

THE LOCAL Mt Victoria

NGĀ KARERE HAPORI O MATAIRANGI

HUB PONDERES ITS FUTURE



The Mt Vic Hub hopes it can continue to operate until Christmas but has no certainty beyond that. The Hub's Board has been doing the numbers and looking at options since it got the shock news that the Wellington City Council funding it relied on would not be awarded in the 2026–2027 financial year.

The decision to not allocate funding was spear-headed by local ward councillor Nicola Young and passed unanimously at the council's grants subcommittee. But at a public meeting held to discuss the news, the two councillors apologised to the community for supporting the move.

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Hub ponders its future

At a public meeting, the Mt Vic community was seeking answers for a shock decision to remove funding from the Hub. Jane O'Loughlin was there.

Around 100 people turned up to an emergency public meeting on 3 June held to discuss the future of the Hub, following a surprise decision by the Wellington City Council not to award it funding for the next financial year.

The meeting, chaired by Wellington Central MP Tamatha Paul, heard from Hub Board members as well as supporters from the community.

Board chair Johnny Crawford said the Board had been “blindsided and devastated” by the news, revealed in a “three minute phone call” from councillor Nicola Young a couple of days before the grants subcommittee.

Johnny said there had been no signals that funding was at risk, and council staff had recommended the funding be awarded.

“It’s very unusual for councillors to go against recommendations like that. However, less than two days before the meeting, I received a quite unusual phone call from the councillor in charge of the committee, saying that they would not be accepting the recommendations and that they’d be withdrawing funding from us. The reasons that were provided in that three minute phone call were really vague. They were inconsistent with the information that we provided. And I left feeling kind of confused and

centre, had been praised by the council. “The latest community facilities policy from 2023 states the impact of our model in the community could be replicated and has a positive impact.”

Alice listed the activities the Hub provided were listed, such as organising community dinners, the olive harvest, seedling swaps, and street clean ups.

In addition the Hub office itself was used by a variety of groups fly fishing, Dungeons & Dragons, Grey Power and ‘Friday after Five’ social meet ups, as well as meetings for the Hub itself and other groups.

Treasurer Matthew Ordish outlined the Hub’s budget, and the financial challenge it now faces. Annual expenses included rent, salaries, the newsletter, activities and administration.

Income was predominantly from the council (\$80k) with around \$7.5k coming from room rentals.

Matthew said the Hub had a lease for its building until June 2027, which assumed an obligation of \$19,000.

Additionally the Hub had \$35,000 put aside as savings.

The Board was considering a number of options, including keeping the space but cutting back on activities, and paying staff until the end of the year.

“We could retain our staff until Christmas and we could be pay rent to 2027. We’ve been dubbing this the ‘exiting with grace’ option,” Matthew said.

Other speakers from the community gave their support for the Hub, including Get Lost Cycling, and Clyde Quay School principal Cameron Ross. **TL**

"I did let you down, and so I want to apologise for that."

Councillor Laurie Foon apologised to the Mt Victoria community



Two city councillors at the June public meeting apologised to the Mt Victoria community for voting to remove funding from the Mt Vic Hub.

Laurie Foon, who was one of the councillors on the grants subcommittee, said that she voted alongside the other members because the change was included as part of a wider vote.

"So at the end of the day, it was just too overwhelming," she told the meeting. "That's why it went through unanimously because it was all loaded together, and it wasn't set up to start picking apart. I could have worked harder to do that, and in hindsight, I would have, and I should have, and I'm sorry, but that is what happened with the process on the day."

She praised the work that the Board did and acknowledged the hurt the decision had caused.

She said that other community centres may face a similar outcome in the future as the council came up against reduced funding and government direction to focus on the basics.

"The reality is that while Crossways and Mt Vic hub that have been singled out this time, next time, you know, there will be likely more because council just simply, under the current regime and the direction, cannot keep funding community, places, centres, recreation centres, all of these things."

Although he was not on the grants subcommittee, Lambton/Pukehinau ward councillor Geordie Rogers admitted he had originally expressed his support to Nicola Young to remove the Hub's funding.

"I have apologised to the Hub directly, particularly for my involvement and not ensuring that they were communicated with fairly. And I think I also owe all of you an apology for the same thing," he told the meeting.

"I think, particularly in my position as a ward councillor, even though I'm not on that committee, my role in advocating for you, I did let you down, and so I want to apologise for that." TL

Next steps for the Hub

Since the public meeting in early June, the Hub Board has worked out a plan to remain operational in the short term.

"We've made a commitment to put our best foot forward to shore up the Hub over the next three to six months," Board member Alice Carmody told *The Local*.

The Board has examined its costs and looked for savings, in order to eke out its remaining funds over the period.

In the hope it can continue longer term with community support, the Hub will conduct a survey through its newsletter to ask residents what they would like to see the service prioritise – "whether that's community dinners, or advocacy, or what" Alice said.

"We want to keep it simple so it's sustainable and hit those really impactful things," she said.

The Board itself will undergo a refresh, with some Board members standing down, including long time Board member and former Hub coordinator Trish Given. There will be a call for new Board members, to ensure 'fresh blood'.

The Hub hopes to establish more consistent opening hours of 9am to 3pm, and will use volunteer help to supplement the 20 hours of paid coordinator time to achieve that. TL

Fuelled by indignation

There's nothing like community indignation to generate a crowd.

And so it was that a good hundred or so people gathered in the Clyde Quay School hall in June to try to understand how the community's Hub was suddenly on the brink of closure.

Turns out all it took was one councillor – Nicola Young – with a strong personal view about the effectiveness of the facility to influence a whole council committee to go against officials' recommendations and no longer provide funding to Mt Vic's community Hub.

Does the council owe Mt Vic funding? No, but every other organisation on the subcommittee's list of 54 got the funding recommended by council officers – Mt Vic is the only one in the minutes with a line drawn through it.

Commenting on the funding recommendations in the agenda, officers advised that funding allocated to groups would be a 'transitional step' until a further funding framework was developed. In other words, some difficult decisions were on their way

but there was to be a proper process carried out over the coming year.

Not for Mt Vic – the Hub's funding comes to an abrupt end on 30 June with no transition.

The amount the community was supposed to receive – \$79,627 – was comparable to the allocations to other communities.

