

ŌTAKI TODAY

Ngā kōrero o Ōtaki

HEPETEMA/SEPTEMBER 2026

otakitoday.com

RSA eyes re-opening

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Pool gets big investment

PAGE 5

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Clocks go forward Sept 27



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End of an era for Jackie

By Ian Carson

For 38 years, Jackie Rutherford has been a familiar face behind the counter at Ballentynes in Ōtaki.

She has watched generations of customers come through the doors, seen fashions and shopping habits change, and witnessed the steady decline of the town's once-busy retail centre. But now the store has closed, Jackie is facing the end of a working life that has been closely intertwined with the town.

Ballentynes Fashion Central announced last month that Ōtaki was one of 13 stores it was closing after more than 50 years in business. Ten stores, including in Paraparaumu and Levin, will continue trading under the Caroline Eve name.

For Jackie, however, the closure is about much more than the loss of another shop.

"I'm still going through the grieving process," she says.

Jackie began working at the store in 1988, initially taking over Ivy Rutter's job at what was then the Dowsetts store.

"I was walking past one day, and Ivy was doing a window. She knocked on the window and said she was leaving to work at the post office," Jackie recalls. "She suggested I come back and ask for a job. And I got it."

She had worked in Wellington for two years after arriving from the UK in the mid-1980s, and had moved to Ōtaki in 1987.

At the time, retail in the town was a very different proposition. Friday night shopping was a big social occasion, and Dowsetts – which was later bought by the Ballentynes chain



Ballentynes Ōtaki manager Jackie Rutherford is swamped by pupils of Ōtaki School after their kapa haka group performed at Ballentynes on the store's last day, September 2.

Photo Ōtaki Today

– was among a cluster of shops that kept the town centre buzzing.

"We used to never get finished and out of here until about 9 o'clock," Jackie says. "Then we'd go straight over to the pub [the Family Hotel]."

Five or six staff worked in the store on a typical day, compared with just a couple in its final days.

"Everything was busy," she says.

The change has been dramatic. Shops such as Edhouse's department store, Field's shoe shop, Featherstone's bookshop, Gimblett's hardware and other long-established retailers have

disappeared, leaving much of the town centre occupied by op shops and service businesses. Jackie has seen the same pressures affect Ballentynes.

Online shopping has changed the way people buy clothes, while the economic pressures of recent years have made customers more cautious.

"If a woman's got a choice to put food on the table or buy herself a new jumper, she's always going to put food on the table," she says.

Customers still come through the doors, but increasingly they are looking for sales and cheaper options.

The biggest loss for Jackie, though, will be the people. She has got to know generations of Ōtaki families through the shop, sometimes serving children who later return with their own children.

Recently, a man who had been visiting the area recognised her.

"He said, 'You used to give me lollies out of the drawer.'"

She has no idea who he was, but he remembered her from when he was a 3-year-old visiting the store with his grandmother.

Over the decades there have also

been plenty of colourful moments – including the day a hitchhiker came into the shop on a rainy day wearing little more than a T-shirt and shorts. Jackie and a colleague made him a jacket from plastic bags, stapling it together and putting a big bow on the back.

"He thought he was Christmas," she says.

But it's the quieter memories that mean the most. The store has often doubled as an informal information desk, and where people could just come in for a chat. Customers have shared their health problems, family dramas and everyday news with Jackie and other staff.

On occasions, women have even rung her and asked her to bring clothes to their homes to try on – only for Jackie to discover they were buying an outfit for their own funeral.

"That's the hardest thing," she says of leaving. "It's the people I'll miss."

Her standing with the community was acknowledged on Ballentynes's last day – September 2 – when Ōtaki School's kapa haka group performed for her at the store.

Jackie says she has no intention of sitting at home now.

"I'm looking for a part-time job," she says. "I can't bear being at home."

As for Ōtaki itself, Jackie remains optimistic. With its population continuing to grow, she believes its fortunes can improve.

"You can only get so down. You've just got to fight for it."

But for now, Jackie is getting over being at a store that has been part of her life for nearly four decades.

"I've loved my time there," she says. "And I've loved the people."

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SPIRITUAL FAIR AROHA VIBRATION

Ōtaki Memorial Hall, 10am-4pm Saturday, September 19. Entry by gold coin or non-perishable food item (proceeds supporting Ōtaki Foodbank). Come along indulge, enjoy, nurture and spoil yourself with divine energies.

WEA TALKS W M Thackeray: *his life and context*. Speaker: Dr Heidi Thomson, emeritus professor of English literature at Te Herenga Waka VUW, 10am-1pm Saturday, September 12, Venue: Waikanae Presbyterian Church Hall, 43 Ngaio Rd. *Why you should read Vanity Fair (1847-1848)*. Speaker: Dr Heidi Thomson. 10am-1pm Saturday, September 19. Cost per talk: Season ticket - free, Standard Member - \$20, Casual/Visitor - \$30

BORNEO BASH Gertrude Atmore Supper Room (Memorial Hall) 6pm, Sunday, September 20. Hear the story of a unique adventure cycling more than 5000km around the island of Borneo by Ōtaki cyclist Lindsay Gault. Gold coin koha to Cancer Society.

TREE TALK Ōtaki Carbon Forests is holding a Tane Tree Talk with Prof Warwick Silvester at the Senior Citizens Hall, Rangitira St, 7pm Thursday, September 24. Warwick will talk about research by the Tane Tree Trust on planting, management and sustainable use of native trees.

AWARENESS DISCO 5-8pm Friday, September 25, Ōtaki Memorial Hall – to support child cancer awareness (see page 14). **WEHIWEHI GALA** Wehiwehi Marae, Manakau, 10am-3pm, October 3. Wood chopping, hangi, chow mein, mussel fritters, raw fish, cake stall, hight tea, nachos, sausage sizzle, candy floss, drinks, burgers, toasties, face painting, bouncy castle, white elephant, raffles, plants, health checks, and more! Eftpos available. Bring the whole whānau.

BIKE REPAIR 11am-3pm, October 17, Ōtaki College. Does your bike need a little TLC? Bring it to Energise Ōtaki's Repair Day. Bookings required: kirsty@energiseotaki.nz

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS WEEK October 12- 8. The theme for this year's Mental Health Awareness Week is Belonging Matters. See mentalhealth.org.nz to order a free event pack.

SENIORS' OCTOBER Community activities throughout October. For the programme, visit ageconcernkapiti.co.nz (see page 6).

KIDS MARKET October 11 at the Ōtaki Market (see below).

ŌTAKI MARKET Old Main Highway, Ōtaki (opposite New World). Open 10am-2pm every Sunday during summer.

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

OLD COURTHOUSE GALLERY 239 Main Highway, Ōtaki.

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

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

COMMUNITY BOARDS The next **Ōtaki Community Board** meeting at the Gertrude Atmore Supper Room is at 7pm on Tuesday, September 22. The next **Waikanae Community Board** meeting is 6.30pm Tuesday, October 27, at Waikanae Beach Hall, 24 Rauparaha Street. The public is welcome at meetings. Search "meetings and agendas" at kapiticoast.govt.nz To speak at a meeting, register by calling 04 296 4700 or 0800 486 486, or email democracy.services@kapiticoast.govt.nz

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

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.

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

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

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

ŌTAKI LIBRARY – ALL SESSIONS FREE:

JP service every Monday 10.30am-12.30pm;

Age Concern every 2nd Thursday 10am-noon **Greypower** 1st & 3rd Thursday 10.30am-1.30pm.

ŌTAKI WOMEN'S COMMUNITY CLUB Family Hotel, Ōtaki. October 14, 5:30-8:30pm. Women get together for a club meeting, then have dinner. Email: otakiwomensclub@outlook.com

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

Election agenda lost in space?

Against the background of Ageostrategic uncertainties brought on by military attacks mounted by two of the world's three super-powers against lesser countries contrary to the letter and spirit of United Nations membership, New Zealand faces security considerations of historic significance.

These relate to the development of its space industries that place it within the top echelon of world nations for regular despatch of rocket-supported payloads into deep space – no longer a frontier for mankind but a global play area for commercial and security interests.

The security considerations relate to its position on the use of the technologies developed by Kiwi entrepreneurs operating from launch sites in the North and South Islands. Can their rockets carry potential defence or attack weaponry? Can they carry links that enable and/or support defence or attack weaponry? Can they transport security monitors, acting in effect as spy in the sky devices for security agencies of New Zealand alone, allied defence partners and/or third parties entering into commercial arrangements?

While these questions have not featured in public argument during the lead-up to full-scale electioneering for November's vote, a professor of commercial law at the University of Auckland, Gehan Gunasekara, has made his position clear in the *New Zealand Herald*.

Referring to offshore descriptions of the Mahia Peninsula on the East Coast as "a unique resilient platform" for satellite launches providing critical redundancy to Western orbital

infrastructure during a crisis, he writes: "Its use during any crisis would make this country a target and draw us into the conflict, whether we want to be part of it or not. We should enact rules to prohibit the use of facilities in this country for war-like operations."

He argues that New Zealand's adoption of a "non-nuclear stance" in 1985 has enabled us to forge a genuinely independent foreign policy and avoid, for instance, being drawn into the entanglement of the 2003 Iraq invasion.

"It's not physical distance that protects us from war and conflict. It is our ability to morally distance ourselves by upholding international norms and condemning those who do not."

It is correct that New Zealand's sovereign government is free to make up its own mind on the position it adopts on matters from support/involvement in military and security matters to free trade and tariff imposition; conditions that control imports to the scale of immigration. But in making up its mind, a government of any political stripe in Wellington would not do so without considering the circumstances and likely reaction of other countries to the position it might adopt.

Independence of decision making carries with it the freedom to make the right or wrong choice. But the claim to an independent foreign policy does not insulate a nation from the reaction of other nations, good or bad. It does not of itself offer a deterrent to aggressive intent from a third party.

Moral suasion was hardly a barrier to President Vladimir Putin's decision to invade Ukraine. It is not that which has prevented his forces taking over the country – it is the ability to access the Starlink satellite that has enabled Ukraine to utilise its drone capabilities

to an unprecedented scale of military defence. Guidance from space for drones has been critical to both sides in the Gulf war – a conflict that began following the failure of moral suasion to convince Tehran it should refrain from uranium enrichment with a prospect of nuclear weapon manufacture.

China regularly asserts its commitment to peaceful co-existence, but few would expect President Xi to constrain China's defence establishment from ensuring its forces have access to the best information space technology can supply.

Our infant space industry is maturing rapidly. It offers the country a space-age potential as advanced as any internationally for defence of its land area and massive exclusive maritime zone.

The conflicts of 2025 and this year have dramatically exposed the limits of moral suasion as a barrier to war. Consequently, an objective of a New Zealand-owned and operated protective defence system that makes the most of advanced technologies, wherever they may be sourced, would appear both prudent and reasonable. Links available to Pacific Island nations for fisheries monitoring, along with security surveillance, could be of inestimable value to them.

Independent or not, we have no control over others who may or may not decide to display aggression against us. But we do have control over the measures we take for own defence.

A debate on the role of our fledging space industry would be useful during the coming election campaign. If nothing else, it would give us all a break from taxation rhetoric and the outpourings of single interest advocates pressing politicians for more and more dollars from the public purse. Defence and security need more airtime.

■ *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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Funds boost beleaguered RSA

By Ian Carson

The Ōtaki Club & RSA is hoping to be fully open on September 15 if a public appeal continues to attract loans and donations.

As of September 7, \$30,000 had been received – about half of the amount the club needs to stave off closure.

About 100 people at a public meeting on Sunday, August 31, heard that the club was technically insolvent, but that plans were afoot to rescue the struggling club.

The meeting was at the Raukawa Street clubrooms of the RSA, which had already been mostly closed for two weeks in a bid to slash costs while a rescue plan was devised.

Those attending heard that for more than three years, the club's costs had exceeded revenue. Despite efforts to reverse the deficit, poor trading in June and July brought matters to a head. Unable to service supplier costs, the club stopped orders for goods the club relied on, such as alcohol and food.

The August 31 meeting was called after two early meetings of members, in which the club committee was urged to discuss the situation with the public.

President Trist Reweti was up-front about the challenges, saying the situation meant members had some tough choices to make. However, on the positive side, many people had



BETTER TIMES: Four recent presidents of the Ōtaki Club & RSA, from a rendered photo taken on Anzac Day, 2026. From left, Trist Reweti, Colin Robertson, Hone Underwood, and Mike Fogarty. *Image supplied*

offered to help since the doors closed.

Costs had also been trimmed, including staff costs and the salary of general manager Te Hau. She told the meeting she had recently resigned to help the club with its cost-cutting programme.

