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February 2024



Pottery Club festival celebrates creative Ōtaki

The Ōtaki Pottery Club hosted their annual Festival of Pots and Garden Art over Wellington Anniversary weekend, with 116 artists exhibiting their work at Anam Cara Gardens in Ōtaki.

Guest artists this year were Amy Brennan with her quirky whimsical ceramics, Elisabeth Vullings with her architecturally inspired lighthouse series of paintings, and Bruce Winter with his fabulous sculptural work.

The festival showcased the creative collections of artists working in all manner of mediums.

From pottery in all shapes and sizes, colours and styles; domestic table ware to jewellery; ceramic flowers to large stacked totems; mugs and jugs; water catchers and birdbaths; mosaics; metalwork; wood work; stained glass; chicken-wire sculptures; Oamaru stone carving; tufa; outdoor paintings; indoor paintings; and aluminium butterflies, the festival proved yet again it really has something for everyone.

The 15th annual festival was again the main fundraiser for the year for the Ōtaki Pottery Club, and is organised and run by the club members.

This year, 35 first-time exhibitors joined the festival to showcase their work. Every year it is exciting to see what the artists have created. Demonstrations at the festival were a chance for people to have a go and test their creative talents. The café was also hugely popular.

Applications open in September for any interested artists wanting to exhibit at the festival, which will be on Wellington Anniversary weekend 2025. Apply online: <https://www.otakipotteryclub.org/festival-of-pots-kapiti.html>

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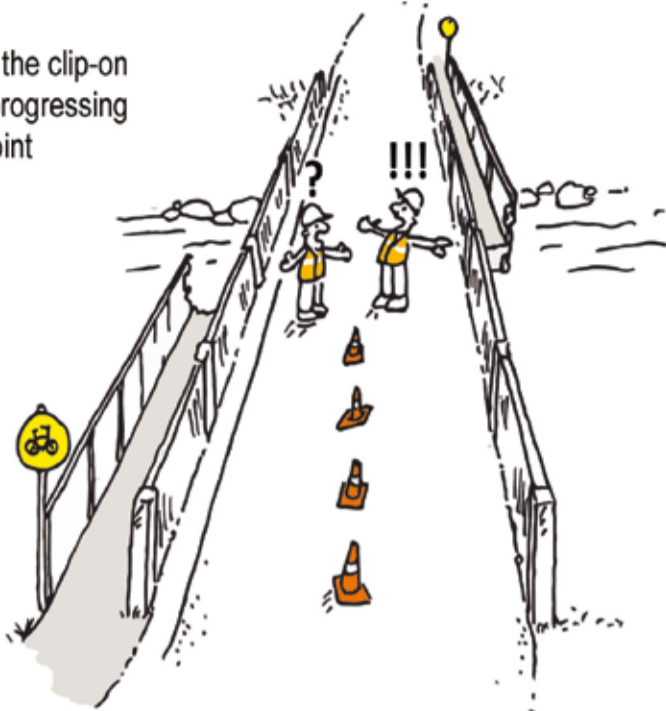
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ŌTAKI MAIL MADNESS

Construction of the clip-on cycleway was progressing well until this point



Ōtaki Mail

For news and advertising contact:
Penny Gaylor, Editor
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or email: otakimail@xtra.co.nz

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Act early if you can't pay your mortgage

BY FLEUR HOBSON

Hobson Mills Law has recently been involved with a number of mortgage defaults.

The most common reason for mortgage defaults is that people have stopped making their monthly mortgage repayments. This has almost certainly come about because of the increase in the cost of living and higher mortgage interest rates, coupled with low incomes.

Mortgage defaults can happen when people do not fulfil the terms of their loan for other reasons, too. These reasons include not paying rates, not paying relevant lender mortgage insurance, transferring ownership of the property without letting the bank know and damaging the property so it loses value.

If you stop paying your mortgage repayments, this can lead to the lender beginning a process called "foreclosure".

A foreclosure involves the lender, usually a bank, undertaking their legal right to repossess the home and list it on the open market to find a buyer so they can recover the existing mortgage loan balance with the proceeds of the sale of the asset. That will mean that the property is no longer yours.

Foreclosure, however, is the final act in a series of steps a lender needs to take when a person defaults on their mortgage payments. Before foreclosing, a lender will need to go through a series of steps.

The first is to contact you if you miss one or more mortgage payments. Usually banks try to work with you to address the issue, with the aim of helping you make up for your missed mortgage payments.

If you are still not able to make payments, the bank may issue a "letter of demand". This letter will outline the key details of your mortgage, how much you are behind on your mortgage payments, and a specific timeframe to pay your arrears together with any interest or fees owing due to falling behind on your mortgage payments.

At this point it's not too late to start robust conversations with your lender and work out a payment plan to get you back on track. If the letter of demand does not result in you resolving the issue with your lender they can then issue a formal notice under the Property Law Act 2007 (PLA).

This notice will state that you have defaulted on your mortgage and let you know how much you have to pay the lender by a certain date. The date must be at least 20 working

days after the PLA notice, which must be given to you in person. The 20 working days start when the notice is issued, rather than when it is given to you.

When the bank serves you a PLA notice, it can also notify you about triggering an acceleration clause in your mortgage contract. An acceleration clause is a provision that allows a bank/lender to require the borrower to repay all of the outstanding mortgage loans if specific requirements (which are set out in the mortgage contract) are not met.

If you don't pay the amount specified in the note by the date outlined, the bank has the right to begin the foreclosure process, and sell your home to recover the outstanding mortgage. This is known as a "mortgagee sale".

The best advice is to take action early – and that includes getting good legal advice – if you are finding that you cannot pay your mortgage repayments, or you are coming up short. The key word in the previous sentence is early.

The earlier you act, the more likely it is that you will get a good outcome. The ideal is seeing a lawyer to explore your options as soon as you know that you will have trouble meeting your mortgage repayments or that you are defaulting for another reason.

For expert advice, whatever your issue, contact Fleur, Susie or Freya at Hobson Mills Law, ph 364 7190, 282 Mill Road – opposite Farmlands.

HOBSON MILLS LAW

INCORPORATING SUSIE MILLS LAW

282 MILL ROAD, ŌTAKI

PHONE 06 364 7190

Outstanding Harvest Weekend coming up

BY FRANK NEILL

Te Horo’s Rod Clifton is currently working hard on organising the Horowhenua Vintage Machinery Club’s Harvest Weekend.

This outstanding event will take place on 3 and 4 February at Grahame and Sue Cottle’s property, Heatherlea East Road, Levin.

Rod is the Horowhenua Vintage Machinery Club’s President and a member of the committee that is organising the Harvest Weekend.

Organising the event “has been a big job,” Rod says, with the committee members spending a huge number of hours on the project.

And Rod still has one big job to do – to pick up a stone crusher from Hawera.

There will be plenty for families at the Harvest Weekend.

As well as the displays of vintage farm vehicles and implements there will be a series of events.

For the children, for example, there will be free balloons, free barrel rides – where the kids take their ride on one of a train of eight or nine barrels towed by a ride-on mower – and the kids will also be able to pick up a stone and place it in a vintage stone crusher.

A big feature of Harvest Weekend will be the huge range of vintage vehicles and equipment on show, some of them more than 100 years old.

“There are going to be a lot of tractors there, including some very rare tractors,” Rod says.

There will also be bulldozers, stationary engines, two traction engines, miniature traction engines, the vintage stone crusher and two fairground organs.



above: Rod Clifton, President of the Horowhenua Vintage Machinery Club, with the Munktells tractor that will be one of the many vehicles on show during Harvest Weekend.

On one of the two days, vintage trucks will also be on display while on the alternate day vintage cars will be exhibited.

Among the displays there will be some action events.

This will include a team of six draught horses ploughing and discing; crops such as maize, oats and potatoes being harvested using vintage machinery; vintage hay-baling with stationary bailers; a tin mill

and a chaff cutter.

“There’s going to be heaps of things going on,” Rod says.

“We are very very lucky to have Grahame and Sue’s property for the show.

“We couldn’t run the show without it.”

Entry to the show is \$10 (with eftpos available) and children under the age of 12 have free entry.

Free car-parking will be available on site. Dogs are not allowed on the property, however.

As well as being busy organising Harvest Weekend, the Horowhenua Vintage Machinery Club is also in celebration mode.

The Club was named Supreme Champion at the Horowhenua A P & I Royal Show, held in Levin from 18 to 21 January.



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BY VIVIENNE BAILEY

Te Horo Book Share Cupboard

The Te Horo Book Share Cupboard was recently installed within the grounds of Kāpiti Coast landmark, Hyde Park Village, corner of the old SH1 and Te Horo Beach Road. Situated close to Te Horo Garden Centre and the Seasonal Surplus wheelbarrow, the brightly decorated bookcase was the brainchild of local resident, Sharon Hurst together with her book club friends.

“We had spare books left over from our shared readings,” says Sharon. “We thought it would be good to share these with our community.”

Building funds were provided by Helen Cook, organizer of the Seasonal Surplus Stall, previously part of the now defunct Te Horo Country Market.

Sharon explains that Helen had donated the lion’s share of funds, a year’s profit from the stall. She laughs. “So, we now had a big bag of money.”

Not long after Sharon started the planning process, a three-month trip to Europe

sidelined issues but the helpful hands of MenzShed Kāpiti members, Peter Rendell and Ian Barbour carried the community project forward. The two built the large attractive cupboard incorporating windows sourced from TradeMe, spending about two days a week during the months she was away. “Sharon knew the cupboard was in safe hands,” says Ian.

After gaining permission from the complex’s owner, John Everiss to install the cupboard Sharon sought further funds and sponsorship for materials such as paint, however the stock of books, all readable quality, donated by Te Horo locals, is “self-sustaining.”

Describing the community venture as “fun,” Sharon believes Hyde Park Village will become a central point for Te Horo, particularly now the expressway has made SH1 a local road, and the village “a community hub.”

Drinks and Nibbles

The monthly Te Horo hall drinks will be on Friday 2 February, from 5.30pm.

Kāpiti residents enjoy a summer free of water restrictions



While parts of the Wellington Region are facing water woes, Kāpiti Coast residents are enjoying a water-restriction-free summer thanks to sound investment in the district’s water infrastructure and water metering.

Kāpiti Coast District Council Infrastructure Services Group Manager Sean Mallon says Council supplies safe drinking water to approximately 20,000 connections for household and commercial use, so it is critical that we actively monitor and identify leaks, and continue to invest in maintenance and renewals and projects to increase the resilience of our water supply network.

“The introduction of water metres in 2014, coupled with the Waikanae River Recharge scheme and ongoing investment in the district’s water supply network means we have enough water to manage long dry conditions.

“That being said, we continue to encourage

people to use water wisely and to have an emergency water supply on hand should a natural hazard/disaster disrupt our systems. We recommend households have an emergency supply of at least 20 litres of water per person, per day for seven days (140L per person).”

Mr Mallon said Council is continuing to work with Kāpiti Coast communities to ensure people in the district have reliable access to clean water, now and in the future.

“Current projects to increase the safety and resilience of the district’s water supply network include the construction of a new water reservoir in Ōtaki and a \$22 million upgrade of the Waikanae Water Treatment Plant to increase its earthquake resilience and replace aging equipment.”

“Work is also underway to renew a number of aging pipes across the district and complete upgrades of existing bores.”

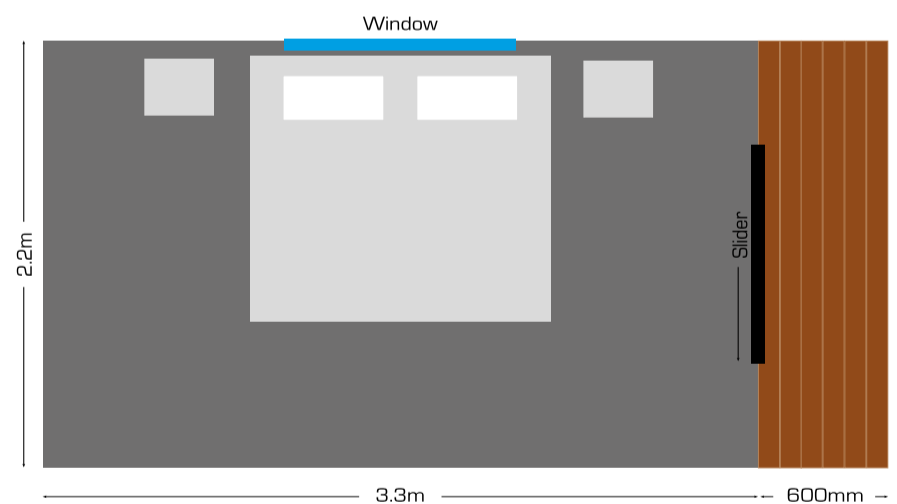
source: GWRC



from left: Peter Rendell, Helen Cook, Sharon Hurst and Ian Barbour



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The Kilns at Te Horo

IMAGES BY VIVIENNE BAILEY



Celebrating The Kilns at Te Horo

BY VIVIENNE BAILEY

A preview celebration late last year at Kāpiti Coast’s new ceramic arts hub, The Kilns at Te Horo focused on the culmination of more than seven years of work by The Mirek Smíšek Arts Trust, Waka Kotahi and its construction teams, successive Kāpiti mayors, councillors, Ōtaki MPs and the local community.

Following rebuilt paths winding through ancient remnants of lowland native bush including tōtara, kahikatea, pukatea, nīkau palms and tawa, guests viewed the expertly restored beehive kilns (dismantled and relocated from their original site), the renovated Te Horo Railway Station, now sited behind a white picket fence, a range of attractive signage boards displaying well-researched information on Te Horo’s renowned ceramic artist Mirek Smíšek, his property, the kilns and railway station (all now recognised by Heritage New Zealand as a category 2 heritage site). An interesting highlight was The Doreen Blumhardt

Studio where a resident potter will work on site for six months at a time.

With Stage One of The Kilns at Te Horo completed, Tony Hartevelt (chairman, The Mirek Smíšek Arts Trust), believed Stage Two, incorporating an arts centre, workshop and exhibition space, would need several further years of hard work and community support to develop.