For example, the Kilbirnie/Lyall Bay Community Centre got \$99,514, Newtown \$216,133, Aro Valley Community Council \$61,860, Karori Community Centre \$66,700, Johnsonville Community Centre \$57,556 – and all of these have the benefit of using a council-owned building and therefore don't have to pay rent.

Now the Hub faces a massive challenge to stay operational. Could some good come of this? A shocked community has rallied around the Hub, keen to help. The Board itself is made up of smart, thoughtful and caring people. But at the end of the day it will need cold hard cash to make it work. If it does survive,

let's hope it emerges in a more resilient form, more accountable to the community and less at the mercy of the whims of councillors. **TL**



Jane O'Loughlin
Editor

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Crossing stranded following Golden Mile review

The Wellington City Council's decision not to go ahead with the Golden Mile project leaves a pedestrian crossing to nowhere in the middle of Kent and Cambridge Terrace.

In January 2026 then-Mayor Tory Whanau unveiled what was supposed to be stage one of the Golden Mile rejuvenation project which was to cost nearly \$140 million. The changes to the intersection were designed to re-align Courtenay Place with the Embassy, and included a separated cycleway, new pedestrian crossing facilities and plantings – completed with a cost of around \$4.4 million. Construction also identified and remediated an underground sinkhole.

Although the cycle lane is now in use, the crossing has never been opened as the work required to connect it properly with Courtenay Place has not been done.

According to officers' advice to councillors, a safety audit found further work would be needed to make the crossing safe, if retained. Councillors have asked officials to come back in December with a budget of \$1–\$1.5 million for the work.

Meanwhile, the council has put 'no walking' signs on the part of the Kent/Cambridge reserve that connects with the new crossing, to try to deter pedestrians from using it. **TL**

Seen any rats?

Predator Free Wellington wants to know. The group relies on community sightings of rats in areas they've cleared. Please let PFW know if you think you see a rat or anything suspicious on Miramar Peninsula, Rongotai, Lyall Bay, Kilbirnie, Hataitai, Roseneath, Oriental Bay or Mt Vic. Report via the contact page at pfw.org.nz **TL**

\$150k to revitalise Courtenay Place

The council has approved approves \$150,000 from the City Growth Fund to support Te Aro Hā business partnership to make visible improvements in Courtenay Place in the next 12 months.

The private group led by former mayor Kerry Prendergast has come up with a plan to revamp Courtenay Place, at a cheaper price.

The group consists of designers and construction companies including Willis Bond, LT McGuinness, Dunning Thornton, and Athfield Architects.

The group, which presented to the Wellington City Council, has a vision for Courtenay area as a 'world class creative district'.

It had spent the past nine months conducting extensive engagement across business owners, residents, mana whenua, hospitality operators, arts organisations, tourism bodies, community groups, universities, the film industry and other creative industries. "There is strong alignment and enthusiasm to partner on this regeneration effort." **TL**



St Gerard's garden coming back to life

A neglected green space in front of St Gerard's monastery is getting some love, with a community effort to plant it.

The area was the site of an orchard and hen house in the days when the monastery was occupied by a religious order.

Neighbours, gardeners and bush restoration workers are now getting together on weekend working bees to help to plant the area and bring it back to life.

Anyone wanting to get involved or make a donation can do so via the OrientalZigzag Facebook group. **TL**



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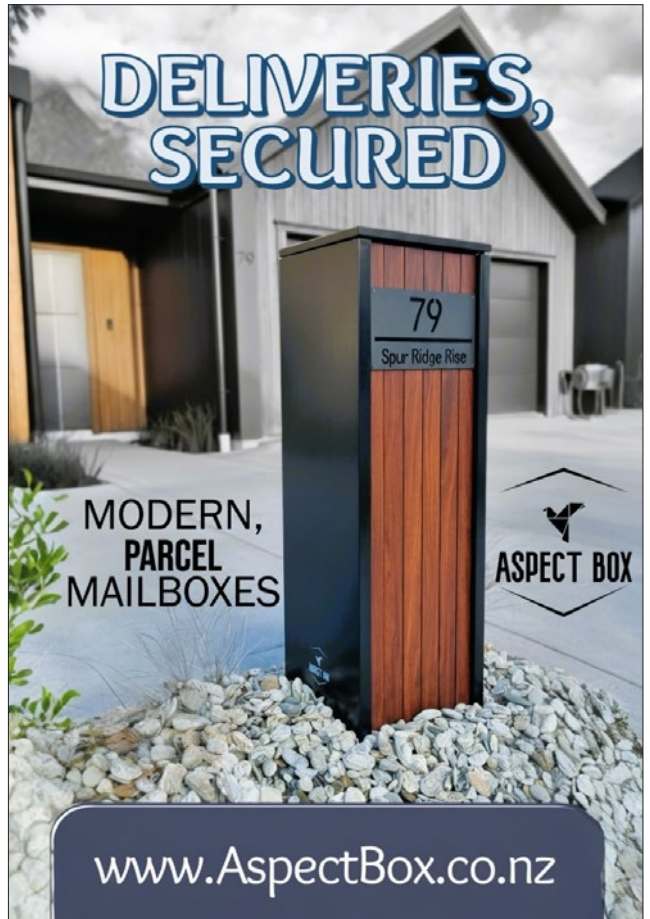


Day Programme for those with dementia, cognitive or other conditions

The Marsden Club in Newcombe Crescent, Karori, (and the Chelsea Club in Lyall Bay) provide high quality, professional day programmes for people with dementia and other cognitive conditions. Funding from Health NZ is usually available.

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Could this be the breakthrough election for the Opportunity Party? **Jane O'Loughlin** talks to Wellington North candidate **Jessica Hammond**.

This is not Jessica Hammond's first rodeo. This year will be the fourth general election she has stood in representing Opportunity (formerly known as TOP or The Opportunities Party), but this one feels different.

"It feels really different," Hammond says. "I've always loved it and I believe in what I'm doing, but this time it feels a bit more like we're pushing on an open door. There are people coming to us wanting to talk to us. I had this strange experience of being lobbied, which I don't think people thought was worth bothering doing before. So now I'm getting a taste of what that feels like. It feels like we have momentum – the kind of momentum we've never had in the past. So it's really exciting."

Hammond puts the change down to a mix of leadership, experience and timing. A major factor, she says, is the arrival of Qiulae Wong as Opportunity's leader.