Laying out the figures, Te Hau (surname withheld), who was appointed only 16 months ago, said the Ōtaki RSA had nearly \$90,000 of debt – \$55,000 in aged payables (supplier debt), and \$32,000 in loans

from members. Alongside that, it had running costs such as \$2800 a month for power.

However, it had a strong freehold asset in the building, valued at \$1.2 million, which – along with efforts by the management to become solvent again – Te Hau said were “holding off” creditors. Trist said two recent meetings of members indicated there was no desire to wind up the club, which was established in 1919 and had become an Ōtaki institution.

"That's not an option," he said.

Members agreed to set up a working group to pursue two options for the club:

1. Continue to trade with changes to operations.
2. Continue as an entity but sell the buildings and land.

A priority for option 1 was to clear debt as soon as possible. Re-opening full time would require most of the \$55,000 supplier debt to be paid. Restocking the bar would cost up to

\$3000, and \$4000 would be needed for payouts on the pokie machines, plus \$2000 to refill the ATM.

To generate income, other groups could hire the venue, including the kitchen for commercial operations.

Apart from donations and loans, corporate sponsors would be approached to support the club. Future operations might include more volunteers, but it was also recognised that the Ōtaki RSA experience needed to entice more people into the club more regularly.

Option 2, to sell the buildings and assets, would clear the debt and allow for the purchase of another smaller building. The club would continue, but it would be unlikely to offer gambling, dining or alcohol.

A merger with another entity would be possible.

Two have expressed interest: Ōtaki Golf Club, and Waikanae Chartered Club. Members, however, have indicated they wouldn't want to travel to Waikanae, leaving the golf club as the only viable alternative at present.

Meantime, working group member Phil Cowan has set up a “Love Ōtaki RSA” crowdfunding campaign. Using social media, it is aimed at attracting funds from businesses, individuals, and veterans worldwide. See Love Ōtaki RSA on Facebook.

- If you want to donate, assist or you have suggestions, contact president Trist Reweti at otakirsa@xtra.co.nz

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REALTY

Candidates line up for Kāpiti electorate

Five candidates have thrown their hat in the ring to contest the new Kāpiti electorate.

The National MP for the previous Ōtaki electorate, Tim Costley, will vie for the seat against Labour candidate Sophie Handford, the Greens' Melody Willis, NZ First's Penny Gaylor, and Opportunity's CK Sng.

Ōtaki Today asked the candidates what they thought mattered most to Ōtaki residents.

Tim Costley – National

Improved local healthcare is the biggest issue I hear about, followed by the need to cap council rates. We've opened new health facilities locally, funded extra medicines and treatments, and we have a new cancer clinic coming. Law to cap rates at 4% is also progressing. Towns like Ōtaki get forgotten about by councils and some candidates. Not me: I understand what our town needs. I wrote a new law which is entirely focused on delivering better support for Ōtaki. It aligns the boundaries of agencies like health, MSD, housing, and police, so we don't slip through the cracks and get stuck between Kāpiti and Horowhenua. It would mean you could get all your support in Kāpiti, not Levin or Palmerston North. Ōtaki deserves the best local support, especially for healthcare and making life more affordable. That will continue to be my focus if you re-elect me as Ōtaki's MP.

Sophie Handford – Labour

People are worried about the cost of living, the lack of jobs, the cost of healthcare, and access to housing. Labour will fight the cost-of-living crisis with free GP visits and prescriptions, and a \$20 a week cap on public transport fares. We'll boost wages by restoring pay equity and fair pay agreements – that will help families and lead to more spending and



Tim Costley – National



Sophie Handford – Labour



Melody Willis – Greens



Penny Gaylor – NZ First



CK Sng – Opportunity

jobs in the local economy. Labour will invest in local infrastructure, like social housing, increase apprenticeship funding, and introduce tax breaks for small business investment. People are sick of the current government making excuses and ignoring problems. The number of people in Ōtaki on Jobseekers has risen 15% in the past three years. Wages have stagnated. While Ōtaki families struggle, National has cancelled desperately needed new state houses on Aotaki St. Ōtaki locals want action, not excuses. You deserve a champion who will fight for a community where everyone can thrive together.

Melody Willis – Greens

"There is an indigenous spirit in Ōtaki that is unapologetic and proud. By definition that spirit is also loving." – *Tainui Stephens, 2021*. I'm impressed by the strong sense of community, care, and creativity demonstrated by Ōtaki residents and it's this type of spirit that all New Zealanders deserve. I've heard from Ōtaki residents how deeply the cost of living and housing crisis is impacting whānau and your local community. Despite what some would have us believe – with chronic underinvestment in housing, assaults on Te Tiriti o Waitangi me te reo Māori; and recent attacks on rough-

sleepers, workers, and the environment in favour of corporate greed – Aotearoa has enough for everyone to thrive. New Zealanders cannot afford to elect another government that prioritises corporations above people and planet. This is why I'm standing for the Green Party, the only party with a plan to ensure everyone's needs are met and nature is healthy.

Penny Gaylor – NZ First

After 17 years representing Otaki and the Kapiti Coast in local government, I've joined NZ First to represent people in Parliament. I've lived in Otaki for 20 years, serving on the board of Te Wānanga o Raukawa, and am chair of Ōtaki College. Education is important to me, and as NZ First says, education is an investment, not an expenditure. And I'm committed to tackling student truancy. I've long championed environment responsibility. New Zealand is rich with natural resources and hard-working innovative Kiwis, so I'm backing a party that is smart enough to know how to put the two together and get us back onto the pathway to prosperity. If we want to be a prosperous country again, we have to work our way out of debt and welfare dependency. I'm proud of my work to secure new electric trains for Otaki, which will

realise huge economic benefits for Otaki.

CK Sng – Opportunity

Ōtaki's growth is at a crossroads. Housing stress remains a real concern as affordable options are scarce, and fast-tracked developments risk overwhelming our infrastructure, roads, and community character without proper consultation. Residents want growth that respects mana whenua, protects Raukawa Marae and the town's cultural identity, and doesn't sideline existing whānau in favour of newcomers. Alongside this, cost-of-living pressures, stretched healthcare access, and ageing infrastructure are front of mind for many households. As the Opportunity Party candidate for Kāpiti, I'll champion smart, sustainable development where housing growth is paired with real infrastructure investment (via our Affordable Housing and Intergenerational Infrastructure policies), transparent community consultation, and policies that improve healthcare access and ease the cost of living (via our Healthy People, Abundant Energy and Tax Reset policies) without leaving Ōtaki's unique character behind. Ōtaki deserves a voice that listens first, then plans and acts with the next 30 years in mind.



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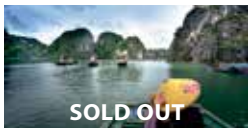
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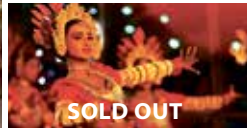
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Members of the skill sharing group at the Senior Citizens Hall.

Photo Ōtaki Today

Crafty sharers move house

The Ōtaki Skill Sharing Group has found a new home after moving from the now-closed Presbyterian church hall to the Senior Citizens Hall in Rangatira Street.

The group meets every Wednesday from 9am to midday, providing an opportunity for people to meet others, socialise and learn or share craft skills.

About 18 people attend each week, with knitting, crochet and card making among the popular activities.

Group leader Penny Denzel says the group is also making a difference in the wider community.

“We deliver blankets regularly to St Vincent de Paul in Levin, specifically for refugees in the area,” she says.

The group also provides knitted slippers to three local schools – St Peter Chanel, Ōtaki School and Te Kura Kaupapa Māori o Te Rito. So far, about 200 pairs have been made and distributed.

“We went to the schools and asked what they needed, and one said slippers,” Penny says. “So that’s what we did.”

The group previously made items for overseas communities, but rising shipping costs and complications have led it to focus its efforts locally.

Four of the women involved are aged over 90 and continue to knit regularly. For many members, the group is as much about companionship as it is about craft.

“We put a cup of tea on at about 10 o’clock,” Penny says.

A \$2 koha covers costs.

The group is short of wool and welcomes donations of any type. Members also knit squares at home which are brought along and joined together to make blankets.

Penny says the group welcomes people of all ages, including young people who want to learn from those with experience.

The Ōtaki Skill Sharing Group was the supreme winner for Kāpiti in the 2019 Wellington Airport Regional Community Awards.

■ *If you’re interested in joining the group or would like to donate some wool, please contact Penny: 021 247 0722 or email pdenzel@gmail.com*

Activities galore for Seniors’ October

A month-long programme of community events and activities is planned for Ōtaki’s older people during Seniors’ October.

The Kāpiti-wide Seniors’ October 2026,, run by Age Concern and supported by Kāpiti Coast District Council and the TG Macarthy Trust, begins on October 1, the International Day of Older Persons.

Age Concern Kāpiti community programme administrator Holly Stephenson says there will be an even wider range of activities than the successful event last year.

“This year’s programme includes a diverse range of activities, providing seniors with wonderful opportunities to learn, try something new, stay active and, most importantly, have some fun and connect with others,” Holly says.

Throughout October, 60 events and activities are scheduled, with several running multiples times.

Ōtaki events include:

- Clay and Cuppa, Monday and Friday October 5 and 16 – Visit Ōtaki Pottery Club, explore ceramics, see the gallery and make a pinch pot.
- Ōtaki Rotunda Tour, Monday, October 5 – Tour the historic rotunda at the former Ōtaki Children’s Health Camp, hear its story and learn about its restoration. Registration required.
- Ōtaki Family History Help Desks, Wednesdays October 7, 14, 21 &

28 – Get help starting or progressing your family history research using a range of genealogy resources.

- Meet the Candidates, Monday October 12 – Kāpiti Grey Power’s Ōtaki meeting hearing from candidates ahead of the election.
- Introduction to Bridge, Wednesday, October 14 – Discover bridge and try mini bridge practice games at Ōtaki Bridge Club. Registration required.
- Ōtaki MenzShed at Home, Thursday, October 15– Find out what MenzSheds is all about and how Ōtaki MenzShed helps in the community.
- Volunteer Pop-In Session, Wednesday, October 21 – Find out about volunteering in Kāpiti, the opportunities available and the benefits of getting involved.
- Ōtaki Family History Society Monthly Meeting, Tuesday, October 27 – Join the meeting, with a focus on solving family-history “brick wall” problems and mysteries.

A free Seniors’ October booklet will be available from the library, Citizens Advice Bureau, Ōtaki pool and other outlets about mid-September. A digital copy will also be available at ageconcernkapiti.co.nz and at kapiticoast.govt.nz

RĀ WHAKAURU | ENROLMENT DAY

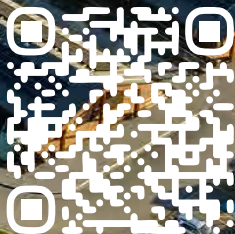
Kia Rangatira te Tū! Plan your 2027 study journey

Saturday 26 September 2026 10:00am – 2:00pm, 41 Te Rauparaha Street, Ōtaki.

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- Tamariki activities and whānau space

Visit our website for more details or to register! **WANANGA.COM**



Community planting boost from Mills Albert

Civil construction company Mills Albert has got behind the Friends of the Ōtaki River with a tree planting and putting surplus topsoil to good use.

About 40 Friends and Mills Albert staff gathered on August 19 to plant native seedlings on the south bank of the river. The seedlings were all grown at the Friends' own nursery as part of the group's ongoing conservation work.

Friends chair Max Lutz thanked Mills Albert for its support, which included not only paying for the trees but arranging delivery of about 1000 cubic metres of topsoil to the site.

The soil was surplus material from recent works on Mill Road. Hundreds of truckloads were transported from the Mill Road depot and spread across the riverbank using a bulldozer.

Former Friends secretary Trevor Wylie played an important role in liaising between the conservation group and Mills Albert. A sign



acknowledging the company's contribution was also unveiled during the planting.

Mills Albert construction and sustainability manager Peter Jenkins said the project was a good example of business and community working together for the benefit of Ōtaki well into the future.

"This is something not just for us

and our families to enjoy, but also for future generations," he said. "This planting is going to be here for many years to come."

He said the company was pleased to be able to support the Friends' volunteers while also finding a productive use for the surplus soil.

"These guys [the Friends] are all volunteers, so it's really nice to be

able to give back to the community," he said. "And the timing was great because we were able to put that topsoil somewhere useful. From a sustainability perspective, this is exactly what I like to see, because part of my role is to divert as much as I can from landfill."

He said the company would be keen to find similar opportunities in

the future.

"If we have more soil that's good enough to plant in, this will be the first stop," he said.

