

# *the* Ōākura Post

JULY 2025





# Kaitake Community Board

Listening to conversations around the district recently, there are three topics that seem to be on everyone's lips at present (over and above the perennial concerns with rate rises, and Council waste), those topics being the South Road/Devon Street West "TimTam Alley" protected cycleway, the Three Waters Service Delivery proposals, and the Water Meter Billing options.

While the New Plymouth District Council's protected cycleway initiative was touted as being designed to promote safer and more sustainable transport, it has ignited significant public backlash. While some residents have shown support for the Council's environmental goals upon which this cycleway base built, many argue the project has led to reduced parking, increased traffic congestion, increased emissions, impact on customer access and foot traffic for local businesses, and insufficient consultation with all affected communities.

When I highlight to the Chief Executive some of the concerns that had been brought to my attention regarding elements of design, I was informed that "an efficacy and safety audit will be conducted once the entire project has been completed, and any necessary changes will be made at that time." The one positive of this project is, reportedly, there wasn't any ratepayer money applied to the project, but whether that will be the same with any alteration work remains to be seen.

Your Community Board will continue to advocate for you by bringing these and any other of your concerns to Council's attention, but I do urge you to report any specific issues you may have identified directly, either in person at the front desk, by email, or on the Antenno App.

NPDC's water services delivery model is another flashpoint. The Council is currently weighing two main options that they gave the public to consider and comment on: continuing with an In-House Business Unit, or establishing a Council-Controlled Organisation (CCO)—either locally, or regionally in partnership with Stratford and South Taranaki District Councils.

The regional CCO model is the preferred option of the Taranaki Mayoral Forum, citing potential efficiencies and shared expertise. However this move has sparked concern among many residents and community groups, with key community reactions including:

- Loss of local control: Residents fear that a regional CCO would dilute New Plymouth's influence over water decisions, with governance shifting to a board that may not be directly accountable to local voters.
- Transparency concerns: Critics argue that CCOs, while technically council-owned, often operate with less public oversight than in-house departments.
- Equity issues: Some worry that a regional model could lead to uneven service levels or pricing across districts, especially if infrastructure needs differ significantly.
- Privatisation fears: Although CCOs are publicly owned, some residents see them as a step toward corporatisation or eventual privatisation of essential services.
- Long term debt implications: Concerns abound that this option is only being pursued because of the huge levels of borrowing that can be accessed by the CCO, and that will not impact on Council's ability to undertake further borrowing.

Despite these concerns, there are those who support the CCO model, believing it could bring professional management, economies of scale, and better long-term planning.

Regarding the water meter debate: Consultation was undertaken over the past month on how water should be billed once volumetric charging begins in July 2027.

#### The proposed billing options included:

1. Fixed charge + volumetric charge
2. Fixed charge + volumetric charge with a daily allocation (e.g. 100L per household)
3. Fully volumetric charge

You need to be aware that Council is also considering whether wastewater charges should be based on your metered water usage.

#### Other proposals under consideration include:

- Leakage remission policies, to help households manage unexpected costs.
- Support for vulnerable users, including potential new remission policies for renters, older age residents, and those with medical needs.
- Shared Meters, how to handle billing for properties with shared meters.

The shift to usage-based billing is considered to be a fairer and more sustainable model, given most households currently pay a fixed annual fee of \$547 for their water where many households use much less than that. However, there are genuine worries about affordability, especially for large families or those with limited incomes.

These are complex issues, and dealing with them while balancing fiscal responsibility, environmental sustainability, and community trust is proving to be challenging. When you read national media reporting, we are not alone in grappling with these and other social and infrastructure issues.

Councils and communities across the country have been scrambling to meet a looming deadline to set up new water services providers under threat of Government intervention, and they are also trying to deal with Central Government funding cuts and legislative U-turns and changes in policy direction in fiscally trying times. These are indeed interesting times we find ourselves in.

And on the subject of interesting times ahead, I will be hanging up my elected member Community Board hat for the next couple of months or so, and donning my Returned & Services Association cap, undertaking a tour across the top of the Mediterranean from Spain to Turkey to visit, to lay poppies, and to pay my respects at the many battle, burial and memorial sites in that part of the world. I have whanau buried at some of those sites, and it was a dream of mine throughout my military service career and beyond, to kneel at those particular graves to acknowledge their sacrifice.

The other members of the KCB will be taking up the slack during my absence, and I look forward to sharing my experiences on my return. And one final reminder before I sign off – Nominations to stand for the Kaitake Community Board, and for Council are open from the 4th of July through to 12 pm on the 1st of August.

Next meeting: Monday 21 July 5pm. Kaitake Community Sports Hub, Corbett Park, Ōākura.

**Graham Chard -**  
**Kaitake Community Board Chair**  
**thechardz@gmail.com 027 2204 549**

On behalf of Teresa Goodin, Renee Hohaia, Paul Lobb, and Cr Bryan Vickery



Bryan Vickery   Renee Hohaia   Paul Lobb   Graham Chard   Teresa Goodin

## David Macleod MP for New Plymouth

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(06) 759 2580  
37 Gill Street, New Plymouth

**Office hours:**  
Mon-Thu: 9am-3pm  
Fri: By appointment



I recently had the opportunity to join Health Minister Simeon Brown for a visit to the new East Wing Building at Taranaki Base Hospital in New Plymouth. It was great to see the progress firsthand. This is a project that matters to everyone in our region, including here in Ōākura. Minister Brown announced an extra \$59.2 million in funding to ensure stage two of the hospital upgrade is completed. This boost will help cover rising costs since 2022. The project remains on track, with stage two due for completion by the end of 2025 and the new facilities set to open in phases starting in April 2026.

We are also delivering cost of living relief for locals. More seniors in Ōākura and across Taranaki will now qualify for rates rebates, with up to 66,000 additional SuperGold Card holders set to benefit. For families, Working for Families payments are increasing for 142,000 households nationwide, and prescriptions will now last 12 months. That means fewer trips into town just to renew a script, saving both time and money.

