

*Yvonne
Hildred*

HEADING
TOWARDS
A CENTURY

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HOW TO
VOTE
pg 10

the Ōākura Post

OCTOBER 2025

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SOPHIE SONGBIRD

– Topless Picking Flowers at Dawn Thursday 2nd October.

Dawn is the first date on tour for Sophie Songbird as she makes her solo debut this spring. Known for her work with beloved Aotearoa band Dr.Reknaw, Sophie's stepping into the spotlight with a voice and vision all her own. Her unique sound—equal parts nostalgic and

refreshingly modern, drawing from jazz, blues and country with a splash of psychedelic flair. Her songs carry warmth, wit, and a sprinkling of mischief. On stage, Sophie is magnetic—her honey-toned vocals and rhythmic guitar work to create a rich, intimate atmosphere.

"Writing and performing this music brings me immense joy," she says. It's a shift from the styles I've immersed myself in over the past several years, and returning to just me and my guitar feels like a refreshing homecoming. The spirit of the music is lighthearted and playful, and I'm excited to see how people connect with it."

Her first single, 'Topless Picking Flowers' out September 19, is a dreamy fusion of classic country charm and smooth Hawaiian tones. The track and music video offer a playful, tender ode to nature, joy, and freedom and has been inspired by euphoric afternoons spent gardening under the Taranaki sun..

For the Dawn gig, Wayne Manson will be opening. Wayne is an accomplished guitarist specialising in blues with a jazzy feel. Wayne is a regular performer at the NP Singer/Songwriters nights and has supported a lot of NZ artists over the years, including Turkey the Bird, Marlon Williams, Delaney Davidson, and heaps of blues artists.

I asked Sophie a little more about her gig in Ōākura. "Dawn is the only venue in Taranaki for your tour, How did you decide on this venue?"

"It's such a beautiful space and I think the acoustics will be perfect for my sound, and the people there are wonderful. I think it's gonna be a dream gig."

Tickets sales only available at undertheradar.co.nz

If you miss Sophie Songbird at Dawn you can catch her around the country with one-night only dates in Raglan, Auckland, Nelson, Levin, Raumati, Wellington, Mt Maunganui and Waihi.

2 October Dawn Ōākura
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Tracey Lusk

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Gardens Galore

Now is the time to start planning for the upcoming Centuria Taranaki Garden Festival. This annual event attracts thousands of garden enthusiasts from around New Zealand every year. But it's not only admiring beautiful gardens, there are numerous events ranging from educational sessions on growing bananas, propagation, wellness power bowl demonstrations and music in the garden (featuring music group La Mer – spot the locals!). Garden entry tickets and further information are available from the Taranaki Arts Festival Trust and other outlets. Visit www.gardenfest.co.nz for further information or pick up a booklet from the library or i-SITE at Puke Ariki. The festival runs from the 31 October to 9 November so get booked in for any events that appeal.

Running at the same time, the Taranaki Fringe Garden Festival offers "real gardens for real people" aimed at inspiring and sharing knowledge around achievable practical gardens. A standard \$2 charge at the gate makes these affordable and accessible to many. Visit www.taranakigardens.co.nz for more information.

Sustainable Trails

You can also enjoy the Sustainable Trails Backyards Festival on the same dates, followed by the Builds and Farms Festival from the

10 to 16 November. There are a number of guest speakers sharing their knowledge across permaculture, seed saving, and encouraging good insects in your garden. There is also quite a range of activities designed for children under 12 along with standard garden visits .

Builds and Farm events feature electric orchardist Mike Casey advising on how to reduce your bills and emissions by electrifying your farm or whare, affordable design builds, a butchery demonstration on how to break down a whole animal, and tiny home tours. What a range!

Visit trails@sustainabletaranaki.org.nz for more info.

Taranaki Arts Trail

This coincides with the Taranaki Garden Festival and features numerous artists from around the mountain who open their studios to display their art - paintings, sculpture, ceramics and jewellery are amongst the range of items to view. This year For Fossils Sake (featured in the September Ōākura Post) is also opening their museum doors to the public.

Look out for the orange open studio flags or visit tarankiartstrail.co.nz to find out more.

All of these events feature some very talented and creative locals. No-one could say there's nothing to do in Taranaki. Get out, get round and while you are doing it support our fabulous cafes and food outlets.

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Bryan Vickery

Kaitake Ngamōtu Ward Councillor



BV media

This is a difficult column to write. Why? As I write this I don't know the results of the local body elections. In all probability I will be narrowly reelected, and Graham Chard will be emphatically voted onto a council, but he won't win the mayoralty. He has consistently been the best speaker in the mayoral debates, but has not made the headlines.

The key issue in this election is reining in rates without putting a wrecking ball through all the good work of Council. Mayoral aspirant Max Brough advocates voluntary rate caps. Cr Brough argues that some capital projects, such as the extension of the Coastal Walkway to Waitara and the different stages of the \$50m Active Community Sports Hub should be paused and potentially rescoped to find savings. He argues that historically NPDC capital projects have carried too much contingency budgets (sometimes 30 percent) and the oversight and delivery of these projects has been poor. The designs tend to be gold plated, when a basic plan would do.

