

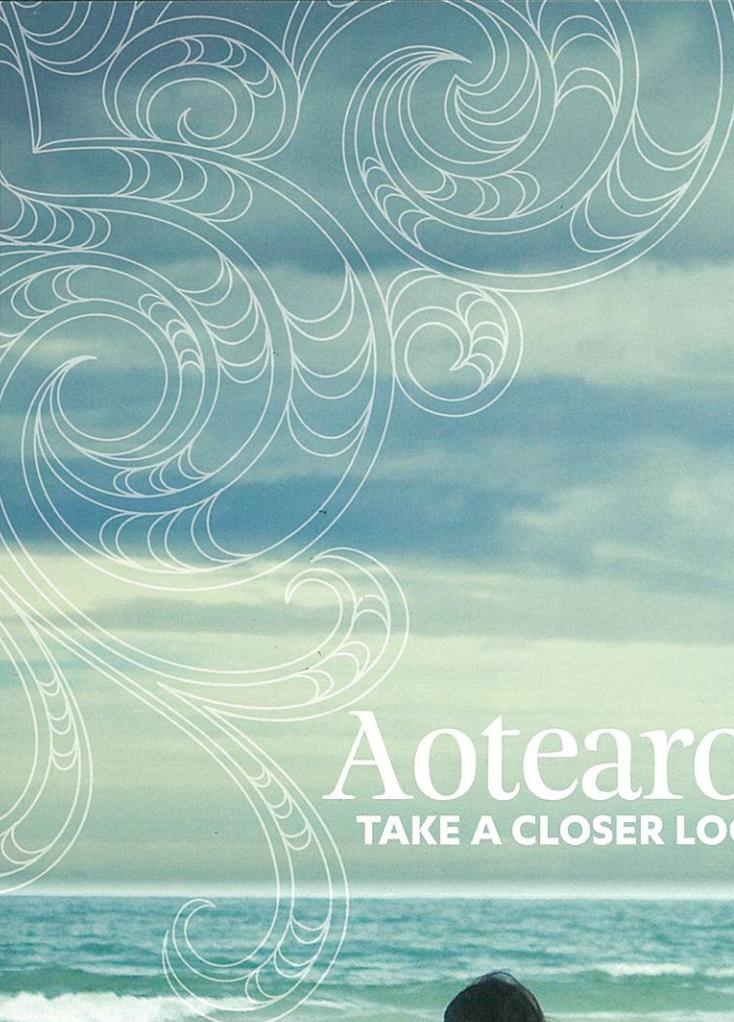


Culture

TAKE A CLOSER LOOK

Aotearoa's indigenous culture is a rich one, not least because Māori of centuries past produced our oldest art form - rock art - by etching and painting taniwha, waka, whales and other designs in hundreds of caves and sites countrywide. Discover history and culture through art - and how to take your own cave tour - on page 30.

Ours has always been a country of immigrants, but long gone are the days of importing largely from the Queen's realm. In these pages you'll learn how a Chinese New Zealander keeps her culture alive for her children, and how 50 years after Samoan independence the country's special relationship with New Zealand lives on. Plus we drop in on a special party bringing Christmas cheer to sick and underprivileged kids.



Aotearoa

TAKE A CLOSER LOOK



We all know what a special place Aotearoa is, but you might just be surprised at what's left to discover about our country. In the following pages, we reminisce about summer tiki tours of yore, explore three hotspots in the far north, wild west and deep south, and look at ways to bring back the cute, clever New Zealand sea lion from the brink of extinction.

The whopping 80 per cent of our flora found nowhere else on earth need protecting, too. Setting the standard is Wellington's Otari-Wilton's Bush, established in 1926 thanks to a passionate botanist. Today, many more Kiwis are putting their time into regeneration programmes countrywide. With a bit of determination and a lot of hard yakka, we might just get there.



History

TAKE A CLOSER LOOK

Without ships and other vessels, we wouldn't be here to mull over New Zealand's history. Read on to discover more about the sea crafts that got us to and around Aotearoa, from Māori waka to the inter-island ferry *Aromoana* and how the many vessels were eventually squeezed out by the trains and planes. Speaking of planes, what better year to celebrate our aircraft in stamps than the Royal New Zealand Air Force's 75th birthday?

It also seemed about time to pay tribute to our status as the home of the 'Lord of the Rings' and 'Hobbit' films. Tolkien tourism is taking off, as you'll find on page 74. And Governor-General Sir Jerry Mateparae reflects on the 60-year reign of a Queen he's as fond of as she is of New Zealand.



As well as you might know this country of ours, there are always more stories to share and hear about Aotearoa – and sometimes you find them in the most unexpected places. **TAKE** the stamps on your mail, for instance.

Each year since 1984, The New Zealand Collection has showcased the stamps that New Zealand Post issued in the calendar year – and 2012 continues this tradition. This year's lot is **A** bumper crop of quintessentially Kiwi designs by artists and designers including the renowned Michel Tuffery.

Experts in their fields and intrepid journalists take us that bit **CLOSER** to the stories behind the stamps in these pages, as they ponder New Zealand's landscape, nature, culture and history. Discover more about everything from tiki tours to Tolkien tourism, Māori rock art to Chinese festivals, our Air Force to our ships, native plants to native sea lions, a special kids' Christmas party to the Queen's affection for New Zealand.

The telegram sent by the Queen to then-Governor-General Dame Catherine Tizard after she took a parachute jump is just one of many yarns that will surprise, intrigue and inform you. Go on, take a **LOOK** at Aotearoa as you've never seen it before. 