"We ran a really good process to select her and I think the proof is in the pudding that people are connecting with her," Hammond says. "And not just externally – the membership is behind her."

She also believes the party has matured. After several election cycles, Opportunity has learned more about politics, campaigning and the practical work of trying to win votes. It has also attracted people with political experience, including former Labour minister Iain Lees-Galloway.

On top of that, Hammond says, "it also feels like the time is right": people are prepared to look at new ways of doing things.

It was the Opportunity's big picture policies that first attracted Hammond to the party.

"I was very excited by their ideas and the... idea that you can actually fix things. rather than tinkering."

This election those policies include a land value tax, a universal basic income, and making retirement savings compulsory. Significantly, the party says it's prepared to work with either National or Labour. This means if it reaches the 5% threshold or wins an electorate seat, it could play a role as a 'kingmaker' when it comes to forming a Government.

If Opportunity makes it into Parliament this year, Hammond is likely to be among its MPs, which would mean an abrupt career change for the public servant.

Hammond is a born-and-bred Wellingtonian. She grew up in Wilton, now lives in Khandallah, and is familiar with the city's western and northern suburbs.

Like many Wellingtonians, she has spent time around Cuba Street and Courtenay Place, and she says one of the things she has always loved about Wellington is that it has "such a centre" and "such a heart". Her own teenagers, she says, share some of that affection for the city's alternative energy.

Hammond has stood in Ōhāriu three times, but this campaign places her in Wellington North.

"It's definitely a very different electorate from what I'm used to," she says, noting different demographics and a much busier campaign schedule.

Although she won't say no to electorate votes "this is a party vote campaign for everyone except for Qiulae."

For now she is looking forward to being on the campaign trail once more, and hoping this time it leads all the way to the steps of Parliament. **TL**

This is the first in a series of political profiles and articles *The Local* will be running in the lead up to the general election in November.

The thespian life of John Smythe

Photo: Sharon Greally

Sharon Greally meets an actor and prolific theatre reviewer.

They say a house is not a home without books. Walking into John's sunny home in Mt Victoria, I immediately felt the urge to grab a book and lie down on the sun soaked sofa with a hot cuppa.

John and his partner Liz Melchior have lived in their heritage home for nearly 20 years. Amongst the books, the walls and shelves are lined with vibrant art works, and photos and drawings of them and Liz's seven grandchildren. "They enrich my life" he says.

John's life is an Aladdin's cave full of literary and theatrical pursuits. He has worked as a theatre critic, an actor, director, screenwriter, theatre review editor, publisher, and author.

He is especially well known for his publication *Theatreview*, which he founded in 2006, and is celebrating its 20th anniversary. It's a non-profit website which is the only one that publishes nationwide reviews on performing arts. There are over 15,000 reviews available. The name has been trademarked as it's such an unusual word, he tells me. He has a team of voluntary critics with hands-on experience who write reviews nationwide, looking at all aspects of production and the audience experience. "To quote Hamlet, they hold a mirror up to nature. We the reviewers reflect back to them what we have received and respond in a constructive way. It's a great and valuable resource. We have built an archive that's easily searchable. It's a lot of work, I love it, but who will want to take it over?"

There are other significant anniversaries coming up for John – the 100th anniversary of Wellington Repertory in which he was involved as co-founder of the Green Room Theatre club; and the 50th anniversary of the New Zealand Writers Guild of which he was President.

Smythe has recently exercised his acting muscles performing in Butterfly Creek Theatre Troup's production of *King Lear* earlier this year, where he played The Fool. "All the song and dancing things were stripped back to focus on the King's mistakes. Someone said the relationship between the King and The Fool was very strong and riveting, which was good to hear."

John started his theatre career back in the 60s, "majoring in drama club at Victoria University", as well as working in the kitchen of Downstage, helping moving sets over night. After, he would go over the road to Roys Hamburgers. "It was the only place open all night, and they made great egg burgers!" It's now BATS theatre. "I was the theatre reviewer for National Business Review, and I put BATS on the map!"

Having played two roles at Downstage, he told acting legend Davina Whitehouse he might take a crack at being an actor. And she laughed and said "Oh my boy you'll never be an actor because of your New Zealand accent!"

That encouraged him to further his studies. Director Richard Campion suggested he go to NIDA in Sydney. Having grown up with an identical twin, John found being in another country liberating. "No-one knew me. I could be myself". It was a great time to be in Australia in the late 60s and 70s, he says. There was a huge renaissance in theatre, television, and film,


and soon he was off to Melbourne Theatre Company as playwright in residence, and he also wrote and performed in a lot of Australian films and TV series, and was very adept at various accents.

He returned to Wellington in 1984 as an Australian delegate to the International Affiliation of Writers Guild – with a fully-fledged Australian accent.

A four-part mini series he wrote about Opo the dolphin brought him back to New Zealand. The series was picked up by TVNZ but funding issues meant it was never made.

He auditioned for a couple of television acting roles. “It was so funny. I was asked – ‘just tell me one thing. Can you do a New Zealand accent?’ ” He ended up getting the role.

John and Liz love living in Mt. Vic. They can be out three or more nights a week, to various theatre and dance productions. Film festivals are also on the entertainment calendar. Eating out sadly is off the menu.

“The problem living here now is the rates and insurance. It’s crippling. But we’ve got great neighbours, and Liz said that she would only move from where she was living if it was to Mt. Vic.” 



Have you got an idea for a local personality we should feature? We want to profile a range of Mt Victoria residents – and they don’t have to be famous, just interesting. Get in touch with *The Local* to let us know at editor@the-local.co.nz



Kia ora Mt. Vic!

Let’s talk about our community.

Get in touch about any local issues or if you need support. I’m here to help and would love to hear from you!

Tamatha Paul
MP for Wellington Central

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Auth by Tamatha Paul, Green Party MP.
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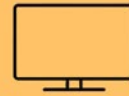
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No hearing for Mayfair until December

An apartment block for Austin Street has been stalled by legal action, as **Jane O'Loughlin** reports.



An indicative visualisation of the proposed 'Mayfair' tower block (centre) beside the single-storey homes at 134 Elizabeth Street and 9 Rixon Grove, based on developer's architectural drawings, supplied by Better Planning Society 359 committee member and designer, Allistar Cox

An Environment Court appeal taken on the resource consent for the Mayfair apartment block proposed for Austin Street won't be heard until at least December, according to a spokesperson for the group taking the legal action, Ralph Highnam.