By contrast Mayoral aspirant David Bublitz, the favourite to win the mayoralty (unless Sarah Lucas steals the mayoralty) favours the status quo. He is opposed to rate caps and is confident the Chief Executive will find additional savings through further restructuring and efficiencies. In my opinion, he's dreaming. I favour an overhaul of the rating system and the scrapping of land based rates, and the implementation of a capital rates system.

I would describe myself as a pragmatic, positive councillor. But I have always respected Max Brough's dedication to fiscal restraint. My voting record is more inline with David Bublitz. However, the council needs to do things differently or we will have another year of double digit rate increases. Ideally I like the leadership style and values of Sarah Lucas, but in the short term the pragmatic fiscal restraint of Max Brough.

Whatever the outcome of the election, it has been a real blast to serve you and to champion your wonderful community. I am grateful.

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Meet an Inspiring Teenager, Helena Rollins

Start by telling us a little about yourself.

I'm 17 years old and go to NPGH where I'm in my last year of school. I was born in San Francisco and have lived in Ōākura since I was about 4 years old. I went to Ōākura primary school and Devon Intermediate.

I like taking my dog Allie for a walk - especially to the beach. Allie is a chocolate Lab I've had since I was 8 years old.

My main interests are singing, dancing and acting.

What have you been doing around those interests?

I've been involved with the choir at NPGH called Jubilate since year 9. It's a group of about 29 girls who all love to sing. I've travelled to many competitions with them such as the 2024 Big Sing Cadenza. It's been great being part of the group and watching it grow over the last five years. Recently the Wellington Youth Choir asked us to perform together for a town concert held at the Methodist Church in New Plymouth.

I'm also in an a cappella quartet with some friends, and we're performing alongside Jubilate in Who's Huia, a showcase for NPGHS and NPBHS music groups.

In July I went to Palmerston North as part of the NPGHS Pasifika group where we performed traditional Pasifika songs and dances from many cultures. I liked getting to know the different cultures better. It was a wonderful time, and the group grew a lot closer during that trip.

Earlier this year I played Grace, Daddy Warbuck's assistant, in our school production of 'Annie'. Now I'm going to be part of the NP Operatic Society's Christmas show, 'Down Under.' It'll be a three course dinner and cabaret featuring Kiwi and Aussie songs, running 28 Nov - 20 Dec. We're already rehearsing three times a week. It's my first time performing with the Operatic Society and I'm looking forward to it.

You were a foreign exchange student for a year in South Carolina, USA. How did that come about? What was it like?

I wanted a change and was curious about what my parents' high school experiences were like since they both grew up in the US. I looked into some international exchange programmes and in August of 2023 I started an academic year in America where I was a sophomore [2nd year of high school] in South Carolina. I was immediately immersed in another cultural.

The year was so fun and eye opening. It was fascinating to hear and meet people with very different religious and political beliefs. I joined the top school choir and went traveling with them. I was also in the school production of



a 'Mid Summer Night's Dream', and my high school experience felt very much like the film 'High School Musical'!

What about your Academics?

School work was much easier in the States and I got straight A's without studying. When I got back to school in NZ I was thrown right into NCEA Level 2 exams, which was a big change.

In addition to regular classes I'm taking two scholarship classes, English and Media Studies, which is film and its influences on society. Those two classes have extra NZQA scholarship exams and the potential for financial awards. If I pass one I get \$500 to use toward university tuition and if I pass both I get \$1000.

What else do you do in your 'spare' time?

In January I went to the Walsh Memorial Flying School located in Matamata near Auckland. One of my friends who had done it said it was fun, and I'd already had an interest in aviation. The Walsh is an accelerated school for aspiring pilots, and on the first day I was flying a plane with an instructor. Over two weeks I attended theory lectures and then put those theories to practical use in the air. I flew a low-wing plane, a Piper PA-38 Tomahawk that weighs half a tonne. Flying is an awesome feeling!

Last month I participated in the Taranaki Literary Quiz. Teams from each of the participating schools were given a list of 10 books to read. The event was a competition to correctly answer questions about the books. My team won second place, which I'm proud of.

Also recently I organised a team for the 48 Hour Film Festival. In 48 hours we made a parody of the 'Fast and Furious' called the 'Slow and the

Stupid' which was just shown at the Len Lye Cinema. It won Audience Favourite!

I'm working three jobs now, all part time or casual, a bookshop, a café, and at one of NP's finest restaurants, saving money to pay for university.

I'm sure your parents are glad that you recently got your driver's license and can get yourself to all your activities. We'll be interested to follow where your academic pursuits, talents and interests take you in the future. What are you thinking currently?

I visited the campus' of Auckland and Canterbury, both so cool and different. I don't know which I want to attend yet. I'm planning on doing a Bachelor of Arts, double majoring in Political Science/International Relations, and either Drama or Cinema Studies. I've also applied to the Nelson Aviation Academy, which would put me on track to join the airline pilot industry.

With my passion for performing, being a professional singer or actor is a lifelong dream of mine. Although opportunities in NZ are slim, I'm signed with a national acting agency that provides me with auditions. I've gotten some memorable projects already like the Len Lye 'First Sound Last Sound' international artworks and also in a major motion picture released last year.

I'm not entirely sure where I'll end up next year, but if I pursue an undergraduate degree I'll be keen to get involved in the university's drama and musical theatre societies. I'm always looking for new opportunities to perform.