The Kilns at Te Horo are located on Jim Winiata Lane, off Winiata Link Road on the eastern side of the expressway overbridge, Te Horo.

Opening hours are Thursday to Sunday, 10am to 4pm, entry is \$5, payable by eftpos.



Taking Ōtaki's pulse

There's a sting in its tail

BY ANN CHAPMAN

During a regular walk on the beach, I noticed an increasing number of blue bottles – the siphonophore that resembles a jellyfish – often called the Portuguese man o' war, which has a rather nasty sting in its tail.

Large numbers have been reported on most west coast beaches and NIWA expert Dr Dennis Gordon says it's common to start seeing more jellyfish on the beach at this time of the year.

But the man o' war can sting if touched. They can sting when they are lying on the beach apparently stranded. They will sting if you swim amongst them or paddle in the surf. Although the sting is rarely fatal, even the washed-up ones on the beach can give you a nasty surprise. There will be an intense jolt of pain when first stung which will increase if the tentacles move around the area or if you touch it. The affected area will develop red welts with associated pain. Normally the pain should diminish over the next few hours although the welts will remain tender for a few days.

It's unpleasant and very distressing for a child but usually does not present a serious medical emergency for adults. It can become dangerous for the young, elderly or allergy sufferers, so caution is advised when curious kids want to look at them.

What to do if stung

Immediately wash the site with salt water. Do not rub the sting as that can release more toxins. When home, immerse the area in hot water. To be really effective heat needs to be applied as soon as possible after

the sting. Apply a hotpack for 30 to 40 minutes or until the pain subsides, then follow with an icepack to constrict the blood vessels and to reduce swelling.

When should I be concerned about a man o' war or jellyfish sting?

Some people may experience fevers, shock or trouble breathing. If this happens get medical attention right away.

Otherwise, it's best to stay away from them and enjoy the benefits a trip to the beach will bring.



image: Wikipedia

Summer is sunshine and sunburn

BY ANN CHAPMAN

Summer seems late in coming this year and now we finally have some sun. Those of us who have to go back to work at the end of the traditional two-week Christmas / New Year break will be upset at missing the sun, but not at missing the inevitable sunburn.

The sun may be late, but it's hot and the threat of sunburn is big as we shed our winter woollies and our long sleeves. While the sun is necessary for our body to get vitamin D, too much sun has time and again proved to be a bad thing. We all love the sun. It makes us feel good. It warms our hearts and spirits. We all want to be in it to rest and play. We love to sit at the beach, have a picnic, rest and relax with a book. We love to be in the garden. While the sun gives us a sense of wellbeing it also has some nasty tricks to play on us as well.: Sunburn and skin cancer.

Government and health authorities have for over 25 years preached the message for sun protection with the slogan: "Slip Slop Slap and Wrap".

The sun's burning rays are Ultraviolet Radiation (UVR) and are highest between September and April, especially between 10am and 4pm. It's really important to slip, slop, slap and wrap: slip on a shirt or into the shade; slop on plenty of broad-spectrum sunscreen of at least SPF 30; slap on a hat; and wrap on a pair of sunglasses. Sunburn is nasty. It hurts. It can cause blisters and peeling. It can damage the cells in the skin. It can prove fatal. Sunburn should be avoided if possible, as even mild sunburn can damage your skin and increase the risk of skin cancer. Mild sunburn causes red, hot, sore skin and can usually be treated at home. The fairer the skin the higher the risk of getting sunburnt. However, skin of any colour can be damaged by the UV

radiation in the sun. Even a few minutes may cause sunburn in the middle of the day when the sun is at its hottest. In severe cases of sunburn, look out for blistering, swelling of the skin, chills, a high temperature and a general feeling of discomfort. Severe burns may produce symptoms of heat exhaustion such as dizziness, headache and nausea – best to see a doctor then. Balancing your need for wellbeing and Vitamin D without getting sunburnt is difficult when you have to consider age, skin type and the joy of being out in the sun. Covering up and sunscreen are critical. When used correctly, sunscreen can help protect against sunburn and damage to skin from UVR exposure. When choosing sunscreen, look for a broad spectrum, water-resistant of at least SPF30. The danger of too much sunburn in the short term is sunburn; in the long term it's skin cancer and melanoma. At high risk are people with:

- A lighter natural skin colour.
- Family or personal history of skin cancer
- Exposure to the sun through work and play.
- A history of sunburns, especially early in life.
- A history of indoor tanning.
- Skin that burns, freckles, reddens easily, or becomes painful in the sun.
- Blue or green eyes.
- Blond or red hair.
- Certain types of and a large number of moles.

Enjoy your time in the sun but slip, slop, slap and wrap to protect you and your loved ones.



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	Pure Breast Care. Ph Liz 0800 259 061. Bra/prosthesis fitting	By appointment
	Natural Wear. Ph Donna 0800 622 397. Bra/prosthesis fitting	By Appointment
Monday 12	Foxton Cancer Kōrero. Phone Anita 021 510 318. Salvation Army Church Hall, 10 Avenue Road, Foxton. A place to talk if newly diagnosed, during or post treatment.	11.30am
Tuesday 13	Volunteers Meeting. Freemasons Hall, Parker Ave. Levin.	10 am
Wednesday 14	Financial Workshop. At Addis House, Palmerston North & Zoom. Please register with Fran as minimum numbers are required. Phone 06 356 5355 or Email: fran.harvey@cancercd.org.nz Topics Covered: Banking – Options when facing financial stress – ANZ Enduring Powers of Attorney – Mtu Community Law Services offered by Work & Income	10am to noon
Wednesday 21	Men's Cancer Kōrero. Winchester House. A place to talk if newly diagnosed, during or post treatment.	3pm
Wednesday 21/2 & 17/4	Ōtaki Cancer Kōrero. Ōtaki Memorial Hall A place to talk if newly diagnosed, during or post treatment.	11am to 12
Thursday 22	Lymphoedema Support Group. Winchester House.	5pm
Tuesday 27	Women's Cancer Kōrero. Winchester House. A place to talk if newly diagnosed, during or post treatment.	10am
	Check out the Coping with Cancer videos on our website: www.cancernz.org.nz	

For further information on any of the above activities and support please contact:

Brylee Knowles, Supportive Care Coordinator, Horowhenua

Email: Brylee.knowles@cancercd.org.nz Mobile: 027 542 0066

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Latest Health Survey provides valuable information

The annual New Zealand Health Survey results provide valuable information about the health and wellbeing of adults and children in New Zealand, says Dr Harriette Carr, Deputy Director Public Health at the Ministry of Health | Manatū Hauora. “The information collected supports the development of health services, policies and strategies, and helps the Ministry of Health and the wider sector to identify key issues and monitor trends.”

The 2022/23 New Zealand Health Survey results are based on data collected between July 2022 and July 2023. The sample size was 6,977 adults (15 years and older) and 2,029 children aged 0–14 years. Around 180 indicators related to child and adult health are included in the survey

publication. The data is presented online in a way that allows results to be compared to previous years, and to be viewed by gender, age group, ethnic group, disability status and neighbourhood deprivation.

“The key statistics in the survey give a picture of New Zealanders’ smoking and vaping behaviour, alcohol consumption, mental health, eating habits and access to food, obesity, physical activity, oral health and access to healthcare.

“For the first time, results for disabled children and information about social, emotional and behavioural functioning in children have been included,” says Dr Carr.

“However, we know there is more to do to lead and steward the health system

and promote good health for all New Zealanders.

The Government Policy Statement on Health 2024–2027, Budget 2024 and

“ Around 180 indicators related to child and adult health are included in the survey ”

Te Pae Tata | The New Zealand Health Plan, are all currently being developed and will set the direction for the health system to ensure all New Zealanders have timely

access to quality healthcare.

“The findings of the NZ Health Survey will help us track our progress on the work underway to enable the health system to meet the future needs of New Zealanders,” says Dr Carr.

The 2022/23 NZ Health Survey findings have been published on the Ministry’s Annual Data Explorer, an interactive web tool: Annual Data Explorer.

Further information about the NZ Health Survey, including previous publications, is available at New Zealand Health Survey.

“The data show that most New Zealanders continue to report they are in good health and that progress is being made in some key areas, such as smoking cessation,” says Dr Carr. *Source MoH*

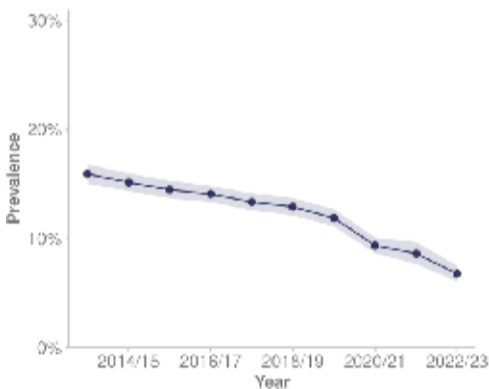
Smoking rates continue to decline

The New Zealand Health Survey has been monitoring trends in smoking continuously since 2011/12. Data on smoking is collected from a randomly selected group of New Zealanders aged 15 years or over.

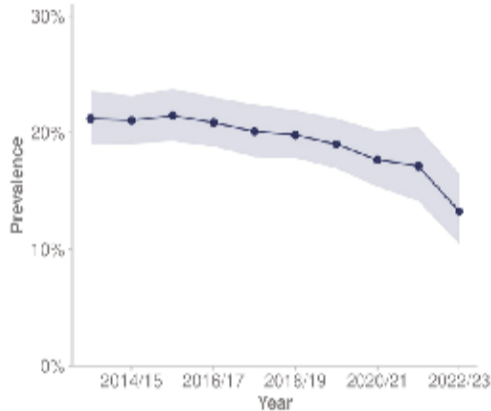
The latest New Zealand Health Survey results show the rate of daily smoking was 6.8% in 2022/23, down from 8.6% the previous year and 16.4% in 2011/12.

Over the last decade, daily smoking rates have decreased for all population subgroups.

However, trends can be harder to interpret for smaller groups because



Prevalence of daily smoking, total population aged 15+ years, 2013/14 to 2022/23



Prevalence of daily smoking, Pacific peoples aged 15+ years, 3-year rolling average 2013/14 to 2022/23

results can fluctuate from year to year. An example of this variability is smoking data for Pacific peoples, which has fluctuated considerably over the last few years.

This variability is due to sample sizes being smaller than usual, which is the result of COVID-19 impacts on data collection. Work is underway to improve the sample size for Pacific peoples in future surveys.

To better understand trends in smoking among Pacific peoples the survey calculated a 3-year rolling average.

Source MoH

P2 Health expands their range of services

The P2 Health Collective have been nestled in the centre of the Ōtaki Health scene for the better half of a decade. For those who haven’t yet seen them, they have been expanding.

It’s crucial for a community to have access to a comprehensive range of health services that meet the specific needs of its residents. By expanding their services and renovating their facilities, they are striving to bridge the gap and ensure the Ōtaki community has access to the healthcare it requires.

If you haven’t visited their newly renovated modern facilities yet, it might be worth checking them out. Their diverse range of services, including physiotherapy, osteopathy, podiatry, and counselling, could provide expert advice and assistance for various ailments.

Plus, supporting local businesses like the P2 Health Collective helps strengthen the community and ensures continued access to essential services.

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Ōtaki Update

February 2024



Kāpiti Summer. Feels like home!

School might be back, but summer is still here! With special events like Summer SPLASH!, the Back to School Water Fight, and Dogs in Togs, our pools are the coolest way to have fun this summer! We also have additional lifeguards on duty so there's more eyes on everyone.

If you'd prefer a to relax with a good book, our whare pukapuka (libraries) have got your summer reading covered. Our libraries have digital resources, so you can borrow an ebook wherever summer takes you. Download our new library app, and access your library account and services on the go.

Whether you're soaking up the sun at one of our spectacular beaches, taking the path less travelled along one of our tracks or trails, or jumping into one of our pool events, remember to capture the moment so you can enter our summer photo competition. Share your selfies, portraits, or happy snaps with us by 5pm Sunday 18 February for a chance to win some awesome prizes.

There are so many things that make Kāpiti a great place to live, play, and visit. All we ask is that you follow the rules and keep safe while you're having fun. Remember to respect each other and our environment so we can all celebrate everything that makes Kāpiti feel like home this summer.

► [Visit kapitiummer.nz](https://www.kapitiummer.nz) for more information on our photo competition!

We're continuing our Vision Kāpiti kōrero (conversation) this year, to hear what you want to see in our future so we can shape a vision for Kāpiti together. We will be holding pop-up hubs in February and March, where we'll ask for your views on important topics. You can join the conversation online anytime and find our next Vision Kāpiti events at [haveyoursay.kapiticoast.govt.nz](https://www.haveyoursay.kapiticoast.govt.nz).

Know your zones

As Kāpiti gets busier over summer we want everyone to be able to enjoy our beaches safely. There are zones in place for certain activities over summer, so make sure you know when and where it's okay to do different activities.

To keep us safe and to protect our environment, our Beach Bylaw prohibits driving on most parts of the beach, unless launching boats or using land yachts in designated areas. Two-wheeled and off-road motorbikes are not permitted on any beach, foreshore or dune area. Please visit our website to find maps and more information about vehicles on our beaches.

We also have summer zones in place for certain activities, such as longline fishing, dog walking, horse riding, and camping, so that everyone can enjoy our shared spaces safely.

A reminder that alcohol-free zones are in place for all beaches and public places in urban areas from 9pm–6am every day. Alcohol-free zones are in place 24 hours a day, every day of the year for all skateboard parks and reserves, and specified areas in Ōtaki.

► [To find the right zone for your activity this summer, visit kapiticoast.govt.nz/our-district/beaches](https://www.kapiticoast.govt.nz/our-district/beaches)

Keep safe this summer

For many of us, summer is all about fun in the sun, and with so many beaches, rivers and pools to choose from, Kāpiti is the place to be! But whether you're surfing the waves, frolicking in a river, or paddling in a backyard pool, water safety is key to doing summer right.