"Obviously, we're disappointed with that delay, we have a raft of excellent lawyers and expert witnesses lined up and ready to go."

Resource consent was granted for the 32-unit apartment block at the end of Westbourne Grove in February, but neighbours involved in the hearings lodged an appeal.

Meanwhile, another group of residents has set up a trust and is considering a judicial review of the resource consent decision.

Better Planning Society 359 is the name of the new incorporated society, established by Dame Gaylene Preston. The name relates to Town Acre 359 from Wellington's original town plan.

A statement from the group said the Society is "on a mission to ensure better planning around Town Acre 359, which includes stopping the Mayfair development" due to scale, safety, noise, traffic, sun, and privacy concerns.

The Society says it has 14 members from Elizabeth, Austin, Pirie Streets and Rixon Grove and is seeking more.

A flyer from the group said it was concerned that construction of the Mayfair would involve the removal of 5,200 cubic metres of Mt Victoria hillside and send more than 27,000 heavy truck movements through narrow streets, and create serious construction noise over two years.

"We have formed an incorporated society to stop this badly planned development from going ahead and to make it less likely that other areas in Mt Victoria will suffer similar threats. The more members we have, the stronger and more credible our voice – a large, united community is our best chance of being heard, and of leading a real discussion on how the new district plan can keep Mt Victoria vibrant and inclusive." **TL**



Residents interested in joining can email: betterplanning359@gmail.com

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8

PIKOPIKO CLYDE QUAY KINDERGARTEN

Pikopiko Clyde Quay Kindergarten is located in the inner city suburb of Mount Victoria. We are on the grounds of Clyde Quay School, and share the playground with the school children, which helps the kindergarten children develop knowledge and connections with the school.

Older siblings are able to visit, and whānau involvement is encouraged. These factors encourage a smooth transition to kindergarten and then on to school as the children turn five. Our position within a school allows our children to observe and learn all about the routines of the older children, so they confidently anticipate going to school.

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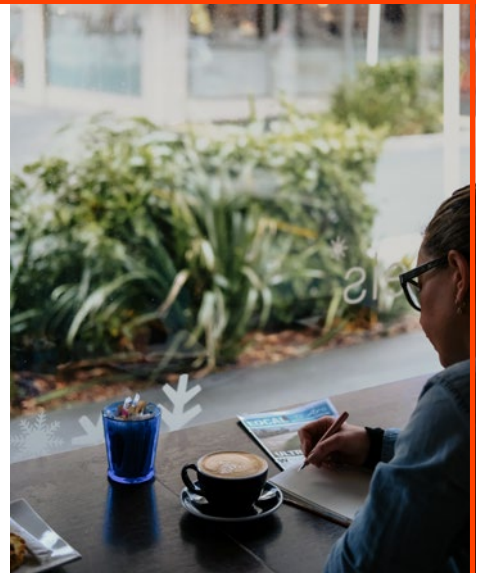
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Write your Welly life – writing workshop

Join columnist **Leah McFall** and journalist/Substacker **Dan Keane** for a workshop exploring the joys of writing both the city and the self, and learn some simple techniques to capture your own role in the capital's great drama.

Workshop includes one free drink, and nibbles.

This workshop is brought to you by *The Local*, Wellington's community newspaper and an enthusiastic supporter of emerging writers and journalists, and will be hosted by editor **Jane O'Loughlin**.



Sunday 9 August, 3:00pm – 4:30pm

Southern Cross Bar, 39 Abel Smith Street, Wellington
Tickets \$79 each. Book now – places are limited!

THE LOCAL
COMMUNITY NEWS





Creativity on stage at Showquest

Wellington East Girls' College was among the many intermediate and high schools competing in the recent Showquest 2026 event.

Photos: Becky Nevada

Hundreds of students took part in the Wellington stage of the nationwide event at the St James Theatre 24-25 June.

To take part, each school must develop an original performance that weaves together six elements: Art, Music, Dance, Drama, Culture and Technology – exploring a theme chosen by the students themselves. Performances are entirely student-led: choreographed, designed, produced and performed by students.

Wellington East received an excellence award for music and recognition for drama.

The Senior overall winners were Sacred Heart Girls' College (1st Place); Scots College (2nd Place) and St Mary's College (3rd Place).

The Junior award winners were Maidstone Intermediate (1st Place), Fraser Crescent School (2nd Place), and Fergusson Intermediate (3rd Place).

Also featuring on the stage was the TOI wearable art showcase, presented in partnership with World of WearableArt (WOW).

TOI invited students to push the boundaries of creativity, transforming imaginative concepts into striking wearable works of art that captivated audiences with a blend of fashion, storytelling and performance. **TL**



Research participants

Kia ora!

wanted!

Are you older than 18?

Have you called **Mount Victoria** home for at least the past 3 years?

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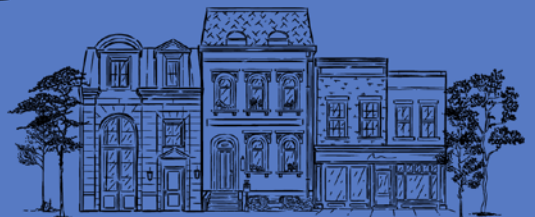
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I would love to hear from you!
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This discussion will take up an hour of your time & your audio data will be stored without identifiers



Local fresh produce meeting French cheeses is what Antoine calls, 'a perfect combination.'

What happens when a French chef makes pizza?

From cheffing in a Michelin-starred restaurant in Paris, to opening his first outlet on Cambridge Terrace, Rowena Fry meets the man who made it happen, Antoine Collet.

Antoine admits that when he first came to work in our city he was definitely not a fan. 'I got really, really annoyed with the Wellington weather,' he says with a smirk. But after a few seasons Antoine learnt to endure the prevailing northerlies and biting southerlies, and accept that side of Pōneke's personality.

As well as working for two years at Bellamy's, in Parliament, Antoine's international skills have had him employed at a number of Wellington's top restaurants as sous, head, and executive chef and it was here that he quickly learnt how different Kiwis are to Parisians. "People are a lot harsher in France. You don't get 'please' or 'thank you'."

