledgement the testing lacks precision. If both tests are positive, the driver is prohibited from continuing to drive and forbidden from driving for 12 hours. If only one test is positive, the driver is permitted to drive away. In practice, the difference between being allowed to drive away or being stopped can come down to test variability. From the driver's perspective, it can feel like a lottery: first test positive, the ability to continue driving depends on how that second test falls. If the first roadside test is positive on any of the four drugs tested, a saliva sample is sent for definitive laboratory analysis. The roadside tests are usually correct, but they can produce both false positives and false negatives. The possibility of false negatives means that even if you return a negative result at the roadside for a particular drug, it doesn't guarantee it won't later test positive with the more accurate laboratory analysis. The laboratory testing covers a panel of 25 qualifying drugs, the majority (18) of which are prescription opiates or benzodiazepines. This strong focus on prescription medicines makes their omission from testing at the roadside particularly conspicuous. A major criticism of the roadside drug test is that it detects only the presence of a drug in saliva, it does not measure actual impairment. A substance may remain detectable long after use – well beyond the period in which it has any intoxicating effect. For example, THC is typically detectable in saliva for about 24 hours. The fact that medicinal cannabis users have a medical defence raises some important issues. Imagine two people – one using medicinal cannabis legally and one using cannabis illegally

– who both return laboratory THC levels above the evidential threshold. The medicinal user with a valid prescription can use the medical defence, so their infringement notice is withdrawn. The illegal user, however, must pay the \$200 infringement fine and will lose 50 demerit points. Despite identical laboratory results only the person using cannabis unlawfully is penalised. In effect, roadside drug testing is not only a road safety measure, it's also a de facto mechanism for enforcing unlawful cannabis possession. The medical cannabis defence applies only to situations where a driver exceeds the laboratory evidential threshold for THC. It does not provide any defence for driving while impaired. Driving while impaired by any prescription medication – including medicinal cannabis – is illegal, and there is no defence available for impairment. This distinction highlights that the roadside saliva test is not a scientifically valid or legally recognised measure of impairment. It is often described as a proxy for recent use but even on that measure it performs poorly. Given the scientific shortcomings of the saliva test, it is best understood as a quick, easily administered enforcement tool: if you exceed the evidential threshold, the law presumes recent use and penalties may follow. It serves as a public health road safety message, and discourages driving soon after using any of the screened drugs. Despite the imperfections of roadside saliva testing, the underlying road safety message remains clear: it is neither sensible nor responsible to drive while under the influence of drugs. ■ Dr Steve Humphries is a director at Hebe Botanicals in Ōtaki. He was a lecturer at Massey University and director of the Health Science Programme.



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RONGOĀ



JOANNE HAKARAIA

Joanne is a rongoā Māori practitioner, whose work supports healing through relationship with the ngahere, alongside postgraduate research grounded in this practice. She is kaitohu (director) of The Rongoā Mauri Studio and is ACC registered for Rongoā Māori Services. See rongoamauri.com

WHAT CALLS THE SEED TO RISE?

E kore au e ngaro,
He kākano ahau,
I ruia mai i Rangiātea.



THE NATURAL WORLD is not separate from the human experience, but a living mirror through which we come to understand ourselves.

Seeds, trees, and forests carry mātauranga that reaches beyond ecology into the realms of wellbeing, identity, and transformation. By observing how life emerges within the ngahere, we are offered insight into our own processes of growth, healing, and remembering.

When a seed falls to the earth – whether released by its parent tree or carried by Tāwhirimātea or manu – it burrows into the darkness of Papatūānuku and is held by the whenua. There, it does not rush toward the light. Within the seed is a complete blueprint: a nucleus holding the potential for full

expression. Although dormant in appearance, the seed is alive, dynamic, and responsive, sensing moisture, warmth, nutrients, and safety. Only when the conditions are right does it begin its journey into Te Ao Mārama (the world of light).