It's important to know your limits, never swim alone, and keep small children within arm's reach. Always check for hazards, such as strong currents, tidal rips, and steep drop-offs. Swim between the flags at the lifeguarded beaches at Paekākāriki and Ōtaki, or visit our Poolsafe Accredited pools. If you've bought a new pool or portable pool, please check with us to make sure it meets the appropriate safety regulations.

Remember to check water quality before you go for a dip. Rain can wash contaminants into our rivers and beaches, increasing the risk of illness when swimming. Don't swim after heavy rain and avoid swimming in river mouths or near stormwater outlets on beaches. Please also be on the lookout for toxic algae in or near our rivers – even a small amount can kill a dog!

We work with Greater Wellington to monitor our recreational swim spots. Check [lawa.org.nz](https://www.lawa.org.nz) for the latest updates on where it's safe to swim.

► [Visit kapitiummer.nz](https://www.kapitiummer.nz) to learn more about keeping safe this summer.



Waitangi Commemorations

We're proud to be supporting Whakarongotai Marae Trustees with their Waitangi Commemorations on Saturday 3 February, 10am–5pm in Waikanae.

This free community event is open to all and will commence with a mihi whakatau on the marae (please gather at the marae gates at 9.30am), followed by kapa haka, entertainment, historical storytelling, and activities for tamariki, with high tea and hāngī available for a koha. Food trucks and stalls will also be available throughout the day.

**Te Puna o Te Aroha
The Wellspring
of Love**

**Waitangi
Commemorations**

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Ngā Poutiaki o Whakarongotai,
Ātiawa ki Whakarongotai,
Te Whakaminenga o Kāpiti and
Kāpiti Coast District Council.



Ōtaki Reservoir update

This year will see a lot of activity around Te Manuao Road as the first new reservoir is built and pipes are installed. We'll let people know detailed timing for the pipe installation along Te Manuao Road when it's confirmed, but at this stage we expect it to run from February to July.

Our crews are currently working on the following tasks:

- Completing installation of the stone columns to strengthen the ground and support the weight of the reservoir. This task is expected to be completed by the end of February.
- Trenching the pipes which run from the reservoir to Te Manuao Road.

We've awarded the contract to build the reservoir tank and expect construction to begin in March.

This reservoir is supported by funding from the Central Government's Infrastructure Acceleration Fund and will improve our community's resilience, and support current and future housing needs.

► [Find out more at kapiticoast.govt.nz/otaki-reservoir](https://www.kapiticoast.govt.nz/otaki-reservoir)



What matters most for the Kāpiti Coast?

Every three years, all councils revisit their plans and budgets. Our Long-term Plan (LTP) sets our direction, priorities, and activities, and outlines our financial and infrastructure strategies and budget for the next 10 years.

To develop the LTP, we need to talk about some key decisions we need to make.

We'll be consulting in March and April, asking you about some specific issues:

- funding the delivery of water services
- providing a better housing service for our older people
- investing in Ngā Manu Nature Reserve as a centre for tourism information.

These questions matter, because what we decide will have an impact on your rates, and our district's economic vibrancy and social wellbeing.

We'll give more detail about the pros and cons in the coming weeks on our website, social media channels, weekly Everything Kāpiti e-newsletter, and local media.

► [Look for details on the consultation issues in the coming weeks at whatmattersmost.kapiticoast.govt.nz](https://www.kapiticoast.govt.nz/whatmattersmost)



Experience our events

There's still plenty to see and do in Kāpiti this summer.

Join our whānau-friendly Lunar New Year celebration at Paraparaumu Library on 10 February with a dragon parade, live music, and a chance to learn more about Lunar New Year traditions.

Fly high at the spectacular Ōtaki Kite Festival on 17–18 February. There's free entry, and the festival offers a fabulous weekend of kites, family fun, market stalls and entertainment at Ōtaki Beach.

For the more adventurous, you can choose your challenge with the XTERRA Wellington Festival on 24 February and the Kāpiti Women's Tri on 25 February.

Movies in the Park is back in March! With a session for kids and another for teens and up, there's something for all the whānau in Waikanae. Grab a picnic rug and settle in for a screening of Despicable Me or Top Gun Maverick on Saturday, 2 March.

► [For a full calendar of events and activities check out kapitiummer.nz](https://www.kapiticoast.govt.nz/for-a-full-calendar-of-events-and-activities-check-out-kapitiummer-nz)



Visit [kapitiummer.nz](https://www.kapitiummer.nz) to find out how to do summer right.

Ōtaki swimmers working hard

BY FRANK NEILL

Swimmers from the Ōtaki Titans Swimming Club are currently preparing for a series of upcoming meetings.

As part of that preparation the Titans and the Taniwha Squad (senior swimmers) attended the Summer Swimming Camp at Waikanae Pool from 8 to 12 January.

The first swimming meet will be the Manawātū Age Group Championships at the Lido Pool in Palmerston North on 3 and 4 February.

Kokoro Frost has been selected to represent Samoa at the World Swimming Championships that will be held in Doha, Qatar, in February.

This follows Kokoro's success at the Pacific Games in November last year, where he qualified for the final in several individual events and was a member of the Samoan team that won silver in the men's 4x100 metres freestyle relay.

A number of swimmers are training to qualify for the 2024 Oceania Swimming Championships that will be held in Australia's Gold Coast from 21 to 24 April.

The qualifying period for this event will end on 29 February.

Swimmers are also working towards qualifying for the New Zealand Age Group Swimming Championships that will be held

at the Hawke's Bay Regional Aquatic Centre from 15 to 19 April.

There is also a Chocolate Fish meet at Tawa on 18 February, which is another event for the junior Marlins and Dolphins squads to look forward to participating in.

below: members of the Taniwha squad during training at the Summer Swimming Camp at Waikanae Pool.



Three-peat team

BY FRANK NEILL

Ōtaki's highly successful number one team will be looking to add a fourth successful title when Tennis Wellington's post-xmas inter-club competition begins on 3 February.

The Ōtaki 1 team of Craig Eves, Leonie Campbell, Hannah Grimmett, Tom Caines, Adam Shelton, Jodie Lawson and Jackie Gould won the Wellington Mixed A-grade pre-xmas competition.

This was the team's third victory in a row, having won both the pre-xmas and post-xmas competitions in the 2022–23 season. Ōtaki's number 2 mixed-grade team will also be looking for more success during the post-xmas competition.

The team of Gary Quigan, Lilian Bramley, Dan West, Philip Grimmett and Teri Grimmett finished second in the pre-xmas Mixed C-grade competition, winning promotion to the B grade.

A number of Ōtaki's junior teams will be looking to emulate or improve on their pre-xmas competition success when their post-xmas inter-club events get under way on 3 and 4 February.

The most successful of the junior teams was Ōtaki Ruru, who finished second in the pre-xmas Hot Shots (Sunday) league.

Kaylah Doar, Mia Woodroffe, Noni Taleta and Jake Hawkins are the members of this team.

Ōtaki Pihipihi was not far behind Ōtaki Ruru, finishing in fourth place, while Ōtaki Mōhio was fifth.

The junior C-grade team Ōtaki Māhuri (Max Beauchamp, Hunter Pritchard, Maapihi Pritchard, Oliver Martin) also finished second equal on points in their grade, but were then bumped to third on countback.

Tennis is proving very popular at the Ōtaki Sports Club, with well over 100 members and it is continuing to grow in size.

Tag Finals planned for March



Ōtaki Tag organiser Terry Poko says they are looking at having the Finals Day on Saturday 2 March with both the Open and Social grades competing for championship honours.

"Ten teams will be playing for the Social Grade and eight teams will also be in competition mode for the Open Grade," says Terry.

"What has been interesting is the junior team, coached by Peter Goldsmith, HK Wahs is leading the points table in the Social Grade. Peter has done a great job keeping the core of these players together for the past few years and are now a very well drilled team.

"In the Open Grade, teams like KickOnz,

Lowkey, Fusion and Ragnarok lead the way, but come finals it will come down to the top two inches when games start to heat up. Competition across the board has been great and we have welcomed new teams this season.

"Again a special mention to Jared Tuoro and his team of parents and volunteers for opening the way for our tamariki to play Tag in our Ōtaki community which has exceeded all our expectations.

"The Junior competition is the key to the longevity of Tag in Ōtaki and having volunteers and supportive parents will go a long way to ensuring Ōtaki Tag will continue to be an annual whānau focused sport," says Terry.

below five of the victorious Ōtaki 1 team (from left): Craig Eves, Leonie Campbell, Hannah Grimmett, Tom Caines and Adam Shelton.



Ōtaki represents at Waka Ama Nationals

BY TRACEY DOYLE

Once again Ōtaki Waka Hoe (ŌWH) represented at the Waka Ama Nationals, 14–20 January at Lake Karapiro, Cambridge.

A large number of paddlers, (7 teams and 9 W1 paddlers), parents and extended whānau migrated north for the week, staying at marae and camping, to ensure solid support for our paddlers on and off the water.

It was a great atmosphere with an assortment

of people, merchandise and food stalls. And the weather, made paddlers battle the heat, wind and rain at times.

ŌWH are proud of the results; considering we have the obstacles of limited water access and resources, we still managed to make our mark on the Nationals stage.

A big thank you to all our supporters and whānau that make this event so enjoyable year after year.



Three teams and three of our adaptive paddlers have qualified for 2024 IVF World Sprint championship to be held in Hilo, Hawaii, in August. Therefore, a huge amount of fundraising and coordination is required to get these paddlers to experience World class paddling.

Results

- Taitama (midget boys) W6 250m Champ Final 12th place
- Taitama (midget boys) W12 Champ final 7th place
- Taitamahine (midget girls) 250m Cup final 1st place
- J19 Women W6 1000m final 5th place (Worlds qualification)
- Adaptive mixed team W6 1000m final 2nd place (Includes World qualifiers for W1)
- J19 Men W6 500m 5th place (Worlds qualification)
- Master Womens W6 500m final 7th place (Worlds qualification)
- Intermediate Womens W1 final 12 place Iraiha Henare
- J19 womens W1 final 9th place Trialaine Suitauloa
- Te Wananga O Raukawa W12 final 3rd place

all images supplied



Ngāti Raukawa victorious

Ngāti Raukawa Basketball had 22 teams compete at the annual Māori National Basketball Tournament in Rotorua in January.

Over 400 teams from around the country attended this year.

Ngāti Raukawa put in their usual strong performance, and brought home six gold medals and four silver medals.

Coach Paxman Taurima sends out “a big mihi to NZCT and Triple Threat New Zealand for supporting our kaupapa.

“This year we won the overall supremacy award – the Willie Taurima Award,” says

Paxman, “named after my late father who created the tournament ten years ago. This is the first time in the history of the club that we have won this taonga.”

- U9 Tama A Grade – Gold
- U11 Kotiro A Grade – Gold
- U13 Tama B Grade – Gold
- U15 Kotiro B Grade – Gold
- U17 Tama A Grade – Gold
- U19 Tama A Grade – Gold
- U9 Kotiro A Grade – Silver
- U11 Tama A Grade – Silver
- U11 Tama Prem Grade – Silver
- U15 Tama Prem Grade – Silver

right: Eli Tapine and Club Chair Trist Reweti (on right) accepting the Willie Taurima Award for Overall Iwi Supremacy



all images supplied





Gardening with

Garden tasks for February



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Flower garden

It's difficult to think about spring in the middle of our dry summer, but now's the time to start planting your spring flowering bulbs: daffodils, freesias, anemones, ranunculus, sparaxis, ixias, grape hyacinths, tritonia and lachenalia.

Stake tall perennials and remove spent flowers to extend flowering period.

Dead-head roses and keep well watered in preparation for winter pruning.

If the tops have died away on your gladioli plants, lift and clean off soil. To keep the bulbs in good order for the following season, put in a dry place and dust with Flowers of Sulphur to control mildew and mites.

Prepare autumn flower beds prior to planting by digging in compost and a general garden fertiliser.

Sow seeds of alyssum, wallflower, candytuft, arcotis, stock, dianthus, larkspur, snapdragon, nigelia, honesty, bellis, godetia, linaria, pansy, nemesia, cornflower, lobelia, scabiosa, polyanthus, aquilegia and lupin.

Plant out in the garden and in containers: cornflower, linaria, alyssum, wallflower, viola, lupin, sweet pea, pansy, stock and primula.

Fruit and vegetable garden

Continue to water fruit trees for best quality fruit. As soon as fruit is picked, prune pip- and stone-fruit trees.

Feed citrus with fertiliser applied around drip line – water in.

Trim away leaves covering grapes to allow fruit to ripen with the sun – protect from birds with netting.

Plant out more lettuce seedlings as you harvest to keep the summer salad supply going.

Pick cucumbers and zucchini as they come ready (every day) to encourage continuous fruiting. Otherwise, they'll stop flowering to put all their energy into producing one or two monster-sized specimens.

Powdery mildew on cucumbers and pumpkins (they're so susceptible) can be controlled with Yates Fungus Fighter. An organic alternative is Yates Nature's Way Fungus Spray or pour a bucket of soapy water (just add a squirt of detergent) over any infected plants.

Use Derris Dust to prevent white butterfly caterpillars on cabbages and cauliflower.

Sow seeds of beetroot, parsnip, cabbage, brussel sprouts, spinach, cauliflower, kohlrabi, carrots, lettuce, radish, carrots, leeks, silverbeet, cress and swedes. These are best planted in trays for transplanting in the garden later.

It's also time to plant the winter garden; plant out seedlings of cabbage, leeks, celery, spinach, cauliflower, silverbeet and brussel sprouts.

Remove any plants that have finished producing or have become diseased.

Lawns

Autumn is the traditional lawn-maintenance time, but during the warmer months keep lawns well watered and raise mower blades a little higher to reduce stress.

Second thoughts

Give hanging baskets a good soak in a large bucket of water once a fortnight. Unhook baskets and place in the top of, or into, a large water-filled bucket and leave to soak.

Focus on growing onions

This rather humble vegetable – one of our oldest – is a culinary basic, enhancing flavour and lending depth to a variety of our dishes.