Budget 2025 brings practical support for our tradies, small business owners, and farmers. The new Investment Boost initiative means 20 percent of the cost of new machinery, tools, or equipment can be deducted from taxable income. There is no cap on the value, and all businesses can benefit. I have already heard from local operators who are enthusiastic about what this means for their plans to expand or upgrade.

With news that New Zealand's gas supply is declining faster than expected, energy security is again front and centre. Taranaki has always been at the core of our country's energy industry. That is why we are investing \$200 million to take a Crown stake in new gas field

developments, restoring confidence after years of policy uncertainty. This will support our energy transition while keeping electricity affordable for households and businesses alike.

As always, please reach out if you need information or assistance. 06 759 2580 or david.macleodmp@parliament.govt.nz

Follow facebook.com/davidmacleodmp to see when I'm next in Ōākura and for my regular updates from our electorate.

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Steve Muller



Briar Atkinson



Kurt Smith

# Ōākura Bowling & Social Club

Ōākura players featured prominently throughout the Bowls Taranaki awards night culminating with Briar Atkinson taking out the Women's player of the year and Steve Muller the Administrator of the year. Kurt Smith and Adam Collins were also recognised for their great season with Smith taking out the National Para Pairs (trophy proudly on display at the club rooms) and both boys being members of the Paritutu team that won the National Interclub 7s. Well done to all the winners and especially to Stratford-Avon for being awarded Club of the year, a bench-mark and challenge for the Ōākura club to work towards.

The Ōākura club is looking forward to an exciting upcoming season with two new club concepts: (1) the restoration of women playing members and women club competitions and (2) the introduction of a MJ Marine Fishing Charters and Cruises sponsored community bowls tournament played over several Saturday afternoons throughout the early to middle part of the season. The Saturday competition will be open to all playing members, non-bowlers, friends and family and the wider community. The format will be 2 games of 1hr 15min triples with weekly team prizes and individual honours at the completion of the tournament. The beauty

of the competition is that there is no obligation or commitment to turn up each week. Just register by 1pm on the day and drawn teams will be selected. More details on dates and format to follow in the oncoming months. A big thanks must go to Barry Watkins for his generous sponsorship.

Two Ōākura teams are contesting the midweek interclub competition played at the Paritutu indoor stadium over winter. Last year's winners, Jim Priest, Allan Bridgeman, Roy Phillips, Ray Haslip and Rex Wright, are keen to go back-to-back while the Steve Muller skipped team of Pat Walklin, Wayne Gray, Rod Smith and Peter Radich are eager to press hard for the title. There are opportunities for bowlers to play every week day of the week at the stadium so no excuses for not enjoying this great game over the winter months.

The club is also in consultation and collaboration with local apparel supplier Tsunami for design and supply of new club uniforms. The brief for the design is surf, sun and the Kaitake ranges. We are all waiting with great anticipation for the final design.

Congratulations to Heather Lofthouse for organising and administrating the OBC (Oakura Bowling Club) Mahjong Group. I believe numbers are growing weekly so if you are keen or want to learn to play mahjong the group meet at the clubrooms on Mondays 1pm or contact Heather on 021617894.

*The underarm bowler*

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1 June - 31 July - In three words - a reading challenge for kids

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1 June - 31 July - Winter reading challenge

Pick up a bingo card from one of our librarians and challenge yourself to read something different. Fill in a line of your card for an entry into the prize draw. For teens and adults.

*Ōākura Library Team*

## Skytower climb fundraiser a huge sucess

Our Skytower stair climb team would like to thank the community for their support in helping us fundraise \$8,893 for Leukemia and Blood Cancer NZ. Overall a grand total of \$1,971,610 was raised from Firefighters all across NZ. Once again the event was a huge success and an exhilarating/nerve racking/exhausting get-a-way for the crew.

Unusually for this neck of the woods we've had to deal with a few serious fires recently so with winter approaching it's a great time to remember

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Kirsty, the author, reading her book *The promise of Puanga: a story for Matariki*.

to be firewise around the home. Ensure you've had your chimney swept for the winter, dry any washing at least a metre from the heater and be aware of any trees growing into power lines.

Lastly we'd also like to congratulate Mark Town who just completed his Station Officers course in Rotorua, scoring a perfect 4 from 4 assessment scenarios.

*The Ōākura Fire brigade*



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## Kaitake cameras reveal impact of sustained predator control

Dozens of cameras installed on the Kaitake Range in Taranaki are revealing the success stemming from five years of intensive predator control.

The western-most of three mountain ranges in Te Papa-Kura-o-Taranaki, Kaitake is the focus for a joint predator control programme involving the Department of Conservation (DOC), Taranaki Maunga Project, iwi and other community collaborators.

DOC Biodiversity Ranger Brandon Kingi says a comparison of images captured by the trail cameras dotted across the Kaitake shows a dramatic decrease in predators like possums, stoats and feral cats – and a notable increase in protected native species like kiwi, which have been successfully reintroduced to the area.

“We’ve seen a big fall in the number of feral cats caught on our cameras, which shows the 1080 operation has effectively controlled them,” says Brandon.

“Immediately after the operation in November last year, the number of cats detected dropped almost overnight -- from about 95 per cent of the cameras showing feral cats, to about 1 per cent.

“There was a similar result for stoats -- they were seen on our cameras before the operation, then they had almost vanished when we checked the cameras afterwards.”

The predator control methods used at Kaitake also include bait stations and leg-hold possum traps.

Brandon says keeping predator numbers down requires hard physical labour, carried out by staff from DOC and Taranaki Maunga Project, as well as volunteers and paid staff from iwi and community groups.

Brandon says the successful measured reduction of predators at Kaitake demonstrates how a trapping network extends the benefits from aerial operations by reducing predator reinvasion. There are also anecdotal observations of more birdlife across the range and a healthier forest.

“The camera data is another tangible measure that the hard work by kaimahi and volunteers removing predators and reintroducing kiwi is paying off,” says Sean Zieltjes, Taranaki Maunga Project Pou Whakahaere Taurua/Co-Project Director.



A kiwi, as photographed by one of the cameras in the network. Credit to DOC

Organisations contributing to predator control and species protection at Kaitake are Kaitake Conservation Ranges Trust, Ngā Mahanga a Tāiri hapu, environmental educators Te Ara Taio, and numerous schools. Taranaki Kiwi Trust, Sanctuary Mountain Maungatautari, Ngāti Koroki Kahukura and Save the Kiwi have all contributed to the return of kiwi to the maunga.