This moment of emergence is not random. Something within the seed responds to a calling. The seed becomes a powerful reflection of the human condition. Like seeds, we are shaped by te taiao – our environment. Trees adapt to their surroundings over generations, responding to climate, predators, and changing ecosystems. These adaptations occur at cellular and physiological levels and are carried forward through the seed itself.

In this way, the present is not separate from the past or the future. The tree standing in Te Ao Mārama holds the memory

of its ancestors while simultaneously shaping the blueprint of generations yet to come. Change happens in the now, and its effects ripple across time.

Through my work with the ngahere, I have observed how reconnecting with the mauri of the natural world can support healing and regulation, particularly for those carrying stress, trauma, or disconnection from their bodies and environments.

If we are to care for those who come after us, and restore balance to what has been carried before, the work begins here, in this moment. The seed, the tree, the ancestors, and the descendants are not separate beings; they are expressions of the same life force.

If we already carry the blueprint of who we are meant to be, who is it that we are remembering?

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



Rod Clifton with one of his current tractor restorations – a rare 1953 Farmall Cub with a belly mower. Rod has more than 400 tractors at Te Horo.

Photo Ōtaki Today

Rod's resilience and hard work paid off

FIFTY-FIVE YEARS AGO, Rod Clifton bought a block of land on the highway at Te Horo and started a mechanical repair business with a box of tools, a jack, a grinder, and a welder.

Now aged 80, Rod is still there, still running the business and still on the tools when he can. He's the sort of guy with old-fashioned values that suggest nothing short of a wooden box will slow him down.

"If you want something, you've got to work for it," he says.

And work he has, with the reward of a business that's likely now the longest-operating repair business run continuously by the same person in the Kāpiti-Horowhenua area. Along with Rod Clifton Motors, which includes towing, Rod also has Rod Clifton Transport

– now looked after by grandson Jesse Clifton – and a furniture truck rental business.

Rod is famously proud of being a Te Horo boy. He grew up on the farm of his parents, Sam and Ruth, in the Mangaone Valley. He went to Te Horo School and what was then Raumati District High School. He left school at the May holiday break, a couple of weeks before his 15th birthday.

"I like to say I left before I was 15," he says impishly.

He worked on the farm for a while, but other than driving the tractors, farming didn't suit him. So he got a job with Neville Webb in Levin well drilling. The skills took him to Australia when he was 21, but he was soon back, this time delivering milk in Wellington.

Meantime, he was building a stock car, installing a Chrysler Valiant engine he got from

Australia. His milk station boss noted his skills and got him a job in the workshop. However, a side hustle fixing up cars was earning him more money than his paid work, so his thoughts turned to starting his own business.

By chance, Coastal Freighters was selling its site at Te Horo. Rod bought it with the weight of three mortgages that were charging 20 percent interest, and no formal training or apprenticeship.

It wasn't easy to begin with. On quieter days he would work in Howie Townrow's market garden just along the road, which would much later lead to him marrying Howie's daughter, Joy.

But resilience, determination and sheer hard work paid off. The business grew and Rod became well known for restoring his huge collection of old tractors. He has 64 restored

tractors in his tractor shed, with a total of about 400 around the property.

Rod's is a remarkable story of longevity that might well have ended a bit over a year ago. He felt a twinge in his stomach and was lucky enough to get a doctor's appointment the same day. On being sent immediately to hospital, he was told that untreated, the cancerous growth would have killed him within anything from two hours to two days.

Undeterred, and with treatment now behind him, Rod is very much back at work, but appreciative of his manager of 29 years, Kent Jenkinson, and grandson Jesse, who's been working there since 2014. He credits them for keeping his business going, but it's clear Rod Clifton's influence pervades everything that happens there.

There's no sign any of that will change soon.