There are more than 325 members of the vast lily family, and the onion (*Allium cepa*) originated in the Middle East, migrating around the world with early traders and travellers. As onions spread, varieties differed according to the conditions they were grown in and so did their uses. Mediterranean varieties such as the white or silvery onion are not usually long-keepers (unless pickled or frozen) because they can be grown most of the year, whereas types developed in the north of Europe (the brown onion) became hardier and kept longer due to the chillier climate. Large onions were developed for use in casseroles and stews while little ones were desirable for pickling in vinegar and spices – smaller ones also matured more quickly (the distinctive onion smell is caused by acids that lurk beneath the skin).

Onions can be planted in the same site year after year, but it's best to choose a spot that hasn't grown onions or their relatives for at least three years to help prevent disease. Silverbeet is a good alternate vegetable, or a heavy-feeding crop such as potatoes or brassicas.

They prefer rich, well-drained soil because their root systems are limited. Prepare soil before planting with compost or cow manure (not fresh), but avoid quick-acting nitrogenous fertilisers.

Onions are easily grown from seed sown in March and April or mid-August – work a general fertiliser into the soil prior to sowing. Sow in drills 1cm deep in rows about 20cm apart and later thin to 5–7cm apart. When transplanting, trim the tops and roots with scissors and ensure only the roots are buried.

As onions reach maturity (usually 5–6 months from sowing), the tops begin to yellow and topple over, and can be bent over by hand to assist bulb ripening. Lift the bulbs about two weeks later and leave them to dry in the sun or a warm, dry shed for several days. Place them on a pallet or old wire bed-base to keep them off the ground so air can circulate.

One of the easiest ways to store onions is in the traditional red-string onion bags – choose a cool, dry and airy spot.

The onion family includes the small pickling onions, grown specifically for pickling, the Japanese onion, which produces clusters of six to nine shallot-sized bulbs (the leaves and stalks can also be eaten in salads), the potato and tree onions, which produce a cluster of small bulbs and are useful in areas where typical onions are difficult to grow, and salad or spring onions, which are eaten while still immature – harvest as you need them about 6–10 weeks after sowing.

The names of varieties tend to change with the times – while we now plant 'Pukekohe Long Keeper' or the large, German yellow-skinned 'Stuttgart Long Keeper', the flat-shaped 'Red Brunswick' or the Italian 'Boretana Button Onions,' early settlers grew 'Brown Spanish', 'James Keeping', 'Giant Rocca' and 'Silver Skinned Picklers'.



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the Ōtaki Mail

BY VIVIENNE BAILEY
viv.bailey@xtra.co.nz

Robust summer perennials

Canna lilies certainly aren't the quiet, demure residents of our summer gardens. Instead, they flash bold foliage and blowsy, gaudy flowers through many parts of the country, particularly those with consistently warm summers.

They're members of the huge ginger family, which also includes bananas, heliconias, marantas and strelitzias (bird of paradise) – all pretty free-flowering, flamboyant characters.

Cannas are generally robust and trouble-free – you can even ignore them – but if you take trouble over them, you'll be rewarded as they will respond enthusiastically to a mulch of compost.

Most like a rich, moist soil, and regular attention to grooming keeps them looking good. Remove spent stems at ground level as soon as flowers finish because they start to die at that stage, and clumps begin to look tatty and unattractive.

Foliage becomes brown and withered in winter and the plant dies down. This is the time to cut the entire clump back to ground level, although in colder areas frost does much of this job. It's also the time to divide and replant any overcrowded clumps, usually done every two to three years, depending on the vigour of your variety.

Cannas are ravenous feeders and, like all the ginger family, are greedy growers that enjoy heavy feeding in spring and summer to ensure the clump remains vigorous and at its most attractive. Growers recommended digging out your clump every three years and starting again elsewhere from

small pieces because the soil will be exhausted.

Although most canna breeding has been aimed at creating spectacular large flowers, some have been bred for dramatically coloured foliage, such as the brightly striped 'Tropicanna', great teamed with zinnias and which can provide a flashy structural backdrop for dark foliaged dahlias, and against the red-flowering 'Australia' with its matching rich, brown-red leaves.

Although known for their vivid flowers, a wide range of light pastel shades are currently available such as 'Gabriel', an attractive, dwarf peach-apricot and 'Panache,' which grows to mid height and produces flowers with apricot, pink and yellow petals.

Although some gardeners dismiss cannas for being too large and greedy for space, there are also low-growing varieties like 'Tropical White', a mere 30cm; pretty 'China Pink' grows to 50cm high; and cheerful, scarlet-and-gold 'Queen Charlotte' grows to only about 1m. There's also a dwarf hybrid 'Eric' that has bronze foliage and soft pink flowers. It grows to 30cm, but can also be used as a ground cover.

If you want dramatic height, try varieties like the nodding canna (*Canna iridiflora* 'Ehemannii'), with pendulous, bell-like, watermelon-pink flowers, growing to 2.5m tall; or the striking 'Pfitzer's Stadt Fellbach' – 3m from base to flower tip, with large, loose heads of apricot-pink shading to cream-yellow at the flower centre. For another 3m giant there's 'Grande', grown for its bold, red-green leaves.



Luscious Lilies

Highly valued for centuries, lilies are hardy perennials, magnificent plants that when in bloom are truly one of our most beautiful flowers, bringing elegance, charm and fragrance into the garden. They are versatile plants, growing well in sun to light shade, but look particularly stunning mass planted amongst shrubs, roses and perennials where the cover keeps the bulb cool and moist. Although liking damp conditions, lilies need excellent drainage and, in areas inclined to lay wet, raised beds may be required. Rhododendrons, azaleas and camellias are great bed-mates because they enjoy similar conditions (don't add lime when feeding – lilies like acidic soil).

Lilies are mainly summer and early autumn flowering, and come in all sizes, from 20cm dwarfs to 2m giants, and in most shades, except blues and purples.

There are three main types – Asiatic, Trumpet and Oriental, as well as a fourth subgroup – LA hybrids.

Easy to grow Asiatic lilies flower in November/ December and grow to 1m – the flowers are 100mm across, but have no fragrance.

Later-flowering Oriental lilies have the best scent (a heavenly fragrance) and produce bold, speckled flowers 200mm across on a 1–2m plant.

The trumpet-shaped flowers of trumpet lilies are 100mm across and 150mm long. They include the beautiful, fragrant Christmas lilies *L. longifolium* and *L. regale*.

LA hybrids are popular, easy-to-grow, fragrant lilies with a wide range of colours – the hybrids have the extra bonus of being disease-resistant. The plants are a cross between Asiatic and trumpet lily *L. longifolium*, combining the best qualities of each. They flower in December, have large flowers (150mm across) and grow to a height of 1m.

Lilies grow well in pots – it is an ideal way to get the best from fragrant varieties. Grow outside until flowering, then bring your lily inside to enjoy its heady perfume.

Use a quality potting mix, one that includes wetting agent and water crystals, and water regularly – it may need to be once a day in summer months. The bulbs can be left undisturbed in their pots for several years if they are top-dressed with a controlled release fertiliser – lilies resent being disturbed so take care when cultivating around bulbs grown outside (unlike other bulbs lilies are never truly

dormant, this is why they're sold in damp sawdust).

When your lilies have finished blooming, leave flower stems on the plant until they turn brown, then cut off at ground level. Leaving flowers to wither allows energy to be drawn back into the bulb, preparing it for next year's growth and flowering – bulbs should not be lifted or stored dry during dormancy.



all images supplied

Extremely successful Ōtaki Summer Camp

BY FRANK NEILL

This year's Ōtaki Summer Camp, which attracted a record number of 300 participants, was "extremely successful" one of the camp organisers, Adrian Leason, says.

The feedback from participants was universally positive and universally enthusiastic," he says.

The 2024 camp was held at Adrian and Shelley Leason's Bennetts Road farm from 20 to 22 January.

Over the seven years the Summer Camp has been running, the numbers have steadily increased from around 150 who attended the first event.

This year around 50 per cent of those attending had also attended one or more of the previous camps, while the other half were at their first camp.

"It is really great having returnees because they carry on the tradition and the culture and the special character that has evolved."

Adrian also outlines his gratitude for all the people in Ōtaki who have supported this annual event.

"It takes a village to organise Summer Camp and here in Ōtaki we are lucky enough to have a small town that is very, very supportive," he says.

The camp is for people aged 17 to 30 years with an interest in politics, justice, anti-racism, equality and the environment.

For people with an interest in these areas, networking is very important if they want to achieve results and there is now a "neighbored sense" of it being a networking event, Adrian says.

"Our friends in the commercial world are very good at networking ... In business, networking is a core activity.

"Networking and finding ways to collaborate are important when you are organising initiatives aimed at making positive progressive change.

"That does not happen by chance. It is universally the result of organising, hard work and planning.

"That is what Summer Camp wants to celebrate and wants to enhance – deliberate skilful organising," Adrian says.

Networking and organising was one of the themes explored by one of the speakers at the camp, Morgan Godfery (Te Pahipoto/Ngāti Awa, Lalomanu/Samoa).

A senior lecturer at Te Herenga Waka Victoria University, a writer and a political reporter on TV, Morgan said he did not foresee the "speed and quite frankly the malice" of the recently elected government.

"It has elicited anger," he said, but "the anger is only useful if it leads to action."

When getting ready to take action "collecting together is important. Just your presence here is an act in itself.

"The tradition of the Summer Camp is a very long one and a very proud one in this country," Morgan said.

"We are fighting for warm, dry homes.

"We are fighting for the ability to pay rent.

"We are fighting for a climate for future generations."

The important question is "how do we convert our political beliefs into political power? How do we achieve political change? There is really only one way and that is collective action."

It is about finding "at least one mate. The more people you have, the easier it is to organise."

The next step is to "clarify our thinking: what are we trying to achieve and how are we going to achieve it? Precision matters in organising."

Another very important thing is to "find what unites us instead of what divides us. We can win when we work together," he said.

He gave a number of examples of collective action that had positive results, including the history of Bastion Point and, quite recently, action that resulted in the National Party saying it would not support the ACT Party's proposed legislation on Te Tiriti o Waitangi past the committee stage.

Morgan was one of a number of speakers at the camp.

Another was the famous singer and activist Moana Maniapoto (Te Arawa, Ngāti Tūwharetoa).

Moana asked not be quoted, however, as she wanted freedom to talk off the cuff.



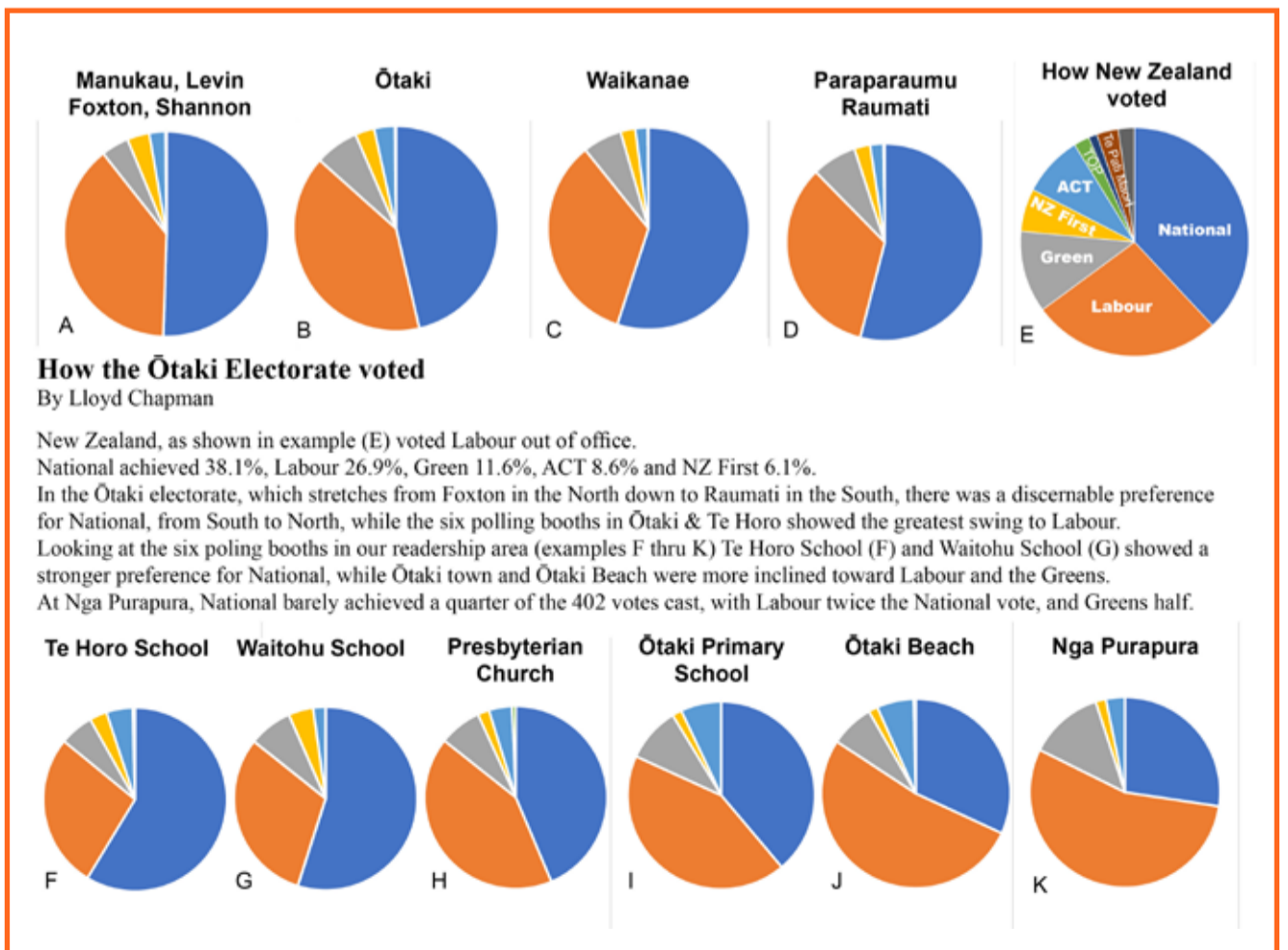
Moana Maniapoto during her 2024 Ōtaki Summer Camp speech.