He said about 96 percent of the material excavated by Mills Albert was currently being put to use elsewhere rather than going to landfill.

Grant gets school shade sails for summer

Ōtaki School will have new shade sails for summer thanks to a \$27,029 grant from New Zealand Community Trust.

The sails, over the kura's sandpit and outdoor play area, will provide UV protection over one of the school's busiest outdoor spaces, helping keep tamariki safer in the sun.

The kura's tumuaki (principal), Rauru

Walker, says the school appreciates the "generous" funding.

"Our outdoor play areas are a big part of how our children learn, connect, and grow, and the new shade sails will give students a safe, shaded space during peak heat hours", he says.

The sandpit has also been recently installed, quickly becoming a favourite play

area, but it had no overhead cover. The new shade sails will protect it and nearby outdoor spaces, with local contractors engaged and installation expected before summer.

A thumbs up from Ōtaki School tamariki for new shade sails. From left, Kahukuranui Lewis, Ngākau Tatana, Eva-Wairere Edwards, and Te Āio Epiha-Hall.

Photo NZ Community Trust



Contact me at my Kāpiti office

020 438 8462

kapiti@parliament.govt.nz

6 Te Roto Dr, Paraparaumu

Tim Costley
MP for Ōtaki

National



Authorised by Tim Costley, Parliament Buildings, Wgtn.



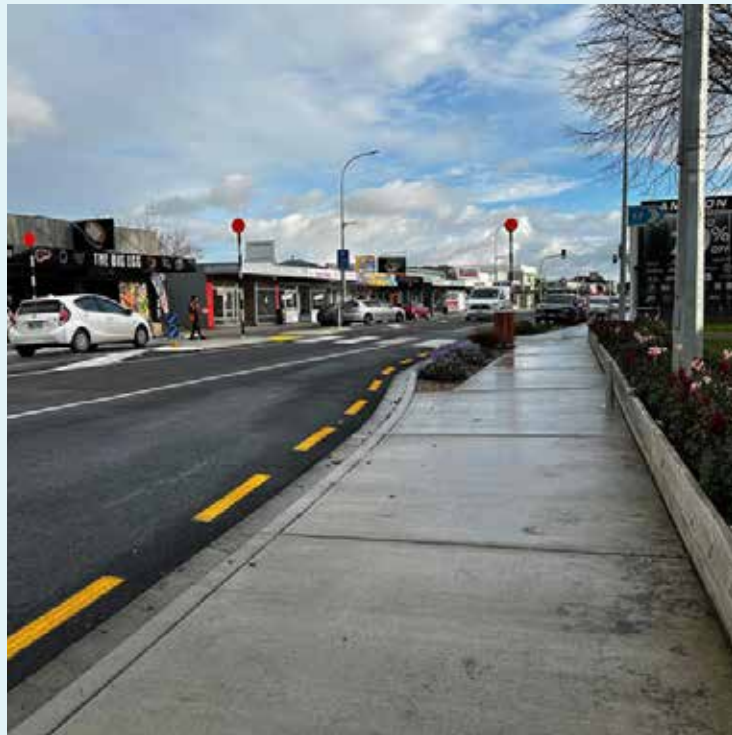


Photo credit: NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi

Milestones that matter

The transfer of Old State Highway 1 to a local road marks an important milestone for Te Horo and Ōtaki.

Once a busy state highway, the corridor has been upgraded into a safer, more people friendly road, with improved crossings, footpaths, walking and cycling links, drainage and road surfaces.

These improvements make it easier to get around and support the long-term wellbeing of our communities. Council is now responsible for maintaining the road, ensuring it continues to serve our district well into the future.

The formal handover process is expected to be completed later this year.

► Find out more at: kapiticoast.govt.nz/OldSH1otaki



Have your say and make Ōtaki roads safer

We're seeking community feedback on our draft Speed Management Plan 2026–36.

The plan proposes speed changes and safety improvements across local roads to help reduce harm and make it safer for everyone to walk, bike, scoot and drive.

The plan includes safer speeds near schools, recreation areas and busy routes, along with improvements such as raised crossings, speed humps and pedestrian refuges.

Even small changes in speed can save lives.

Have your say by midnight 15 September.

► Visit: haveyoursay.kapiticoast.govt.nz/SpeedManagement



Building a resilient water supply

Strengthening drinking water supply for residents now and into the future is major focus for two of our infrastructure projects in Ōtaki:

- We've replaced 3.4km of ageing pipeline from the Waitohu Reservoir to the new Ōtaki Reservoir. This upgrade also supports future growth by preparing the area for a possible additional reservoir.
- Two-way traffic management is in place on Tasman Road where we're replacing a drinking water bore. Currently crews are driving casings into the ground, which is the noisiest part of the job. Once the required depth is reached, drilling will begin.

► Visit: kapiticoast.govt.nz/TasmanRoadBore



The travelling Mini-ramp rolls into Ōtaki

After supporting the Waikanae skate community during their skatepark refresh, the much-loved mini-ramp has moved to its new home in Ōtaki.

Following discussions with the Ōtaki Community Board, the ramp has been installed at Haruātai Park, near the basketball court.

With recently upgraded lighting at the park, local skaters can enjoy the facility well into the evening, making it easier to fit in a session after school or work.

This creates an exciting new space for the community to get active, build skills, and have fun, even after the sun sets!

► Visit: kapiticoast.govt.nz/FindAPark



Manakau Hui Mai romp home in Kāpiti Cup football final

By sports reporter Frank Neill
Manakau Hui Mai easily won the plate final of football's Kāpiti Cup competition on August 29.
Playing on their home ground at Manakau Domain, they defeated the Waikanae Hawks 6-1. This saw Hui Mai score an unprecedented 19 goals in their final two matches of the season.

In the local derby a week earlier they thrashed Ōtaki Master Blasters 13-0 in the plate semi-final.
Atain Haley was prominent in both games, scoring six goals in total – four goals against the Master Blasters two against the Hawks in the final.
Tainui Baker also scored two goals in the final,

with Mike Glensor scoring once. A Hawks own goal completed Hui Mai's tally.
Cam Manclark was in fine goal-scoring form in the semi-final, netting five goals. Mike Glensor scored twice. Tainui Baker and T J Sannazarro each found the back of the net once.
Meantime, the Ōtaki Kāeaea women's team completed their season with a win, a loss and a

draw from their last three matches to finish sixth on the table.
They defeated Wellington United Emeralds 1-0 on August 16 at Haruātai Park. Haley Hall was the match's sole scorer. A week earlier they drew with Tawa 0-0 and in the final match of the season they lost to the Seatoun Sea Shanties 0-4.
■ *More sport page 24*

Ōtaki to fore in awards

Ōtaki featured prominently in the 2026 Kāpiti Good Sorts and Wellington Airport Regional Community Awards.

The awards night on August 6, hosted by Kāpiti Coast District Council in partnership with Wellington Airport, recognised local volunteers, leaders, and organisations.
The Mayoral Award was presented to Ōtaki's Ricki Baker – an uri of the three mana whenua iwi of the Kāpiti Coast, Ngāti Raukawa, Ātiawa ki Whakarongotai, and Ngāti Toa Rangatira.
Mayor Janet Holborow said Ricki was held in the highest regard across the district, the wider Wellington and Manawātū regions, and beyond. His service to whānau, hapū, iwi, and the wider community reflected a life given generously to others.
In the Wellington Airport Regional Community Awards, The Kilns at Te Horo won the Arts and Culture category, and Ōtaki Surf Lifesaving Club won the sports and leisure section.
In other categories, the education and child development category was won by



Ricki Baker receives his Mayoral Award from Mayor Janet Holborow.
Photo supplied

Multicultural Educational Campaign NZ; heritage and environment by Ngā Uruora Kāpiti Project; and the Rising Star award went to Otaihanga Zero Waste. Hora Te Pai Health Services won the health and wellbeing category and went on to win the supreme award. All winners will represent

Kāpiti at the Wellington Airport Regional Community Awards finals later this year.
Janet said the awards night was an opportunity to shine a light on people who led with an unwavering commitment to others.
“This year, we had 32 nominations for our Good Sorts awards. The high calibre of nominations reflects just how many amazing volunteers support our community,” she said.
Good Sorts awards went to Noella Squire, Emma Upton, Thomas Wolff, Neil Shipman, Tim Upton, Jonathan Mines, Rachel Thompson, Tarn Sheerin, Eric Robinson and Alan Tinney.
A Taonga Maumahara award was presented posthumously to the whānau of Bruce Henderson, a champion of safer infrastructure, cycling programmes, and the expansion of the district's trail networks. The rangatahi award went to Jack Stephens, an outstanding member of the Youth Council.

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Participants will be compensated for time and study-related costs.

MAHI MĀRA/Gardening



A lovely crop of tamarillos on the way. Photos Kath Irvine, ediblebackyard.nz



A tamarillo grown in a cooler garden, topped to keep it small so it can grow beneath the canopy of a feijoa to protect it from frost.

Spring prune for a productive tam

I’m a fan of a tamarillo with a sturdy trunk and a low centre of gravity. Pruning is the way! Without it, branches are lanky and breaky, and the fruits become ever smaller each year. A spring prune – once risk of frost is over, will keep them reachable, sturdy and fruitful.

EDIBLE GARDEN



KATH IRVINE

Tams fruit on first year wood, just like citrus, figs and feijoas. This means they can be kept small with an annual prune, and still be awesomely productive. So don’t be shy about removing branches that have already fruited. New shoots will come from the trunk, making for

stronger branches that can support excellent fruiting.

Pruning

Prune out the top of young seedling trees to your preferred height – 60cm, 1m or 1.8m – choose a height that works. Topping it stimulates side branching for more productivity, as well as creating a sturdier trunk. No need to head back trees that are fitting into their surrounds perfectly. However, if your tree is going to be taller than you can manage,

or out-grow the space you’ve allotted it, or has a puny trunk that needs fattening up – prune it back.

Pruning mature tamarillos

- Use thinning cut to clean away dead or broken branches.
- Thin out weak or puny branches that clutter the tree.
- Head back the trunk to your desired height.
- Thin out branches that have fruited, or at the least prune them right back.

Tamarillos can be pruned back hard if necessary. I’ve lopped the tops off back to a 1m trunk with great success. They reshoot from this point with vigour as long as they are warm, well fed and surrounded with plenty of support plants.

Restoring a lop-sided or lanky tamarillo

One of three things are typically happening here:

- The tree is shaded, and reaching towards the light.
- The tree is in the wind. Cut the tree back so that it is lower than shelter trees, or choose a sheltered spot, and plant a new tamarillo.
- You are a shy pruner, and haven’t pruned the trunk back.

Tamarillos are short lived trees so no dramas about starting again - you will need to at some point anyway.

Plan ahead for new trees

Keep your tamarillo supply up by growing a new tree every three years or so. My fav way is from seed (free plants, yay!) and genetic strength (double yay!). Homegrown seedling trees are more disease resistant, hardier, and more vigorous than store bought ones.

Collect the seed of your best fruit from a strong growing tree, in the same way as you would for a tomato. Tamarillos grow fast and come into fruit quickly – about 2 years from seed to harvest when in the right environment.

The joy of growing your own, and having free plants is that you can experiment with pruning techniques and gain confidence as you figure out what works best.

■ Kath’s edible backyard garden is spray-free, natural, and low-input. Kath offers organic gardening advice through articles, books, workshops, and consultations.



Tamarillos always fruit on new wood.



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ŌTAKI DISTRICT ARTS, ATTRACTIONS AND EVENTS

Kōanga/Spring 2026

October a poignant time for Trail artist Serra

By Ian Carson

For jewellery artist and night-sky photographer Serra Clark, this year's Kāpiti Coast Art Trail is about more than displaying her art.

Serra is taking part in the Trail for the third time, with some of her jewellery on display at the new Workspace Studios at 2 Arthur Street, Ōtaki, alongside artists Sarah Brock, Bill Shortis and Vaune Mason. Her photography, however, will be on display at Copperfield Collective in Paraparaumu.

The timing of the Trail is especially poignant for Serra – it's the fifth anniversary of the stillbirth of her daughter, Zoe.

To mark the anniversary, Serra is also holding an exhibition, *Lessons From Zoe*, at the Roderick Deane Gallery, Paraparaumu Library in October. The exhibition brings



Serra Clark at Workspace Studios with her dog, Autumn. Photo Ōtaki Today

together five years of her night-sky photography, work that began as a way of processing her grief.

Serra had become interested in

photographing the night sky while pregnant with Zoe, but after her daughter died, that interest took on a much deeper meaning.

Venus was prominent in the sky about that time – Serra and her older daughter began saying goodnight to Zoe by looking towards it.