Elayne Kessler

Ōākura Bowling & Social Club

LegAsea Community Bowls

The Oakura Bowling and Social Club is keen to create new opportunities and avenues for all bowlers to enjoy this great game. The club is looking forward to the exciting introduction of the LegAsea community bowls tournament sponsored by MJ Marine Services (fishing charters). The tournament will be open to all playing members, non-bowler members, friends and family and the wider community. The beauty of the competition is that there is no obligation or commitment to turn up each week. Just register by 1.00pm on the day and drawn teams will be selected. See ad for dates and information.

Friday Afternoon Bowls

Friday afternoons from 2.30pm it will be available throughout the season (weather permitting) for those bowlers wishing to have a social roll-up, coaching or, for the more serious bowler, to hone their skills. Club bowls and club equipment will be available and the bar will be open from 4.30pm.

Women Bowls

Oakura Bowls is eagerly looking forward to the restoration of women playing members in the upcoming 2025-2026 season. Club champs day will be on the same day as the mens and, with the introduction of the LegAsea community tournament, the ladies will have the option of playing those Saturday afternoons in a more social environment. Coaching will be available Friday afternoons throughout October and November from 3pm and a full playing programme and calendar will be available from the clubrooms. The club would love to hear from any ladies interested in joining as playing members and we look forward to working with the women in creating future bowls opportunities within the club's playing framework.

Twilight Bowls

Building on last year's fantastic community bowls success, the club has allocated three Friday evenings for twilight bowls in late February. The concept is to encourage non-bowlers from the Ōākura and surrounding communities to enjoy a fast-paced bowls format in a relaxed and social setting. The format will be Bowls3five triples with 2 x 1 hour games each evening. Teams can be made up from local businesses, sporting clubs, families or just three mates or friends. A full bar will be available with a complementary sausage sizzle each night.

1st Year Bowlers

The Oakura Bowling Club is offering all first-year bowlers a package deal: \$50 membership fees for the initial year, club shirt, free coaching sessions, and the use of club bowls.

If you have any questions or require further information around the above concepts, membership or the upcoming season please do not hesitate to call Paul Coxhead 027505520 or Steve Muller 0211695863.

The underarm bowler



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Indoor bowls

Our final club championships for the year were the Novice singles, which is open to players with less than five years experience. We had a good turnout with six people entered on the night. There was a round robin section with the two highest winning players going through to the final of 12 ends. After some close games Paul Bishop and Andy Marshall qualified through to the final. Paul scored on a couple of ends, but it was Andy who played consistently good bowls that won on the night. This is the third year running that Andy has won, well done!

There were a busy couple of weeks with Central Division and North Taranaki Champ of Championships events. Congratulations to Grant l'Ami, Neville Jans and Paul Coxhead who won the CD Champ Triples. Grant l'Ami continued his good form winning the CD Mens Singles, and also the NT Singles. This is the second year in a row that the Ōākura club has won the NT singles with Marvin Clough winning it last year.

In the run up to the end of the season we have had a couple of social visits, one visiting the New Plymouth Club, and the other we had Frankleigh Star visit us. Both nights were great fun, where the teams are mixed up and there is plenty of banter throughout the night.

Also in our annual grudge match against the Warea club we played for the Sitter's Shield, which we unfortunately lost to Warea by only one game difference. We will be challenging them next year, to hopefully win it back.

We finished the year with our closing night, which involved a few fun games and a couple drinks.

This is my final indoor bowls article for 2025, we'll be back in March 2026 and welcome new members.

The President

ŌĀKURA BOWLING & SOCIAL CLUB LegAsea Community Bowls Tournament



October 11 & 25, November 8 & 15,
December 6 & 20, January 3 & 10.

- Club members, new players and casual bowlers welcomed
- Mat fee \$5pp
– Daily prizes & sausage sizzle
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For further information contact:
Steve Muller - 021 169 5863
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Tim from Habberfield Landscapes knows firsthand how a thoughtfully designed garden can completely change the way you experience your home. More than just a patch of green, a garden becomes a personal sanctuary – a place where you can escape the daily rush, reconnect with nature, and find moments of peace just steps from your door. Whether it's a quiet spot for your morning coffee, a shaded corner to unwind with a book, or a vibrant space for family and pets to play, Tim believes every garden should reflect the lifestyle and needs of the people who live there.



With over 20 years' experience crafting beautiful and functional outdoor spaces, Tim understands that a garden is more than aesthetics, it's about creating an environment that engages all the senses – the colours of seasonal blooms, the texture of carefully chosen plants, the soothing sound of rustling leaves or flowing water. Through smart design choices like lighting, pathways, and seating areas, Tim ensures gardens not only look stunning but are practical and welcoming, encouraging you to spend more time outdoors and enjoy every moment in your space.

Tim also emphasizes that you don't need a sprawling backyard to benefit from a garden's transformative power. Even smaller spaces can be turned into lush retreats that boost wellbeing, foster creativity, and add lasting value to your home. Every garden is a chance to cultivate your connection to nature.



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MP for New Plymouth

A growing economy creates more jobs, higher wages, strengthens local businesses and helps Kiwis with the cost of living. It's always a priority for the Government, but lately the focus has been on business competition and overseas investment.