Antoine says he always wanted to run his own restaurant and was fully aware of the difficulties that starting a business involved; the world of dine-in restaurants is famously difficult to sustain longer than the average lifespan of five years. So, working with a business mentor he ran through all the variables, did the numbers, and reversed the common process of starting with what he wanted to do (and then figure out how to make it work). Instead, Antoine went searching for something that already worked well and then found ways to make it truly his own.

This is when the idea of gourmet pizzas arrived; a unique base with flavoursome, French toppings.

So how does a French chef put his spin on pizza? As well as his 12+ years of cheffing around the world, Antoine already had skills in patisserie and comes from the land of baguette so knew how to make



a base that the taste buds (and stomach) would adore. As for the toppings, Antoine explains best, "We've got lamb meat balls and artichoke. I guarantee you'll not find artichoke on any pizzas in town. Red wine braised beef. Again, I guarantee you'll not find red wine braised beef on pizzas

in town. We use French cheeses as well: French brie, Gruyère, Comté." (For the vegans and lactose intolerants amongst us, Antoine's menu also offers vegan, vegetarian, and gluten free options.)

The final part of the puzzle was fortuitous; the finding of his premises. For five years, Antoine had practised, and competed, as a knife thrower at Sweet Axe on Cambridge Terrace. He'd already asked the owners for advice on running a business but followed up by asking if they knew of any kitchens to rent. "Well, we've got one upstairs; do you want to look?" they said. As soon as he walked in he knew it was perfect. "It was out of the blue! It needed a bit of work but I could see it."

Three months later, in March of this year, Déjà Vu opened for business – and is adding a distinctly French twist to the local pizza scene. **TL**

Déjà Vu – www.dejavu.nz

Next to Sweet Axe on 60 Cambridge Tce. Dine in at Sweet Axe, pick up, or get it delivered.

Finding the vibe

James Lowe from Lowe & Co finds that property purchases are as much about gut instincts as they are about numbers and lists of requirements.

With Anji away enjoying a well-deserved holiday in Vietnam, I've been handed the keys to this month's column. By all accounts she and Jason are having a fantastic time, although with temperatures pushing into the high 30s and humidity thick enough to chew on, Wellington winter suddenly doesn't sound quite so bad. At least that's what I keep telling myself.

For those who don't know me, I'm James Lowe. I've been working in real estate for just over three years now and alongside my mother and business partner, Anji, for more than two of those. Compared to Anji's 18 years in the industry, that probably still makes me the apprentice, but I like to think I've picked up a few lessons along the way.

Living in Mt Victoria, most of us already understand the importance of location. In my admittedly biased opinion, it's the best suburb in Wellington. We have the city on our doorstep, beautiful character homes, incredible views, and a real sense of community. Location matters, and it always will.

What has surprised me, however, is how much less property transactions are about the objective facts than I expected. Floor area, sun, school zones, construction type and parking all matter, of course. But after walking hundreds of buyers through homes, I've realised that many purchasing decisions ultimately come down to something far less measurable.

The word buyers use most often is "vibe".

They might not be able to fully explain it, but they know when a home feels right. Sometimes a property ticks every box on paper but fails to connect emotionally. Other times a buyer walks through the front door and immediately starts imagining Christmas lunch on the deck, kids playing in the backyard, or morning coffees in the sunroom.

That emotional connection is powerful.

As homeowners, we naturally build memories and attachment to our homes over time. The challenge when selling is recognising that buyers don't see those memories. They're walking through with fresh eyes.

Creating an environment where they can picture their own future in the home is often just as important as presenting the practical features.

Another observation from my relatively short time in the industry is how irrational even the most reasonable people can become during a property transaction.

And that's completely understandable.

For many people, buying or selling a home is one of the biggest financial decisions they'll ever make. It's often tied to major life events — growing families, downsizing, relationship changes, retirement, job moves, or simply the desire for a new chapter.

When emotions, uncertainty and large sums of money collide, people occasionally act in ways that surprise even themselves.

That's why one of the most valuable things we can do, whether buying or selling, is remember that there are real people on the other side of every transaction. Buyers aren't just numbers on an offer sheet, and sellers aren't simply names on a title.

At its heart, real estate isn't really about property at all.

It's about people, their stories, and helping them take the next step in their lives. **TL**

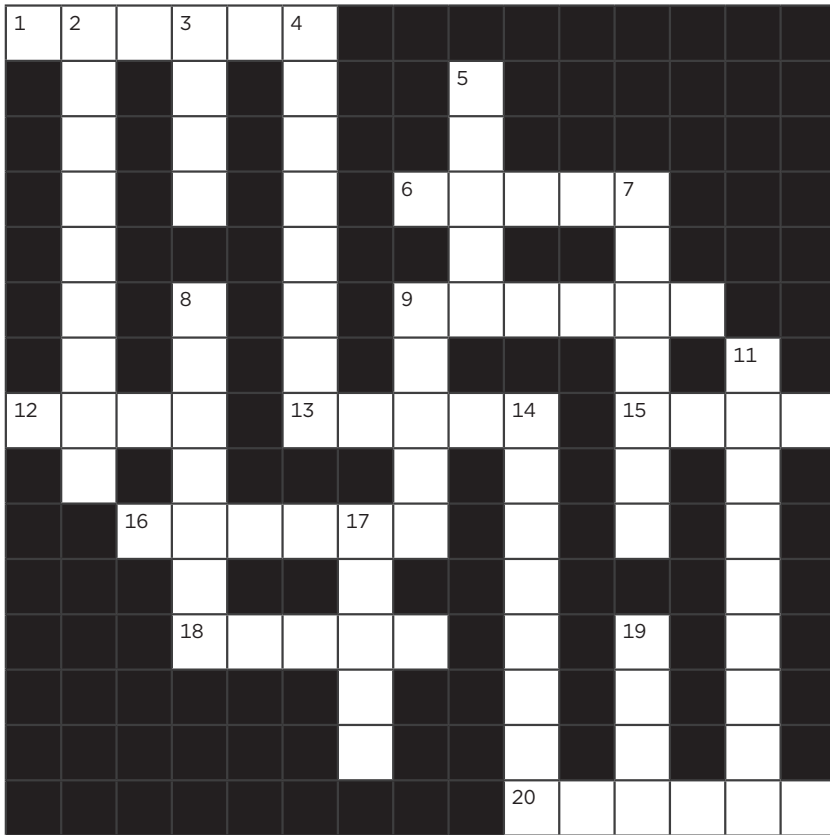
Sometimes a property ticks every box on paper but fails to connect emotionally. Other times a buyer walks through the front door and immediately starts imagining Christmas lunch on the deck.