She subsequently travelled, learned more about astrophotography and began spending time outdoors at night, creating images while coming to terms with her loss.

"It was my way of being able to go out and be on my own and process it in some way, create something out of it," she says.

She hopes the exhibition will also encourage conversations about baby loss, which she believes is still difficult for many people to discuss.

Serra has a background as a social worker and has become involved in advocacy around perinatal mental health and bereavement. She encourages bereaved parents

to connect with other parents who have experienced baby loss, and organisations such as Sands NZ. A portion of the proceeds from *Lessons From Zoe* will be donated to Sands.

Her exhibition (September 25 to October 8) is just before Baby Loss Awareness Week (October 9-15). On October 15, as part of Baby Loss Awareness Month, the Global Wave of Light has people around the world lighting candles at 7pm to remember babies who have died.

Serra will provide candles at the exhibition for visitors who wish to take part.

For Serra, the photography is ultimately about more than the images themselves.

"I want to show my work because it's my brief journey of what's happened," she says. "Everyone processes their own journey differently."

Thirty-two local art venues to visit

Ōtaki has 32 artists and galleries participating in the 2026 Kāpiti Coast Art Trail.

This year the Trail includes Labour weekend October 24–26, and the next weekend, October 31/November 1.

Local artists and galleries include:

- Anna Bradbury, 85 Lupin Rd
- Birgit Moffatt, 32 Parenga Rd
- Claire Crocker, 54 Old Hautere Rd
- Grant Stevenson, 38 Moana St
- Jennifer Turnbull, 3 Iti Street
- Kathryn Ennis-Carter, 55 Settlement Rd, Te Horo RD 2
- Melina Martin, 41 Ngaio St, Ōtaki Beach
- Tote Modern, Ōtaki Pottery Club, 47 Te Roto Rd
- Richard Wells, 26 Waitohu Valley Rd
- Sarah Brock (ArtSpace) 2A Arthur St
- Sonia Savage, 35 Ngaio St, Ōtaki Beach
- Old Courthouse Gallery, 239 Old Main Rd



- Stacey Young, 8 Freemans Rd
- Allan Marshall, 241 Ōtaki Gorge Road
- The Makers Where, Hyde Park Village, Te Horo
- Thomas Green, 3 Iti St
- Ōtaki Market Collective, 59 Main St
- Jos Smith, 7A Lemon St
- Paula Archibald, 3 Bell St
- Studio Reset, 239 Hautere Cross Rd

- Workspace Studios, 2A Arthur Street
- Rod Graham, 22 Te Roto Rd
- Keno Sculpture, 7 Byron Brown Pl
- Mike Coolen, 12 Waitaheke Rd, Te Horo
- Ngā Toi Waihanga ki Ōtaki, 211d Old Main Highway
- Gareth Davies, 7 Byron Brown Pl, Ōtaki Beach
- James Carter, 12 Waitaheke Rd, Te Horo
- Deborah Harris, 37 Kensington Dr, Peka Peka
- Dean Lewin, 155 Peka Peka Rd, Peka Peka
- Karen Piercy, 98 Paetawa Rd, Peka Peka
- The Kilns at Te Horo, 6 Jim Winiata Way, Te Horo
- Nigel Sloley, 37 Kensington Dr, Peka Peka
- See kapiticoastarttrail.co.nz

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'26

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ŌTAKI STREET SCENE



Volunteering: giving back, getting more

Every community relies on people who are willing to give their time, skills and energy to help others – and Ōtaki is fortunate to have plenty of them.

Volunteers are often the quiet achievers of a community. They organise events, help clubs and sports groups, support charities, maintain community facilities, plant trees, deliver meals, raise funds and turn up when someone simply needs a helping hand.

Without them, many of the things that make Ōtaki such a great place to live would either cost considerably more or simply not happen.

But volunteering isn't just about giving. It's also about what you get back. There's a particular satisfaction in knowing that your time has made a difference to someone else.

It might be helping a child learn a new skill, contributing to a successful community event, fixing something

VOLUNTEER



that others can't, or simply having a friendly conversation with someone who needs company.

Volunteering is also an opportunity to use skills and experience that might otherwise go unused.

Retired tradespeople, business owners, gardeners, administrators, artists, drivers, cooks and organisers all have something valuable to offer.

For younger people, volunteering can provide experience, confidence and connections. For older people, it can provide purpose, friendship and

a continuing sense of being useful. And there is another benefit that is sometimes overlooked – volunteering brings people together.

It creates friendships between people who might otherwise never meet and strengthens the sense that a community is something we all contribute to, rather than simply a place where we live.

Ōtaki's community spirit has been built by generations of people prepared to roll up their sleeves and help. The next time an opportunity to volunteer comes along, consider giving it a go.

You might just find out that while you're giving something back to Ōtaki, you're gaining something valuable yourself.

■ **Ōtaki Community Expo, Ōtaki Memorial Hall, Main Street. October 10, 10am-2pm. To book a stall contact: 021 102 0058 or email otakipromogroup@gmail.com**

Land, Women and Rangatiratanga

Nei ka whakanuia a Kahe Te Rau o te Rangi rāua ko Te Rangitopeora, ngā tapairu o Kāpiti i tāmoko i te Tiriti hei whakapūmau i tō rāua mana whenua. He mea whakaohoho ā rāua manatunga tuku iho e a rāua uri ake me ngā ringatoi o Te Ātiawa ki Whakarongotai, o Te Wānanga o Raukawa anō hoki mā te toi, e honoa ai ki a Whenua Wāhine Rangatiratanga.

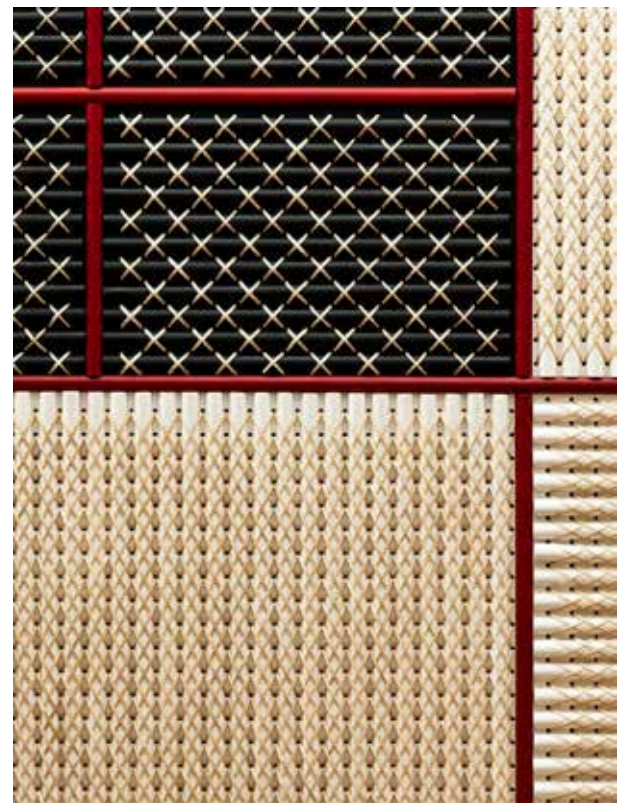
Distinguished rangatira of Kāpiti, Kahe Te Rau o te Rangi, and Te Rangitopeora, are celebrated in this exhibition at Toi Mahara, Waikanae. Both signed the Treaty of Waitangi to affirm their authority over the land.

The taonga in the exhibition are testament to their mana and carry forward an enduring legacy. Artists and descendants of Kahe Te Rau o te Rangi and Te Rangitopeora are joined by others of Ngāti Toa, Te Ātiawa ki Whakarongotai, Ngāti Raukawa and mātāwaka artists to respond to these ancestral figures, honouring traditional forms while creating new narratives. Their works reflect the evolving tikanga that binds land, people, and time.

Kaitiaki taonga provided by: Whānau Pomare, Whānau Bevan and Carkeek.

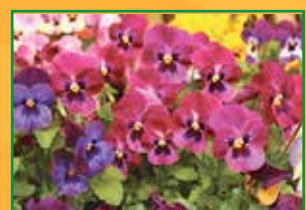
Artists: Charlotte Orzecki, Gina Solomon, Elaine Bevan, Ezra Bevan, Neke Moa, Brian Climie, Aimee Porteners, Matene Te Putu Climie, Hinepūororangi Winiata, Hariata Ropata-Tangahoe, Adrienne Spratt, Chris Gerretzen, Erena Baker, Kere Pomare, Karl Leonard, Tracey Patete, Ranea Aperahama, Toi Waiariki tukutuku collective.

■ **Exhibition on until November 1 in the Te Manawa Toi | Coastlands Gallery.**



Toi Waiariki, Rangatiratanga,

Photo: Maija Stephens.



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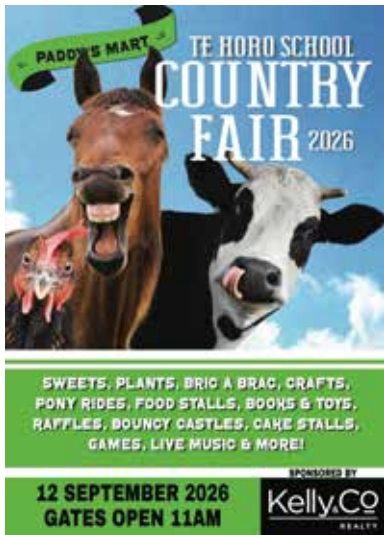
For the programme booklet visit
www.ageconcernkapiti.co.nz
Printed copies available at local
libraries and CABS



ŌTAKI STREET SCENE



Spring is in the air – celebrate with new experiences



STORY WORKSHOP Ōtaki Library, cnr Main and Aotaki Sts. **Sat Sep 12, 10.30am–12pm.** (See Library FB page for more dates.) Got a story to tell? Join the new Story Workshop, connect with local writers in a supportive, creative space. Bring your ideas, drafts, scripts, poetry, essays or even podcasts – anything you'd like to share and develop. Open to writers aged 18+.



ŌTAKI DANCE GROUP BALLROOM DANCING Ōtaki Memorial Hall, Main St. **Weekly from Tues Sep 15, 7.30-9.30pm.** Tuesday night dancing. Lessons have finished but the dancing has not! Come along and enjoy your time on the floor. Open to the public.



SPIRITUAL FAIR AROHA VIBRATION Ōtaki Memorial Hall, Main Street. **Saturday September 19, 10am- 4pm.** Entry by gold coin or a non-perishable food item (proceeds supporting Ōtaki Community Foodbank). Enjoy, nurture, spoil yourself. Spiritual card readings, treats, healing modalities, café.



ŌTAKI WOMEN'S COMMUNITY CLUB meeting Family Hotel, Main St, Ōtaki. Wednesday **Sep 9 / Oct 14, 5:30 - 8:30pm.** Join the Ōtaki Women's Community Club (OWCC) to connect with like-minded local women. Dinner is held after the club meeting. Keen to join? Email otakiwomensclub@outlook.com The OWCC runs the Ōtaki Market and Kids Market.



ŌTAKI MARKET Main Highway (opp New World), Ōtaki. **Sunday Sep 20 and 27, every week from now on, 10am-2pm.** Art and craft, assorted produce, pre-loved and new clothing, tools, books, homeware, plants.



BIKERS' BREAKFAST Southwards Car Museum, Ōtaihang Road, Paraparaumu. **Saturday Sep 26 8:30 am–12:30 pm.** Enjoy a free hot drink and bacon buttie at the second annual motorcycle safety event. Find more details on their FB page.



RETRO PACK '50S ROCK'N'ROLL NIGHT Civic Theatre, Main Street, Ōtaki. **Monday September 28 7:30-10pm.** Join local legends Andrew and Kirsten London, April Phillips, James Tait-Jamieson and Ryan Watson as they reprise their popular 50's show, with the accent firmly on the great rock'n'roll songs of that era. Chuck Berry, Elvis, Peggy Lee, Everly Brothers and more! Room for dancing in the beautifully restored Art-Deco-era treasure that is the Ōtaki Civic Theatre! Tickets at eventfinda.co.nz \$25+fee.



PRODUCERS NIGHT MARKET Ōtaki Market, Main Highway (opposite New World), **Thursday October 1, 4:30 - 8:30pm.** Fresh produce, plants, flowers, and healthcare products, supporting local growers, makers, and small businesses across Kāpiti and Horowhenua. Twilight setting, festive lighting; live local musicians; seating available; food trucks. If postponement is required, the event will move to the following Thursday.



ŌTAKI KIDS; MARKET Ōtaki Market. **Sun Oct 11, 10am-2pm.** Celebrate the power of young minds and crafts. Registrations open six weeks before the event: otakiwomensclub.org/kidsmarket regular stall holders!