More competition could be on the way in the banking sector as the Reserve Bank announced they are reviewing the capital requirements. The amount capital banks must hold in order to lend to individuals and businesses has long been an area of concern, with some saying the amount increases the cost of lending to everyday New Zealanders. Bringing those requirements down will create more competition by levelling the playing field between larger and smaller banks and could help lower your mortgage rates even further.

At the same time, the Government is also moving to create competition in the supermarket and electricity sectors, with a fast-track for new supermarkets, and a new rule for gentailers which means the big companies can't sell the electricity they generate to smaller ones for a higher rate than they charge themselves. These measures should help put downward pressure on power and food prices to reduce costs for businesses and households.

The Government is also backing Kiwi businesses to grow by attracting overseas investment. The Business Investor Visa provides a targeted pathway to residence for business migrants ready to invest. From November 2025, people will have two investment options:

- \$1 million investment with a 3-year work-to-residence pathway
- \$2 million investment with a 12-month fast-track to residence pathway.

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To be eligible, applicants must be under the age of 55, meet English language, health, character, and business experience requirements, and have sufficient funds to support themselves and their family. Eligible businesses must have been operational for five years, meet financial thresholds and employ at least five full-time staff. The Business Investor Visa will sit alongside the refreshed Active Investor Plus Visa, which has already attracted over \$1.5b in proposed investments.

Together, these visas are part of building a more consistent, transparent immigration system that helps strengthen New Zealand's economic growth.

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It's time to choose who will make the calls for our district

Voting in the New Plymouth District Council local election closes at midday on Saturday 11 October. Any New Zealand citizen or permanent resident 18 years or older is eligible to vote and can still enrol up until Friday 10 October at vote.nz however you will require a special vote.

It's time to make your choice on who you think should be our next mayor, councillors, community board members and decide the future of our Māori ward.

These are the people who will decide on how our district evolves over the next three years, how rates are spent, how much it costs to register your dog or swim at our pools, where you can build and ensuring we are future-proofing critical assets such as roads and water infrastructure.

"Every resident is impacted by the decisions these elected members will make - so whether you own a home, rent or are someone that uses our venues and services it is important you have your say in who will be making those calls," says NPDC's Manager Customer & Communications Ben Kohlis.

Progress results will be announced on Saturday 11 October 2025, preliminary results expected on Sunday 12 October and final results are expected to be announced Friday 17 October.

See our website npdc.govt.nz/vote2025 for more information.

How to vote information

- This is a postal vote so you need to fill in your papers and get them in the post in plenty of time to reach us no later than midday 11 October.
- You can put them in ballot boxes NPDC sites throughout the district, including all our libraries, Puke Ariki, Todd Energy Aquatic Centre and the Civic Centre in Liardet Street.
- There will also be a drive-through ballot box at the Civic Centre on October 4 and 11. See our online map for details of locations closest to you.

The positions local voters will decide on are:

- NP District Mayor
- Six Councillors in Kaitake/Ngāmotu ward (for voters in on the role in New Plymouth city to Ōkato)
- One Councillor in North Ward (Waitara up to Waitomo District Council border)
- One Councillor in the Kōhanga Moa ward (area including Egmont Village, Inglewood and Tarata)
- One Councillor in the Te Purutanga Mauri Pūmanawa (Māori ward)
- Five district wide councillors (these councillors would represent the whole district)
- Four positions on each of the Inglewood and Waitara community boards.

Puketapu-Bell Block Local Board have been elected unopposed and by-elections are required for one vacancy on **Clifton** and **Kaitake** community boards with just three nominations received, all of who have been elected.

We are required to **run a poll** on whether to keep or remove our Māori ward in the next two elections. The results will be legally binding.

By the numbers:

- 82 nominations received for the 2025 election, up from 77 in 2022.
- 9 candidates are running for Mayor in 2025, up from 8 in 2022.
- 45.1%: The voter turnout in 2022.
- NPDC Vote 2025 website has received 169,000 page views for Know your Candidates (Know Your Candidates page) as of 9 September.

Taranaki Regional Council Election

Voting papers have been delivered so it's time for residents to make a call on who they want to make the big decisions in Taranaki. Voters have until 12 noon on 11 October. There are 19 candidates standing for Taranaki Regional Council in four constituencies. The Māori Constituency candidate has been reelected unopposed.

The Council's mission is to protect the environment, and its work programmes include freshwater management, flood protection, biodiversity and biosecurity, caring for three regional gardens and providing public transport.

Chief Executive Steve Ruru says, "There are some major decisions to be made over the next three years around the Council table so it's vital we get as many people taking part in the elections as possible and that residents know who they are voting for. By having your say and casting your vote, you'll be picking the people representing you and making the calls about where your rates money should be spent and what our priorities for taking the region forward should be."

Māori Constituency Referendum

Under the Local Government (Electoral Legislation and Māori Wards and Māori Constituencies) Amendment Act 2024 we are required to hold a binding referendum alongside this year's election. The Taranaki Māori constituency, for electors on the Māori roll, was brought in in 2022 after public consultation and will be in place for the 2025 election. Electors have a 'yes' and 'no' box on their voting papers to decide whether to keep or not to keep the Taranaki Māori constituency for the 2028 local elections and future elections

Special Votes

For those not yet enrolled and who did not receive voting documents in the post, they can cast a special vote at the New Plymouth, Stratford or South Taranaki District Council offices, email Election Services at: specialvotes@electionservices.co.nz or phone 0800 922 822 for a special vote to be posted out.