Invasive species are putting immense pressure on New Zealand’s ecosystems. Aotearoa has one of the highest rates of threatened species in the world – 4,000. Once our unique native species are gone, they are gone for good. The results at Kaitake demonstrate a small but important success in protecting native species.

## Kaitake Golf Club

Hi Everyone,

The nine hole blue pennant team came first in the pennants on a countback from Urenui while the nine-hole white team finished sixth. Congratulations to these teams. The weekend team finished fifth equal on six points. The Midweek Ladies finished on 3 points.

Quick Six Golf has now ended for the Season and many thanks to Nicola Avery from The Glassman with help from Chris Hill from Taranaki Golf. This was very successful, culminating in a Rules & Golf Etiquette evening. We will continue to support these ladies over the coming months and help them to move on to playing either 9 or 18 holes and obtain a handicap.

The Pink Ribbon Lunch fundraiser for Breast Cancer hosted by Kim Woodward was very successful and \$1281.00 was raised.

Ladies clubs champs are underway this month and the Men will be starting shortly.

Wonderful to see Kaitake on the Pennant Podium once again. Well done to the 9 Hole Blue team for winning this year's competition,



L-R ladies in photo of Kaitake Blue 9 Hole Pennant Team are Christine Alexander, Raewyn Bishop (C), Jeanette Maw, Julie Mills

Raewyn Bishop (C), Kaye Cavey, Christine Alexander, Jeannette Maw, Julie Mills and Jean Keegan. Also acknowledgements to the White team for almost making it, Angela Hitchman (C), Coraleen Le Breton, Margaret Mills, Margaret Green, Kay Stachurski and Heather Prouse.

For some history, Kaitake has featured many times not just as winners but also runners up since the competition started in 2001. The shield was made by Mr Bob Kay for the

Taranaki Women's 9 Hole Golf Pennant and presented by him and his wife Molly, stalwarts of the Inglewood Club. It took 10 years for Kaitake to feature on the shield but once they did, there was no stopping them. 2011, 2012, 2013, 2015, 2022, 2025. Congratulations to you all.

### CHIPPERS:

The Chippers has now finished and will resume again in Term 4. Information, please contact the office or Jamie on 022 6773663.

### TARANAKI VETS GOLF:

All golfers over the ripe old age of 50 may join the Taranaki Vets Golf. The sub for the year is \$15. Once a month a game is held at a golf club in Taranaki with an entry of \$10, Ladies and Men are welcome, Tee time is 9:30am over the winter. Come and enjoy a very good, cheap round of golf.

### NEW SECRETARY:

Lastly the Club wishes Denise Howe all the best in her retirement and hope she gets to play lots of golf. Denise has been our Secretary/Manager for approximately 8 years and we will miss her in the office.

Our new Secretary is Penny Holdcroft who is excited about taking on the new role.

## Indoor Bowls

The Central Division interclub has come to an end after six weeks of competition. Our team of Pat Walklin, Peter Anderson, Steve Muller and Allan Bridgeman won the 2nd Division after a strong performance winning 4 of the 6 nights. In a format that sees the teams playing fours, pairs and singles on any given night, the team played consistently well across all games, deserving their win and promotion to the first division.

In an early start to the North Taranaki champ of championships season our fours team (skipped by Jim Priest) went to Inglewood. In a knockout competition the team played well over two nights reaching the final against Norfolk. After some enterprising bowls by both teams it came down to the final two ends where Norfolk inched ahead to win. Congratulations to Jim, Bev Kirkby, Paul Bishop and Andy Marshall for the impressive result.

Our club champ triples was completed over three nights with some great bowls played throughout. The team of Grant L'Ami, Bev Kirkby and Paul Coxhead got through to the final with three wins and a draw. The final round robin meant any of the remaining four teams could reach the final. The game of the round was between Jim Priest and Pat Walklin; Jim dropped a six on the first end and then clawed back to 10 all with one end to play. It came down to the last bowls with Jim pinching the win and heading to the final. The final ended up being a one sided affair with Grant's team consistently playing better bowls. Still to come this season, includes the champ pairs and hotly contested champ singles.

**The President**

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# Caring like the coast: How the spirit of wartime Ōākura lives on in Abraham’s Funeral Home



Barried Head. Photo: Taryn Utiger

From his idyllic Ōākura childhood to a lifetime of service in funeral care, Barrie Head has always believed in the power of community. Barrie Head still cherishes his wonderful 1940s childhood in Ōākura.

“There really was no better place to grow up,” the 83-year-old says. “I often think about how lucky my sisters Lorraine, Jocelyn and I were to grow up in Ōākura. There were about 100 people in Ōākura, and none went without. Even during the war when things were tight, people in Ōākura were well fed because we looked out for one another. We had a big vegetable garden, local farmers shared their meat and the boys from the pa taught us how to find the best shellfish. We were a true community.”

Born in 1941, Barrie has carried that community spirit with him his entire life, including as a funeral director at the oldest family-owned funeral home in Taranaki, Abraham’s Funeral Home. Dedicated his life to helping others

is something that was instilled in him by his parents Charles and Mildred Head, who owned the Ōākura general store and post office from the 1930s to 1961. While Mildred was the postmistress, Barrie remembers it was his father Charles who delivered war telegrams to Ōākura families, informing them of deaths and injuries in battle. “That was an unenviable task, and one that required great care and compassion.”

As well as the role his parents played in the community, Barrie recalls his boyhood adventures in the Kaitake Range, tearing around on a horse and cart, exploring tunnels, and countless hours spent reading and playing at the river and the beach. “In my young hellion days, I was often at the beach when I was meant to be at Ōākura School or Ōkato College. No one seemed to mind, which is good because those long hot days at the beach were lovely. “One of my fondest memories would have to be the Christmas parties Tom McDonnell

used to throw at the pub. He would invite all the kids and we’d drink lemonade and eat so much cake we’d get sick. Then he’d send the kids home and the parents would come back and party.”

