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AOTEA ARMY ASSEMBLES

Last week, Leon Foster took to social media to launch the 'Aotea Army'. You'll likely know Leon from Barrier ITM, but his helpful persona goes above and beyond his daily work. Leon is much loved around the island for his kind heart, open and insightful poems and being a strong advocate for mental health.

But it doesn't stop there, he is now assembling and organising an army of volunteers from across the motu to start working bees, helping those truly in need.

The response to Leon's outreach has been nothing but humbling and heartwarming. A crystal clear reminder for many, of the reason they choose to live on this off grid rock.

When action is needed, this community bands together.

The Aotea Army already has over 32 volunteers committed. They are skilled and diverse; from qualified builders to registered counsellors. The initiative is built around working bees and focused on helping with practical tasks, but in true Barrier style, the offers haven't stopped there. Volunteers have come forward to even offer pampering and haircuts!

Local businesses have also joined the cause. Mulberry Grove Store are providing Thai meals for the people the Army are assisting, Sunset Lodge are offering free bus rides for volunteers and Port FitzRoy Store are providing drinks and snacks. Lunch gift vouchers are coming from My Fat Puku, cold drinks and snacks for the hardworking volunteers from The Rocks, Barrier Building Supplies have swooped in to support by offering much needed materials for projects and Gulf Fuels are supplying the fuel for tools required to do the mahi.

In a short time, the Aotea Army has clearly gained strong momentum.

So why did Leon activate this? He says, 'If you don't take action. Don't expect change'.

Ka pai, Leon and the Aotea Army.

Looking to get involved?

Follow or message the Aotea Army Facebook page

Call Leon: 020 4143 3243

Scheduled working bees:

Sunday 17 March

9am for briefing and meet at Tryphena Hall ready to head 300m up the hill on Medland's road

Sunday 31 March

9am meet at Medlands Church for a convoy to a property in Okupu



HAERE MAI KI AOTEA ADVOCATE

The Aotea Advocate publishes free community news every other week. For the community, by the community. Each issue is available in print, online and to your email inbox, sign up online.

To access all issues and articles online visit:

www.greatbarrier.co.nz/AoteaAdvocate

Submissions, advertising and enquiries

Email: AoteaAdvocate@gmail.com

Brought to you by Bree Biederman and Lucy Dixon



EVENTS CALENDAR

16 & 23
MARCH

Grow Food Aotea Workshops

Raised Garden Beds & Autumn Gardens. Check out Grow Food Aotea Facebook

16
MARCH

Coastal Clean Up with Okiwi Kura

8:30am - 12pm
Meet FitzRoy Wharf | BBQ afterwards

18 & 25
MARCH

Island Screens

The Heiresses & Rachel's Farm Kitchen from 6pm | Movie at 7:15pm
Entry \$10 | \$15 for non members
Tryphena Social Club

19 & 26
MARCH

Yoga for Presence With Lucia

Every Tuesday at Claris Art Gallery
5:30 - 7pm

23
MARCH

Taonga Species of Aotea Exhibition Opening

2 - 4pm | Art Gallery
Exhibition details within

26
MARCH

Local Board Ordinary Business Meeting

1pm
Claris Conference Centre

30
MARCH

Easter Market

From 10am
Claris Sports Club
All welcome | Details within

30
MARCH

Stamp My Re-useable Bag

2 - 4pm | Art Gallery
To book email:
manager@aoteaahv.nz

30
MARCH

Aotea Brewing Autumn Sessions

12 - 6pm
Great Music | Hot Food | Cold Beer
Tickets available

13 & 14
APRIL

Peter Thorburn Workshops

13 April Kawa Marae
14 April Claris Conference Centre
Details within

All events can be found online at www.greatbarrier.co.nz/events



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'Taonga Species of Aotea'
Exhibition
21st March - 8th April

Opening event: Sat 23rd March 2-4pm
Arts & Heritage Village
All welcome. Nibbles provided
Open call for artwork.
Draw your favourite forest taonga species.
Deliver to the gallery by 20th March.

Featuring the works of Erin Forsyth, Birds & Forest Taonga of Aotea - in collaboration with Aotea Great Barrier Island Environmental Trust.