Morgan Godfery speaking at the 2024 Ōtaki Summer Camp

Ōtaki Electorate voting patterns

BY LLOYD CHAPMAN



ŌTAKI SUMMER CAMP
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 f X @

Ōtaki College News

February 2024

www.otakicollege.school.nz



ŌTAKI COLLEGE 2024 STUDENT RETURN DATES

Wednesday 31 January 11:00am–3:00pm	Any new enrolments from Years 7-13 who have not received a confirmation email or phone call before this date need to come in to the College and enrol. All Kaihautū (Deans) will be available for enrolments at this time
Thursday 1 February 09:00am–4:00pm	Year 11, 12 and 13 course counselling for students and, if possible, parents – individual appointment times will be emailed mid January. No uniform required.
10:00am–1:00pm	Year 7 and new Year 8 and 9 students please come to the College Library with your parent/caregiver to meet with your Homeroom or Kāiārahi Teacher and the Principal for a short visit. No uniform required.
Monday 5 February	Pōwhiri and full school return but at different times, depending on Year Level. Correct uniform to be worn.
9:00am	RETURNING Students yr 8 and Yr 12 and 13 (assemble in the College Gym)
9:30am	All Year 7 and NEW students/staff assemble on tennis courts
9:45am	Pōwhiri Following the pōwhiri new students and parents are invited for refreshments in the staffroom.
11:00am	RETURNING Yr 9s, 10s and 11s (assemble in Gym)
11:10am–3:15pm	Students in class, followed by a house event in the afternoon – students should bring a change of clothes for this event. (Buses will run as for normal school day)

The College Office will be open for chromebook and stationery sales before College starts as follows:
Tue 23 Jan - Fri 2 Feb, 09.00am-12.00 midday and 1.00pm-3.00pm (closed for lunch from 12.00-1.00pm).
From Mon 5 Feb normal office hours will resume: 08.30am - 04.00pm.

At our college, digital learning is integrated across all subjects in the curriculum. In some subjects, almost all learning is online. Additionally, all classes have a website which acts as the hub from which their learning is organised and daily tasks assigned. All students from Years 7 to 13 are encouraged to own a Chromebook and headphones as part of their basic stationery. Students in Years 12 and 13 only are allowed to connect devices other than Chromebooks to the school network, and if you are considering purchasing a laptop you are strongly encouraged to check with the college first to ensure the device will be compatible.

Chromebooks may be purchased outright from the College for \$444 - Acer C734-C15D, 4GB RAM. This price includes a 3yr warranty and 3yr Acer device care programme (up to 2 repairs - 1 replacement) and a bag.

The free lunch service is planned to commence from Mon 5 Feb but, as we are moving to a new local provider, we may not meet this goal and there could be a slight delay. We will email you in late January if students need to bring their own lunches for the first few days back at school.

Uniform is sold through Marlan Trading, State Highway One, Ōtaki. Marlan Trading closes at 12pm on 20 Dec 2023 and reopens for College Uniform fittings on Monday 15 Jan. Hours will be 9.00am-4.30pm, closed for lunch from 12.00-1.00pm, until Fri 23 Feb. After that normal hours resume - Wednesdays from 1.30-4.30pm. If paying by parent account Marlan will need to verify the payment with College. You will then need to return to collect your uniform items.

There will be a second-hand uniform day at College on Wed 31 Jan from 10.00am-2.00pm. Eftpos available - follow the signs from the Main Office.



Ōtaki College
Business Manager

We are seeking to appoint a full-time Business Manager, commencing Term 3 (July) 2024.

The successful applicant will have the following skills and attributes:

- Outstanding interpersonal skills and be a team player
- Very experienced in using accounting software and preparing financial reports
- Enthusiasm and motivation
- Well-developed IT skills
- Effective time management
- Proven experience working in a school would be an advantage

The hours of work are 40 hours per week, 52 weeks per year, including annual leave.

Remuneration to be negotiated.

The position is subject to satisfactory Police Vetting.

Please contact the Principal's PA (Viv White) 06 364 8204 ext 701, or vwt@otakicollege.school.nz for an application form and job description.

Applications close on 3pm, Friday 23 February 2024

Two added to Ōtaki College Hall of Fame

BY FRANK NEILL

Long-serving Ōtaki College Tumuaki Principal Rex Kerr and well-known Ōtaki resident John Barrett have been inducted into the XŌtaki College Alumni Trust Hall of Fame.

Their significant achievements for both the college and the community were recognised during the induction ceremony, held at Ōtaki College on 15 December 2023.

Rex Kerr was appointed Ōtaki College's Principal in 1975 and "he worked tirelessly until his retirement in 1997," retired Ōtaki College teacher Janice Brown said in presenting Rex's citation.

"Rex is a humble man who is not comfortable receiving praise, but tonight it is only right that we as a school and community recognise and thank him for all he has done," Janice said.

"Through Rex's leadership, one of the biggest achievements for the college saw the development of Māori Language with Nan Gray and Ian Christensen starting the bilingual unit around 1985. At the time, there were only two other secondary schools in New Zealand that had bilingual education. It was an initial step for the now well-established and widespread Māori-medium kaupapa. In 1991, Rex instigated the establishment of Te Whānau o Akopai – a two-year course based at Ōtaki College, run by Wellington Teachers College, to train Māori teachers.

He oversaw the beginning of vocational training, which has since developed into work experience and trade training with outside providers.

When the Weraroa Unit (at Kimberley) for severely disabled students was closed, the Weraroa Unit was established at Ōtaki College under the leadership of Christine Davidson at. The unit also included students with other disabilities.

"Rex's educational leadership and knowledge was recognised with his appointment for 10 years as Te Mana Whakahaere of Te Waananga o Raukawa (the Ministerial Representative for the Ministry of Education). During his time as principal "Rex went out of his way to ensure he found the best staff available at the time,

often working around people's availability to start," Janice said. "He could recognise people's strengths not only as a teacher but their ability to fit into the team.

"In the early days the staff 'lived' teaching, got on really well in work and play, and many staff stayed for a lot longer than planned. His high standards, belief and trust in staff made them feel valued, and in return, they gave it their all. Staff respected Rex. He was always fair, especially to women, Māori and other ethnicities, which was not always the norm of the day," Janice said.

Rex has been heavily involved in sport throughout his career, having played and coached rugby and cricket. He is a Life Member of four sporting organisations: New Zealand Secondary School Rugby, the Horowhenua-Kāpiti Rugby Union, the Rāhui Sports Club and the Manawātū Secondary Schools Athletics Association.

As well as being secretary for a year and Chair for five years of New Zealand Secondary School Rugby, Rex also managed a New Zealand Secondary School Rugby team that competed in Japan.

He was a member of Ōtaki Rotary Club for 47 years and was a member of the Ōtaki Wellbeing and Health Group until recently.

Since retiring, Rex has also written five books about Ōtaki. He has written many historical articles for the *Ōtaki Historical Journal* and worked on several exhibitions for the Ōtaki Museum.

John Barrett is a former student of Ōtaki College, where he began his studies in 1962. Countless whānau, hapū, iwi and members of the Ōtaki community "have benefitted from Dad's contributions," his son Pera Barrett told the induction ceremony.

"How many people have blossomed or flourished under the guidance of Dad? Many. He's been a leader as long as I've been alive, and for a long time before that too. I'll skim through a few of the contributions he's made to different groups: "He is the Chairman and co-founder of Kapiti Island Nature Tours and [Kapiti Island] Nature Lodge, a whānau operated,

multi award-winning tourism business.

"Dad is active within the confederation of our iwi – Ngāti Raukawa, Te Ātiawa ki Whakarongotai and Ngāti Toarangatira.

"He established the Kāpiti Skills Centre with Eddie Bisdee in the 1990s to work with rangatahi at home in Ōtaki" and from 1991 to 1993 John worked on the conservation corps with Eddie Bisdee.

Pera then listed a series of contributions John has made. These include:

- John is currently in the Leadership Group for NZ Tourism Industry Transformation Programme;
 - He is the current NZ/Oceania representative and founding member on the Leadership Council of the World Indigenous Tourism Alliance;
 - He is the Chair of Raukawa Whānau Ora Ltd;
 - He is a Director of Te Waananga o Raukawa Foundation;
 - He is the Honorary Secretary of the Raukawa Marae Trustees;
 - He is on the Māoriland Film Festival Charitable Trust;
 - He is a Director of Regenerative Vanuatu-Pacific Region;
 - He is the Managing Director of Kāpiti Island Manuka Honey and of Kāpiti Island Nature Tours;
 - He is a Kapiti District Tourism Advisory Board member;
 - He is a past Director of Tourism NZ;
 - He is a past Deputy Chair of the NZ Children's Health Camps Board;
 - He is a past Chair of the NZ Māori Tourism Council;
 - He is a past Director of the Wellington Conservation Board; and
 - He is a past Director of the Aviation/Tourism Training Organisation.
- "That's a long list, and every line is focused time on contributions to others," Pera said.



above: Rex Kerr (left) and John Barrett about to go into the Ōtaki College Hall to be inducted into the XŌtaki College Alumni Trust Hall of Fame. Image: Frank Neill

That's where you see a leader - contributing to others. Dad's had to make plenty of sacrifices to make those contributions. You can't be everywhere for everyone, for every whānau, or every kaupapa, and I know that won't have been easy.

"But being self-less enough with your limited time, because it's limited for all of us, so that you make the best use of what you have for others, while being smart enough to use your time here for the greatest impact, and not just for the prettiest flowers, is one of the skills of a great leader," Pera said.

Rex and John join Chris Parkin, David Pritchard, Jackie Sutton and Pete Housiaux on the XŌtaki College Alumni Trust Hall of Fame.

Mayor Holborow's report

BY JANET HOLBOROW

It's been a superb summer so far in Ōtaki. The beach has been full of people soaking up the sun, and others have been enjoying our tracks, trails and summer activities. It was also great to see The Kilns at Te Horo up and running, the Ōtaki Festival of Pots and Garden Art was once again a huge success, and the markets have been humming.

It was wonderful to receive a message from the organisers of the Ōtaki Market recently thanking council staff for their support. It's lovely to hear that our staff are "helpful and professional, but also bring a warm and friendly vibe to the table." I often hear similar comments about council staff, so I'd like to take the opportunity to thank the team for the incredible work they do, not just behind their tables at the office, but out and about in the community.

Ōtaki Ward Councillor Shelly Warwick was acknowledged by the Ōtaki Market for doing a "stellar job" judging the Kids' Market stalls. When I can't attend events

or appointments, councillors and community board members are always willing to step in and support community events.

A few examples: ŌtakiCommunity Board Chair Cam Butler opened the Ōtaki Festival of Pots and Garden Art, and ŌtakiCommunity Board Member Jackie Elliott attended a previous market on my behalf. Deputy Mayor Lawrence Kirby has been Acting Mayor for some of the summer period, and it's so good to know I can leave things in his capable hands.

Throughout 2023, I had such great support from elected members in so many ways, and I'm so grateful that we've been working together so well. That doesn't mean we don't disagree or challenge each other – we often have different opinions or views on how we should approach an issue – those differing opinions can often lead to a better solution. So far we've always treated each other with respect, or called each other to account when we feel things aren't going



above: Ciara Schneider, 12, from Upper Hutt, with Cr Shelly Warwick. Ciara makes everything she sells.

as well as they should.

This respect needs also to apply to our interactions with the public. If ever anyone feels like our staff or elected members (including me) aren't meeting our responsibilities, please do get in touch.

As we return to work and study, the sun continues to shine, and we have plenty to look forward to with the Ōtaki Kite Festival,

Māoriland Film Festival and a wealth of other activities and events. All the best to the organisers of these events, and I hope everyone enjoys all that Ōtaki has to offer for the rest of the summer. The murals at Te Horo Beach toilets are soon to be completed, so make sure to go check them out!

Out and about with Shell

BY SHELLY WARWICK – ŌTAKI WARD COUNCILLOR

Well, not a lot had been a lot happening at council as staff took a well-deserved break over the festive season, however we need to thank those staff who were on-call to ensure all our services were functioning while we all relaxed.

I joined the Surf Club team this summer as beach support to hang out with my kids – two of whom are still active lifeguards in the club. This has been great and we are very lucky to have such an active club in our town. I have been swimming at both the beach and the river often, and it is really awesome to see so many families and kids enjoying our natural assets and getting outdoors. Ōtaki really has a lot to offer and the best part is that our beach and river are free. We do need to be mindful to look after these places and look after each other in these spaces as well. Beaches and rivers are looked after by Kāpiti Coast District Council and Greater Wellington Regional

Council, who hold different responsibilities in these spaces. They monitor water quality, among many other things, to keep us safe when we are swimming. I also had the pleasure of being invited to judge the kids stalls at the Ōtaki Market on 14 January. What a great initiative and big thanks to the Ōtaki Womens Community Club who run the market for the community, providing opportunities like this to our youth, and putting the money made from the regular markets back into our community. An amazing group of volunteers. Thank you.

It's a busy year ahead at council with the Long-term Plan being worked up. Early in the year the council will go out into the community for feedback on this. Look in our papers and on social media for ways you can engage and provide feedback.

Hope 2024 has started off well for you all and you have enjoyed our 'Sunny Ōtaki' weather with your whānau and friends.



Coming to a street near you

These bright orange containers, funded through the Ōtaki Community Board (ŌCB) initiative funding, will be in a street near you soon. The idea behind the containers was to have clearly identifiable containers into which our community can put produce from their garden or fruit trees that is excess to their own needs; others can take what they need. In Ōtaki we have so much food growing in our fertile soil, and most people want to share if they can, instead of it rotting on the ground.

This initiative, spearheaded by Ōtaki Ward



Manaakitanga

BY JACKIE ELLIOTT – ŌTAKI COMMUNITY BOARD

Happy Ōtaki Summer 2024! One of the real pleasures this summer has been meeting visitors to Ōtaki: whether they are new residents; those attending the many events held here; someone passing through town in a campervan; or someone taking a detour from Te Araroa to reset and restock.