Piano performance by Rosa Scaffidi

If you haven't yet experienced the brilliant piano playing of Rosa Scaffidi, now is your chance! Join us at Whiteley Church on Wednesday, 8th October at 12:10pm for a truly special performance.

This concert features an enchanting programme of French music by Debussy, Satie and Poulenc, brought to life not only through Rosa's artistry but also with the added magic of live dance. Members of the Val Deakin Dance Theatre – Jane Roseman, Shelley Prestney, Inge Vink, and Davina Moffat, along with the talented young sisters Anna and Frida Bliss will dance to selected works from Debussy's Suite Bergamasque, Satie's Gnossiennes, and Poulenc's Napoli Suite.

With beautiful music, imaginative dance, and the warm atmosphere of the lunchtime concert series, this event promises a delightful midweek escape. Come along, bring a friend, and be inspired!

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Kaitake Community Board

When this edition of the venerable Ōākura Post arrives in your letterboxes it will be in the middle of the New Plymouth District Local Body Elections.

This would have to have been one of the emotionally charged, controversial and highest profile elections I have ever experienced; with double digit rate increases, ballooning debt, resilience issues with essential infrastructure assets, homeless people living on the street, central government failings, and an escalating cost of living crisis being just some of what has been eating at people and brought to the fore..... issues that are not just affecting our region, they are being felt right across the country.

Many of you will be aware that my wife and I have been away over the past couple of months visiting and laying poppies at battlefields, war graves and war memorials along the Mediterranean, Adriatic and Aegean coasts, and these images are just some of the sites we visited. As military veterans, we found the total experience deeply moving, incredibly humbling, one that caused a lot of tears to be shed, and one that will stay with us for the rest of our lives

While I have been to many different places around the world during my military service, it was the first time I had been to the majority of the places we visited, and my first time as merely a 'visitor'.

Since returning home and reflecting on the things I saw, the things I experienced, and the people I met and engaged with, my time away reinforced to me how blessed we are to live here in Aotearoa, New Zealand. And, while I cannot deny there is much that needs to be done to address the problems that are being experiencing at present, I came to the realisation that most Kiwis have no idea how good they have it (even in these 'tough' times), or how much worse their lives could actually be. That said, it doesn't mean you should just sit back and put up with it.

Leading up to midday on the 11th of October, the one action everyone can take should they be unhappy with the current direction their elected Council is taking, is to ensure they, along with everyone around them, have their say on who they want to represent them, and take the time to vote; if they don't, they are actually sending the message that, not only are they happy with what has been done to them in the previous term, they want more of the same for the next three years.

Turning my focus back to a more local perspective, your Kaitake Community Board has made some great gains recently to address the needs and desires of the residents in our rohe that have been brought to our attention. Walkway upgrades to Matekai Park are locked in, social amenities for Shearer Reserve are underway, safety concerns in various areas are being addressed, and the foreshore

beach 'lake' has finally been drained – for the time being anyway. We have also stood up a number of other projects to smooth the way for the incoming board, to highlight the continued need for the Community Board Discretionary Fund, and to demonstrate the value of both Community Boards and this fund, and the benefit they provide to outlying residents of the New Plymouth District.

With the impending end of this triennium, I'd like to take this opportunity to express what a privilege it has been to serve you for the past three terms. I'm a little frustrated at the raft of issues that remain unresolved, however I'm grateful I can reflect on a volume of work that has been achieved.

I also need to publicly thank Paul, Renee, Teresa and Bryan for your support and your efforts, and for having the courage and the bravery to step up to support and serve those who live in your community.

And finally, I urge and encourage you, who live in and make up our community, to continue to bring your concerns, your issues, and your great ideas and suggestions to the elected members of your next Kaitake Community Board and your next Council. Make them aware of what you think, what you need, and what you would like so they know that you have an expectation of them to uphold the oath they take to serve you.

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

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Heading Towards a Century

95 – 60 – You can be forgiven for thinking this may be all about cricket – take a look at the cover photo and you will see a golf club in hand. This is Yvonne Hildred, a long time veteran of 95 years young who has been playing golf for six decades.

In her early years, Yvonne did a three year apprenticeship in dressmaking – her mother had a Ladies fashion store in Wellington and in those days alterations, school uniforms, bridal gowns were all part of the trade. Perfectly cut sheets were also part of her repertoire and we have no doubt this has contributed to her deadeye putting skills. On completion of her training, she married, had her first child and realised life was quite hard in the big city and so moved to New Plymouth.

Life was then in Ōmata with husband Baden equipped with a truck and chainsaw and the school close by, it made a perfect setting for raising over time a family of six children. Baden had a forestry gang clearing logs and carting to Katere Road Sawmill. Yvonne also had her set of skills making many gowns for brides and their maids.

Once the youngest child went off to school, golf became Yvonne's next project. She started playing at The Fitzroy 12 hole Municipal Course and this was basically to practice. A notebook accompanied her to record the strokes prior to approaching the green as she found the numbers stacked up so quickly.

