

Sunset Beach



THE CASE STUDY

PROJECT DETAILS

Location
Port Waikato

Project Type
New community hall

Architectural Designer
Sunset Beach Lifeguard Service
(Port Waikato's surf lifesaving club)
with Karl Ngatai from Tuakau

FEATURED PRODUCTS

- RAB™ Board
- Villaboard™ Lining
- Axon™ Panel
- Linea™ Weatherboard

Robust products by James Hardie provide essential weather, wind and salt protection for community buildings in an extreme coastal location.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

A seaside town on the west coast south of Auckland, Port Waikato has a permanent population of around 800. For more than 50 years, the heart of the community was a hall owned by the Sunset Beach Lifeguard Service and shared with the local population. The space was used for celebrations, play centre groups, church meetings, funerals, weddings, indoor bowls, markets and meetings – all the functions and gatherings that held the community together.

In 2019, when the ground beneath the hall eroded to the point of no return, the

building had to be demolished. The locals were bereft; suddenly they had nowhere to meet, party and play. So the Sunset Beach club came to the rescue. They vowed to build a new community hub, along with purpose-built premises for their own needs. Malcolm Beattie, president of the Sunset Beach Lifeguard Service, explains how the club approached the project.

“It became a bigger responsibility than just looking after club needs. As a pillar of the community, the club recognised the importance of a community hub to Port Waikato. We needed a place for our training, equipment storage and medical triage, but we also wanted to provide the community with its much-needed multi-use space.”

The club owns the beach-edge site, which is 50 metres inland from the previous site. Engineering requirements posed some significant challenges, however Malcolm and his team worked them all through and emerged with consented designs.

The next challenge was financial. The community hub was projected to cost around \$1.4 million to build, which was



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more than the club could afford, so a project steering group of senior club members started door knocking for donations. One of the doors they knocked on was ours. James Hardie saw the merit of the club's mission and chose to donate materials for lining and cladding the building. Ben Seaborn, a James Hardie sales consultant, talks about why we got involved.

“We like to help out when we can find a great community project. This project really stood out, so we offered our products for no charge. The project's location right next to the ocean is a chance to demonstrate the durability of Hardie™ fibre cement products, and the combination of helping surf lifesaving and the local community at the same time was ideal for us.”

A key product for construction was RAB™ Board, which enables builders to close in early.

“The location is breathtaking, but very exposed. On a windy day, the sea breeze would come up and bring the salt water with it – not to mention the west coast rain – so using RAB™ Board meant builders could close in quickly and start working on the inside.”

“For exterior cladding, the project used our Linea™ Weatherboard because it's made to withstand extreme coastal conditions. For selected areas inside, Axon™ Panel was chosen to reflect the beach feel and provide durability with a classic design aesthetic.”

Stage one, the community hub, is now fully complete in use daily. Ben visited recently to

see how Port Waikato is enjoying the new facility.

“The community hub looks fantastic. It's a really useful space that seats up to 200 people. I visited on a rainy day and the space was warm and cosy – fully insulated against the weather outside. There was a play centre group using the building, so lots of kids running around and parents supervising. Outside, I could see progress with stage two of the project underway – the surf lifesaving club.”

The club's building is nearly complete. It will be open in time for Labour Weekend 2021. Inside there's a kitchen, bunk room, gear storage, space for training sessions and a medical triage centre. Outside is a deck for ocean surveillance and social occasions. Malcolm Beattie is thrilled with progress.

“We're so grateful to James Hardie and our other contributors. We're showing our appreciation in every way we can, with signage, social media posts, and mentions on our website and annual report. Everyone at Port Waikato says thanks.”

Our beach town is growing fast. We're seeing an influx of people who choose to live at Port Waikato and work in nearby towns, like Pokeno, Paerata, Huntly and Te Kauwhata. More people living at the beach means a greater need for surf lifesaving, and of course it means more need for a community hub. The value of this project goes way beyond the cost of the construction. Malcolm Beattie, president of Sunset Beach surf lifesaving club.