Barrie moved from Ōākura in his 20s, to work alongside his grandfather Willie Abraham at Abraham’s Funeral Home in New Plymouth. All these years later Abraham’s is still the funeral home of choice for many coastal families. “My grandfather, Willie, did a lot of the old funerals in Ōākura, and a lot of Māori funerals from around the coast. He had a good name for being kind and thoughtful, and when times were tough for the community, he’d forgo the funeral debt. “People haven’t forgotten that, and many Ōākura and coastal families continue to support us.” That enduring community support is one of the many reasons Abraham’s has remained proudly family-owned and operated for a hundred years.

At a time when many funeral homes across Aotearoa have been sold to overseas corporations, Abraham’s is proud to stand apart from the crowd. Not only is it the oldest family-run funeral home in the region, it is one of only two locally owned funeral homes in the district. With deep roots in Taranaki, Abraham’s has been caring for local families since the day it was founded by Barrie’s grandfather, Willie Abraham in 1924. Today it is in its fifth generation and led by Barrie, his daughters Bronwyn Macey and Megan Baker, and Megan’s husband Mark Baker. Together they blend time-honoured traditions with state-of-the-art practices, and combine their deeply held community ties with personalised care. Barrie says Abraham’s isn’t just a business, it’s his family’s commitment to its community.

“I believe in local communities supporting each other,” he says. “Just like we did in Ōākura when I was a boy.”

Taryn Utiger



The Head family owned the Ōākura general store and post office on the corner of Dixon St and South Rd. Left to right, Charles, Barrie, Lorraine, Jocelyn and Mildred Head.



As a youngster in Ōākura in the 1940s and 50s, Barrie Head’s favourite place was Ōākura beach.

## Bryan Vickery Kaitake Ngamōtu Ward Councillor



It was great to see Graham Chard and Tracey Lusk at the opening of the new bridge and walkway to protect the historic Hauranga Pā site near Ōākura. Coincidentally during the opening speeches two cyclists, as if choreographed, crossed the bridge. They dutifully got off their bikes, obeying the signs asking cyclists to push their bikes across the bridge. It will be interesting to see how many riders obey these signs. Will the breach be more common than the observance? The bridge is truly awesome and very sturdy.

The project, led by NPDC in close collaboration with mana whenua and Kaitake Community Board, focuses on Te Ara Tahuri Hau (pathway of wind changes) supported by a rock revetment protecting the wāhi tapu site and allowing access around the headland at high tide. It also includes a replacement for the footbridge over the Whenu Ariki Stream that was destroyed during ex-tropical Cyclone Dovi in 2022. The bridge and walkway cost about \$2

million, with about \$440k of funding from the NZ Transport Agency - Waka Kotahi.

I’ve been in plenty of controversy lately. I have very publicly withdrawn my support for the cycling separators on SH45. They are not working and are upsetting a lot of people, especially affected locals. I was raised to admit my mistakes, and to learn to fail fast. Time will tell, but I am predicting they will be removed in less than nine months.

Councillor Gordon Brown and myself were criticised recently for voicing our opposition to seabed mining in a Council committee meeting (chaired by Cr Brown) and for being photographed with protesters afterwards outside the Council chambers. I don’t recoil from my anti-seabed mining position and speech. However, in retrospect, it was an error of judgment being photographed with the protesters. I have been described as a pragmatic fence sitting councillor, but on this

occasion the fence was electrified. I was true to one’s convictions, and my position seems to be held by the majority of people.

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## Whenu Ariki Stream Bridge is open

Blessing is given by Keith Manukonga, left, pictured with Conrad Patterson and Nigel Wilson, both NPDC. Hauranga Pā, within the tribal area of Ngāti Tairi, was one of the largest pā in the Tataraimaka district. It holds deep cultural and historical significance to mana whenua, said Ngāti Tairi representative Keith Manukonga.

Watch out for a full article in next months edition of The Ōākura Post.



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## A Farewell to Val Deakin: 27 December 1935 - 23 May 2025

On Saturday 31 May a celebration of Val's life was held at the Val Deakin Dance Centre where Val had performed and taught dancers for many years. At the front of the room Val lay in a most exquisite basketry coffin laden atop with flowers. Filling the room to overflowing were friends, former students, appreciative parents and others of the very many whose lives were touched and enriched by Val.

Guests were encouraged to wear bright clothes to go with Val's sense of colour. There was far more laughter than tears, but there was both. Val's loveable fluffy, white dog, Puppeteer, was present and whimpered from time to time. Stories were told by Jane Roseman and also by Claire Trowbridge, a lifelong friend of Val's since childhood. A photo montage of Val's life and a performance of one of her dances gave more insights into this remarkable woman. At the end as we filed out of the building,

one couldn't help but carry away thoughts and feelings about how extraordinary the life of Val Deakin was.

Val lived in Ōākura and has been buried at the Ōākura Cemetery. She was our very own treasure, and her loved best friend Jane Roseman continues to carry on Val's work.

Previous articles about Val Deakin have been published in The Ōākura Post in June 2023 and October 2023.

Read online [www.theoakurapost.co.nz](http://www.theoakurapost.co.nz)

Elayne Kessler



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**GIRAFFES CAN'T DANCE**



8 - 17 AUG 2025  
[ValDeakinDance.org.nz](http://ValDeakinDance.org.nz)



## Exciting new Production of Giraffes Can't Dance

**At the Val Deakin Dance Centre  
August 8-17**

The much-loved story Giraffes Can't Dance is coming to life in an exciting new production at the Val Deakin Dance Centre this August! Performances will run from August 8 to 17, but be quick—some shows are already sold out!

Follow the heartwarming journey of Gerald, an awkward and ungainly giraffe who longs to join the jungle dance. While the other animals—waltzing warthogs, rock 'n' rolling rhinos, cha-cha dancing chimps, tangoing lions, and even reel-dancing baboons—show off their moves, Gerald feels left out. But with encouragement from a wise and friendly cricket, Gerald discovers his own rhythm and learns to dance in his own special way.

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# What’s Happening at the Rivermouth Hub?