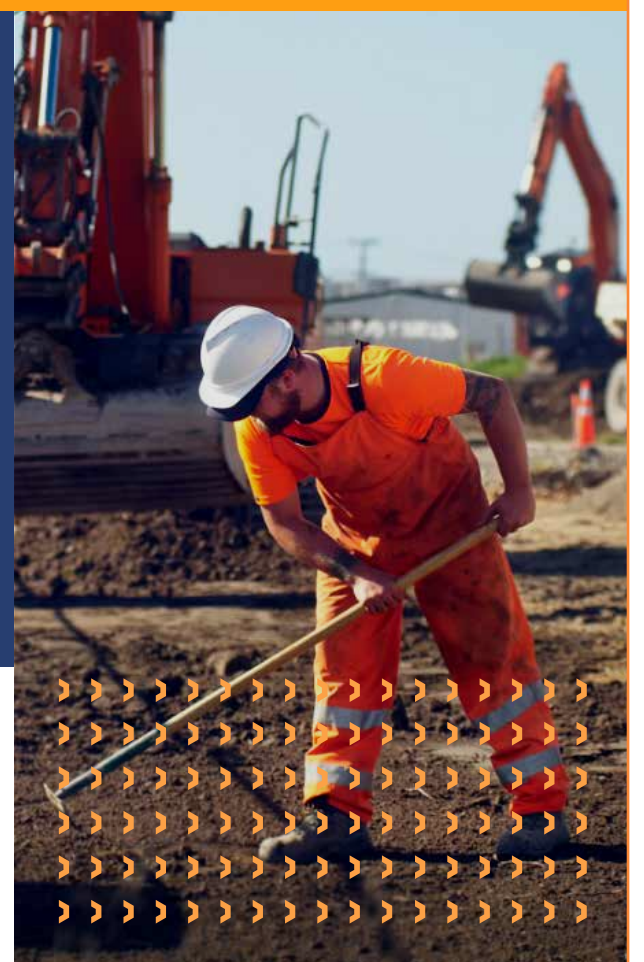
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HĪTŌRIA/History



The Ōtaki Sanatorium – The San – not long before it closed in 1985.

Doctors and hospitals that shaped Ōtaki

SINCE THE MID-1800s, Ōtaki residents have been fortunate in the provision of public health services.

The first doctor to practise in Ōtaki was Charles Hewson. He was appointed in 1853 to “attend to and prescribe for Ōtaki Māori”, according to his obituary in the *Manawatu Herald* of July 29, 1881.

“Having learned there was a large native population (much larger than at present) in the neighbourhood of Ōtaki, he determined on settling there, and has resided there ever since, receiving a salary from government for attending upon and prescribing for the natives until shortly before his death.”

Dr James Mason then came to Ōtaki in 1895, seeking a “more congenial climate” than his birthplace of Scotland.

“He came out from the Old Country in search of the elixir of life, and found it Ōtaki, of all places,” the *New Zealand Freelance* noted. “He there built a home, sent for his family, and said in effect, ‘Here is my habitation, for here only I can live.’”

Whatever was in the water here certainly seemed to pep him up as he was then appointed “native medical attendant” for the Ōtaki district. But so good were his energy levels that he then went on to propose, in 1896, the construction of a cottage hospital in Ōtaki. Despite some hiccups with the tendering process, he was promised the position of surgeon at the new hospital.

The Ōtaki Cottage Hospital opened in 1899 with Dr Mason in his new job. It was soon after, however, that he sought a more bureaucratic career path. With his skills as a bacteriologist, he took positions at a national level where he focused on public health, culminating in the Public Health Act being passed in 1900.

Ongoing interests in sanitation, vaccinations and Māori health led to his part in setting up tuberculosis sanatoria, one of which was in Ōtaki. This achievement was to be another of his legacies, as he died in 1924, aged only 59.