NEW 'Forest Taonga of Aotea' Posters will be available from the gallery and www.gbiet.org/shop-merch



Aotea Great Barrier Environmental Trust

AOTEA ARTS & HISTORY VILLAGE
HONONGA O TOI TUKU IHO

Easter Market Day

Saturday 30th March
From 10am

Food, raffles, plants and general paraphernalia

Claris Sports Club
19 Whangaparapara Road

Stall bookings & general info please
Email: clarisclub@extra.co.nz
Leave a message: 09-4290-260
Or enquire at the bar

Hop along and check it out!

FROM THE AIRWAVES

Each Monday Tim Higham gets to the heart of island life with interviews and reflections on AoteaFM. Latest interviews:



Truth & reconciliation

Soon-to-be Dr Kelly Klink on suffering and healing potential of Ngāti Rehua.

Looking after us

How lucky are we to have Tania and Darcy Kemp and their Aotea Health Care Team?

Looking a gift horse in the mouth

Is Tātaki Auckland Unlimited's new destination management plan fit for the island?

Keeping it real

Rapper and actor Louis Sammons channels the island in his work.

Losing a character

Original hippie Russell Scott is packing his tent for elsewhere.

To listen to these interviews visit: greatbarrier.co.nz/island-stories-podcast

IN THE PUMPKIN PATCH

The nature of nature is change and rhythm. Days are shortening and temperatures are easing. Plants are preparing for winter - ripening their seed, sending starches down the roots.

Autumn offers the opportunity of harvesting crops to store over the winter, collect seeds and make way in preparation for winter delights.

Melons, pumpkins and winter squash need to be picked at the right moment. They are a little late this year due to the wet, cloudy and wild start in spring. Watermelons should have a strong yellow blotch where they lie on the soil (known as the couche), and the first two tendrils on the stem leading to the fruit should be withered. Rock melons usually announce their readiness by an abrupt change in colour that can take place over 12 hours! They will change from grey green to being suffused with an orange glow, and release their delicious aroma. Many varieties will "slip" from the vine when ripe, meaning they will pull away from the vine with minimal resistance. Be watchful to pick the melons on time as rats have an uncanny habit of knowing just when they are ripe and will dig in to devour the seeds.

The risk with pumpkins/squash is picking them too early before the starches start converting to sugars and develop rich sweet flavour and colour. Give them time, but guard against rats. Check traps and reset daily.

Buttercups should develop a burnt orange spot on the couche, and the skin should resist pressure from a thumbnail.

Butternuts should be an even tan/orange all over (no green or pale areas) and the stem that attaches to the fruit should be dry and woody.

Grey pumpkins should also have an orange spot on the couche.

If the maturing fruit are covered by leaves, expose them to the sun so the skin hardens off before harvest.

Store/cure in a sunny, warm, dry place for the first few weeks and protect against rats. They will benefit from a few weeks storage before eating, the starches will break down and give much better eating quality. For winter storage, the sun is not necessary, but keep fruit as dry as possible, separate from each other, and always protect against rats.

If you are wanting to collect seed, be careful. The pumpkin family (Cucurbits) cross very easily within each species! Butternuts and cupolas will cross - they are both Cucurbita moschata! Kumi kumi, rampicante, spaghetti squash, acorn squash and zucchini will all cross - they are all C. pepo, even though they look so different. Your seed catalogue will tell you what species each variety is.

Words by local growing expert and Food Resilience Coordinator
Caity Endt



Throughout 2024, Grow Food Aotea is offering a wide range of workshops and skill shares aimed at helping Aotea residents to increase their ability to use and grow some (or more) of their own food - or get even better at it. Join us.

WHAKAARO WHAKAHAUMAKO

'A thought to help, enrich or enhance'

Word/concept for this issue:

'Kotahitanga'

Unity, togetherness, solidarity, collective action

Example... 'Nā te kotahitanga o te motu whānui i tutuki pai ai te kaupapa'

'With the unity, solidarity of the island as a whole, the kaupapa (Waitangi Day) was a success.'

Word by Nancy Tait, local resident and Te Reo teacher



OPTIONS & TRADE OFFS

"Long-Term Plan" might not be the most captivating title, but this single document will influence our rates rises for the next three years, and how much funding is allocated to Aotea for various projects and programmes.