SONIC BOOM - a concert experience for families! Southward Car Museum, Paraparaumu. **Wed September 30, 4-5:15pm.** A high-energy live concert experience for a family night out. Packed with epic singalongs, huge dance moments, and nonstop fun. Expect flashy guitar solos, bold costumes, big crowd interaction, and a show bursting with colour, surprises, and feel-good moments that kids (and parents!) will love. Show time: 1 hour 15mins. Tickets at eventfinda.co.nz from \$20+fee.



2026 KAPITI COAST HIGHLAND BALL Waikanae Memorial Hall, **Sat Oct 10, 7-11:55pm.** Book now for a real good Scottish time. Live stage band – Bowmore Display – from Kapiti Coast Pipes & Drums, BYO Drinks and table snacks. Raffle bring cash, supper includes Haggis. TICKETS NEED TO BE PRE-PURCHASED BY THE OCTOBER 7. Members: \$55, non-members: \$65. Contact kapitiscots@outlook.com or 02140 6088.



LAURA COLLINS AND THE BIG BLUES BAND St Peters Village Hall, cnr Beach Rd and Ames St, Paekākāriki. **Saturday September 12, 7:30- 9:30pm.** Laura Collins, known for her soulful vocal delivery and upfront entertainment brings a show with a 'whole lot of brass'. Expect blues, soul, boogie and swing, you'll hear Etta James, Aretha Franklin, Fats Domino, Ray Charles and more. The emphasis is on having a hugely good time! Laura is joined by some of her long-time Wellington based musical companions, Kiwi music icon Wayne Mason, John O'Connor, George Barris, Richard Te One. James Tait Jamieson, Craig Collis and Neville Lauridsen. Get your bling on and go out for a blast! Tickets at eventfinda.co.nz



HENNY PENNY - THE SKY IS FALLING DOWN St Peters Village Hall, Paekākāriki. **September Tue 29, Wed 30; October Thu 1, Tue 6, Wed 7, Thu 8, 10:30, 11:15am.** A fun-filled family adventure for the Sep/Oct school holidays. What would you do if you thought the sky was falling? Join Henny Penny, Cocky-Locky, Piggy-Wiggy, Funny-Bunny and Little Red Riding Hood on a hilarious journey to warn the King and Queen – while trying to avoid the mischievous (and very hungry) Foxy-Loxy. Perfect for children, parents, grandparents, and anyone who enjoys a great family morning out in the lovely village of Paekakariki. Tickets at eventfinda.co.nz \$9+fee. Children under 2 free.



PAEKĀKĀRIKI MARKET DAY St Peters Village Hall, Paekākāriki. **Saturday October 3, 10am-2pm.** This monthly market has an eclectic range of stalls that can include: handmade homeware and crafts, second-hand and vintage treasures, photographs and artwork, food and live music.

ŌTAKI COMMUNITY EXPO

Saturday October 10 10am-2pm

Looking to get involved or help out in your community? Come and check out the many groups that need support.

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ŌTAKI STREET SCENE



MY ŌTAKI KAI

Edited by DEBBI CARSON

Moreish bikkies that never last long

Marie Waaka (Ngāti Toa Rangatira, Ngāti Whakaue) is kaiwhakahaere (manager) of marketing, at Te Wānanga o Raukawa.

Born in Rotorua, Marie is the daughter of Pateriki Te Rei, the first ahorangi (head teacher) at the wānanga.

Ngāti Toa kaumātua Pateriki Te Rei descended from Nohorua Whatarauhi (Tom Street), an elder brother of Te Rauparaha.

Pateriki played representative rugby, fought in the Pacific during the Second World War, and then worked as a carpenter at the Waipa Mill. He was involved in establishing Te Wānanga o Raukawa.

Marie has lived in Ōtaki since 1983. She is wife to Rupene Waaka and mother of two – Peti and Hohi. Rupene was a librarian and researcher at Te Wānanga who also lectured as a kaiāwhina.

Marie is into home preserves. She loves to make tomato relish with a kick of chilli, kamokamo pickle, plum sauce, and plum jam. The tomatoes and kamokamo come from her home garden, while the plums come from a friend's garden.

From time to time Marie weaves with harakeke, and sews a little. Most days she does a few online crosswords and a couple of Sudoku games.

Lately, she has become addicted to an arrow game on her phone, but admits: "I need to kick that!"

Marie has written several children's books – the Te Whānau series, and has her fourth book, *Te Whānau e Rēre ana*, at Te Wānanga



Marie Waaka with some of her children's books. Photo supplied

of Raukawa's publishing arm, Te Tākupu, for publication by the end of the year. It's a rhyming book for young children about flying insects.

Marie's favourite recipe is peanut brownies, based on a recipe from the *Edmond's Cook Book*.

"I love these, but try to limit how often I make them because I can eat my way through them too easily," Marie says. "They are favourites with my whānau as well."

"Every so often I try to lose weight. I have some success and then, oh dear, more brownies!"

■ To buy Marie's books, go to tetakupu.wananga.com



Marie's peanut brownies

Ingredients

125g butter, softened
1 cup white sugar
1 egg
1½ cups standard grade flour
1 tsp baking powder
Pinch of salt
2 tbsp cocoa
1 cup roasted unsalted peanuts

Preheat the oven to 180°C.
Line two baking trays with baking paper.

Cream the butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Add the egg and beat well. Sift flour, baking powder, salt and cocoa together, add to the creamed mixture. Add the peanuts, roughly chopped if you wish, and mix well. Roll tablespoonfuls of the mixture into balls, place on the prepared trays and press down with a floured fork. Bake for 15 minutes or until firm and coloured on the base. Leave on the trays for 1–2 minutes then place on a wire rack to cool.

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Fluoride debate based on unscientific claims

Part 2 (see Part 1 August issue)

Like all scientific fields, community water fluoridation is continually shaped by new evidence, active debate, and ongoing refinement of knowledge.

But the nature of debate inside the scientific community differs markedly from the debate that plays out among the public. Scientific discussion is evidence driven and self-correcting, whereas public discussion is often influenced by misinformation and recycled claims that no longer reflect the state of the science.

This contrast becomes clear when you examine how some anti-fluoridation websites present research. Their framing often distorts both what studies actually found and how those findings fit into the broader evidence base.

One New Zealand anti-fluoridation site, for example, claims that researchers have identified a link between water fluoridation and a rare bone cancer (osteosarcoma) in males under 20. It further asserts that the key study by Bassin et al. (2006) has “never been refuted as no other study has looked at age of exposure”.

It’s an alarming narrative: scientists discover evidence that fluoride causes cancer, fail to act, and continue recommending fluoridation regardless. There’s plenty of room for outrage – if the framing were accurate.

The Harvard University Bassin study was a legitimate peer-reviewed piece of research, but the authors themselves cautioned that it was small, exploratory, biologically uncertain (no effect was found in females), and should not be interpreted as causal. They explicitly stated that the findings required replication.

Far from being ignored, the Bassin findings were tested in larger, better-designed studies, – including a follow-up analysis by members of the original Harvard research group – and multiple major reviews have since concluded that fluoridated water is not associated with osteosarcoma.

The claim that Bassin’s work has “never been refuted” is simply a rhetorical device. It is technically true that no study has repeated the exact original design, but that is because subsequent studies were methodologically improved. They examined the same question



with stronger data and found no association. Anti-fluoride groups cling to the Bassin study because it is the only one that has ever produced a positive association. If they acknowledge that it was tested and robustly contradicted, their entire argument collapses.

Selectively reporting outdated or methodologically weak studies while omitting the broader evidence base is a common tactic in anti-fluoridation advocacy. And anti-fluoride groups often misstate what research articles actually conclude. Any cited study is best checked by referring directly to the original paper, and the conclusion section is usually clear enough for readers to see what the researchers found.

The fluoride debate often gets derailed by claims that sound alarming but are scientifically irrelevant. A common example is the statement that “fluorine is a toxic gas”. True, but fluorine gas is not added to drinking water. Fluoride ions are, and they are entirely different substances with entirely different properties, just as the chloride in table salt is not chlorine gas.

Another example is the claim that “fluoride is industrial waste”. In reality, fluoride – which has many important industrial and commercial uses – is obtained from naturally occurring fluoride in phosphate rock. It is purified to meet New Zealand drinking-water standards before being added to community supplies.

Then there is the emotive statement that “fluoride is used in rat poison”. Everything is a poison at a high enough dose; even vitamin D has been used commercially as a rodenticide. At the concentrations used in water fluoridation,

public health agencies – drawing on an extensive research literature – find fluoridated water safe and effective.

Anti-fluoride campaigners often point to fluoridated communities with poorer dental health than some non-fluoridated ones to imply fluoridation isn’t effective. But those comparisons ignore the socioeconomic and demographic differences that drive oral health: area-level deprivation, access to dental care, dietary patterns, and broader community health factors.

New Zealand’s 2026 national study of more than 600,000 children – the largest evaluation of fluoridation effectiveness ever conducted here – made this point explicit. Crude, unadjusted comparisons sometimes made fluoridated areas appear worse. Once sociodemographic differences were properly controlled for, fluoridation clearly reduced early childhood caries.

This argument from anti-fluoride groups only works if basic confounding factors are ignored. Whether that omission is accidental or deliberate, the effect is the same: it misleads the public.

Anti-fluoride campaigners often argue that fluoridation is unnecessary because “we just need to eat better and reduce sugar”. It’s an appealing idea, but changing dietary habits at a population level is extraordinarily difficult – as public health history repeatedly shows. Public health policy can’t be built on an imagined utopia where everyone consistently follows a perfect diet.

And even nations with comparatively good

Scientific discussion is evidence driven and self-correcting, whereas public discussion is often influenced by misinformation and recycled claims that no longer reflect the state of the science.

dietary habits and lower sugar consumption – Japan is a classic example – still carry a substantial burden of dental disease. Diet matters, but diet alone is not enough.

Anti-fluoridation groups sometime claim that “if water fluoridation is so effective, why don’t all countries adopt it?” The fact that some countries don’t fluoridate their water says nothing about effectiveness. In countries that do, health authorities consistently record large reductions in tooth decay.

Non-adoption usually reflects practical, geographic, or political factors rather than scientific doubt. Some countries have regions where natural fluoride levels are already high enough that adding fluoride is unnecessary. Others have decentralised or fragmented water systems that make controlled fluoridation technically difficult or prohibitively expensive.

In many countries decisions are shaped by political culture and social norms. Sweden is clear example. It does not fluoridate its drinking water; instead, it operates a nationwide programme in which fluoride varnish is applied to schoolchildren’s teeth. This model cannot match the population-wide reach of water fluoridation, but it fits Sweden’s context: near-universal school attendance, an integrated publicly funded dental system, and high trust in government-run public health where fluoride application in schools feels routine, appropriate, and acceptable.

Fluoridation attracts strong feelings and is often debated intensely. That makes it all the more important for public discussion to rest on accurate, trustworthy information. Claims from anti-fluoridation groups that are driven by a predetermined agenda should be treated cautiously and checked against reliable scientific evidence.

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

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Ōtaki Today welcomes letters to the editor. Please include your full name, address and contact phone number. Only letters that include these details will be published, unless there is good reason to withhold a name. Please keep the word count to a maximum of 200. Note your letter may be edited for grammar, accuracy or length. Not all letters received will be published, and the publisher reserves the right to reject any letter. Write to Ōtaki Today, 13 Te Manuao Rd, Ōtaki or email ian@idmedia.co.nz **OPINION:** Note that the views and opinions of our contributors are not necessarily those of Ōtaki Today.

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HUATAU/Opinion

HE TIROHANGA HOU: HENITI BUICK

Pool investment good for Ōtaki, but still deserves scrutiny

Term 3 seems to be flying by, with school holidays somehow only two weeks away!

There's plenty happening around Ōtaki. With the general election coming up in November, I'd encourage everyone to get involved, listen, ask questions and just vote. It was great to see Tara D'Sousa and the local housing group bring election candidates together recently to talk about the very real housing shortage we face here in Ōtaki. A very important kaupapa!

Personally, I managed to sneak away to Dunedin for my Otago graduation after completing my MBA. A blast from the past and a reminder of the good student life in the mighty south! If you have rangatahi considering Otago next year, I'd highly recommend it.

A big council decision this month was the Ōtaki Pool. The council supported progressing a redevelopment including better learn-to-swim facilities, warmer water, a new deep-water pool, improved changing and family facilities, and space for lifesaving and water-safety training.

There's no getting around it, this is a significant investment. About \$11 million was already programmed through council's previous capital works programme and Long-Term Plan, but that doesn't make it "free money". It is still ratepayer investment and deserves scrutiny.