The Ōtaki Consumptive Sanatorium opened in 1907, built with public donations, local body and government subsidies. It was hailed for



Ōtaki Cottage Hospital in 1905 – it opened in 1899. The hospital was built on the urging of Dr James Mason, who was the hospital’s first surgeon. Photo Auckland Libraries

both its purpose and its buildings, designed by renowned architect Frederick de Jersey Clere. It stood near the Ōtaki Cottage Hospital on a long driveway off Mill Road. The land was originally gifted by tangata whenua to the Church Missionary Society, but through various legal acrobatics was eventually transferred to the Crown.

For the first 19 years the buildings housed male and female tuberculosis patients, and from 1917 returned soldiers with TB. From 1919 only female patients were admitted, until 1956 when male patients were again included.

Over the years, alterations and additions were made to the building and its purpose changed when it was taken over by the Palmerston North Hospital Board. When faced with a bill for improved sewage disposal, the board passed the sanatorium on to the Kimberley Hospital & Training School until 1985, when residents were moved to the Kimberley property in Levin.

During its many manifestations, the “San” as it was known, continued to be supported and cherished by locals. Many people were

employed there; others volunteered their time and resources to entertain and care for the residents.

The Ōtaki buildings fell to wrack and ruin, despite efforts of the local community. In her article in the *OHS Journal* (Vol 20, 1997) Margaret Long records the last few years of the important medical and architectural landmark:

“Over the next 12 years the buildings were remorselessly plundered of everything of any value, including stairway[s], doors and windows. Finally the Manawatu CHE contracted a demolition firm to clear the buildings from the area.”

These days only some of the concrete foundations remain within the bush that has taken over much of the previously 92-acre site

The buildings that once housed the Ōtaki Cottage Hospital – also designed by Frederick de Jersey Clere – still remain on the site. As with the San, there were disputes between politicians and locals about its continued existence.

Nevertheless, the facility endured and as a result of negotiations between the Department

of Health and the Palmerston North Health Board, maternity services were added, previously unavailable to all those who could not afford to give birth in one of the private institutions that had been set up in the town. The maternity ward was initially the only public facility within the Kāpiti-Horowhenua area until Levin and Paraparaumu had their own in the 1950s. By this stage, the Ōtaki Hospital was solely a maternity facility, becoming known, in 1932, as the Ōtaki Maternity Home.

Midwife Jane Stojanovic, who had worked at the maternity home, told the NZ College of Midwives Conference in July 2002 that the home was enjoyed and supported by the Ōtaki community, but it was expensive and often empty.

“Sometimes three weeks would go by with no women being admitted,” she said. “The place lost its ‘soul’ when the hospital was altered to try to save money.”

The buildings were utilised for other health-related services and post-natal care reduced. However, the maternity hospital survived until 1992. For three years after the closure, the buildings were used as a community health centre and a 48-hour birthing centre, but these, too, were stymied by health authorities and were closed in 1995.

Locals again rallied in opposition to the closure of health facilities, and the buildings were then used for the Women’s Health Centre, offering a range of support services. Further funding pressure also closed the centre, in 2020, once again deeply affecting the community that had, for over 125 years, battled hard for public health provision in Ōtaki.

Any likelihood of the site being used again as a public health facility is doubtful. The current political pressure is to privatise health provision nationally, and tangata whenua has a Treaty of Waitangi claim over the use of the land they gifted to the town that was later taken by the Crown.

Given that local iwi have recently set up their own medical practice – Oranga Ōtaki – which operates as a charitable trust, the future may not be so bleak even though the site remains, once again, under a jurisdictional cloud.

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

OUR HERITAGE



NICKY TREADWELL

ŌTAKI COLLEGE 3M 1972



GOT OLD PHOTOS?