Join the Team

Seven local clubs now call the Rivermouth Hub at Corbett Park home, and we would love your support in helping us provide facilities for our sports clubs, our community and especially our kids. There are many ways to support the hub – from a social membership that allows you to bring your guests and enjoy some refreshments in the amazing beachfront setting....to donating as a community supporter or corporate sponsor to help keep this valued community asset up and running, as well as keep it free for kids. Head to our website [www.kcsh.co.nz](http://www.kcsh.co.nz) to check out the options.

Tsunami Sports Kaitake Netball Club

The netball season is well and truly underway, and the Kaitake Netball Club (KNC) is buzzing with excitement! This year, we’re thrilled to welcome R & Co as our newest silver sponsor. Their backing is a great boost for our club.

We’re also celebrating the return of our valued sponsors Craig’s Investments (Silver) and Tsunami Sports (Gold) - we’re feeling well-supported for the season ahead. A special shout-out to Tsunami Sports for providing our fresh new hoodie design—a massive hit among the players!

It’s been a strong start for our five teams, with three senior squads and two youth teams hitting the Waiwhakaiho courts each Saturday. In the Seniors the Diamonds (Section 1) are sitting 3rd equal, Tūi (Section 2) are also in 3rd, Kererū (Section 9) are flying high at 2nd, while our youth teams Electric (Section 3) are 3rd after three games and Sparks (Section 5) are also 3rd on their table.

KNC hosted an Umpire/Rules session on the 18th May which was a great opportunity for players of all ages to come together and learn more about the rules and how to umpire. A big thanks to Zoe Hall for running this session for us.



The Kererū team is fundraising and will be cooking up a storm in the Mitre 10 BBQ at Waiwhakaiho on July 27th, so if you happen to see them, buy a sausage and support the Tsunami Sports Kaitake Netball Club.

If you're eager to give netball a go, why not come along to our fun Sunday Sessions? Every Sunday at 3pm at Ōākura School netball courts we host casual, friendly netball meetups, open to all ages and skill levels. It's the perfect way to get active, meet new people, and feel part of our awesome sporting community. Here's to an unforgettable 2025 season! Go Kaitake!

Taranaki Bulls Kids Day at the Hub: Sunday 27th July



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## ŌākuraHomeSewn

Local lady Keryn has come up with a wonderful way to channel her passion for sewing to benefit the Ōākura community. The idea came to her when she began sewing for her grandchildren and has grown with the pile of garments she has already put together. Aimed at practical, warm and super cute styles for toddlers through to 6/7 year olds, her creative flair is obvious - tights, tutus, headbands and sweatshirts sporting unicorns, sparkles and rainbows. Boys pyjamas featuring Bluey, Hot Wheels and jungle animals made me wish I still had littlies to buy for. All money raised goes to a local charity you can choose from Keryn's list of five worthy causes. Look out for the sign at 93 Messenger Terrace on Sunday mornings if you want to take a look.

## Seed Bank

There is now a seed bank in the village. At Crafty Fox Co-op in The Village Mews you can: Collect seed packets and leave a donation; If you have seed, add it to the seed bank.  
**Contact:** [seedsavers.taranaki@gmail.com](mailto:seedsavers.taranaki@gmail.com)

## Pride Taranaki events happening in Ōākura.

13 July: Walking Group 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM @ Entrance to Washer Road, Tapuae. 13 July: Coffee Group 11.00 AM - 12noon at Dawn Cafe.  
[pridetaranaki2023@gmail.com](mailto:pridetaranaki2023@gmail.com)

# Ōākura Tennis Club

Ōākura Tennis Club's Juniors had another great season with three Junior Interclub teams who all competed strongly across the entire season.

The Division 1 Youth team of Angus Thorpe, Ana Shlosberg, Noah Stanley, Aidan Peacock and Janick Whipper performed very strongly, week in, week out, throughout the season to make the grand final. The final itself was amazing to watch, with several really close matches that ended up going our way. In the end the team won by dominant score of 5-1 against a Rotokare team who have won the competition for the last few years and hadn't lost a tie in that time. It really showed how far our rangatahi (young people) have developed in terms of technical ability and determination.



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## Great Taranaki Sausage Search

Oakura Meat Co. crowned the winning sausage in this competition with a celebration at Butlers Reef in June. Vaughan, butcher and store owner, said the whole competition had gone really well. "It created a lot of chit chat and engagement with the community. People really got on board with it. What was interesting was that the combined votes from the shop and Butlers Reef was a three way tie between the finalists -we had to go to the online votes to decide the winner". And the winner was The Taranaki Moana Banger, a combination of Taranaki pork, minced paua, diced mussel and lemon zest. Not the one I voted for - but everyone to their own sausage ! This crowd pleaser is headed for the New Zealand sausage of the year competition. Well done Toni (sausage designer) and Vaughan and Stacey of Oakura Meat Co.

## Serial Griller

Serial Griller at the carriage served it's last burgers in June, but they're still in town. This excerpt from their Facebook "We are tired and needed to give something up. In our opinion our New Plymouth store is the one to focus on. While we are sad to let our community and staff down, we know that they will understand that our family needs to come first. We hope that you will still support us in town. Thank you so much for the support you have given us over the years. We love being a part of this community. Vouchers will still be valid at the NP store".



# Woolly Nightshade Invasion

Many locals are alarmed at the explosive rise of toxic woolly nightshade on the roadsides and nature reserves. And with good reason. This rapidly spreading South American invader is a real threat to our walkways and also to your health.

Woolly nightshade is highly allelopathic which means it releases toxins to prevent the regeneration of native plants. The hairs blown from its furry leaves will also irritate your skin, eyes, and lungs. This tree not only ruins our efforts to create recreation walkways but can also render them unhealthy to use.

Woolly nightshade invaded the Ōākura Coast Trail five years ago but it took three years of concentrated effort to finally eradicate it by pulling out the many hundreds of smaller trees and, more recently, locating and killing the nearby parent trees whose berries were causing the local spread. What we learned is that mass infestations can be arrested but require a coordinated and focused effort.