Equally, every part of our district has assets that need renewing and investing in over time. This one is ours.



Parts of the pool infrastructure are becoming obsolete, the existing system needs replacing and we have an opportunity now to move away from gas, while getting the best value we can from an asset that should serve generations.

Over the life of a major community asset, cost per user and the breadth of community benefit matter too, particularly when pool use has increased 67% in just three years.

The hardest part for me was shortening the main pool. My own kids love canoe polo, so I genuinely understand the disappointment from the polo community. It wasn't something I dismissed lightly. Parking remains a challenge too, and we hope to see more work in this area to support our busy sport periods.

But governance sometimes means weighing what we lose against what we gain.

We received written submission from many Ōtaki School tamariki, Ōtaki Sports Club, Ōtaki Canoe Club and heard from individuals such as Dr Terina Raureti and other community members on the day. Our pool now serves increasingly diverse users, babies, tamariki learning to swim, rangatahi, sports, whānau, older people and lifesaving.

Ultimately, I supported investing in a facility that can serve the greatest diversity of people over its lifetime, with increased patronage, while strengthening water safety and reflecting the culture and identity of our town.

Lastly, Te Puna Oranga o Ōtaki has its AGM at 5.30pm on September 29. RSVP to samantha@tpoo.nz if you'd like to attend.

■ Heniti is the Ōtaki Ward councillor

CAM'S CORNER: CAM BUTLER

Highway handover is coming

Revocation complete, what now?

With the Old SH1 revocation complete there are a couple of things to happen now.

Firstly there is a formal handover from Waka Kotahi to Kāpiti Coast District Council for the road – KCDC is responsible for the road from that point.

KCDC have asked for a number of items to be fixed before handover in October, however Waka Kotahi don't have a great track record of fixing problems.

These include the old rumble strip on the Te Horo straights and I have noted all of the weed plants that are starting to take over the beautiful plantings along the expressway and Old SH1. Shall we hold our breath?

Old chemicals

As we have seen at Horowhenua College, old chemicals sitting around can be quite hazardous and a fire risk.

If you have unwanted chemicals sitting around you can dispose of them at the Otaihangā Zero Waste station, paint can go to Resene and batteries can go to the library. There is a lot of useful information on the KCDC electronic and hazardous waste website page.

House revaluation

Working with Quotable Value, KCDC is reviewing the value of all properties in Kāpiti as it does every three years. This value is what your rates are based on so it is important that they are correct. While QV are pretty good at their job, every now and then things don't quite match up. You can object to the revaluation by directly

submitting to QV (not KCDC) through their portal.

You will need to clearly state why you disagree with the valuation and provide some sales data for the area, unrecorded improvements etc.

Ōtaki pool stage II redevelopment

It is not well known just how poor a condition the water heating plant is at the Ōtaki pool.

The boiler is obsolete and cannot be repaired if it was to fail. Failure would result in a shutdown of a couple of

months to replace it like-for-like and then it is still a gas-guzzling, expensive-to-run plant.

The new plant proposed uses electric heat pumps that will be more reliable and drastically slash the running costs of the pool.

The gas bill for the Ōtaki pool is currently as large as that for all the other costs of running the pool!

The changing rooms are the original changing rooms and while we all like a bit of nostalgia, they are not up to regulation and highly inefficient so badly need to be replaced as well. The plan for replacement are for modern changing, showering and toilet facilities.

The spa and sauna will be upgraded to commercial units with more capacity rather than the residential units currently in place. That will make some people very happy.

- Like Ōtaki Community Board on Facebook
- Next Ōtaki Community Board meeting is 7pm on Tuesday, September 22.

■ Cam is chair of the Ōtaki Community Board



EYE ON WAIKANAĒ: MICHAEL MOORE

More than just a place to live

What makes somewhere feel like home? Is it the house we live in, the street we live on, or perhaps something much deeper?

A strong community is created by people who choose to get involved. It is built through friendships, shared experiences, acts of kindness and the willingness to give something back.

Throughout our community, there are countless people who quietly give their time to clubs, societies, sports groups, community organisations and local events. They coach children, organise activities, maintain facilities, serve on committees, raise funds, provide companionship and simply turn up when someone needs a helping hand.

Volunteering gives people an opportunity to contribute to something bigger than themselves. It can provide a sense of purpose and belonging, while creating friendships and a wonderful sense of camaraderie.

For some, a local club or community group becomes an important part of their social life – somewhere they know they are welcome and where their contribution matters.

Our historic Te Horo Hall is a wonderful example. For generations, it has been more than just a building. It has provided a place where people can gather, celebrate, meet, perform, organise and share important moments in their lives.

The hall itself is important, but it is the people who use it, care for it and volunteer their time

who truly bring it to life.

Community spaces like this matter because they give us somewhere to connect. They provide opportunities for people of different ages and backgrounds to meet, talk and participate. They turn neighbours into friends and, sometimes, strangers into people we can rely on.

That is how a collection of houses becomes a community.

We sometimes talk about protecting our homes, but perhaps we should think more broadly about what "home" really means. It is not simply

the four walls where we live. It is the street outside, the local park, the hall, the sports field, the library, the clubrooms and all those places where people come together.

Most importantly, home is the people around us.

We have a wonderful opportunity to shape the communities we live in. Every time we volunteer, join a local group, support an event, help a neighbour or simply take the time to get to know someone, we add another thread to the fabric of our community.

And perhaps that is the greatest reward of all: knowing that together, we are creating a place that is not merely somewhere to live, but somewhere we truly belong.

- The next meeting of the Waikanae Community Board is at 6.30pm on Tuesday, October 27, at Waikanae Beach Hall, 24 Rauparaha Street, Waikanae Beach.

■ Michael is a member of the Waikanae Community Board



THE ELECTORATE: TIM COSTLEY

Capping council rates is what our community wants

Rates capping is not just a good thing, it's what our community wants.

Rates are set by elected councillors and are paid by homeowners and tenants. Rates capping will help make life more affordable for every local family.

National is passing legislation to limit to 4% the amount councils can increase rates each year. This is designed to balance the fact that some costs go up slowly over time, but also that local families are not a free source of extra funding for councils.

We can't continue with constant rate increases, taking from the pockets of hard-working families and local seniors. Any

opposition from Kāpiti Coast District Council to rates capping is tone-deaf to the clear feedback from our community.

In the last two council terms, Kapiti increased rates by 52%, including 17% in one year. Now is the time for every local candidate, and every local councillor, to come out and support rates capping.

National is very clear about wanting to see a change in the spending habits of our local and regional councils. Every family has to make tough decisions about what they can afford,

what they borrow for, and what they say "no" to.

We expect councils to make the same tough decisions. Our government also had to make difficult but responsible spending decisions and reduced tax to help make life more affordable for local residents. If

we put tax up by 17% or even 7%, there would be a similar outcry. It's time to cut back on council spending.

I have heard from endless local residents worried about being taxed out of their own homes. They have worked hard to pay off a mortgage on their home, but on a pension or

fixed income, they can't afford to keep paying higher rates for councils' wishlist. It could cost them the ability to stay in their homes.

We have seen councils across New Zealand waste money on pet projects. Local examples include the garden roof bus stop at Paraparaumu Station, or the container pop-up in Waikanae.

Kapiti locals can't afford escalating rates, nor could they afford a land tax, wealth tax, inheritance tax, or capital gains tax as proposed by Labour and opposition parties.

Councils should focus on delivering the basics, like local roads, pipes, and public services, and keep rate increases under 4%.

■ Tim is the Ōtaki electorate MP



Letting Parliament decide who governs

Another general election is coming, with every citizen having an equal vote and the freedom to decide who should represent them.

Democracy is strongest when people participate –not voting increases the relative influence of those who do.

Members are elected by their local communities, additional members are allocated through the party list system to achieve proportional representation under MMP. The result is a House of Representatives that reflects the choices of the electorate.

After the public has voted, a second process begins. Political parties negotiate to form a coalition or confidence agreement that determines which group will govern. This decision is made after the election, not by the voters directly.

Once a government is formed, party discipline usually requires its members to vote together under the direction of party whips. Individual members of parliament, although elected to represent their communities, are expected to support the collective decisions of their political bloc.

This raises an important question. If the people have already elected the House of Representatives, why is a second political process required to concentrate executive power in a single coalition?

Why should 121 elected representatives not consider each piece of legislation on its merits and vote according to their judgement and the interests of those they represent?

That is the real “why”.

When Parliament divides into competing blocs before it can govern creates the right versus left contest as a historical convention that has continued unquestioned.

PEOPLE'S POLITICS



PHIL MALPAS

The real purpose of Parliament is not to determine which side holds power, but to enable the elected representatives to work together in producing the best legislation for the nation.

The House of Representatives is the democratic

foundation of New Zealand's system of government. Every elected member derives their authority directly from the people. The people elect members of parliament – not governments, political parties, or coalitions. Government should therefore be constituted by the elected members of parliament.

After a general election, the process of democratic representation is replaced by political negotiation between parties. Coalition agreements and political arrangements determine which parties will exercise executive authority, often independently of the direct mandate given by voters to individual members of parliament.

This process concentrates authority within political parties and transfers effective control from the elected House of Representatives to partisan organisations. The result is that political ideology and party discipline take precedence over the independent judgement of elected representatives.

While political parties perform an important role in developing policy, presenting candidates, and contesting elections, they should not possess an exclusive monopoly over the formation and control of government.



Why not consider a people's referendum to end political monopoly in government?

A referendum would provide that the Government of New Zealand shall be formed by the majority support of the elected members of the House of Representatives.

- Every elected member shall have equal constitutional status, whether elected as the representative of a political party or as an independent member. Each member derives their authority directly from the people and is accountable to the people throughout the life of Parliament.
- The Executive Government shall derive its authority from the continuing confidence of the House of Representatives as a whole, rather than from political party coalition agreements or other partisan arrangements.
- Political parties shall remain free to contest elections, develop policy, nominate candidates, and participate fully in parliamentary debate. However, no political party or coalition shall possess an exclusive right or monopoly to form or control the government.
- Government shall be constituted by the majority support of the elected members of

parliament and shall remain accountable to the House throughout its term.

This proposal strengthens representative democracy by ensuring that the authority entrusted by the people remains with their elected representatives.

It encourages cooperation rather than confrontation, consensus rather than partisan domination, and government that reflects the collective judgement of Parliament acting in the interests of all New Zealanders.

The objective is not to abolish political parties, but to restore the primacy of representative democracy by ensuring that government is formed by Parliament itself, rather than by political monopoly through coalition agreements or partisan control.

A book authored by Phil Malpas about the manipulation of democracy is about to be published. Early copies of *Joining the Dots – Humanity, Government and the Missing Link, Will this be the Cooperative Century?* may be ordered from dot1@Sgen.co.nz

■ Phil is a writer and advocate for cooperative systems and sustainable energy – blogs at Substack.com

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A useful tool for many people is a mobility parking permit – it means we can continue to access places where we need or want to go with less hassle around parking.

You might be eligible for a mobility parking permit if you have a medical condition or disability that means you rely on a wheelchair to get around, cannot easily walk distances without help, or have a medical condition that means you need someone to look after you.

You might qualify for a temporary permit if you have a temporary disability such as a broken leg.

You might also be able to apply for a temporary permit if you are or have an international visitor who has mobility issues – you will need to provide a scanned copy of the home country mobility parking permit or visit a New Zealand medical practitioner. A temporary permit costs \$35 and is valid for 12 months.

So how do you go about getting a mobility parking permit?

Applications within Kāpiti Coast are managed by CCS. You can access the forms through the CCS website – ccsdisabilityaction.org.nz – but if you don't use the internet, pop into Citizens Advice Bureau and we can help you fill in the form and print it out for you. You can also call CCS on 0800 662

7275 and they will post you a form, or your medical centre might have physical forms.

While you fill in most of the form, there is a section that your doctor or nurse practitioner has to complete confirming you have a medical condition or disability that meets the requirements for receiving a mobility permit. You will not be issued a permit if this section is not signed off.

The mobility permit costs \$50 for a long term (five year) permit, unless you're aged over 90, in which case it's free (in addition to the cost of an appointment with your medical provider).

You can pay by internet transfer or debit/credit card, but if you want to pay by eftpos or cash, you have to go to a CCS branch – from Ōtaki, the nearest branches are in Palmerston North or Petone. You can't pay at the AA, council or post office.

And if you're thinking about using the mobility parking space without displaying a permit, beware – the fine is \$750. If yours gets lost, a replacement costs \$25.