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

ŌTAKI COLLEGE 3M 1972:
These third formers (Year 9) were born about 1958. Some of them will be attending a reunion in Ōtaki on Saturday, March 7, 2026. Former college teachers and partners have also been invited.
■ For more information, contact roy_chung@yahoo.com
Are you in this class? Send us names of those we don’t know, or any corrections to: debbi@idmedia.co.nz
Back row: unknown.
Row 3: unknown.
Row 2 from left: Donna Ferretti, unknown, unknown, unknown, unknown, Kathy Bennett, unknown.
Front row: Jeanette Carson, Nina Rauhihi, unknown, Angela Johns, unknown, unknown, unknown, unknown, unknown.

FROM NGĀ TAONGA SOUND & VISION ARCHIVES



Happy holidays – in old family movies

Every year Ngā Taonga Sound & Vision makes a holiday video to share something special from its extensive archive collection.

Throughout 2025 the film team preserved several charming home movies from the Goldsmith family, dating from the late 1920s to the 1940s.

Amateur filmmaker Bernard Harry Goldsmith captured many scenes of the family having fun together over the years, at a time when owning a home movie camera was still unusual.

He also took some stunning footage of ruined buildings and tent villages in the immediate aftermath of the 1931 Hawke’s Bay earthquake.

Ngā Taonga was privileged to digitally preserve and watch these films in 2025, and with the family’s permission, decided to use some of their vintage summer holiday footage to make Ngā Taonga’s holiday video.

See it here: bit.ly/3LHyTL1



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Toi Mahara Live Art Market

Mahara Place, Waikanae, midday-4pm, January 31.

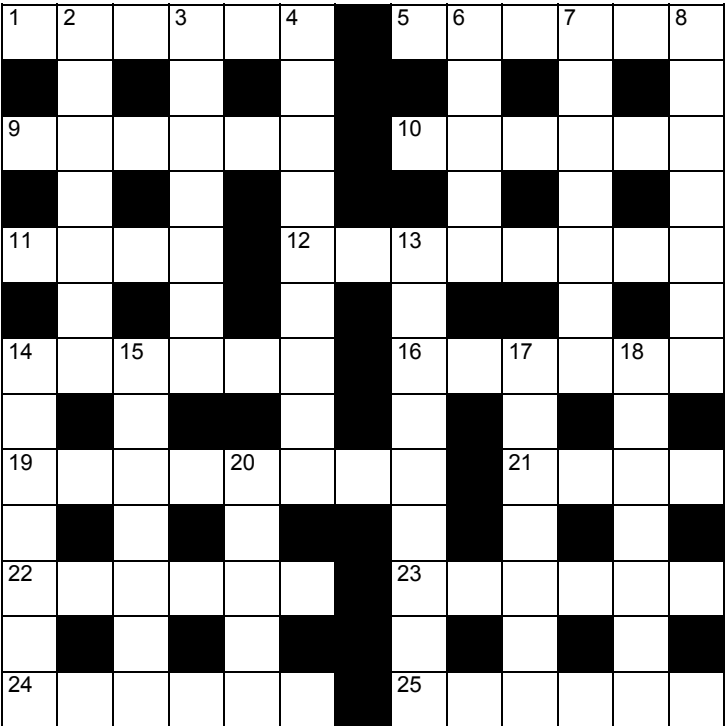
Make art, buy art, meet the artists and listen to live music at Mahara Place this month. There will be a sausage sizzle for the kids, local cafes will be open, live music with the Andrew London Duo, Charli Ravenwood, Tui and Johnny. Performances by students of Denise Walker Dance Academy in between sets. Free entry, something for all ages.

Explore artwork in a diverse range of media, including pottery, sculpture, jewellery, painting and drawing. Watch artists create live portraits, and demonstrate their practice, their teaching styles. Take something home with you or make something yourself!

