

## Retro tractor brings nostalgia to Ōtaki playground

A retro-style model tractor is proving popular among children and adults alike in the playground beside Ōtaki's i-SITE Visitor Centre on SH1.

### Norfolk pines replacement put on hold



Replacement of vandalised Norfolk pines on Marine Parade in Ōtaki has been put on hold, pending a review of how the foreshore amenity area should be developed long-term.

Vandals broke a number of Norfolk pine saplings recently, near the car park south of the surf club, and pulled out shrubs by the pavilion.

Council had been intending to replace these, in line with the previous efforts to create a tree-lined 'avenue' effect near where people picnic, swim and use the public facilities such as the toilet block.

However, Community feedback has revealed that people have a mix of opinions on what should be done.

Leisure and Open Space Asset Manager Lex Bartlett says that while one opinion published on Facebook was against having pines in that particular stretch of the street, two local residents he had personally spoken to wanted the vandalised trees replaced and liked the avenue effect they create.

Both said they felt there was support for replacing the pines.

"It has cost the Community about \$1500 already and there is no point replacing them if there is some doubt as to what the Community wants," says Mr Bartlett.

Community Board chair James Cootes and Ward Councillor Penny Gaylor agree. "Long-term, the Community Board does wish to review how the amenity area on the Ōtaki foreshore is developed, which would involve consulting with the local residents. Therefore it makes sense to hold off a replacement programme until then," says Mr Cootes.

Council has just installed the tractor as part of an upgrade for the playground which involves bringing back play equipment reminiscent of yesteryear.

In recent months the older equipment in the playground has been replaced by things similar to a 1960s' play area, such as a merry-go-round and a basket swing. The tractor is the latest addition and will soon be followed by a "lullaby" rocking horse which can seat up to four children at a time.

The tractor was designed by Council's Leisure and Open Space Team and built by playground specialists Roktopus of Palmerston North.

It had to be specially-constructed to ensure it met strict safety compliance standards, that there are no sharp parts and that children cannot get fingers, arms or

legs caught in the machinery.

For this reason, the design focused on creating something new rather than adapting a genuine old tractor – although a real steering wheel, seats and wheels were used.

The tractor has proved immediately popular. Even when the Council team was installing it, children began playing on some of the pieces. The feedback from adults has been positive too because of the nostalgic link to the playgrounds of their childhood.

The Ōtaki playground is a favourite with shoppers and travellers passing through as well as local residents.

The whole playground project has a budget of \$53,000 and is part of a planned programme by Council to ensure our playgrounds are well-maintained and updated if required.



Community Board Chair James Cootes and Ward Councillor Penny Gaylor with their respective children (L-R) Penny's children Louis and Giorgio Bevan, and Grace and Drew Cootes.

### Main Street footpath repaired



AFTER

Positive engagement between Council and the Ōtaki Community through Facebook has led to a planted area on Main Street being replaced by concrete.

The planted "rain garden bed" was at footpath level near the Post Office and a café/takeaway, but heavy foot traffic in the area led to the plants being trampled. Comments on Facebook suggested it had become a hazard to people walking along the footpath.

As a result, Operations Manager Tony Martin created a service request for remedial work, removing the bed and putting in a concrete dish channel in keeping with the rest of the area.

Coincidentally, while doing the work, Council noticed a water leak in Main Street and that was also fixed.



BEFORE

## KĀPITI ARTISTS A CAPITAL SHOW

12 August to  
26 September 2014  
10am – 3pm  
Wednesday – Friday





Parliamentary Gallery  
Bowen House  
70/84 Lambton Quay  
Wellington

Don't miss this Council-supported exhibition which features 41 Kāpiti artists, the first time they are displaying their work as a group in one gallery.