The explosive epidemic of this toxic invader in Ōākura is a 'perfect storm' resulting from two coincidental events. Firstly, woolly nightshade used to be controlled by TRC under their Regional Pest Management Plan but for funding reasons it has been removed from the targeted species which totally slipped under the radar of public awareness. Secondly, the local pest trapping programme has produced a welcome increase of the bird population who spread the yummy yellow berries to the places they roost at night.

Woolly nightshade has thereby become the major obstacle in establishing and retaining our local nature reserves. Unlike gorse, which is eventually outgrown and killed by the shade of native trees, woolly nightshade poisons and rapidly outgrows the natives to completely dominate the whole area. To avoid this disastrous outcome, the native trees must be planted more densely followed by a programme of regular weeding. The consequences of not doing this is evidenced by the gullies between the QE2 reserve (upper

Wairau Rd) and the unplanted Lucys Gully which have now become so infested with woolly nightshade as to be visible on Google Earth. Birds are now spreading the berries from these areas to the subdivisions and reserves of lower Ōākura.

We should not forget that Ōākura was once a treeless farm-scape with a coastal fringe dominated by gorse and boxthorn. Its unique leafy theme is not by default or accident but by intervention - an ongoing programme of progressively displacing noxious species with natives. Both TRC and Biosecurity Taranaki are advocating local awareness (hence this article) and proactive intervention as our only realistic chance of fixing this problem. Clearly, it's all up to us.

Specifically, this means forming tiny task groups to identify the location of the plants and eradicating them. We've found that teams of two work well. It's a good way of catching up with a buddy when you can't go fishing or surfing.

Do not slash the branches or spray with Roundup, as they will grow back even stronger and damage surrounding natives. Plants up to one metre high can be pulled out easily. Otherwise, poison the trunk as low as possible using Picloram (the active ingredient in

Brushkiller and "Cut n Paste" weed gel). For smaller trees, cut the stump with a handsaw and cover with "Cut n Paste" gel. For larger trees, drill 10mm holes spaced every 100 mm around the trunk at downward angle and inject with a 20:1 Brushkiller or 5:1 Glyphosate mix. Use a drench gun and pack combo. Otherwise, ringbarking downwards with a machete and squirting the cleft using a spray bottle does work but must be done thoroughly to avoid regrowth. Whether pulling out the young ones or poisoning the large ones, we prefer to leave them in situ to decompose (shaking or relocating them will release the irritants).

Every tree you see flowering will multiply tenfold next year so we need to act right now. Tackle your own property first, then wherever else you can gain access. Because this method is highly focused, it is not a threat to surrounding vegetation or nearby organic farming.

In the longer term, if you think Taranaki Regional Council should resume a leading role in the control of Woolly nightshade they have advised that you can submit opinions when the Strategy and RPMP come up for review in the next year or two.

Clive Neeson



Pictured - Woolly Nightshade

Fay Looney - Starling Murmurations. The Oakura Post, June 2025, page 6.

Correction to contact details: ▶ [faylooney@xtra.co.nz](mailto:faylooney@xtra.co.nz)





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# Ōmata Book-Swap

We need skills and supplies, can you help?

The student leaders at Ōmata School are launching an exciting new children's book exchange initiative to encourage reading. They are setting up a fantastic community book house where children can leave a book they've finished and pick up a new one to read. The goal is to further develop a strong reading culture and give everyone the chance to discover new stories.

The book exchange house will feature a creative design and we are hoping to get the support and skills of our community to bring this project to life. Our aim is to get Ōmata children more excited about reading than ever!

While we already have the ideas for the design, we're now looking for builders, artists, carpenters, engineers, or anyone else willing to lend a hand. If anyone has spare supplies—like plywood, off cuts of colour steel, or other useful materials for building the book house

we would really appreciate your support! . If you would like to offer help with supplies or skill please email office@omata.school.nz

**Bella, Piper, Noah and Blake**

## Coming Up July

- 14 Term 3 begins
- 17 Y7/8 Indoor Bowls
- 28-31 Y7/8 Science and Tech Fair

## August

- 7 Y6 Amazing Race at Oakura
- 8 Y7 to LEAD Conference
- 13 3D Conferences
- 14 3D Conferences

## From Muesli Belts to Chia Seed Chic

Back in the 80s and 90s, a dietary trend for parents turned up coined the 'muesli-belt'. My mum would call them alternative lifestylers, (others called them hippies) and health conscious middle class parents fed their children so many wholegrain, taking healthy eating to such an extent, that their children became malnourished. No doubt pockets of it appeared in Aotearoa then too. I'm noticing a similar trend lately I might call a 'quinoa cool' or 'chia seed chic'.

Parents are making chia puddings for their babies for breakfast. They may as well be feeding them a bulk forming laxative and saying there you go, that'll do you for the morning. I asked one mum who seemed otherwise sensible why she was doing it and she said because it was on TikTok.

Recently I spoke to the mum of a small child who was basically apologising for feeding her kid pasta. I wanted to say FFS, who told you that was bad! It made the consult easy though, just about all I needed to say was let him eat plenty of pasta and she was happy. I did of course check he covered the food groups well enough to meet protein and macronutrient requirements, and no issue, he did.

It's a recurring them in my consults especially with underweight toddlers and teens, but also with selective eaters likely to be a bit neuro diverse or "neuro spicy", as a few mums have told me they prefer to call their kids, as well as kids whose diets are already restricted with allergies.

When you're little, your gut system is a bit immature. This means your teeth might not be so good at chewing up veggies and grains and if you even have teeth and your stomach doesn't do such an efficient acid rinse cycle to get food into small enough particles to let your digestive juices work on the food so the small molecules can absorb

through a fairly sturdy gut barrier. It's not fibre they're getting energy from, it's good old plain starchy carbohydrates that provide clean, readily available slow release glucose fuel for muscles and brain to function properly.

When you're bigger and still growing, you continue to need starchy carbs as fuel energy for that crazy amount of exercise, activity and learning kids do, especially for the tween and teen stage where bodies should go out a bit, in preparation the going up. Early teens can grow up to 10-11 cm per year in the tallest kids. It's a massive amount of body building!

Try matching your busy kid one day, step for step, do all the bouncing around and the concentration studying without a bowl of cereal, a pile of sandwiches or large plate of pasta at 3x a day.