Stallholder artists include:

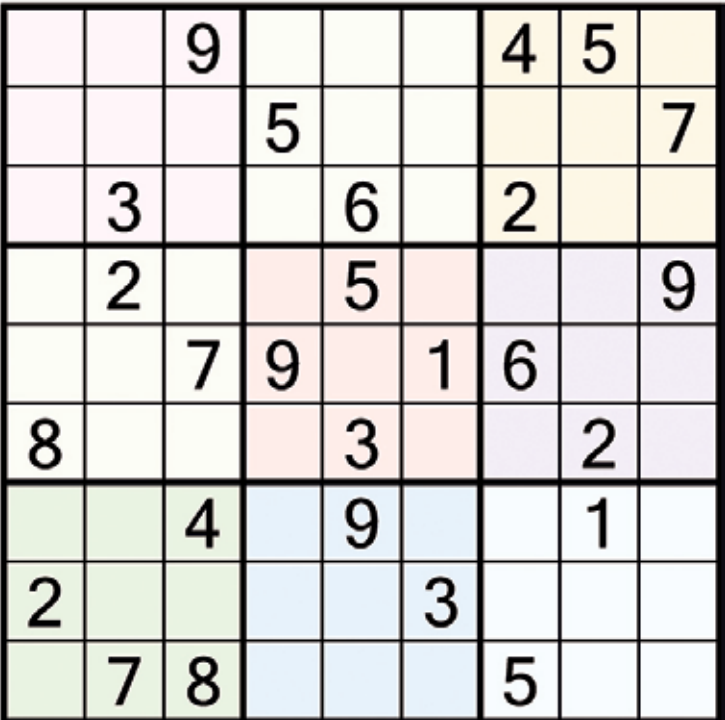
Chrissie Sallis, Kirsty Glasgow, Takayo Ukai, Liane Ashman, Anne Brunt, Hanne van Beek, Deb Donnelly, Shed Project Kāpiti, Elaine Bevan, Dee Warring, Gina Goad, Kimbra Taylor, Lizzi Yates, Morag Stokes, Bodhi Vincent, Sandra Smillie, Carrie Burke, Michelle Connolly, Monica McCormack, Jacqueline Benndorf, Josie McKenzie, Manu Carkeek.

THE CROSSWORD #NZ1955F (answers below)



- ACROSS
1. Materialise (6)
5. Group of seven (6)
9. Excellent (6)
10. NZ's unofficial national flower (6)
11. Leg joint (4)
12. Practise (8)
14. Pause (6)
16. Start place of Coast to Coast race (6)
19. Weekly magazine first published in 1939, The ____ (8)
21. Swimwear (4)
22. English name for Mt Taranaki (6)
23. Length in miles attributed to fabled Northland strip of sand (6)
24. Bird which migrates between New Zealand and Siberia (6)
25. Polar covering (3,3)
- DOWN
2. New Zealand canal town (7)
3. Component (7)
4. Finance Minister, 2017-2023 (9)
6. Wear away (5)
7. Clam found on Northland and Southland beaches (7)
8. Singer and musician who died in 1985, 'Prince' ____ (3,4)
13. Mountain recognised as the first point on the New Zealand mainland to see the sunrise (9)
14. Person New Zealand's annual sports awards are named after (7)
15. Took for granted (7)
17. Afternoon performance (7)
18. Sailing event (7)
20. Boredom (5)

SUDOKU PUZZLES thepuzzlecompany.co.nz
MEDIUM #98M 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 below.