• *If you'd like help applying for a mobility parking permit or to find out about other transport aid, see our volunteers at 65a Main Street between 10am and 1pm Monday-Friday, call us on 06 364 8664 or go to our website CAB.org.nz and search 'mobility parking' in the Ask Us box.*

■ Maria is secretary of Kāpiti CAB

GOOD ADVICE



MARIA FYVIE

Housing project 'starting point'

The new development in Rangiorua Road is paving the way for a fresh approach to community housing on the wider Kāpiti Coast.

The development is just the first project of the newly established Kāpiti Housing Solutions Trust, an independent charitable organisation created to develop and manage long-term housing for local people.

The trust says the Rangiorua Road project is about more than simply building houses. It's intended to establish a long-term community asset, with the homes owned and managed by the trust and designed to meet the needs of people struggling to find suitable housing in the private market.

Resource consent is already in place for up to 46 homes across the Rangiorua Road site, with the first stage providing 21 homes. Plans include shared open spaces, gardens and areas where tamariki can play and connect, with the development intended to become part of the wider Ōtaki community.

Kāpiti Housing Solutions chair Alison Cadman says the trust's aim is to ensure housing reflects the communities in which it's built.

"Our role is to help ensure Kāpiti has housing that reflects the identity of the community, and supports local people and whānau to continue living, working and raising their children close to the people and places that matter most to them," she says.

The Rangiorua Road site was bought by



Work under way at the Rangiorua Road development. Photo supplied

Kāpiti Coast District Council in 2021 as part of its response to local housing needs. The council subsequently secured funding from the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development to support the delivery of long-term affordable rental housing.

In 2024, the council established Kāpiti Housing Solutions as an independent charitable trust, allowing it to pursue housing opportunities and partnerships outside the traditional council model. For the past 18 months, the trust's board has concentrated largely on establishing the organisation, developing governance arrangements and securing the partnerships needed to progress the Ōtaki project.

Alison says that work has largely been behind the scenes.

"We're now looking forward to being much more visible – sharing our journey, continuing conversations with the

communities we serve, and becoming an organisation that people know they can approach with confidence," she says.

The trust sees Ōtaki as the starting point for a wider role in addressing housing needs across Kāpiti.

Its success, Alison says, will not be measured solely by the number of homes delivered, but also by the confidence people have in the way those homes are planned, managed and cared for.

Trustee Kim Tahiwī (Ngāti Toa, Te Ātiawa, Ngāti Raukawa ki te Tonga and Muaupoko) says keeping local people in Ōtaki is central to the kaupapa.

"This kaupapa needs to prioritise local homes for local whānau," she says. "It is important that our future generations have the opportunity to continue working and raising their whānau here in Ōtaki, while strengthening the neighbourhoods and communities that make this district such a special place to live."

With the Rangiorua Road project now moving towards construction, the trust is also looking beyond its first development. It plans to build relationships with local stakeholders and explore opportunities for long-term housing throughout the Kāpiti Coast.

For Ōtaki, the first development will provide not only new homes but a test of whether a locally focused, long-term approach can make a lasting contribution to the town's housing needs.

Are we solving the wrong problem?

One of the most useful things a business owner can learn to do is reframe a problem.

We tend to assume that when something isn't working, we need to find a better solution.

Sales are down, so we need more marketing. Staff aren't performing, so we need better people. The owner is working too many hours, so they need to improve their time management.

Perhaps.

But what if we're solving the wrong problem?

Reframing means deliberately looking at an issue from a different perspective. Instead of immediately asking, "How do I fix this?", we first ask, "What is actually going on here?"

Take the business owner who says, "I need more sales."

That sounds straightforward. But perhaps they don't have a sales problem at all.

They might have plenty of enquiries but aren't following them up consistently. Perhaps their conversion rate is poor. Maybe their pricing is wrong.

Or they could be winning plenty of work

but at margins that mean more sales simply create more work without much more profit.

"I need more sales" can therefore become: "Where are we losing value between an enquiry coming in and profit reaching the bottom line?"

That is a very different question.

The same applies to people.

"We need better staff" might become, "Have we made it clear what good performance looks like?"

"I don't have enough time" might become, "Why does this business still need me to make so many of the decisions?"

"My team won't take responsibility" might become, "Have I genuinely given them the authority to do so?"

Good questions can be uncomfortable because they sometimes point the finger in a different direction. The issue we initially blamed on the market, our customers, our staff or a lack of time might actually be a problem

YOUR BUSINESS



CHRIS WHELAN

with the way the business has been designed or led.

But that is also good news.

If you can see the real problem, you have a much better chance of doing something about it.

So, the next time you find yourself wrestling with a recurring business problem, resist the temptation to jump immediately to the solution.

Write the problem down.

Then challenge it.

What are you assuming? What evidence do you have? What else could be causing it? What would someone looking at your business from the outside see?

And perhaps the most useful question of all: What if the problem I'm trying to solve isn't actually the problem?

Sometimes changing the answer helps.

Sometimes changing the question changes everything.

■ *Chris is a business and leadership coach based in Wellington. See chriswhelancoaching.com*



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RiverStone – where it feels like home

There are cafés where you go for a coffee, and there are cafés that become part of the fabric of a town.

For more than a decade, RiverStone Café has been firmly in the second category.

Brent Havis and Jeanine Cornelius took over the Ōtaki café in 2012, and it has since become the longest-running café in the area under the same ownership – a remarkable achievement in an industry where businesses and menus can change rapidly.

Located at the southern end of the shops on the old main highway, RiverStone and its busy coffee cart have established a reputation for something that is increasingly difficult to manufacture: familiarity.

Customers know the faces behind the counter. They know there will be good coffee, generous home-style food and a friendly welcome. And they know they can sit down, take their time and catch up with friends.

Jeanine has been central to creating that atmosphere.

Her friendliness and willingness to chat with customers are a big part of RiverStone's personality. People are not simply another order number; they are neighbours, regulars, visitors and friends. The result is a café that feels more like a comfortable local meeting place than a stop on the highway.

RiverStone is a family operation in the truest sense – one where work, family and community naturally overlap. Daughters Clare and Rebecca are part of the staff, while the next generation can occasionally be seen lending a hand as well.

The food is another important part of the formula.

RiverStone specialises in the sort of wholesome, satisfying café fare that keeps regulars coming back, and visitors stopping to experience for themselves what the rave reviews suggest. There's an all-day breakfast and lunch

menu, alongside a cabinet filled with scones, muffins, slices, cakes and other treats made at the café. Vegetarian, vegan and gluten-free options are also catered for.

Coffee, naturally, is taken seriously, with meticulous care in ensuring the best brew is served every time, whether from the cafe or the coffee cart on the street frontage.

And then there is the setting.

Tucked back from the highway, RiverStone has an outdoor courtyard and garden area that provides a pleasant place to sit on a sunny Ōtaki day. The combination of greenery, shade and outdoor seating has become part of the café's appeal, particularly for families and visitors looking for somewhere relaxed to stop.

But perhaps the biggest secret to RiverStone's longevity is less tangible.

It is hard work. Brent and Jeanine have built the business by being there, day after day, year after year. They have employed local people,

supported the community and created a place where people know they will be welcomed.

RiverStone is open seven days a week, closing only on Christmas Day – another indication of the commitment required to keep a small-town café thriving.

After 14 years, the formula remains remarkably simple: good food, great coffee, friendly local people and owners who genuinely care about their customers.

In a world where hospitality can sometimes feel hurried and impersonal, RiverStone Café continues to offer something wonderfully old-fashioned – a place where you can sit down, have a decent meal, enjoy a good coffee and, if Jeanine is nearby, have a good chat as well.

And perhaps that's the real reason RiverStone has lasted: it's not just a café in Ōtaki – it's a place where Ōtaki feels at home.

■ RiverStone Café, 170 Old Main Highway (opposite New World), Ōtaki. 06 364 6742



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A green poster with a white silhouette of a sustainable community at the top, including a wind turbine, solar panel, car, house, people, trees, bicycle, and bus. The text 'SUSTAINABLE SPRING' is in large white letters, with 'He Kōanga Toitū' below it. The text 'Ready to grow your sustainability know-how?' is followed by a paragraph about workshops and events. Below that is 'There's something for every stage of your sustainability journey.' A QR code is on the left, and the Kāpiti Coast District Council logo is on the right. The bottom has a blue wave graphic.

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ŌTAKI SCHOOL 1951



Pupils at Ōtaki School in 1951 (class unknown). Back row from left: John Taylor, – Craig Taylor, John Dinnison – Michael Raika, Peter Aldworth, Kup Hogan, – – Middle row: – Murray Moy, George Logan, Rose Young, Ri Tahiwī, Lindsay Edwards, – – Front: Heather Watson, Robyn Bell, Carol Hawea, Ann Jones, – Rosalie Wall – Elaine ?, Rini Johnson, Meiling Chan, Patricia Knox, Susie Bevan. *Photo courtesy of Robyn Gardner (nee Bell).*

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 – to debby@idmedia.co.nz

Queer histories in archive

By Daniel White
Nga Taonga

A new curated collection on the **Nga Taonga website, *Queer Histories Found in the Archive*, explores LGBTQIA+ audiovisual content from the early 20th century through to Homosexual Law Reform in 1986.**

It includes items from the TV and radio collections that have not been available online before, along with some amazing photos from other heritage organisations. The collection also provides some historical context to homosexual

decriminalisation, thanks to advice from subject matter experts at Kawe Mahara and Pride NZ.

The collection has three sections:

- Hidden Queer Identities looks at New Zealanders who were in same sex relationships, but either concealed or stopped just short of naming them.
- Early Queer Organising Through to Law Reform tracks the long legal path to decriminalisation.
- Transgender Identities in the 1970s contains some remarkable early TV and radio



Hero image: Composite by Nga Taonga with Tina and Diane at the Gay Liberation Dance Party, Auckland, June 1974 by Fiona Clark; Freda Stark and Len Wilson by Herman John Schmidt, Auckland Libraries Heritage Collections 973-22; Niccole Duval at Mojo’s Nitespot, 1975 by Rykenberg Photography, Auckland Libraries Heritage Collections. 1269-19750215-21; Amy Bock in jail, 1909, Alexander Turnbull Library reference number 1/2-018586-F.

appearances by openly trans women. Like several other Nga Taonga-curated collections, *Queer Histories* is intended to grow over the years as more historical recordings become available. ■ To view the Nga Taonga collections, go to: www.ngataonga.org.nz



Borneo Bash Presentation

6pm, Sunday 20 September | Ōtaki Memorial Hall Supper Room
Entry by Gold Coin donation to Cancer Society

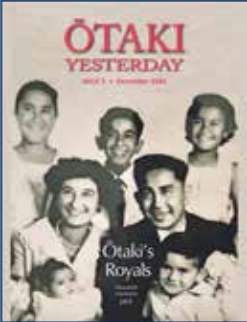
Hear the story of a unique adventure cycling 5183 kilometres around the island of Borneo by Ōtaki cyclist Lindsay Gault. ride4cancer.nz

Ōtaki Yesterday

Ōtaki’s historical magazine 2025, featuring interesting stories about the people and places of old Ōtaki, **will be available early 2026.**

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Ōtaki Heritage/ Te Whare Pouhere Taonga o Ōtaki
will soon be holding its Annual General Meeting.

The meeting will cover:

- Presentation of the Annual Report and Financial Report
- Election of trustees to govern the trust's activities.

A guest speaker will be publicised on our website shortly.
You are warmly invited to attend.