As Te Araroa trail angels, our family have really enjoyed meeting and assisting some of the thousands of people completing the trail this summer. We get asked a lot of questions about Ōtaki, so here are a few things we share:

Our town has manaakitanga – what does this word mean? It means we extend our care to all, we are sometimes referred to as 'Small town – Big heart.' A nice and friendly place. How little? Well, Ōtaki had 4000 residents living within the roughly 8½ km radius of the town at the last census.

Our town, home to three iwi, is proudly steeped in its deep base of Māori culture and te reo. Ōtaki's people are proudly NZ's most prolific speakers of Te Reo Māori, where children can go to full language immersion pre-schools and schools and adults can learn at Te Waananga o Raukawa, campus at the centre of the town. We also have our amazing Ōtaki College right here taking students from year 7. Our Māori culture is also showcased at the many art galleries and at Māoriland, home of world-acclaimed Indigenous film producers and their annual international film festival.

Ōtaki is blessed with a wonderful history. To appreciate it, take some time to spend at the Māori Anglican Rangiatea Church, originally built in 1851. Further down the same road is Pukekaraka, home to an ex Mill Road mill stone and the oldest still-in-use Catholic Church in New Zealand at the site of the French Marist mission set up under the guidance of Father Jean Baptist François Pompellier in 1844.

What's that loud noise? That is our fire siren, there are actually two sirens, one at the township and one at the railway area.

Councillor Shelly Warwick and supported by the ŌCB, is one of many kai initiatives the ŌCB has supported – a Board that is very committed to ensuring food security in Ōtaki. "This idea came about because I am shocked by the price in the supermarket of fruit like fejoas, apples and lemons when we have so much in Ōtaki that goes to waste," said Shelly. "I, like many others with excess fruit, just want it to go out to others in the community. By having a specific container for this kai sharing, people will hopefully feel comfortable to

Noisy, yes, but they alert our fantastic volunteer fire brigade to action fighting fires, attending accidents or assisting our other emergency services.

On those, we have a medical centre open weekdays and able to take new patients. A pharmacy also open weekdays and the Hato Hone St Johns ambulance service will take patients to Palmerston North hospital (about an hour away).

We do have a train station but, be warned, it is not connected to the Wellington-to-Kāpiti Metlink train service. So please look out for the regular #290 buses between Ōtaki and the Waikanae train station where you can catch a train into Wellington. You can pay in cash on both, or buy, load and use a Snapper card from a dairy. For travellers, we have two laundromats and limited spaces for mobile homes at the Ōtaki River mouth. You can book one of the four powered sites – with full facilities – at the Ōtaki Golf Club. The School Flat campground is no longer accessible by vehicle, due to the slips at Blue Bluff, but approximately 7kms up into Ōtaki Gorge you can still park at Shields Flat, just before the slips, and enter the Tararua Forest Park on foot. A reminder to those exiting the ranges at this point, there is no mobile phone coverage for a few more kilometres, and around 10kms to walk to town from Shields Flat. But we love our ranges and are working right now to re-establish better access at the slip site.

There is plenty to do right here in Ōtaki. You can enjoy: our cafes and fresh produce; a picnic and the excitement at the Ōtaki Māori Racing Club; a game at the gorgeous 18-hole Ōtaki Golf Course; our many walks and cycle ways; Haruātai public pools; or a swim in Ōtaki River. The Ōtaki Surf Lifesaving Club ensures a safe swimming beach opposite the end of Tasman Road.

Whether you are just popping through, or planning on making Ōtaki your new home, we extend a warm welcome – our manaakitanga – to you all.

put kai out at the gate and also to stop and take what they need for their whānau. Ōtaki is a food basket and to be able to give to others what Papatūānuku provides us is what community is all about."

This is initially a trial, but we are hoping that our community will embrace this initiative and then we can apply for more funding to roll this out to more homes.

If you would like to be part of this initiative please contact Shelly on: shelly.warwick@kapiticoast.govt.nz

DIY Enthusiasts Flock to Zero Waste Ōtaki

BY DAVE MACINTYRE

The benefits of Zero Waste Ōtaki (ZWŌ) are spreading to do-it-yourself enthusiasts far and wide, with people from as far away as Wellington and the Manawatu being lured to the treasure trove of recycled timber that is perfect for home projects and is available at very affordable prices.

ZWŌ Chairperson, Barbara Hoverd, says the popularity of recycled timbers is reflected in the attention ZWŌ is getting online and on social media.

“Our public Facebook page has 1200 members who regularly post photographs of what they have built. People are using the Google search engine on mobile phones and desktops and Google Maps is also being used to locate our site adjacent to the Ōtaki Transfer Station.

“While the majority of customers come from the greater Ōtaki area, we are now attracting attention from neighbouring regions.”

Proof of ZWŌ’s pulling power came just before and after Christmas, as people sought supplies for their summer DIY projects. On the last open day of the year, five days before Christmas, we were inundated with cars and trailers – a couple of times we had traffic banked-up either waiting to come onto site or to get off site.

When the site reopened on 10 January, over 70 visitors called in, taking away over 2.3 tonnes of timber and 1.25 tonnes of pavers.

Barbara says the payoff comes when people create something that means a lot to them – “What really makes our day is the thought we have helped someone with more than just wood for a project. We have supported their creativity and we hope made a difference in their lives. This is also true for us, the volunteers.”

That was the case for one customer who built a rectangular seat around an oak tree

as a Christmas present for his wife. Pile off-cuts, square posts and recycled decking timbers were repurposed, sanded down and varnished to create a striking effect [seen in the photograph]. The seat was unveiled on Christmas morning.



At ZWŌ, wood is sorted into categories such as piles, fence posts, fence palings, decking, interior-framing wood and plywood. Stacking, sorting and de-nailing is undertaken. Doors (interior and exterior), beadings and trimmings, and various other finished objects are stored in three containers on site.

A selection of windows is also available, as are concrete pavers – which are proving very popular buys. The majority of the pavers are 230mm x 190mm x 50mm, and are available for the very reasonable price of 50 cents each.

ZWŌ is open to the public every Wednesday from 9.30 -11am; on the last Sunday of the month from 9.00am – 12.00pm; and occasionally at other times by special arrangement (ph 028 8520 9936). To keep up to date with what’s new see the ZWŌ Facebook page: www.facebook.com/groups/zerowasteotaki.nz



Energise Ōtaki: Better energy in 2024

BY EMILY MCDOWELL



Last year was the hottest year on record, on land and sea. Here are some ways we’re changing what we do in 2024, to bring down waste and climate emissions, together.

This year, Ōtaki Bike Space will have another two fix-it/ giveaway days. Free bikes will help get us out of cars, and kids into happy travel habits.

The next Ōtaki Repair Café will be 10 March. Last year, four Cafés’ worth of fixing saved about 1,432kg of ‘waste’ going to landfill, and 11 363kg of carbon emissions into the atmosphere.

Infratech recently donated around 40 solar panels, damaged in Cyclone Gabrielle. Trustees will be experimenting with repurposing these for domestic use.

Separately, we’ll be investigating hooking solar panels into hot water cylinders. Says Chair Leigh Ramsey, “They’re simple but smart ideas...this could tuck really nicely into [project] Warm Up Ōtaki, and help community members cut energy bills by 30 to 40 per cent.”

Whether you’re renting or own your own home, Warm Up Ōtaki’s Matt Brenin welcomes conversations for advice on healthy homes and energy efficiency.

Top tip: consider ordering free, lined curtains now as they take 6-8 weeks to process.

What do we do with the emissions we can’t get rid of? Energise Ōtaki calculates that at least 32 hectares of carbon-eating trees will be needed to absorb the carbon Ōtaki won’t be able to stop producing (while aiming for reductions wherever possible), by 2035.

Good news on that. Thanks to Friends of the Ōtaki River have planted 4ha since 2020 (when our calculations begin), plus 3ha combined from other sources, we’re now over 20% of the way to our 32ha goal. That’s

about seven international rugby fields’ worth of trees beginning to provide better air and support richer biodiversity.

Ōtaki Carbon Forests will publish an information pack and host a lunch/ support session for participating landowners (join us!) this quarter.

“[A]ct like your house is on fire, because it is,” said young climate activist Greta Thunberg, famously. We acknowledge the many ways people in Ōtaki are changing behaviours and resources around climate change. In so many scenarios – like creating local fresh food supplies – changing how we use and source energy benefits both people and planet. We’re better working together.

This year the Whakahiko Ōtaki–Energise Ōtaki Fund will open in the deep, dark, ideas-germinating winter, at Matariki.

Connect with any Energise Ōtaki project at: energiseotaki.nz

below: Ōtaki Repair Café volunteer Steve Lang loves repairing instruments.



The Rongoā Space

BY JOANNE HAKARAIA-OLSON

Rongoā of the Month NĪKAU

Behold the mystical Nikau or *Rhopalostylis sapida*, a palm tree of ethereal beauty, found nowhere else in the world but Aotearoa. Its leaves, the essence of its character, bestow upon it a unique and striking silhouette.

The nīkau is the southernmost member of its kin. It can grow 10 to 15 metres tall, with a trunk that coils in perfect symmetry and fronds that beckon the breeze with lengths of up to three metres.

The nīkau graces the world with its delicate blooms between November and April. It unfurls a breath-taking spectacle of mauve blossoms that burst forth from the base of its leafy crown. These brilliantly coloured blooms, coated in a sticky sweet nectar, serve as a beacon, luring buzzing insects – especially the bees – to partake in their enchanting essence. The rare treat of the flower clusters, nestled amidst the aged leaves, is a feast for the senses.

Its fruit takes almost a year to ripen. The berries are edible for humans when they are young and green, and have a slight nutty flavour. The kererū relishes the fruit of this palm as a favoured meal.

Traditionally, the fronds of the nīkau made for exceptional waterproof

thatch when constructing whare, and could also be woven into baskets and mats. The leaves also proved useful for cooking purposes, serving as a protective wrap for kai.

The outer bark became vessels for storing kai and water. From the hardy berries, necklaces were fashioned, or they were savoured as a delicacy when young.

Nīkau definitely defies the hastiness of time. Its languid pace, taking 40 to 50 years to even begin its ascent towards the skies and up to 200 years to reach a height of 10 metres.

From October to May, mature leaves fall off. The outermost leaf is the first to go, leaving a clean circular scar around the trunk as it detaches. During a single season, anywhere from one to five leaves may fall off, and it’s important to keep in mind that up to 20 years may be required for the average nīkau to develop a trunk.

The pith from the central leaf bud of the nīkau was a rongoā used as a gentle laxative. A wairākau made from its sap offered relief during childbirth. However, the removal of the pith or its ‘heart’ claimed the palm’s life; this is now considered a senseless act.

In the dawn of the Eocene period, fossilized pollen of the *Seaforthia*, an ancestor of the nīkau, were unearthed from coal deposits. The Eocene Epoch began about 50 million years ago and

ended about 30 million years ago. The mana of nīkau is profound.

Always consult your health-care provider before using any herbal products, especially if you have a medical problem.



Arts, Books Corner

Renée (1929–2023): A national icon, an Ōtaki treasure

BY ANN CHAPMAN

There has been much written about Renée – her life, her writing, her generosity and humour. Over her 94 years she achieved more than most people would. My gift to her memory is not to repeat what others had said, or to find different words from them, but to find her Ōtaki voice.

Many residents will have attended her workshops, on writing your memoir, on writing poems, to her crime-writing ones. She was a hard task mistress. She expected you to work. She expected you, after her two-hour weekly workshop, to go home and do homework. She expected 10 pages of written work by the beginning of the following week. “You can’t edit a blank page,” she’d say, “so get on and write.” She then marked and commented on it. Her gift to all of us was the words at the end: “thank you for your work.” It was those words which made us turn up week after week and use our brains. “There’s no such thing as inspiration,” she’d say, “there’s only hard work.”

I’d like to talk about an adventure she and I had some seven years ago, which no one else has written about, locally or nationally. It is an Ōtaki story. Let me tell you about *A House to Let*, a play she wrote for us. For Ōtaki and its residents.

With *A House to Let*, Renée added to her collection of 21 plays. She wrote it at my request to celebrate not only 100 years of Labour history, but also the lives of residents in any small Aotearoa New Zealand town. From her first play in 1981 *Setting the Table* to *A House to Let* in 2016, she has brought the New Zealand way of life to our theatres, schools and bookshelves.

The year 2016 was the centenary of the Labour Party and I wanted to do something special to celebrate that would be different to the usual ways of celebrating with dinners and drinks. I rocked up to my friend Renée and said, “I have a suggestion and you can say no if you wish. I’d like you to write a play to celebrate the centenary of the Labour Party invoking all the Labour prime ministers since it first began with Michael Joseph Savage.”

“Yes,” she said without hesitation. Renée took on this opportunity with very little notice and with a lot of community support. She wrote and directed this ‘historical montage’ that looks at our history from the first Labour prime minister to Helen Clark, the tenth one. Through the eyes of a community, she wove this historical tapestry of our history interspersed with songs of the era and poems of our times.

We started the journey together – she writing; me fussing and organising – until finally she was happy with her work. We then conscripted a community of amateurs from within the small Ōtaki community and, four months later, we held a one-time show in the College Hall.

The play was a resounding success. The stars of the show were all amateur adults and school children who acted, sang and danced to a hall of 400 people. This was an indication of how the community felt about her and her commitment to them. It is an abiding memory of a literary wāhine toa and the community she grew to love during the years she lived here.

Me tangi, kāpā ko te mate i te marama.



Aiming High: The Story of Byron Brown and his granddaughter Mary-Annette, by Di Buchan

REVIEWED BY ANN CHAPMAN

Aiming High is the story of renowned Ōtaki resident, Byron Brown and his granddaughter Mary-Annette.

Author Di Buchan spent many hours interviewing Mary-Annette, then aged 96, recording her memories of her grandfather and his significant contribution to Ōtaki.

He was, as the blurb says, an entrepreneur, a businessman, community leader, benefactor, broadcaster, environmentalist, philosopher, poet, storyteller and an internationally recognised expert on the works of Shakespeare and Dickens.

Born in 1866, and sometime around 1893 (after returning from bankruptcy in Australia) Byron came to Ōtaki. His first enterprise was a general store and from that time on there was no holding him back. Buchan provides details and interest in his life and enterprises – too many to identify here. His was a full life right up to his death

in 1947 at the age of 81.