Lowe & Co
REALTY

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Beau's Crossword #9



Across:

1. Fear. (6)
6. Boring, simple. (5)
9. A person walks, a baby ----- (6)
12. Forlorn. (5)
13. First time. (5)
15. Specific spot, a ---- of respect. (4)
16. Terminology. (6)
18. Smooth and dynamic. (5)
20. Birthplace or deathbed of stars. (6)


Down:

2. Dramatic exaggeration. (9)
3. Capital city of Azerbaijan. (4)
4. Class with 8 legs. (8)
5. Paver. (5)
7. Issue, tough decision. (7)
8. An explorer's tool, moral ----- (7)
9. Airplane interior, ---- fever. (5)
11. Worst nemesis. (9)
14. Object that brings good fortune. (8)
17. A story told through music. (5)
19. Chatter incessantly. (4)

For the solution see the-local.co.nz/crosswords

ULO ? Unidentified Local Object

Identify the mystery object – something in the Mount Vic area – to win a \$20 voucher to Tomboy cafe on Majoribanks Street.

Email your answers to us at admin@the-local.co.nz. If there's more than one correct answer, the winner will be selected at random. Congratulations to Helen Hibma who identified the (quite tricky) June ULO as a part of a building on Roxburgh Street. 



July school holiday guide

Wondering how to keep tamariki entertained during these school holidays? Wellington has no shortage of family-friendly activities, from theatre and wildlife encounters to creative workshops, museum adventures and Matariki celebrations. Whether you're looking for a full day out, a free activity close to home or something a little different, there are plenty of opportunities for tamariki to learn, create, explore and have fun this July.

Matariki 2025. Image: Wellington City Council



MATARIKI AHI KĀ

Wellington Waterfront | 9–12 July, 6pm–9pm | Free
Celebrate the Māori New Year with this immersive waterfront experience. Wander through a spectacular trail of fire installations, projections, performances and storytelling, with a special ceremony each evening honouring those who have passed and expressing hopes for the year ahead. Live music and kai will also be on offer.

LAND OF THE LONG, LONG DRIVE

Circa Theatre | 4–18 July | Paid
Join Wētā, Tuna and Kārearea on an unforgettable road trip to Gary the Glowworm's "Rave in the Cave" birthday celebration. This award-winning children's theatre production combines music, adventure and plenty of laughs in a heartwarming story about friendship, teamwork and going the extra mile for those we love.

NŌKU TE AO CAPITAL E SCHOOL HOLIDAY PROGRAMME

Capital E | Throughout the holidays | Paid activities

Creative tamariki can get hands-on with screen-printing, journal-making and raranga (weaving) workshops as part of Capital E's July holiday programme. Capital E's free indoor play space for children aged 0–5 is also

MRS LLAMA THE VERY KIWI FARMER

Gryphon Theatre | 6–10 July | Paid

On her lively New Zealand farm, Mrs Llama is trying to keep everything under control... but between some very pesky rabbits and a cast of unforgettable animal characters, things quickly spiral into hilarious chaos. The show's cast is entirely made up of children. Tickets: wellingtonrepertory.org.nz. open Monday to Saturday throughout the holidays.



Image: Wellington Repertory



TAMARIKI TAKEOVER

Wellington Museum | 11 July, 10am–2pm | Free

Bring the whole whānau along for a free day packed with storytelling, creativity, hands-on activities and interactive fun. The annual Tamariki Takeover encourages young visitors to explore the museum in new ways while learning through play.

CAPITAL OF KAI

Wellington Museum | Daily, 10am–5pm | Free

Discover miniature versions of Wellington’s favourite dishes and try your hand at creating your own culinary masterpieces through interactive activities inspired by the city’s vibrant food culture.

TASTY TREASURE HUNT

Wellington Museum | Daily, 10am–5pm | Free

Pick up a free activity sheet and explore the museum while uncovering fascinating stories about Wellington’s food history.

WELLINGTON ZOO HOLIDAY PROGRAMME

Te Nukua Wellington Zoo | 6–9 July and 13–17 July | Paid

Animal lovers aged 5–12 can go behind the scenes at the Zoo and experience what it’s like to care for wildlife. Activities include preparing animal diets, creating enrichment, learning about veterinary care and discovering how conservation helps protect species in Aotearoa and beyond.

MATARIKI MĀ PUANGA ACTIVITY BOOKLET

Zealandia Te Māra a Tāne | Throughout July | Free with sanctuary entry

Celebrate Matariki while exploring Zealandia with a free activity booklet inspired by Waitā, the whetū associated with the moana. Families can connect with nature through observation, exploration and activities designed to encourage curiosity about the natural world.

WHĀNAU PRINT-MAKING

Zealandia Te Māra a Tāne | 17 July, 10am–3pm | Free with sanctuary entry

Get creative with local artist Tayla Hartemink and decorate T-shirts, tote bags and other fabric items using nature-inspired stamps featuring native manu, ika and ocean life.

NAN AND TUNA

Zealandia Te Māra a Tāne | 18 July, 11am | Free with sanctuary entry

Join String Bean Puppets for a heartwarming tale about friendship, rivers and caring for the natural world.

THE PENGUIN AND THE SEA MONSTER

Zealandia Te Māra a Tāne | 10 July, 10am | Free with sanctuary entry

A delightful puppet performance from String Bean Puppets following a little blue penguin on a magical adventure beneath the stars.



TREE OF REMEMBRANCE

Nairn Street Cottage | 10–31 July | Free

Reflect on the themes of Matariki by writing a message to a loved one on a paper star and adding it to the Tree of Remembrance in the cottage garden.

CABLE CAR MUSEUM

Kelburn | Daily, 10am–5pm | Free

Step back in time and explore Wellington’s transport history. Visitors can get up close to historic cable cars, see the original winding machinery in action and enjoy one of the city’s best free family attractions.

Community notices are free for local groups and not-for-profits. Get in touch if you would like to include your listing in *The Local*.