I'm also always describing the 'protein sparing' usefulness of starchy carbs to parents. If you don't have enough carbs, your body uses protein for energy, making protein not available for building muscles and bone structure before calcium hardens the bones, ensuring kids meet their maximum potential for growth and strength to stand them in good stead as adults.

Are you often arguing or wrestling with a hangry kid or always looking for sweet treats, sneaking lollies or spending all their pocket money on energy drinks? Prime them with bulk carbs and you might be surprised at their change in temperament. Good energy carbs include piles of sandwiches, toast, bread buns, still best to be wholemeal, rice, pasta, mash or roast kumara or potato. You can't overfeed busy kids on these. Kids are generally better than adults at stopping when they've had enough. They can though have too much sweet, nutrient poor carbs.

Feed yourself the quinoa or chia seeds and pile on the carbs for your busy growing netballers, football players, wannabe surfer dudes, cyclists, swimmers, surf life savers and babies. Their healthy, strong bodies will eventually thank you for it!

**Rosemary Law, registered dietician**

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# Ōākura School

A busy month it has been, collecting flax, rocks, wood and other materials for the Ōākura School Hangi. Students have been working on Puanga projects for the event, creating videos, posters, stories, weavings and much more. Our art leaders painted a huge mural that was hung in the food hall. We had more than 500 people join us on the day and a massive feast ensued.

Earlier this month, we had a group of juniors visit The Junction to learn about rubbish and how mishandling it can affect the planet. Students went in groups over a few days and learned all about the importance of recycling the correct things and putting all of their other trash in the bin.

For the past few weeks, our Kiri team has been learning all about the Great Pacific Garbage Patch and how it was formed. Students said that the great pacific garbage patch is the biggest garbage patch in the world and holds almost 2 trillion pieces of plastic. They are also learning about the importance of putting their rubbish in the correct bins.

**Written by Jesse Tscheuschler, Heath Reyes-Lam**

Photos by Jesse Tscheuschler showing preparation for the hangi and the mural that was created for the food hall.

16 the Ōākura Post

the Ōākura Post 17





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*Reggie Emans*


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# TOP Activities

## Ōākura

**Ōākura Hall Bookings**  
Vicky Jury 027 215 2465

**Art Classes - 1-12 yrs**  
Messy + sensory playgroups, after-school art classes, workshops. Process over product, always. Booking essential. Contact Franzl at [imagineplayinspire@gmail.com](mailto:imagineplayinspire@gmail.com)

**Bowling and Social Club**  
Bowling tournaments September through to April. Both mid-week and weekend games. Steve Muller 021 169 5863

**Oakura Bowling Club Mahjong Group**  
We meet each Monday from 1pm at the club. All welcome including beginners. For more information contact Heather 021617894

**Dancing in the Dark**  
Glenys Farrant 027 753 0120

**Golf - Practice net**  
Non members welcome. Clubs and balls can be supplied. \$5.00 WEDNESDAYS. Casual competition for non-members. 8am to 1pm open to everyone. Denise 752 7665

**Indoor Bowls**  
Enquiries to Marvin Clough 752 7531

**JKA Karate** - Jim Hoskin 752 7337

**Justice of the Peace** - Lynn, Anne, John, Krys. Ōākura Library Thurs 10am-12.30pm.

**Kaitake Ranges Conservation Trust**  
Pete Morgan 027 372 5182  
[morgpt@xtra.co.nz](mailto:morgpt@xtra.co.nz)

**Kaitake Social Netball** - Sundays 3pm during Term 2 & 3 Oakura School Netball Courts Contact Jenna 027 489 4929.

**Morning Talk - coffee group**  
Thursdays 10-11am at NPOB Surf Club. Free tea/coffee. Tracey Lusk 752 7875

**'Move it or Lose it' - Strength and Balance Fitness Classe** - Ōākura Hall, Wednesdays and Fridays 9.30am. Contact Gloria Zimmerman 027 284 9111

**Mini Groovers - Music Group**  
All parents welcome with babies/under 5's. Every Tues during term time 10-11am at the Ōākura Hall. Visit their Facebook page: Mini Groovers - Ōākura.

**Ōākura Maimoa Club - after school care**  
Monday to Thursday 3pm to 5.30pm  
Bookings essential through Facebook @oakuramaimoaclub or by text to 022 323 7210

**Ōākura Crop Swap** - 3rd Saturday 3-4pm Ōākura Village Hall. Contact Adam Harris [adam@frankandfearless.com](mailto:adam@frankandfearless.com)

**Ōākura Walking Talking Group**  
Every Monday 10am. Meet in the carpark next to the skatepark on Messenger Tce. Phone Mae 027 314 2995 or just turn up.

**Pickleball Ōākura**  
Ōākura Hall - Tues 9.15am, Wed 7.30pm, Thurs 9.15am. All skill levels welcome and equipment is provided. Elayne 027 937 7173 or Vincenza 027 739 6574

**Playcentre**  
14 Donnelly St. Sessions run Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays 9am - noon during school terms. [oakura@playcentre.org.nz](mailto:oakura@playcentre.org.nz)

**Pony Club** Tracey Mackenzie 027 319 0238 [traceymackkyle@gmail.com](mailto:traceymackkyle@gmail.com)

**Pool Club** - Meets every Wednesday night 7pm over winter commencing April at Butlers Reef. All welcome. For more info call Margaret 027 232 1899

**Probus Club** - Meets once a month at Ōākura Bowling club rooms on the 3rd Friday of every month 10-11.30am. Contact Brenda Ryan 757 3537 or 027 748 9698

**Running for Kids** - TempoFit Kids breakfast run club every Friday 8am before school at Ōākura Hall, 8-13yrs. Hayden Shearman 027 483 5942 [tempofit.org](http://tempofit.org)

**St James Church** - Sunday Service every 2nd and 4th Sunday of each month, 10am

**Strength & Balance** - Ōākura Hall, in the supper room (school term only). Monday 10:30. Jane 06 752 7743

**Sunday School - St James Church**  
Every 2nd and 4th Sunday 10am. [stjamesoakura@gmail.com](mailto:stjamesoakura@gmail.com)