We're looking for more people to join our Board of Trustees.
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admin@otakimuseum.co.nz or 06 364 6886



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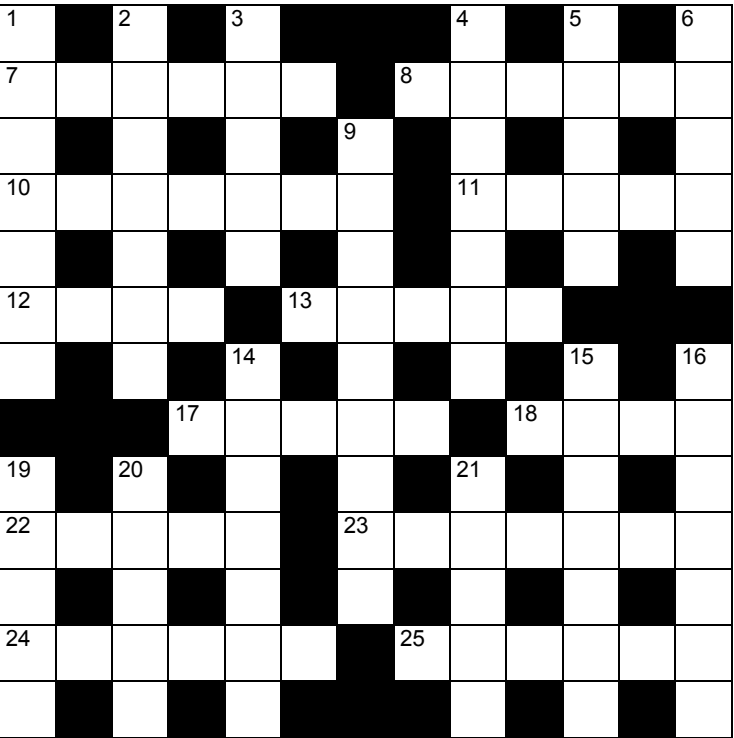
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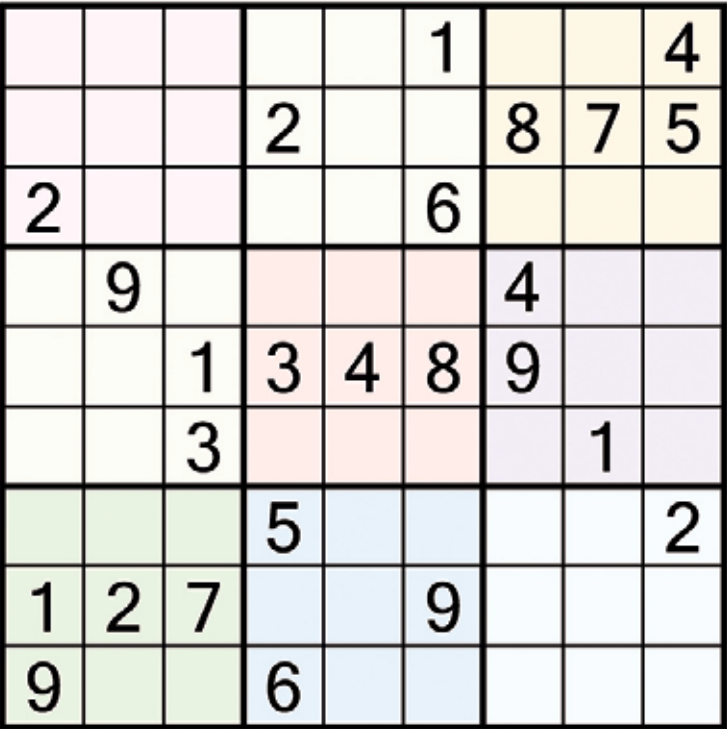


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THE CROSSWORD #NZ1963D (answers below)



SUDOKU PUZZLES thepuzzlecompany.co.nz
HARD #105H Use logic and process of elimination to fill in the blank cells using the numbers 1 through 9. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and 3x3 block. Answers opposite page.



CROSSWORD #1963D ANSWERS
ACROSS: 7. Drench, 8. Ours, 10. Tame It, 11. Clout, 12. Ours, 13. Lives, 17. Ease!, 18. Huia, 22. Swoop, 23. The Tron, 24. Author, 25. Plunge.
DOWN: 1. Station, 2. Benmore, 3. Movie, 4. Cricket, 5. Annoy, 6. Chute, 9. Kiwi Keith, 14. Champion, 15. Fun runs, 16. Pannier, 19. Usual, 20. Booth, 21. Telly.

ACROSS
7 Native NZ feathery tussock grass (6)
8 Soak (6)
10 Co-producer and star of *Muru*, a film about Te Urewera police raids (4,3)
11 Influence, power (inf) (5)
12 Belonging to us (4)
13 Resides (5)
17 Artist's stand (5)
18 North Island bird, last confirmed sighting in 1907 (4)
22 Pounce upon (5)
23 Hamilton's nickname (3,4)
24 Writer (6)
25 Dive (6)
DOWN
1 Sheep or cattle farm (7)
2 Name of large man-made South Island lake, and a nearby mountain (7)
3 Film (5)
4 Sport in which NZ women's team won 2024 World Cup (7)
5 Madden (5)
6 Slide (5)
9 Nickname of former NZ Prime Minister and Governor-General, prominent 1957-1980 (4,5)
14 NZ film director who won an Oscar for *The Power of the Dog* in 2022 (7)
15 Uncompetitive races, usually for fundraising or awareness (3,4)
16 Bike bag (7)
19 Customary (5)
20 Privacy compartment (5)
21 Goggle-box (inf) (5)

A SPRING QUIZ

. Answers bottom of page.

- What is the main spring allergy trigger? a. Pollen b. Dust mites c. Mold.
- Who is the Greek goddess of spring and nature? a. Artemis b. Persephone c. Hera.
- Which country did the Easter Bunny tradition originate from? a. Italy b. Germany c. Ireland.
- In Roman mythology, which goddess is associated with the flowering of plants and the arrival of spring? a. Venus b. Diana c. Juno d. Flora.
- In the spring of 1961, who became the first human to journey into outer space, marking a significant milestone in space exploration? a) Neil Armstrong b) Yuri Gagarin c) John Glenn d) Buzz Aldrin.
- Which ancient civilization's spring festival included rituals of chaos and renewal, somewhat similar to the modern concept of spring break? a) Egypt b) Greece c) Rome d) Mesopotamia.
- What astronomical event marks the beginning of spring in the Southern Hemisphere? a) total solar eclipse b) super new moon c) vernal equinox d) June solstice.
- There have been quite a few significant snowstorms across Christchurch in the past century or so, but which year did snow fall in September in the city? a. 1945 b. 2005 c. 1992 d. 2012.
- What devastating event happened in Aotearoa in November 2010, resulting in the death of 29 men?
- What is the the Māori word for spring?

Ōtaki River entrance tides

September 9 – October 9

<https://www.metservice.com/marine/regions/kapiti-wellington/tides/locations/otaki-river-entrance>

Please note: The actual timing of high and low tide might differ from that provided here. Times are extrapolated from the nearest primary port for this location, so please take care.

		HIGH	LOW	HIGH	LOW	HIGH
WED 9 SEP	-	02:03	08:18	14:27	20:45	
THU 10 SEP	-	02:53	09:08	15:14	21:29	
FRI 11 SEP	-	03:38	09:52	15:56	22:09	
SAT 12 SEP	-	04:19	10:31	16:36	22:47	
SUN 13 SEP	-	04:58	11:08	17:13	23:24	
MON 14 SEP	-	05:35	11:43	17:50	23:59	
TUE 15 SEP	-	06:11	12:17	18:26	-	
WED 16 SEP	00:34	06:47	12:53	19:04	-	
THU 17 SEP	01:13	07:25	13:32	19:47	-	
FRI 18 SEP	01:57	08:08	14:21	20:42	-	
SAT 19 SEP	02:53	09:03	15:27	21:54	-	
SUN 20 SEP	04:04	10:15	16:51	23:16	-	
MON 21 SEP	05:25	11:39	18:12	-	-	
TUE 22 SEP	-	00:28	06:38	12:49	19:11	
WED 23 SEP	-	01:22	07:33	13:41	19:55	
THU 24 SEP	-	02:05	08:17	14:21	20:32	
FRI 25 SEP	-	02:42	08:54	14:58	21:07	
SAT 26 SEP	-	03:17	09:30	15:33	21:41	
SUN 27 SEP	-	04:53	11:04	17:08	23:16	
MON 28 SEP	-	05:29	11:40	17:45	23:53	
TUE 29 SEP	-	06:07	12:17	18:25	-	
WED 30 SEP	00:32	06:48	12:58	19:08	-	
THU 1 OCT	01:16	07:32	13:42	19:57	-	
FRI 2 OCT	02:05	08:21	14:35	20:55	-	
SAT 3 OCT	03:04	09:18	15:40	22:04	-	
SUN 4 OCT	04:16	10:28	17:02	23:24	-	
MON 5 OCT	05:38	11:50	18:28	-	-	
TUE 6 OCT	-	00:43	06:59	13:11	19:41	
WED 7 OCT	-	01:50	08:08	14:16	20:37	
THU 8 OCT	-	02:45	09:02	15:08	21:24	
FRI 9 OCT	-	03:32	09:48	15:52	22:05	

QUIZ ANSWERS: 1. a. Pollen. 2. . b. Persephone. 3. b. Germany. 4. d) Flora. 5. b) Yuri Gagarin. On April 12, 1961, Yuri Gagarin became the first person to travel into space, a landmark event in human history and exploration. 6. d) Mesopotamia. In ancient Mesopotamia, the Akitu festival, celebrated during the spring month of Nisan, included rituals symbolizing the removal of chaos and the renewal of the community, somewhat akin to the modern concept of taking a break during spring. 7. c) The vernal equinox, occurs around September 22 in the Southern Hemisphere, marking the beginning of spring. 8. b. 2005. 9. Pike River Mine Disaster happened on November 19, 2010: An explosion occurred at the Pike River underground coal mine on the West Coast. 10. Kōanga, and it relates to the time for digging the soil for planting.

ŌTAKI TODAY

As part of the Ōtaki Dollars campaign, any paid advertising in *Ōtaki Today* during October will go into the draw for weekly spot prizes – and \$20 each from three different participating businesses earns a chance to win a grand prize of \$5000 to be spent with participating Ōtaki district businesses. See otakidollars.com for details. Every \$20 spent with *Ōtaki Today* earns a draw entry. Contact debbi@idmedia.co.nz or 027 285 4720 today to book your October advertising.

DEATHS
PAPPS, Ernest Henry – New Zealand Artist. Passed away peacefully on Saturday, 5th September, aged 96. Ernest drew inspiration from his deep love of New Zealand's forests, wildlife and natural landscapes. A prolific painter and illustrator, his work has appeared in more than 100 children's books and his paintings can be found in many homes and galleries throughout New Zealand. Loved husband of the late Noeleen, loved grandfather and great-grandfather, Ernest will be deeply missed. A private ceremony will be held by the family.

Whiti Wellington league champions

By sports reporter Frank Neill

Whiti Te Rā ki Ōtaki were crowned 2026 Wellington Rugby League champions when they defeated the St George Dragons 30-18 in the grand final on August 8.

Whiti were up against a team they hadn't beaten in three seasons, and who had dominated the Wellington competition during that time.

Coach Te Umu Miratana says it was a team effort against the Porirua-based team, played at Hutt Recreation Ground, and the climax to "an outstanding season".

"We are very happy – happy for the boys, happy for the club and happy for our town, too," Te Umu says.

Joel Winterburn, who moved to league after playing rugby for Rāhui, stood out, with Te Umu recognising his efforts in both codes.

"He's been a stalwart in Ōtaki, particularly with rugby."

Young hooker Mangaroa Mark, who lives in Halcome, north of Feilding, also stood out, along with Manaia Osborne and loose forward Teariki Peneha, who was

named the final's most valuable player.

Aaron Whitikia featured prominently during the final, scoring two tries and kicking three goals. Joel, Manaia, Teariki, and Huston Holloway also scored tries.

Joel featured again during Whiti Te Ra's prizegiving on August 29, when he was presented with two trophies – one shared with Mangaroa Mark as premier players of the year – and the award for best forward. Mangaroa also won "Man of Steel" award.

Levi Kemp was the third player to pick up two trophies when he won the best back award and sportsman of the year.

Tawhiri Kereama won the prestigious player of the year award and Manawanui Rikihana was awarded the most improved player.



Whiti Te Ra's premier players of the year: Mangaroa Mark, left, and Joel Winterburn.
Photo: Frank Neill



Big medal haul for Ōtaki Titan Kokoro Frost

By Frank Neill

Ōtaki Titan swimmer Kokoro Frost has won three gold medals and a silver at the Wellington Short Course swimming championships.

Left: Kokoro Frost with his recent medal haul. Photo supplied

Although he was second in two races at the Wellington Regional Aquatic Centre on August 22 and 23, he was awarded a gold in the men's 17+ 100 metres backstroke as the winning swimmer was a visitor, and did not qualify for a Wellington title.

Kokoro's other two gold medals came in the men's 17+ 50m butterfly and the men's 17+ 50m backstroke.

His silver was in the men's 17+ 100m butterfly.

Kokoro also swam in the men's 17+ 50m freestyle, finishing in fifth place.

Five Titans competed in the championships. Ralph Borborema was fifth in the men's 17+ 100m breaststroke and Lucas Robins was seventh in the men's 16 50m freestyle.

The results qualified Kokoro, Ralph

and Lucas for the New Zealand Short Course swimming championships, from September 27 to October 1 at the new Parakiore Recreation and Sport Centre in Christchurch.

Elijah Clark scored two top 10 finishes in Wellington. He finished sixth in the men's 13 100m individual medley and eighth in the Men's 13 50 metres butterfly.

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