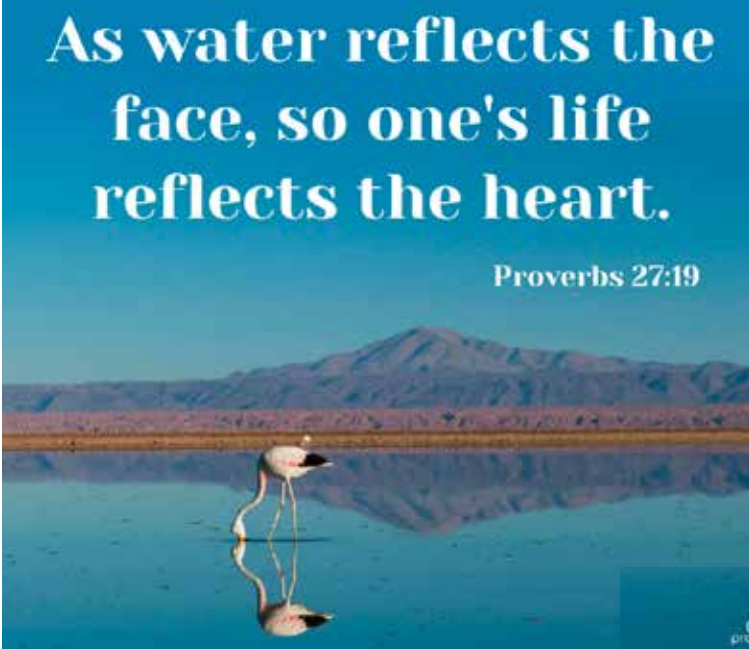


CROSSWORD #1955F ANSWERS
Across: 1. Appear, 5. Septet, 9. Superb, 10. Kōwhiri, 11. Knee, 12. Rehearse, 14. Hiatus, 16. Kumara, 19. Listener, 21. Togs, 22. Egmont, 23. Ninety, 24. Godwit, 25. Ice cap. DOWN: 2. Pananui, 3. Element, 4. Robertson, 6. Erode, 7. Toheroa, 8. Tui Tekā, 13. Hikurangi, 14. Halberg, 15. Assumed, 17. Matinee, 18. Regatta, 20. Ennui.

SUDOKU SOLUTION #98M



What if “winning” meant everyone eats,
everyone learns, and no one’s left behind?
That’s the kind of world worth fighting for.



FOOD QUIZ Answers below.

1. What is the primary ingredient in the Middle Eastern dish falafel?
2. Which nut is used to make marzipan?
3. Which spice is derived from the crocus flower and is one of the most expensive spices in the world?
4. What's the most stolen grocery item?
5. Which five fruits are scientifically related to roses?
6. How many hamburgers does McDonald's sell a day?
7. Arachibutyrophobia is the fear of what food sticking to the roof of your mouth?
8. Which country drinks the most coffee in weight per year?
9. What makes broth different than stock?
10. Which chocolate bar is the global bestseller?
11. How many tablespoons are in a cup?
12. The process of baking a pie crust before adding the filling is called what?
13. True or false: Cutting steak against the grain makes it tender.
14. What is royal icing?
15. What does it mean to macerate fruit?



Ōtaki River entrance tides
January 14 - February 11

<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 14 JAN	-	01:10	07:36	13:51	19:55
THU 15 JAN	-	02:15	08:39	14:49	20:54
FRI 16 JAN	-	03:10	09:30	15:38	21:45
SAT 17 JAN	-	03:57	10:12	16:20	22:29
SUN 18 JAN	-	04:37	10:50	16:58	23:08
MON 19 JAN	-	05:13	11:25	17:34	23:45
TUE 20 JAN	-	05:48	11:59	18:10	-
WED 21 JAN	00:20	06:23	12:34	18:46	-
THU 22 JAN	00:56	06:58	13:09	19:24	-
FRI 23 JAN	01:32	07:36	13:47	20:03	-
SAT 24 JAN	02:11	08:16	14:28	20:46	-
SUN 25 JAN	02:54	09:02	15:15	21:33	-
MON 26 JAN	03:44	09:55	16:09	22:28	-
TUE 27 JAN	04:45	11:00	17:12	23:33	-
WED 28 JAN	05:58	12:16	18:25	-	-
THU 29 JAN	-	00:49	07:21	13:35	19:44
FRI 30 JAN	-	02:07	08:37	14:46	20:58
SAT 31 JAN	-	03:15	09:38	15:46	22:00
SUN 1 FEB	-	04:11	10:30	16:38	22:53
MON 2 FEB	-	04:59	11:16	17:25	23:39
TUE 3 FEB	-	05:43	11:59	18:09	-
WED 4 FEB	00:21	06:24	12:39	18:50	-
THU 5 FEB	01:00	07:03	13:17	19:28	-
FRI 6 FEB	01:37	07:41	13:54	20:06	-
SAT 7 FEB	02:13	08:18	14:31	20:44	-
SUN 8 FEB	02:50	08:57	15:10	21:23	-
MON 9 FEB	03:31	09:41	15:55	22:08	-
TUE 10 FEB	04:21	10:37	16:50	23:05	-
WED 11 FEB	05:28	11:49	17:59	-	-