Shortly after, local identity Tom Priest who had the Ōmata General Store selling a wide range of products — from farming items, sliced ham and stamps — approached Yvonne and Baden to join Kaitake Golf Club situated then on Weld Road. Golf didn't last long for the Hildreds at Weld Road before moving to the new course at Tapuae with a few more local identities. Everyone had to work hard to get the course



into shape. From there it was a migration back to the course as we now know Kaitake on the main road.

Once again this was orchestrated by Tom Priest. He also had many members become dual or associate members at Ngamotu (NP Golf Club). Yvonne did take up this offer and went on to win many accolades including: 26 x LGU spoons, 3 Championship Titles in the Intermediate section 1992, 1996, and 1996, a 54 hole Strokeplay Title, The Edna Little Tray which gives credit to the Taranaki Golfer of the Year in 1998. One last proud moment to mention at New Plymouth is Yvonne's "Hole in One" on the 6th in 1993.

By 2010 Yvonne had joined the Kaitake Midweek Ladies Group where over a four year period gained many wins and placings before transitioning over to the 9 Hole Group.

Yvonne is a treasured member of the group and a well sought after partner for many of the competitions. In November Yvonne will only be four steps closer to a century and from all accounts hopes to continue playing in 2026. Congratulations on your achievement!

Compiled by Jo Wilson-West



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Kaitake Golf Club

Top Dog champions for 2025 have been played, and congratulations to Brian Lewer and Grant Hildred who won over Raymond Lewis and Craig Farrant in a well contested final finishing on the 16th.

The Jackpot has also recently been struck by two players on the same day, Saturday 23rd August. Simon Spurdle with Twos on the 4th and 9th shared the prize with Raymond Lewis who had Twos on the 4th and 11th. The Shootout final is to be held Saturday 18th October.

Stumpy's trophy will be played for on Saturday 27th September. It's a Foursomes format played as pairs taking alternate shots – using one golf ball. Planning is underway for our Ladies 54 Hole tournament in October. Entries have already started coming in with the closing date for entries being 22nd October.

Also a reminder to all dog owners – Dogs MUST always be on a leash while on the golf course and failure to do so will force the issue of banning dogs altogether or certain people from bringing their dogs onto the course!

Players are again reminded that it is important to please repair your pitch marks and replace the divots on the course.

School Holiday Programme

1 Oct Wednesday 2pm-3pm

Weaving stars with wool (like he-tukutuku-auahatanga installation with the waka at Govett- Brewster Art gallery) **12 spaces ages 7+**

Crackerjacks

Pre-school story time Thursday 2 October 10am. Join us for stories, rhymes, craft, and games. Fun for the tamariki and a great way to meet other parents and caregivers.

Check out...

Outback noir, crime fiction set in regional Australia, is a popular genre at our library. It all started with Jane Harper's The Dry and her Aaron Falk series.

Garry Disher and his Constable Paul Hirschhausen series.

Margaret Hickey and her Mark Ariti series.

Chris Hammer and his Martin Scarsden series.

Just to name a few...

Happy reading,

Ōākura Library Team

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Kaitake Community Sports Hub

A big thanks to Dimocks Hawera - our latest 2025/26 Bronze sponsor. Please support the businesses that back our kids. To find out about sponsorship, check out www.kcsh.co.nz.

2025 Kaitake Rugby Update

2025 has been another great year for Kaitake Rugby Club. We welcomed a number of new players and families, with 98 juniors registered and a team playing in each grade from Year 1-7. Let's attract new faces and field a team in every junior grade next year!

We saw plenty of Saturday mornings with several teams playing at home, and it was awesome to see the way our kids played and the amount of support they had. I'm proud of our coaches and supporters for encouraging our kids and helping them grow skills and confidence. Our kids were also lucky to play some games under the lights at Corbett Park, and it was a privilege to host many opposition teams for an aftermatch meal in the clubrooms. Aftermatches are becoming a rare thing in junior sport, but they help our kids learn to host, connect, and share stories and kai.

Congratulations to everyone who played rugby for Kaitake this year, and to those who won awards at prizegiving. It was awesome to see the anticipation and how much it means to kids, and the noise that erupted when our Ferdie 6 won Team of the Year. Congratulations and good luck to Lian Coetzer (selected for Ross Brown West team) and to Mace Hohaia and Jacob Barron (selected for Conrad Smith West team). We're proud of you representing Kaitake at the junior festival at Tikorangi Domain (September 12-14).

A massive thanks to our committee, coaches, and everyone who helped make this season so fun for the kids. The tackle bags are going away for summer, but we are already looking toward 2026. Our newsletter early next year will have all the info you'll need. We're also exploring re-establishing a Kaitake senior side (Div 2 or 3). If you or someone you know is keen, please clear that with your significant other now, and get in touch with jono.white@gmail.com to stay in the loop!

Mountain Vs Sea Trophy Challenge

Saturday 1st November. Enjoy a mix of social and competitive games. More info coming via newsletter & Facebook soon!



Ambrose Golf Day

Friday 7th November. Teams of four (\$200). Only a few spots left. Email: admin@kcsh.co.nz.

Cheers from the team at the Rivermouth Hub – your team!



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New Football Goals for Ōākura School



Ōākura School now has brand new football goals for all the students to enjoy, achieved with the help, support and fundraising of Kaitake FC. It had been apparent for a long time that the football facilities at the school have been in a very poor state, with the existing goal posts becoming a safety hazard for students. With the rapid growth of football in the area it became more important than ever to address the issue.