Climate change workshop

Turn Your Climate Concern into Confident Action for a Better World is a low-cost one-day workshop that helps participants to feel strong and respond effectively in the face of the environmental crises. Based on the popular international education programme *The Work That Reconnects*. In Wellington on Saturday 11 July, repeated on 5 September, details at events.
humanitix.com/twtr

Mt Victoria Residents Association

Our meetings are the first Thursday of the month 6pm at Clyde Quay School Hall. All welcome. Contact mtvicra@gmail.com

Wellington East Girls' College Enrolments Open

Online enrolments for Year 9 students starting in 2027 are now open at Wellington East Girls' College. **Key date:** 22 July 2026* – Applications for all Year 9 students, including out-of-zone applicants, should be submitted by this date. *Families living within the home zone are encouraged to apply by 22 July for planning purposes, although in-zone applications can be accepted at any time.

Tararua Tramping Club

Our club meetings are held on Tuesday nights at our clubrooms at 4 Moncrieff Street commencing at 7:30pm. Visit ttc.org.nz/TTC/ClubNight to see our current Club Night programme of 45-minute presentations on a range of interesting topics including outdoor activities and overseas travel. All welcome.

Pikopiko Clyde Quay Kindergarten

SPACES AVAILABLE! Pikopiko is open for 2-5-year-olds, Monday to Friday, except public holidays. We are operating as a full year kindergarten from 2026. 20 hours free from 2 years old. Phone **04 385 0441** or email: pikopikoclydequay@wmkindergartens.org.nz Please see wmkindergartens.org.nz for more information.

Crossways Community Creche

We are a not-for-profit early learning centre welcoming children aged 1 to 5. Open Monday to Friday, including school holidays, we are located at 61 Majoribanks Street. Contact us on **022 153 4604** or enrolments@crosswayscreche.org.nz. For more information, visit crossways.org.nz

One Mindful Breath

One Mindful Breath explores the role of meditation and mindfulness in embracing the wonders and difficulties of our modern lives. Our practice is secular, framed by Buddhist values. We meet every Wednesday at 7:30pm at the Friends' Centre, Moncrieff St, Mount Victoria. Each session has a meditation, discussion, and a cup of tea. The first Wednesday of the month is "Beginners' Mind", great if you're new to meditation. Find out more at onemindfulbreath.org.nz

Innermost Gardens

Gardening Sundays: 10am-12pm on the first and third Sunday of the month. Also Tuesday morning gardening every week during school term 10am-12 pm. Everyone is welcome. Contact innermostgardens@gmail.com or check out our website innermostgardens.org.nz to find out more about how the gardens are run and allotment and composting opportunities.

Table tennis for over 60s

Table tennis is a fantastic sport for older people as it helps with movement, brain stimulation, and muscle/bone strength. We have 8 tables and play 3 times a week at the stadium on Alexandra Road. We want to encourage new people to join our fun social event. Only \$5 each time – no subscription. For more information contact Diana Winn, email winnich@xtra.co.nz or phone **04 801-9556**.

The Quakers.

Each Sunday at 10:30am Wellington Quakers gather for Worship as part of unprogrammed Friends Meetings. Each Wednesday there is a mid-week Meeting for Worship from 12:15 to 12:45pm. Our address is 7 Moncrieff St. We welcome all. For more information email wgtnquakers@gmail.com

The Listings section is an affordable way to let people know about your service. Advertise in *The Local* for as little as \$40.

Antiques wanted

GOLD, SILVER & COSTUME jewellery wanted & coins, scrap and alluvial. Small to large lots. Highest ever NZ prices paid. 0800 559922 for free no obligation appraisal.

WATCHES wanted, wrist and pocket style going or not, modern & old any considered 0800 559922

MASONIC LODGE items wanted badges, aprons, jewels and regalia all items considered 0800 559922

CAMERAS wanted, film type modern & old, Any considered Ph Ben 0800 559922

COINS & Banknotes wanted. Pennies, threepences NZ & foreign. All types. ph Ben 0800 559922

FOUNTAIN PENS Wanted. Conway Stewart & Parker Style. Any considered. Ph 0800 559922

MEDALS wanted. Military and sports medals. Any medals & badges considered. ph 0800 559922

MILITARY Items wanted. Books, badges, buttons & uniform. Ph 0800 559922

NZR New Zealand Railways items wanted. Badges, signs, uniforms. Ph 0800 559922

RUGBY Programs & badges wanted. Single items or whole collections. Ph 0800 559922

STAMPS First Day Covers, postcards & albums wanted. Any considered. Ph 0800 559922

RECORDS Wanted. 33s, 12s, 45s. Modern & old. Any considered. Ph 0800 559922

BOOKS Books Books Wanted. Fiction & Non-Fiction. Modern & old. Small - Estate Lots Ph 0800 559922

BOTTLES wanted, glass, marble, codd, stone & soda syphon types, NZ & Overseas Ph 0800 559922

BAYONETS swords and pocket knives wanted. Modern and old. Any considered ph 0800 559922

SCOUTS & Boys Brigade Memorabilia wanted Patches, blankets & uniform all items considered Ph 0800 559922

TYPEWRITERS wanted. Modern or old any considered. Ph Benjamin 0800 559922

TAXIDERMY wanted NZ - Exotic skins, heads, birds & mounted animals any considered ph 0800 559922

MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT & Police Memorabilia wanted. Badges, uniform & equipment - any items considered. ph 0800 559922

FIRE SERVICE /Brigade items wanted. Badges, patches uniforms & equipment all items considered 0800 559922

SHEET MUSIC wanted modern & old small to estate lots Ph Ben 0800 559922

Probus Wellington Central



Our mid-winter lunch is at the Wellington Club on The Terrace on Friday 17 July, starting at 12 noon. The usual meetings at Prefab will resume in August, with Helmut Modlik, Chief Executive of Te Rūnanga o Toa Rangatira, as the speaker on Friday 21 August. Probus usually meets on the third Friday of the month (Feb to Nov) at Prefab Hall, Jessie St, 10:00 am to noon. Membership \$50 per annum. Stay for buffet lunch at Prefab \$25. More information: probussouthpacific.org/microsites/wellingtoncentral/

Host Your Next Event at the Tararua Tramping Club Hall!



Looking for a unique, affordable venue with charm and space? The hall - a beautifully restored former church - is perfect for workshops, classes, and community events. Seats up to 145, two smaller breakout rooms available. Weekday and weekend slots open now! Book today and bring your event to life in a space with soul. Check us out at ttc.org.nz/TTC/HallHire or make a booking via the clubrooms booking inquiry form.