In a wider sense it sets out the long-term direction for the whole of Tāmaki Makaurau, and how everything will be paid for.

This is how the mayor couches it: "Auckland Council has reached its teenage years. Now is the time for us to grow up."

There's a particular twist this time around. Wayne Brown is giving us three options - 1) pay less, get less, 2) pay more, get more, or 3) a "central" proposal which lies somewhere in the middle and is the Mayor's preferred option.

Specifically, the public consultation document that's now out for you to complete (link below) asks which of these you prefer:

1. The central proposal: pay 7.5% more in rates in FY25 (financial year 2025), 3.5% more in FY26 and 8% in FY27. With \$39.3b spent on capital works and \$72b on operations.
2. Pay more get more: 14% rates raise in FY25, 10% in FY26 and 10% in FY27, but \$52b worth of capex expenditure and \$76.5b in operations.
3. Pay less get less - 5.5% in FY25 followed by 3.5% and 3.5%. (\$33.5b in capex and \$69.2b in operations).

Of course, those are just numbers. The sorts of things we're talking about in terms of spending are, for example, in the "pay more get more" scenario: an accelerated programme for electric ferries; more electric trains; more public transport services and development of urban cycleways and walking connections to reduce reliance on cars.

The "pay less, get less" option is significantly less sexy.

But what do you think? It's worth reading the plan and giving feedback. Local priorities are also featured in it.

Go to: akhaveyoursay.nz/ourplan

Feedback closes 28 March

MIKE LEE'S BID TO BAN CHOPPER PADS ACROSS GULF ISLANDS

Auckland councillor, Mike Lee is spearheading an effort to eradicate private helipads from residential neighbourhoods across the Hauraki Gulf Islands, including Aotea Great Barrier Island.

Mike will be tabling the crackdown at the Planning Environment and Parks Committee meeting on 14 March.

The reform Lee proposes seeks to redefine private helipads within residential zones as 'prohibited activities'. This will propose both a "modification to the HG District Plan and change to the Auckland Unitary Plan," Lee asserts, aiming to mitigate the disruptive impact of helicopter noise, safety concerns and community division linked to the increasing number of helipads.

For Aotea, the ban Lee proposes would predominantly apply to Settlement Areas as outlined under the Great Barrier Strategic Management Area in the Hauraki Gulf Islands section of the unitary plan.

Lee's motion comes amid growing concerns over the environmental and social repercussions of helicopter activity. In the past 16 months, 10 helipad applications have been approved, with several more filed.

Lee has criticised the councils pace in dealing with the chopper issue.

The motion will prompt discussion and vote by the Planning Environment and Parks Committee. Should the committee approve the motion, it initiates a formal process to amend Auckland's Unitary Plan and the Hauraki Gulf Islands District Plan.

Original and full article by AoteaGBI.news

MĀORI WOMENS WELFARE LEAGUE RE-ESTABLISHED

The island held the very first Waitangi day commemorations, hosted by Te Motu o Aotea Māori Womens Welfare league.

Te Tiriti o Waitangi was signed in 1840 between Māori Rangatira and representatives of the crown, to assure Māori that their interests were protected and to address the lawlessness of the early whalers and settlers. The purpose to ensure both parties could live peacefully together. This is the founding document of our country. This is why it is so important to commemorate and celebrate.

With Te Motu o Aotea Māori Womens Welfare League re-established back on Island, this will be an annual event.

We would like to thank the local police, our volunteer fire fighters and Auckland transport for making a safe space for us all while on the road. Also our many sponsors who supported the day with their generous donations for our raffles and prizes. All pūtea raised will be going towards the league members attending to the annual conference this year.

We live in a special place and have such amazing people in our community. Nā reira, ngā mihi maioha, ngā mihi aroha ki a koutou katoa.

The next event will be Matariki, hosted at Kawa Marae. Stay tuned for details.

Nā Te Motu o Aotea Māori Womens Welfare League

IS METH AN ISSUE FOR YOU?

Is methamphetamine having a negative impact on your life, either through personal use or use by family/ friends?

Do you want to better understand why people use and how to keep yourself safe?