**Surf Lessons** - Deken Waves Surf Coaching. Group & Private sessions available. Contact Simon: 021 122 9525 [dekenwaves@gmail.com](mailto:dekenwaves@gmail.com)

**Te Reo Māori Lessons**  
Toni 021 661 912 [thowison@hotmail.com](mailto:thowison@hotmail.com)

**Tennis Club** - Coaching for all ages and levels. Enquiries - Jackie 027 673 2900

**The Coastal Dippers** - Mon-Fri 7.00am, Sat & Sun 8.00am. Turn up in front of the Surf Club for a quick sea dip. Facebook or Kama 027 769 1101

**Tai Chi Classes**  
Every Monday 9-10am at Ōākura Hall. Judi 027 268 2601. Just come along or contact: [taranakitachichuan@gmail.com](mailto:taranakitachichuan@gmail.com)

**Val Deakin Dance School - Ōākura Hall**  
Adult ballet class on a Friday morning at 9:15am, ask us about adult Tap classes. [val@valdeakindance.org.nz](mailto:val@valdeakindance.org.nz) 752 7743 or text 027 694 0933

## Tataraimaka Hall

**5 Elements Fitness Bootcamps and Kickboxing Fitness classes**  
Monday to Thursday 5-6 pm, Barney 027 752 7076 [barney@5efitness.com](mailto:barney@5efitness.com) or visit [www.5efitness.com](http://www.5efitness.com)

**Gymnastics Group for children - 5-7 yrs**  
Tuesdays after school at the Tataraimaka Hall for basic level gymnastics sessions. Rose at [rosem@realfoodnutrition.co.nz](mailto:rosem@realfoodnutrition.co.nz)

## Okato

**Okato Community Church meeting**  
At Hempton Hall on Sunday mornings 10.30am - all welcome.  
Contact Nicky 027 497 3764

**Okato and District Historical Society**  
Meg Cardiff 752 4566

**Okato Lions Club** - Contact Colin Tyler 027 5421853 - Meet at Hempton Hall first Wed of the month.

**Okato Squash Club** - Monday nights from 6.30pm. All welcome. Ladies morning begins Term 2 - Wednesdays 10.00 - 11am. Rachel 020 4092 5243

**St. Patrick's Catholic Church** - Saturday Vigil Mass @ 6pm. 36 Cumming Street.

**Okato St. Paul's** - Sunday Service every 1st and 3rd Sunday of each month, 10.00am

**Mid-week open church** - Pew for You, every 3rd Wednesday of each month, 4.30pm-6.00pm, [okatocp@gmail.com](mailto:okatocp@gmail.com)

**Te Ruru Market** - crafters, growers and makers. Wednesdays, Hempton Hall, Okato, 3-4:30pm

**Ōkato Tennis Club** [okatotennis@gmail.com](mailto:okatotennis@gmail.com)

# TOP Information

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Founded in Ōākura, NZ - 1st June 2020

ISSUE: No. 56 **August Issue**

Delivered and online 25 July

Articles & advertising bookings 7 July.

Views expressed in The Ōākura Post are not necessarily those of the The Ōākura Post

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# Stories of the Past

As shared by Len Jury

## What is blue, circular and can be seen every day?



The blue towers, haylage silos just down Plymouth Road at Ōmata. These silos have the brand name 'Harvestors', and the parts are manufactured in USA.

The silos were built for David Morris on the Morris farms, Ōmata, the first in 1978. They were erected by the Howard Building Company of England. David, with a wry smile, tells the story of the English engineer, David Harry, who was working to exact precision and a very tight deadline. To all on the project his name became David Hurry. David was told in the early days of the Morris towers, 20% of milk supplied to New Plymouth was from his farm.

The first silo was erected very near 50 years ago and the second 40 years ago, so long ago they have become a part of the Ōmata/Coastal landscape. The first one is 75 Feet (approx. 23 metres tall) and 5 metres in diameter. The second one is almost the same height is half the size. A third tower at Hamilton, was dismantled by David and his sister Maree, by using internal jacks and taking off one sheet at a time, removing many thousands of bolts.

The haylage is 50% dry matter grass chopped into 13mm lengths. It is blown to the top of the silos through an outside tube about 25cm in diameter. Picture an aircraft engine and the force of wind when the plane is taking off to gain an insight into the power required. David assures me, however, the force is much less than that!

The silo consists of steel sheets with a layer of cobalt coloured glass fused together on the outside and inside. It is held together by thousands of specially made bolts 50mm apart. To keep the tower airtight there is a membrane or mastic between the sheets completely sealing off any potential leaks that may occur as the sheets expand and contract during the day.

To cope with the pressure caused by the expansion of gas from the maturing and stored haylage, two big airbags are hung from the roof inside the silo, with a tube to the outside air. In the heat of the day the airbags are squashed and conversely at night the cool air is sucked in, hence no adverse pressure from inside the structure.

To remove the haylage there is an unloader which spins around from a centre point on the floor. Under the unloader there is a channel in which the haylage is moved along like a conveyor belt to the feed troughs. The cost of the unloader in 1978 was \$80,000.

Glass fused onto steel was first used making beer tankers in the United States. In New Zealand silos are only viable now on farms with a large milk quota. For smaller farms the ongoing costs of maintenance, upgrading equipment, labour and no guaranteed quota or payout smaller quotas make the silos uneconomic.

The first Harvestor silo in Taranaki was built by well-known contractor at that time, Lou Stonnell, on his farm at Lepperton. Lou was also involved in the construction of the first Morris silo.

What about the effect on the silos of high winds, tornadoes or earthquakes? For the largest silo there is a base of 200 tonnes of concrete (\*see Hawera water tower footnote) and when full the silo itself weighs another 900 tonnes. Unlike tall buildings, being circular there are no corners, windows or roof to catch winds and cause catastrophic damage.

My grateful thanks to David Morris. This article is written with assistance and information kindly supplied by David.

\*An earthquake affected tower in Taranaki was the Hawera water tower during construction in 1914. This leaning tower was corrected using "bags" filled slowly with water and then rebuilding and reinforcing the base. Taranaki ingenuity was claimed!