The main hurdle was that football goals are very expensive. Once the football club was aware of the school's ambition to replace the goals, they gave their full support and offered to lead the project, taking responsibility to fundraise and build four sets of high-quality portable / lightweight football goals for the school.

Once built and delivered it was just amazing to see the excitement and response from the schools students.

Kaitake FC president Mark Nicholson said, "One of the driving factors in our club's growth is undoubtedly in and around the junior sector. A huge part of that is generated from Ōākura School students and the great work of OJSC. As Kaitake FC's junior football ranks grew rapidly, it became an absolute no-brainer for us to ensure our local school has the best facilities to play and enjoy football while at school. The Football Club has a close affiliation with Ōākura School with so many current students playing in the yellow and black along with teachers and many parents, some of whom went to Ōākura School back in the day. We ultimately just wanted to give back to the school what the school has given to our club. With this in mind, we want to acknowledge the hard work of Jimmy Bevington who proposed and launched the project, designed the goals and has overseen the build, while the club's social committee and the school have been working hard behind the scenes fundraising. A huge thank you to all involved. This project has been another great example of what this community can achieve when it works together".

Oakura School recently celebrated the arrival of these goals with a Students v Teachers football match, eagerly attended by the whole school looking to give the teachers a good beating! A great celebration of football in the community.



Dr Jill Devlin is an Obstetrics and Gynaecology Specialist who has devoted the last 15 years to serving women of all ages.

Practising at Taranaki Base Hospital since 2020, Jill is now available for consultations within her own practise, Honour Women's Health, two days a week by appointment only.

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Year 7 & 8 girls' football team from Ōākura Primary at the AIMS Games in Papamoa!



Learning Comes to Life

By Charlot Fisher and Charlotte Connolly

Term 3 at Ōmata has been all about STEM. What is STEM? STEM stands for Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics. It is about learning through problem solving, creativity, and hands-on challenges. The Epro8 Challenge and our classroom experiments are great examples of STEM in action—using science knowledge, building and designing like engineers, applying maths, and sometimes even programming or electronics.

Recently, we entered the local Epro8 Challenge, where teams from our school compete against other schools to engineer and build movable structures based on a specific problem. We interviewed two students from one of Ōmata's teams who told us all about it.

"We had to build an electric shopping cart. It worked unless you put objects in front of it blocking its path." – Blake Williams. Once they had completed the challenge, they faced a tie breaker.

"For the tie breaker, the teams had to build the tallest tower in three minutes. The rules were that your tower had to stay standing for over a minute and be the tallest. One team's tower fell down straight away, so they were out." – Noah Stonier.

What a Week for Oakura Primary at AIMS Games!

Wow – what a week it was for the Year 7 & 8 girls' football team from Ōākura Primary at the AIMS Games in Papamoa! From 30th August to 5th September, thirteen talented and tough girls from our small village battled it out on the football field against 45 other intermediates, colleges, and primary schools in the biggest sporting event for intermediate-aged athletes.

Right from the first whistle, the standard of football was exceptional.

Day 1 and 2 saw the girls play three games a day, matched up against strong sides from Auckland and beyond. In a howling breeze at Gordon Spratt Park the hard-working Ōākura girls displayed their talents, securing



Photo: Alfred Earby, Ella Brown, Barnie Horo and Asher Millar enjoy making a chemical reaction in their volcano.

It came down to Ōmata and another school, with both teams' towers standing strong. Everyone was nervous that another tie breaker would be needed, but Ōmata pulled ahead—winning by just one centimetre!

This term the whole school has also been taking part in a series of science experiments based on the physical world. This topic has been called "What's the Matter?" and has looked at the material world, looking at the study of matter and its physical and chemical changes. These included Magic Milk, Dancing Raisins, Which Paper Shape is the Strongest, Balloon Power, Exploring Gas and Density, Why Does the Candle Go Out, and Exploring pH with Red Cabbage Indicator.

Our favourite was the red cabbage experiment. First, our teacher boiled red cabbage and poured the purple liquid into bottles. This was our pH indicator. We tested it with water, vinegar, lemon juice, and baking soda solution. Each substance changed the colour differently

depending on its pH. Water stayed purple (pH 7 – neutral), Vinegar turned red (pH 2 – strong acid), Lemon juice turned light pink (pH 3 – weak acid), Baking soda solution turned blue (pH 9 – base).

"Red cabbage contains anthocyanin which is a natural pH indicator. Acids are below 7 on the pH scale and showed red or pink. Bases are above 7 and showed blue or green. Vinegar was stronger than the lemon juice, and baking soda was stronger than water." – Charlotte Connolly.

"It happens because acids have more hydrogen ions (H+) and bases have less. The indicator reacts differently with each, which changes the colour." – Charlot Fisher.

This kind of testing is used in real life too. For example, people test the pH in swimming pools to make sure the water is safe. This Science and Engineering focus has been very informative and extra exciting too.

a couple of hard-fought wins alongside some tough losses. Notably, they went down 3–0 to Havelock Intermediate, who eventually went on to win the entire competition.

Day 3 and 4 required the girls to dig deep, showing grit and determination. Unfortunately, a bit of bad luck, some marginal calls from referees, and the heartbreak of being on the wrong side of a penalty shoot-out left us in the bottom half of the draw.