In mid-March, the local board is funding two free workshops with the man once known as "Gas Man", after he nearly blew himself up while cooking meth. Peter Thorburn triumphed over a 23-year battle with addiction, including eight years of meth dependency, time as one of NZ's most notorious meth cooks, and a lag in prison.

Following his release from prison in 2005 on drug-related charges, Peter experienced a profound transformation that set him on a path of recovery and personal growth. He's spent the last 18 years working as an addiction and mental health specialist and advocate.

Peter will be running two hui, one in Claris and one at Kawa, sharing his "cold hard meth facts and solutions".

If meth is an issue in your life, or if you just want to learn more about its impact on people and communities, then this workshop is for you. Everyone welcome.

Where & When:

Sat 13 April, Kawa Marae 10-12pm

Sun 14 April, Claris Conference Centre 10-12pm

For more information contact:
Kathy.cumming@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz

EXTRA SECURITY FOR AOTEA'S GROUND DWELLING BIRDS

In 2015, the bird aversion training programme was brought to Aotea as part of the permit process to allow hunting dogs on public conservation land administered by DOC. The programme is offered to all dogs to help minimise the threat of dogs injuring or killing ground-dwelling birds, especially pāteke and tākoketai/black petrels on Aotea.

How Dogs Are Trained - Dogs are fitted with electric collars and exposed to dead ground-dwelling native birds in a controlled situation. Kiwi bedding is used for hunters who take their dogs hunting off island. If a dog sniffs any birds or bedding, they are given a negative reinforcement through a small but surprising electric shock.

Most dogs quickly learn to avoid the birds following this experience. The owner can continue to reinforce the training when the dog shows interest in other birds anywhere - like gulls on the beach.

Practice Makes Pawfect - Dogs need to be tested again within 6 months to a year of the initial training. They will be tested for their learned avoidance and may be retrained if necessary.

This testing or training is required annually until the dog consistently demonstrates strong avoidance. When a dog achieves this standard, the dog is certified for periods longer than one year.

If you'd like to undertake this training with your dog (8 months+) or need a retest, DOC and Auckland Council will be advertising training. No booking is required.

Department of Conservation



Visiting speaker Peter Thorburn, mental health specialist and advocate



**Wed 20 March
to Fri 29 March
2024**

**Rabbit control: Aotea Great Barrier Island
Kaitoke - Awana - Okiwi - Harataonga**

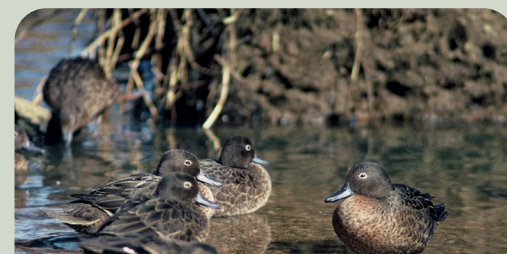
Contractors will be undertaking rabbit control via night shoots and fumigation in the following areas:

Claris Recreation Reserve, Harataonga (Night shoots)
Whangapoua, Okiwi Station, Whangapoua Dunes,

Awana (including campground and Stoney Bay Recreation)

For more information contact Jeremy.warden@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz or the contractor Duane Doughty doclivestock@gmail.com or call 027 568 1908

For more information about rabbit control call 09 301 0101
Find out more about controlling weeds and pests:
www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/pestfreeauckland



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Register your pet cat in the Cat-alogue, email:
annamarie.clough@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz



Job Vacancies Aotea Education Trust



Operations Manager

We are looking for a motivated Operations Manager for the Trust, for 6 hours a week at \$40 per hour, on a fixed term contract for one year. Funding and employment is also part of this job.

Financial Manager

We are looking for a motivated Financial Manager for the Trust, for 6 hours a week at \$40 per hour on a fixed term contract for one year. Experience required on all aspects of financial accounts. Including GST, annual accounts, monthly accounts, using Xero, invoicing, bank reconciliations and budgets.

Both these positions will liaise with the Aotea Learning Hub and Aotea Early Education Centre Managers and the Trust.

Application close date: 5pm 18 Mar 2024

For a full job description, please contact:
Fenella Christian.
Email: aoteaeducationtrust@gmail.com,
Phone: 021538874 or 094290414

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