Rotary



The Mt Victoria Rotary Club is part of Rotary International, a global network of 1.2 million volunteers committed to "Service Above Self." We meet for dinner on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of every month (5:30pm for 6pm) at The Oaks, 89 Courtenay Place, Te Aro. Rotary offers a chance to give back, connect, and make a real difference - locally and globally. Whether you're curious or ready to jump in, we'd love to hear from you, send us an email: mtvictoriarotaryclub@gmail.com

Feldenkrais classes

Awareness through Movement classes are held Tuesdays 6-7pm, from 11 February, at the Quaker room in Moncrieff St. Relieve pain and stress, improve posture, balance and breathing, in a friendly, relaxing environment. Sue 0274667123, www.massagewellington.nz



Website IRL

Jane O’Loughlin checks out a website.

One of the benefits of neglecting house maintenance is the opportunity to see wildlife flourish in your vicinity. Insects, birds, rodents and wandering Mt Victoria cats are all looking for chances to set up house in and around your house, if you give them half the chance.

I’ll never forget the day I saw a small creature in the garden and said with delight: “Look, a squirrel!” before being reminded that there are no squirrels in New Zealand.

Thanks to Predator Free Wellington and all those Mt Vic trappers who enjoy posting pictures of dead rat carcasses on Facebook, those days are hopefully behind us.

But there are plenty of other, more useful specimens of nature out there.

In our case, our lack of window cleaning means a large brown spider has taken up residence outside our large kitchen window, with a web stretching from the roof all the way down to a kawakawa bush in the garden.

There’s nothing like the corpses of your mates hanging in midair to give you a bad feeling about a place.

With this wonderful spider’s web taking up most of the glass real estate, we can observe nature from the comfort of our kitchen, like a kind of free 24-hour wildlife documentary.

It’s a classic spider’s web, the kind you draw when you are a kid, with lines radiating from the centre, and criss-crossed with connecting web.

And just like the cliched drawing of a web, our protagonist spider will generally lurk in the centre, waiting for something to arrive.

If an insect happens to blunder in, it gets wrapped up, and then unpleasant things happen to it. Then it is cut free and dropped to the ground, I suppose so that other flying insects don’t spot them. There’s nothing like the corpses of your mates hanging in midair to give you a bad feeling about a place.

Although seeing a spider’s web is not a new thing, it’s great to be able to see the ongoing workings. When it gets damaged, the spider must repair it. From our vantage point we can watch it spacing out the lines of silk, joining them up, making it whole again. It’s fascinating.

The spider has done such an extraordinary job of securing this web, that it has survived despite the storms and rain of the past weeks.

Let’s be honest: spiders aren’t cute and even this one is hard to love. My daughter calls it Shelob, after the terrifying creature in Lord of the Rings.

I’ve got more of a soft spot, mainly thanks to Charlotte’s Web, a book I read and adored growing up.

I was always slightly confused by Charlotte’s Web, and why the humans thought words appearing in a web meant the pig was worth saving from becoming Christmas dinner, rather than the spider getting some attention for its amazing skill and spelling.

If our spider was to pull a trick like that I expect it would be to write “please continue to not wash the window”.

The sad ending of Charlotte’s Web is the death of the spider. I had to consult the internet to find out that garden spiders will live as long as two years. So as long as we continue to neglect the housework, we’ll have months of viewing pleasure. **TL**

Housing for everyone in Mt Vic

Felix Clarke looks at the history of Mt Victoria Housing Trust

2026 marks the 45th anniversary of Dwell, one of New Zealand's only grassroots social housing providers. Originally instated as Mt Victoria Housing Trust in 1981, a group of seven locals banded together to protect their neighborhood from gentrification.

Market rent in Mt Vic had been rising throughout the 70s, forcing low-income families to flee for outer suburbs. This affected tenants across the board, but was especially disrupting to the large, recently immigrated Pasifika and Greek communities.

Seeing their community slowly fragmented sparked an idea to buy rundown older houses and use local building talent to future-proof them. Then, rent-controlled housing could protect vulnerable families from housing insecurity.

With this aim, Mt Victoria Housing Trust was formed on 7 October 1981. Local MP Ken Comber granted the trust 3.5% interest on loans, the same discount that the government's own Social Housing Corp received. Judith Miller was elected the first chairperson, and with an official first donation of \$15 by Mike Butler the trust was legitimated and was granted a \$20,000 loan.

The decades that followed saw the trust transition from community project to region-wide social housing provider. The process was riddled with step-backs and small mistakes, but in rising to meet these obstacles, the trust was shaped into a resilient, intelligent organisation.

In 1983, 60 Elizabeth Street was restored, and the trust had its first tenants, a Samoan family of six who paid \$75 a week. A second house was bought, a third purchase failed – due to being cut off from state credit – and a fourth was threatening to collapse. Not only this, but tenant relationships were sometimes difficult, and rent was often in arrears. Nevertheless, the trust persevered.



Trustees and staff standing outside 15 Brougham St, Mt Victoria circa 2000. From left are Lizzie Quinn (chairperson), Rod Macdiarmid, Peter Jones, Brian Trott, Faye Tohbyn, William Holden, Liong Xi, Peter Cameron.

The tough times weren't over. The 90s saw the introduction of even harsher neoliberal reform policies from Ruth Richardson's National government, nicknamed "ruthanasia". The trust's interest rates were returned to market level, while at the same time, beneficiaries' accommodation payments were reduced, meaning people were likely to face eviction, and ultimately, the trust itself would go under. At the brink of collapse, Finance Minister John Luxton granted a return to 7.75% interest, saving the trust.

The trust emerged from its near collapse strengthened in its conviction that under the current welfare model, it was needed more than ever to help people slipping between the cracks.

The 2000s were when the trust finally started to bloom. The portfolio of properties, grown slowly through the tough early phases, were now worth \$2.2 million, enough to refinance loans, start maintenance projects, and look to the future.

This future has looked like partnerships. In 2002 First Homes Limited joined, lending architectural expertise. In 2006 Dwell helped found housing provider peak body Community Housing Aotearoa Incorporated, and as of May 2026 has partnered with DCM and Aoraki Construction, addressing both homelessness and housing supply problems locally. **TL**

Sourced from "More Than A Landlord" by Ben Schrader, and publicly available information.

Anji & James

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