And then there’s the story of Mary-Annette. She is no shrinking violet. She is an artist, actor, event organiser, broadcaster and the Queen of Wool for the New Zealand Wool Board.

She left home to enrol in the arts based in Wellington Technical College. But her stage career started when she was a child, and became an integral part of her life. She eventually became a tutor at the art school, prior to becoming the promotions officer for the wool board. Her work in the community-arts sector is well recorded in this interesting biographical

and historical book.

Di Buchan has had a career in social and environmental research and is the author of *Sea, Sunshine & Sustenance*, the history of the Ōtaki Heath Camp. *Aiming High* is her third book.

Price \$45, Mary Egan Publishing
Available at Books & Co, Ōtaki



Poetry in Ōtaki

BY VIVIENNE BAILEY

Local poet, Philip Grimmett believes poetry is alive and well in Ōtaki. The monthly ‘Poets in Ōtaki’ group he started three months ago is thriving, with several writers regularly attending meetings.

Philip began writing poetry for the first time around two years ago, the creative urge triggered by the panic, upheaval, and negative stress of the Covid pandemic.

“I found writing poems like a healing process,” he says. “A poetic journey – almost like a therapy.”

Based in Wellington during that time, he joined U3A Tawa, a writing group compiling an anthology of members’ writing work.

“I was lucky to have 20 poems selected for the publication, *We Write*,” he says.



The self-published 260-page compilation features a diverse collection of essays, short stories and poems, many focusing on social issues, relationships, life experience and reflection, nostalgia and humour.

Philip describes himself as a performance poet, often reading his work aloud, and enjoys

excellence in their craft. She remains a motivating force for me and for so many others, hence why I am humbled to be the recipient of this year’s Merata Mita Fellowship,” said Libby Hakaraia.

“With this support from the Sundance Institute, along with that of my mentors within the Indigenous filmmaking community, I intend to be bold and aim for new heights in storytelling. This fellowship will enable me to strengthen my skills, extend my networks, and grow my confidence – and prepare to helm a large-scale genre feature in 2024.”

source: Māoriland Charitable Trust



Sundance Institute announces Libby Hakaraia as the 2024 Merata Mita Fellow

The non-profit Sundance Institute has announced Libby Hakaraia (Ngati Kapu, Ngati Raukawa au ki te tonga) as the recipient of the 2024 Merata Mita Fellowship. The Merata Mita Fellowship is an annual fellowship named in honour of the late Māori filmmaker Merata Mita (1942–2010) to support Indigenous women-identified artists endeavoring to direct their first feature film. Libby Hakaraia is a dynamic Indigenous storyteller with over 30 years of experience in the screen industry as a director, writer, and producer.

She currently has a slate of film projects in development, including her highly anticipated directorial debut feature film, *TANIWHA*, to be produced by Tainui Stephens (*Whina*, 2022; *The Dead Lands*, 2014) and Desray Armstrong (*Bad Behaviour*, 2023; *Millie Lies Low*, 2021; *Juniper*, 2021; *Coming Home in the Dark*, 2021).

“It is an honour to receive this award. It comes at an exciting time for me and the projects I have been developing whilst building the Māoriland Film Festival over the past decade. Merata Mita was an inspirational storyteller who challenged Indigenous filmmakers to strive for

presenting his work to the group, and to an audience at poetry evenings on the Kāpiti Coast, such as Poetry on the Coast Open Mic at Raumati’s Waterfront Bar and Kitchen.

‘Poets in Ōtaki’ meets in the Ōtaki Library Supper room, 10.30am to 11.30am every third Friday.

“We’re a fun group, all with different writing backgrounds,” he says. “Just bring along your own or your favourite poets’ work, there’s no stress, no critiquing.”



Ngā Arotakenga Mai i Te Whare Whakamatāu o Ōtaki

Ōtaki Library Hours:

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 Wed: 10am-5pm
 Thu-Fri: 9am-5pm
 Sat: 10am-4pm

One Step Too Far - Lisa Gardner



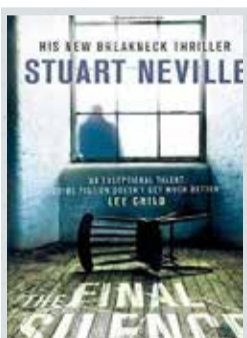
A young man disappears during a stag weekend in the woods. Years later, he's still missing. You can tell a book will be great when the opening page immediately captivates you, and One Step Too Far certainly lives up to the expectation. The characters are developed well and you soon have your favourites. This book will keep you engaged and guessing until the very end. I plan to explore more of Lisa Gardner's works in the coming weeks. REVIEWER: Ōtaki library Staff.

One Of Us - Kylie Kaden



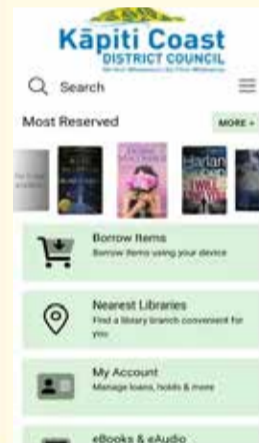
Behind the tall hedges of the affluent, gated community of Apple Tree Creek, not all is as it seems. One Of Us tells the tale of two women who meet in one of those accidental life moments. One finds herself managing alone with her family, while the other has her family, but with closely guarded secrets. I enjoyed this book with the various players having their own story. Some resilient and strong women scattered through the storyline. REVIEWER: Ōtaki Library Staff.

The Final Silence - Stuart Neville



Rea Carlisle has inherited a house from an uncle she never knew, but one room remains stubbornly locked. While the plot intrigued me, I found the main character, DI Jack Lennon rather annoying, though not enough to stop reading to the end. I'll give this author another chance and if Lennon turns up again, I'm hoping the author makes him slightly more appealing. REVIEWER: Ōtaki Library Staff.


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ŌTAKI HERITAGE

Te Whare Pouhere Taonga o Ōtaki

ŌTAKI IN THE NEWS ~ 1903

Selected from early New Zealand newspapers, as written and published at that time.

June 23

The local committee has decided to write to Mr Carnegie for a donation for the erection of a public library and reading-room at Otaki. At a meeting on Saturday it was decided to lease, with a purchasing clause, a section adjoining the new post office site for the proposed library. This section was offered by Mr Freeman on very easy terms. Already a good sum is in hand towards the building, and active steps are now being taken to secure sufficient to start the building. Much dissatisfaction is expressed at the delay in starting the new post office, which is badly needed. It is proposed to send a petition or a deputation to hurry the Government. It is now twelve months since the old building was destroyed and the plans for the new one are not yet prepared.

August 8

A serious gun accident occurred at Otaki last week. A young man, named "Pat Kite," the adopted son of the late Rev. Pineha, while out pig hunting, had his hand fractured by the explosion of his gun. His hand had to be amputated above the wrist. Kite is well known as a footballer, having played for both Raukawa and Tainui. He was given to the Maoris when a child.

September 23

The Otaki Mail says Mr T. Bevan jun. has

purchased an electric light plant for his homestead at Manakau and also proposes to light up the township, provided the extra cost is not too great.

September 30

A strange case of juvenile fire raising has just come under the notice of Detective Broberg and Constable O'Rourke, which explains the destruction, by fire of the Otaki Native College, which occurred here some months ago. Since this fire Mrs. Jennings, the head mistress of the College, has carried on the instruction of the Maori children in a building known as the Native School, and yesterday a half-caste boy named Arthur Clark, who had been "kept in" to finish his lessons, was caught in the act of setting fire to the building by putting a lighted match to a waste-paper basket and placing it under the wardrobe in Mrs. Jennings's bedroom. The fire was discovered before any damage was done, and upon the boy being questioned by Detective Broberg, he confessed to being the culprit, and upon further questioning also admitted that he had set the College alight some six months before. On this occasion the boy had been brought back to school against his will, and the same night, he tells, he got a lot of waste paper and set it alight in the porch of the College, and then went to bed, remaining there, apparently asleep until Mrs. Jennings went to rescue him from the fire. The boy is only ten years old, and has a reputation at school for an amount of cunning much beyond his years. The intention of the police is not known, but it is suggested that he should be sent to the Te Aute College, where he will get more rigorous treatment.

October 29

A laboring man named Wilfred Lee was found on the Manukau Road, Otaki, on Tuesday night about seven o'clock in an unconscious condition, having been thrown from a bicycle whilst going down a long, steep hill. The man was at once

taken to the hospital, where he died about midnight. Lee was an old resident of Otaki, and leaves a wife and several children in poor circumstances.

October 30

Mr W. Lee who met his death through a fall from a bicycle on the Otaki-Manukau road, had resided in the district for many years. He occupied many important public positions, and identified himself with nearly all movements for the advancement of the place. He served for many years as a member of the Otaki School Committee, having been Secretary of the Committee on several occasions, and was chairman at the time of his death. He was also an old member of the Otaki Lodge of Oddfellows, of which order he was a Past Grand, and at the last election of officers he was elected Secretary of the local lodge. For some years he was also a member of the Druids Lodge. In all athletics, the late Mr Lee took a great interest, and worked hard for the Otaki Cricket Club, of which he was hon. secretary and treasurer at his death, and was also an energetic member of the Otaki Athletic Club. He held the position of local ranger of the Acclimatisation Society, and acted as marker for the Otaki Rifle Club. Having been associated with so many movements and societies, he will be much missed in Otaki, where his genial personality was so well-known.

October 31

A deputation introduced by Mr. Field, M.H.R., and consisting of Messrs. F. C. Jones, M'Beath, Penn, and Williams, waited on the Minister of Lands this morning with a request that the Government should purchase, for purposes of a recreation ground in Otaki, an area of 15 acres costing about £900. Mr. Jones said a committee of residents had decided that this land, close to Jubilee-road and adjacent to the township, was most suitable, and it was cheap at £900. If the Government purchased it the local

authorities proposed to spend a similar amount in putting it in order, etc. Mr M'Beath said that at present if they wanted to play a football match or hold a sports meeting they had to hire a ground at 10s a day or depend on the good nature of residents to lend a paddock. Mr. Penn emphasised that from Levin to Wellington there was not a single recreation ground. The Minister in reply remarked that in laying out the township provision should have been made for a recreation ground. The sum now required was very large, and he thought it very doubtful indeed whether the House would pass such a vote for a recreation ground when there was need in many parts of the colony for roads and bridges. Even if the Government agreed to assist in the purchase of the ground, he thought the local residents would have to contribute pound for pound. His opinion was that the amount proposed to be raised for the purpose of improvements to the ground was too great, and some of it should be devoted towards the purchase of the land. He, however, would bring the request before Cabinet, but he did not think there was any chance of it being granted this session. He recommended the deputation to obtain as much as possible by private subscription and then approach the Government again.

December 30

At a circus performance in Otaki, the other evening, an amusing occurrence happened. The clown was carrying on his usual nonsense, when another clown, who posed as a drunk, entered the ring from the audience. Clown No 1 resented the interference of the newcomer, and called in loud terms for the police to come and eject the "drunk." Whereupon the local constable innocently stepped into the centre of the ring to arrest the troublesome one, and did not "tumble" to the joke until apprised by the clown that it was all part of the performance. The denouement was funny - very funny.

Mary-Jane Rivers honoured for outstanding service

BY FRANK NEILL

Decades of facilitating the establishment of community initiatives, and building connections between them, has seen Te Horo resident Mary-Jane Rivers made an Officer of the New Zealand Order of Merit (ONZM) in the 2024 New Year's Honours. This has included working to establish the first Women's Refuge in the North Island in the 1970s through to founding Inspiring Communities in 2006 and leading it until 2011.

Her leadership role has been one of initiator and facilitator.

"I've seen big gaps and been compelled to do something about them," Mary-Jane says. To achieve change, she has always "found and teamed up with other people who were motivated as well. To successfully get an initiative off the ground, I've learned that it is valuable to invite 'people into the room together' who are not the usual bedfellows," she says.

A "major learning ground" in terms of putting together a team to make a vision happen came when she sought out people to become involved in the establishment of a Women's Refuge in Upper Hutt some 50 years ago. At the time she was the Community Development Manager for Upper Hutt City Council. Council-supported community houses were used by many groups. Mary-Jane noticed one woman, a frequent visitor, who came on her own. It turned out her home wasn't safe. Then, another woman came into the Citizens Advice Bureau "with her two

gorgeous, pre-schooler boys. "She was so tired she had bruises under her eyes," Mary-Jane says. The mother was worried the boys were showing signs of violence towards each other and her. It turned out that the woman's husband had recently thrown her through a glass door, one of several violent incidents. She was desperate – not knowing what to do.

"I found a place where she could be safe in the short term and talked about it with the Citizens Advice Bureau volunteers. Together we undertook some research which identified there were others in the community who needed a safe place."

At the time the only Women's Refuge was in Christchurch, but the group began working to set up one in Upper Hutt. There was considerable opposition from some local groups, who expressed a concern that women's refuges would break up families.

Despite this, "the core group and I worked with many other groups – social-support agencies, schools, churches, businesses and council – to find and furnish a house that would be safe and comfortable – becoming a place of refuge." These groups also helped champion the idea.

"I came from outside Upper Hutt and brought wider networks of support such as contacts with private philanthropy, including the JR McKenzie Trust," Mary-Jane says. Sir Roy McKenzie met with the group, who had asked for \$5,000 in funding to help establish the Refuge.

"Sir Roy understood immediately the

importance of what was being done. He said: 'you don't need \$5,000. You need \$15,000'. "He said: 'I will write the cheque now', which he did, and presented the \$15,000 cheque to the group.

"This common ground to address family violence, that exists among people who wouldn't normally meet, had a lasting impact on me," Mary-Jane says. "Founding Inspiring Communities is another highlight in my working life," she says. Inspiring Communities helps communities to work together in locally led ways. It works on the basis that communities know best about what works for them and what they need to thrive.

To help communities achieve what works for them, Inspiring Communities shares experiences and practice-based evidence from one place to another and informs public policy and systems change. At the start of Inspiring Communities eight locally led, place-based initiatives in different parts of the country shared information and learned from each other.