Finals Day was where the Ōākura spirit truly shone. Despite being tired, bruised, and battered, the girls rose to the occasion and finished their campaign in style – winning a penalty shoot-out 4–1 against Bethlehem College Tauranga.

For those who haven't been, AIMS Games is about so much more than sport. It's about gaining confidence, displaying resilience and toughness, making new friends, supporting

teammates, and ultimately having an absolute blast.

A massive thank you to our sponsors – without your generous support none of this would have been possible: Webb Roofing, Jon Costelloe & Co Stunts, Ground Up Landscape and Construction, Pounamu Oilfield Services, Tim Costelloe Engineering Limited, and Kingheim.

And of course, starring in our Ōākura Primary School Girls Football Team: Macy Hart, Sofia Silcock, Hazel Winsloe, Isla Kuriger, Eva Morrison, Cierra Jones, Laura Carter, Chloe Milstone-Webb, Mia Tarrant, Isla Walker, Zoey Kerr, Ava Ingram, and Mary Spencer.

These girls are absolute legends!

As shared by Len Jury

20 the Ōākura Post

Koru on Koru

Koru on Koru Art Gallery and Sculpture Garden

It would be impossible to talk about Koru on Koru Art Gallery and Sculpture Garden without recalling some of its history along with its creator, award winning photographer Fay Looney.

Fay's photographic journey began at age 37 when she applied for a six week sales position with an Australian school photography team called Fotek. The journey continues today, albeit in a very different way.

Built in 1980 as an available light working studio, it has now morphed into a well known art gallery. Fay first opened 'Koru on Koru Art Gallery and Sculpture Garden' in 2014 as a place of interest during the annual Taranaki Garden Festival, offering free space to local

and other New Zealand artists. These annual promotions proved to be so successful that in 2018 two local businessmen offered her free retail space in Devon Street in the CBD. 'Koru on Devon' Art Gallery' was born, and staffed voluntarily by a few local artists. It was extremely well supported by locals and visitors until a downturn in CBD foot traffic resulted in, sadly, the closure of Koru on Devon.

Koru on Koru, however, will participate in the 2025 Taranaki Art Trail and be open each day from 9.30 or open by other arrangement. It is featured in the Art Trail catalogue. Several local artists, sculptors, ceramacists and new creators are included in the exhibition indoors and in her large, old garden. Fay is celebrating her

fascination with the " Starling Murmuration" that happens at Back Beach and also her love of hydrangeas printed on a medium that is weatherproof and UV protected, capturing the images in natural daylight.

Koru on Koru will be open each day of the Garden Festival and on weekends after the trail from 12pm. Fay is happy to open for groups on request. You are welcome to take a picnic and enjoy the garden.,art and sculpture. All are for sale, as are some other items Fay is parting with in a garage sale.

She is happy to boil the billy for your cuppa.

Fay Looney and Elaine Jamieson

Ōākura Tennis Club History Bite

Ōākura Tennis Club

The OTC AGM was held last month and all committee position members rolling over for another year. Thanks to retiring committee members Simon Spurdle and Emily Faragasso. Brianna Mathews was awarded the Ted Normanton Trophy for services to the club for her organising of teams last season and good comms with practises and what the weather is doing!

We are looking forward to the season getting underway next term with coaching, midweek ladies, Saturday interclub and Friday night junior interclub teams. If anyone is considering getting back into competition tennis, get in touch and we can discuss the different options.

Junior Muster is happening on Friday 10th October after school at the club. Everyone is welcome, games, information and afternoon tea provided.

Jackie Keenan 0276732900

grazjaz@xtra.co.nz

Coaching contact Monika 027 555 1201 or Blitz Tennis

Juniors email oakuratennis@gmail.com

Last month we asked for past information or stories of the Ōākura tennis club. Ross Fanthorpe shares his involvement.

When I moved to Ōākura in 1978 there were tennis courts in the name of OTC on Hussey St which were run down and unused. Research showed old club members included, among others, Mike and Lila Jans, Ash and Nona Heydon, Bert Seamark, and Roy and Joyce Bell. Former members got together and agreed the land should be sold. I was asked as a lawyer to action that and to invest the sale proceeds for the benefit of the sport going forward.

The sale proceeds of \$15,000 were invested in a finance company to preside second mortgage to allow families to house them elsewhere. Eventually the capital of \$15,000 earned interest which accumulated to around one hundred thousand dollars. At that stage the school was expanding and the community thought future generations would benefit if astroturf could be used for tennis and netball at the school. The upgrades included boundary netting and the clubrooms that are there today. The other local facility for public tennis was on Linda Street which also benefited from astroturf and ball barrier netting.



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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

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

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

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, Sat 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

Pony Club Tracey Mackenzie 027 319 0238 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

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

Surf Lessons - Deken Waves Surf Coaching. Group & Private sessions available. Contact Simon: 021 122 9525 dekenwaves@gmail.com

Te Reo Māori Lessons
Toni 021 661 912 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: taranakitaichichuan@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
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 or visit 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

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

Te Ruru Market - Okato Community Market - Crafters, Growers, Makers. Every Wed. Hempton Hall Okato 4-5:30pm.

Ōkato Tennis Club okatotennis@gmail.com

TOP Information

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Murmuration

Back Beach- Fay Looney

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& Sculpture Garden**

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