FOOD QUIZ ANSWERS: 1. Chickpeas. 2. Almonds. 3. Saffron. 4. Cheese. 5. Apples, pears, cherries, peaches, and strawberries. 6. 6.5 million. 7. Peanut butter. 8. Finland. 9. Broth is made with meat while stock is made with bones. 10. Snickers. 11. 16 tablespoons. 12. Blind baking. 13. True. 14. Icing made with icing sugar and egg whites. 15. To soak it in a flavourful liquid (such as alcohol) or toss it in sugar.



Horowhenua AP&I Show

Levin Showgrounds, Saturday-Sunday, January 17-18.

Horowhenua's biggest summer event is on again. For more than 100 years, the AP&I (agricultural, pastoral and industrial) show has entertained and informed families from throughout the region. Set in the spacious Levin Showgrounds, the event is a showcase for not only for those working in the rural sector, but also for the innovators who present their new products.

The AP&I show has a hugely diverse range of activities and demonstrations – from woodchopping, shearing, show jumping and dog trials, to vintage machinery displays and animal judging.

There are also plenty of arts and craft stalls, including old-fashioned backing and preserves. Plus the trade space where businesses and clubs can show the public what they do.

And, of course, amusement park rides and entertainment for the young and young at heart.

For more information, see levinapishow.co.nz

Te Rā Whakapūmau cements legacy

The celebration of Te Rā Whakapūmau 2025 – Graduation Day – last month held special significance for Te Wānanga o Raukawa.

Fifty years ago, in 1975, Whakatupuranga Rua Mano – the visionary kaupapa of Professor Emeritus Whatarangi Winiata and the Raukawa Marae Trustees – led to establishment of the Wānanga. Since those early days, it has become not only a leading force in Ōtaki’s social, cultural, and economic growth, but also a leader in New Zealand’s educational development.

Te Rā Whakapūmau 2025, on December 12, was also the first for new tumuaki Professor Meihana Durie.

More than 430 graduands gathered from throughout the country to receive their honours in 41 different qualifications at the Wānanga’s Ngā Purapura. More than 1500 guests flooded into Ōtaki on a brilliantly sunny day, making Te Rā Whakapūmau the largest celebration of its kind in Ōtaki.

A Wānanga media release reflected the spirit of the day – one it said was about intergenerational vision, Māori achievement, and the living legacy of Whakatupuranga Rua Mano.

Ōtaki Today editor Ian Carson took his camera to capture some of the graduands’ sense of pride.



From left, Marie Kipa (Taranaki), Naioha Taiepa (Ngāti Whare, Rongomaiwahine), Kyle Tawharu (Ngāti Raukawa)



Noeline Popata (Ngāti Kahu), and Powhiri Te Moana Watson (Ngāti Tūwharetoa). Powhiri is wearing her service medals for tours of duty in Afghanistan, Iraq and Timor Leste.



Alison Thom (Ngāpuhi, Ngāti Wai), and Jo-ani Robinson (Te Rarawa, Kai Tahu).



Amaria Makoare (Ngāti Whātua, Ngāpuhi, Te Rarawa, Avatete Nieve). Halisa Hakaraia-Smith (Ngāpuhi), Kirrily Posinkovich (Ngāti Kahu), and Taryn Lipsham (Ngāpuhi).

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