One was in Porirua, the Good Cents project supported by Wesley Community Action. At first glance Good Cents is just a course for people in financial stress who want to



above: Mary-Jane Rivers, ONZM

make changes. The key difference is that the Good Cents participants form a group and lead their own journey. The peer support of the group encourages participants to take ownership and control of their finances. They get to the root of why they fell into debt. People support each other to identify and make the changes that will work for them. Importantly, the design of the course has been influenced and

continued bottom p 21

Media Muse

By Manakau's Tom Frewen

"How will it end? Will there be a mighty wind?" – British comedians Peter Cook and Rowan Atkinson discuss potential scenarios for the end of the world in a sketch about a Doomsday Cult in the Secret Policeman's Ball, a comic revue raising funds for Amnesty International at Her Majesty's Theatre, London, in June 1979.

John Campbell, TVNZ's Chief Correspondent, posed similar questions on X (Twitter) when promoting his end-of-year politics column on Saturday 30 December last year. "Who are we?" he asked. "Where are we heading? And who will we be when we get there? Are we on the cusp of something new or something old?"

Rhetorical questions don't need answers. Their purpose is to provoke discussion. Nevertheless it is surprising that Campbell, the senior journalist on the country's main TV channel, fails to address any of the issues that his questions raise. Readers hoping for just a hint as to who they are, where they are heading and the kind of cusp they are on, if indeed a cusp exists, are in for disappointment and some irritation when, reaching the end of Campbell's 4400-word essay, he hands over his fruitless quest for answers that don't exist to the new prime minister.

"In his own maiden speech, only three years ago," Campbell writes, "Christopher Luxon said something worth holding to: 'It's my absolute belief that New Zealand can do better, and when it does, New Zealanders will do better, too.'"

Of course some people will do better and others will do worse. Swings and roundabouts, yeah? Rich get richer, poor get poorer. Same old, same old. But do we really need to hear this from the prime minister?

Campbell obviously does and, without a

clue as to where we are heading, he concludes his essay by begging: "Lead us there, Prime Minister. All of us." Oh dear. And Campbell calls himself a journalist?

Luxon, having transitioned up several next levels from CEO to prime minister and, like a personal trainer on an exercycle, creates the illusion of forward momentum by combining political rhetoric and corporate gibber.

"That's what we're here to do," he says, bounding up to the assembled media's microphones and cameras at his National Party's caucus meeting in Christchurch, "we're going to get back to work, and we're going to keep going, we're going to go hard in Parliament, and importantly we're going to make sure we continue to deliver on that 100-day plan."

(The ritual of New Zealand governments kicking off with a 100-day plan originated in the United States in 1933 when newly elected President Franklin Delano Roosevelt got Congress to pass 15 major Bills in under three months.)

In New Zealand, the 100-day period also coincides with the traditional "honeymoon" period in which new governments get an easy ride in the media as politicians and journalists take their long summer breaks at the same time.

Extending from early December to the first week in February, the "Silly Season" exposes the extent of the media's reliance on politics as a source of national news. With no arguments between politicians to report and comment on, the daily news is reduced to a bedrock content of weather, sudden death on the roads and in the water, murder in the suburbs, retail crime and celebrity weddings.

So when the prime minister says "we are looking ahead to actually deliver a set of

deliverables that will help our vision of New Zealand to take root and come to pass" – and I did not make that up – there is no-one on deck to point out that he is literally talking nonsense.

It is also a bad time for any remotely famous individual to be caught out doing something dodgy. It took journalists just seven days to hound Green MP Golriz Ghahraman out of Parliament. Judging her guilty of shoplifting without waiting for proof to back anonymous allegations that had "surfaced" or "emerged", *The Post* in Wellington and the *Herald* in Auckland delivered their verdicts on their front pages on Wednesday 17 January. "Golriz Gone" crowed the *Herald*, reporting that her resignation from Parliament came as "security footage circulated online that appears to show her stealing a designer handbag from a Ponsonby boutique."

The Post went even further on its front page, saying the MP had not just ended her parliamentary career but also her future involvement in politics of any kind. "Sad end" read the headline alongside Ghahraman's portrait "From political scrapper . . . to scrapheap" – any sense of justice and fair play proving no match for a snappy tabloid headline.

NewstalkZB, owned by NZME, the same Australian outfit that publishes the *Herald*, also has a podcast called "The Front Page." Chelsea Daniels, a news director and journalist, opened the show that Wednesday with "Parliament has not even returned for 2024 yet, but we've already got our first political scandal of the year."

Daniels' view of politics as a source of drama and scandal was also evident on the front page of *Stuff's Sunday Star-Times* on Sunday 31 December, New Year's Eve. Under the headline question, "What's in store?", the paper's writers welcomed in "a new year packed with political intrigue, economic uncertainty, fresh food and fashion fads, travel trends and a sporting calendar highlighted by a new All Blacks coach and the Paris Olympics."

Our news media's demand for scandal and political intrigue is in inverse proportion to the supply of sensational headlines that a country of five million can generate on a daily or even annual basis. But newspaper front pages and television and radio bulletins have to be filled with something.

Donald Trump whose relationship with the truth is as loose as a goose on quaaludes accidentally came close to speaking truth to power with his label "fake news". He would have been closer to the mark with "fabricated news" which covers a wide range of journalistic endeavour from opinion dressed up as analysis to outright prejudice masquerading as objective speculation.

Inevitably, to fill the vacuum created by the lack of reports about interesting events, journalists have resorted to writing about each other. Egos are extremely delicate in the creative writing space, making flattery much safer than honest criticism, highlighting the difference between elephants and sycophants: elephants are always in the middle of the room while sycophants are everywhere.

"Epic, compassionate and insightful" was the verdict of journalist Philip Matthews on Campbell's end-of-year column. "Jesus, that's generous, Philip," Campbell responded, "coming from someone who really knows how to write. Thank you." Eww.

The elephant in this room, though, as journalist Karl du Fresne pointed out, as Crown-owned TVNZ's chief correspondent, Campbell's "personal opinion is seen as carrying the weight of a major state media organisation which is supposed to be apolitical."

Back on the mountain, the scheduled time for the end of the world passes with Peter Cook observing that "It isn't quite the conflagration we'd been banking on. Never mind lads, same time tomorrow. We must get a winner one day."

continued from p 20

contributed to by people from all walks of life – bankers, businesses, funders, other community organisations, as well as those in debt. The course is so successful, with lasting impact, that it is now operating in other communities.

Another of the eight initiatives was in Ōpōtiki, an eastern Bay of Plenty town once considered one of New Zealand's most deprived communities with heavy unemployment.

Scientists discovered that its sea waters are suited for mussel farming. Local iwi Te Whakatōhea always suspected this and have led the creation of the mussel-farming business. The dream was to have mussels processed in Ōpōtiki, creating a sustainable seafood industry with permanent, all-year-round jobs for local people. A viable harbour was needed for this to happen. The joint leadership of Te Whakatōhea and the Ōpōtiki District Council has integrated iwi and community-led development approaches to empower their community's transformation.

The partners worked with businesses, regional council, government and many others to achieve the shared vision. Ōpōtiki's new \$100-million harbour entrance was opened in September 2023, setting the scene for the town to become the largest aquaculture centre in the country.

Mary-Jane says she is proud that the lessons from the eight initiatives has strongly influenced Inspiring Communities' ongoing advice and support. Inspiring Communities "has been significant in demonstrating the value and impact of locally led development, including responses to complex issues such as equity, climate change and economic development," Mary-Jane's ONZM citation says.

When she found out that she was being

honoured with an ONZM, she "was totally stunned," Mary-Jane says. "When I saw the email come through I thought it was my friends playing a joke."

"The greatest joy to me was the friends and colleagues that put the nomination together," she says. And my family have been amazing supporting my work over the years.

In between Women's Refuge and Inspiring Communities, Mary-Jane has contributed significantly even more widely.

She was the first policy director in the Ministry for Women, and first CEO of Citizens Advice Bureau, before consulting on social and organisational development.

"She is a respected consultant internationally, working on strengthening communities across the Pacific, Asia, Africa and Eastern Europe," the citation says. This included working with Women in Business Development in Samoa, strengthening village economies."

In a volunteer capacity she worked with the Tamil Nadu Women's Development Resource Centre supporting Dalit/untouchable women into small businesses and local government.

In 2022 she was a founding Trustee of He Puāwai with Kōkiri Marae, building locally led food resilience in the Hutt Valley. She has been involved with multiple aspects of adult and community education since the 1990s and has chaired REAP Aotearoa since 2015. A highlight of her contribution to education was establishing, and running for 10 years, the Dynamic Community Learning Awards.

Mary-Jane was influential in the establishment of international development agency UnionAID, serving on the Board from 2010 to 2022. She was also a founding trustee of Be.Lab, which has a vision of Aotearoa-NZ being fully accessible.

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Cnr Te Manuao Road/SH1
Tel: 364 8540
Service: 10am

PRESBYTERIAN
249 Mill Rd
Rev. Peter L. Jackson
Tel: 364 6346
Worship: 11am
Cafe Church:
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Acts Churches The HUB
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ŌSLSC: Have fun and stay safe in the water

BY SHELLY WARWICK



We have had some stunning warm weather this January at Ōtaki beach and this has seen high numbers of beachgoers swimming and enjoying this beautiful asset that nature provides. However there have been many rips and multiple rescues as well, both by our Surf Club lifeguards and the public. First we had a young child pulled from the water north of the boat ramp, by a member of the public outside of surf patrol hours. The child was unresponsive and needing to be attended to by paramedics before going to hospital.

There was also a rescue at the Karaka Street area of the beach (again outside of patrol hours) where volunteer lifeguards were alerted to a group of three caught in a rip and unable to get back to shore. Word was put out on the Surf Club group chat and while the initial volunteers were already in the water assisting along with members of the public, others were at the Club getting an IRB ready to attend. The Surf Club have initiated this chat group so that, if there are incidents outside of patrol hours, any lifeguards that are in the area and able to attend to help can do so.

There was also a five-person mass rescue out the front of the club on a weekend when the beach was patrolled by volunteers. All rescued from the water by our lifeguard team after being caught in a rip just north of the flags. The message from the Ōtaki

Surf Lifesaving Club is that our beach has a lot of rips, holes and strong currents, and even though it may look safe you need to be careful. If you are unsure how to read the water from rips, you can go to the Surf Lifesaving NZ website for information or have a chat to our lifeguards when they are on patrol and they will show you where the rips are.

There has been an awesome Regional Guard team patrolling during the weekdays this season. Lead by Patrol Captain Shea Lenaghan, the team includes Ella Gilpin, Harrison Bigwood, Daisy Braddock and Fraser Martin. The weekends have been patrolled voluntarily by groups of the Club's many members: lifeguards, patrol support and our very important rookies who will be the lifeguards of the future. This patrol season – a total of 1,222 hours as at 12 January – there have been 10 rescues.

Thank you for keeping our beach safe, dealing with lots of bluebottle stings and also for the rescues. The message from the Club is:

- Please swim between the flags.
- If in doubt stay out.
- If you see someone in trouble, ring 111.

top: Patrol Captain Shea Lenaghan (left) with Harrison Bigwood.
right: Ella Gilpin (left) and Daisy Braddock



Summer distance-riding events

BY PENELOPE HAINES

On 10 January, Ōtaki hosted this year's combined equestrian event again. While most New Zealanders were still relaxing after Christmas and New Year's feasting and festivities, a hardy group of riders and their mounts saddled up and rode out on a beautiful summer's day to compete in the various riding classes.

Ōtaki provides a unique experience for competitors. It is rare for a competition to be held so close to an urban area, and the

terrain covered in the ride is exceptionally varied. Of course, the proximity to Ōtaki town also made it easy for the general public to come and watch the fun, and it was lovely to see many visit the event to see the horses.

Distance Riding NZ (DRNZ) and Wellington Area Trail Riding Club (WATRC) offer distance-riding events, albeit with slightly different rules. The event of 10 January provided a range of



image: PJ Renshaw of Petapix

classes for all levels of experience: The shortest distance, 10kms was ideal for riders and horses new to the sport, while experienced rider/mount combinations chose distances ranging from 20, 30 and 40 km through to an entire, gruelling, 80kms.

The second year this event has been held and hosted at the Ōtaki Māori Racing Club grounds, followed much of the format of the inaugural event a year earlier. One difference added a new dimension: all competitors would finish their ride with a circuit of Ōtaki Racecourse! For many, this was the first time they'd ridden on a racetrack, and there was much excitement and nervousness about the phase. Ultimately, everyone enjoyed the experience enormously, and there was an excited buzz when the riders came home.

The Competitor's route ran along the banks of the Ōtaki River before climbing to the plateau and the hills behind Ōtaki. A total of 15 property owners had consented and opened their farms for this competition. It is impossible to underestimate farmers' generosity in this regard as they shifted stock away from the route, opened gates for easy access and altered their daily routines to accommodate the riders.

Competitors enjoyed unparalleled views over the greater Ōtaki and Horowhenua regions with a panorama of countryside to

enjoy. The weather was perfect, so riders could look across the township and plain to where the Ōtaki River enters the sea. In the distance, the South Island was clear, while to the North, Mt Ruapehu was visible early on, although a heat haze later hid it from view. The weather was kind and fine, although the temperature rose steadily.

A special mention must be made of those who helped make the day a success. Greg Bickerton of DRNZ, who initiated the event in 2023, returned to spearhead the organisation with Rachel Rolfs from WATRC. P J Renshaw of Petapix stood for hours by the racetrack, photographing riders as they passed.

Clubs run on volunteers, and everyone contributed to the day's success: marking the tracks; catering for volunteers; manning vetting rings; and working on start and finish lines. The enthusiastic feedback on social media afterwards showed how much competitors enjoyed themselves.

There is one sad postscript to this lovely day: Letitia Bonner's horse, Ru, who won the Introductory 20 Km WATRC class, was tragically involved in a paddock accident recently and had to be euthanised.

DRNZ and WATRC owe the Ōtaki Māori Racing Club an enormous debt for their generous support for this event.

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