

THE LOCAL



Karori

NGĀ KARERE HAPORI O KARORI



KARORI IS NOW KIWI COUNTRY

No longer just the national symbol, kiwi are becoming a reality in Karori, returning to the bush after an absence of 150 years.

In the past month, the final instalment of the 250 wild North Island brown kiwi was released into the hills of Wellington city, as part of the Capital Kiwi Project. With high survival rates thanks to a

network of traps keeping predators at bay, the release of the final numbers of the birds marks a milestone in an innovative approach to restoring an at-risk iconic symbol of Aotearoa.

And the impact is real for Karori with kiwi now turning up in the suburb itself, and locals doing their bit to make sure the bird can thrive. [Read more on page 2.](#) ➤

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Karori is now kiwi country

A major milestone has been achieved in the goal of restoring kiwi to the capital's bush, as Stella Carruthers reports.

The project that has resulted in Karori residents spotting kiwi on rural roads is celebrating the release of the final instalment birds into the wild.

“A spirit of working together – kotahitanga kiwi – has ensured kiwi can again live free on the our hills, where they belong, after 150 years of regional extinction,” said Capital Kiwi Project founder Paul Ward.

The project’s initial translocation permit from the Department of Conservation was to release 250 kiwi to the southwest of Wellington.

“This permit was a leap of faith in a new approach to community-led conservation – restoring our manu taonga alongside people. The results have been outstanding, with the project delivered extraordinary survivorship results. In areas with no pest control over 90% of kiwi chicks die – we’ve flipped those statistics. The project is now an international leader in rewilding.”

The Capital Kiwi Project marked the occasion by taking the iconic bird to the corridors of power. A

ceremony at Parliament on 28 April included the appearance of a wild kiwi – believed to be the first time kiwi has appeared at Parliament.

The Capital Kiwi Project started work 8 years ago, with a vision to enable kiwi to thrive in the Wellington area.

The first trap was set in November 2018 and the complete network was operational by 2020. After three years of monitoring, the criteria for the large-scale reintroduction was met. In November 2022 13 kiwi were released. The next 50 followed in May 2023.

Now, the Capital Kiwi Project spans 24,000 hectares, and has a network of 5,300 traps from Red Rocks in the south, to west of Porirua.

These hillsides are perfect habitat where, with predators controlled to appropriate levels, kiwi can live to thrive.

Joel Knight, Ectotherms and Birds Team Leader at Te Nukua Wellington Zoo was excited about the possibilities.

“Future Wellingtonians could very realistically have kiwi in their backyards,” he said.

With the project now well-established, Karori acts as a core support for the growing kiwi population with locals being at ground zero. “Karori, like Mākara, is now kiwi country!” says Paul.

A network of support from landowners, communities and iwi across the landscape underpinned the trap grid. Community engagement was key, as people would only protect what they cared about.

Richele McKenzie of local business Florence Boutique, is one of a number of locals taking action to support kiwi. Richele is a trail runner and takes her dog out regularly in the Karori hills. She signed up for a kiwi aversion training course.

“It’s something you can actually do. My dog – he’s a natural hunter so it was going to be an issue.”

Ongoing funding will be needed to monitor progress of the project.

The vision for the project however extends past kiwi alone, Paul says.

“We are working on a number of fronts here and there is increasing interest in how this landscape can support taonga manu well beyond kiwi. Stay tuned!” **TL**

“Future Wellingtonians could very realistically have kiwi in their backyards.”

A new site and new services for Karori Medical Centre

Karori Medical Centre is on the move after 50 years at its current site.

Stella Carruthers reports.

A new site for the Karori Medical Centre has finally been secured. Due to open in spring 2027, Karori Medical Centre will be shifting to new purpose-built premises on Beauchamp Street at the new Gibbons Co development.

Director and general practitioner Jeff Lowe said KMC has been on the hunt for a new site for more than a decade. “It’s nice to finally land on a site and be working with a reputed developer.”

The central location and good access will mean the new medical centre team can better serve the Karori community, Jeff says.

With an increasing demand for general practice, the new site will mean KMC can offer a more streamlined and modernised GP service. The extra space will allow the practice to expand its team of doctors and other health professionals, meaning that the centre will be able offer more appointments and extend its opening hours.

A bigger building will also enable the centre to offer an expanded range of additional health services.

“We’re looking to expand the team of allied health professionals who work with us. We’re also looking into services that might have traditionally been of-

fered in the hospital to make it more convenient for patients, such as infusion services like iron,’ said Jeff.

Such general practice innovation is not new to Karori Medical Centre. When the original centre was built in 1976 it was the first purpose-built medical centre in New Zealand, combining the three separate GP practices that were operating in Karori at the time. The practice was also an early adopter of technology, deciding to computerise at the same time they moved into the then new build.

“We’re looking into services that might have traditionally been offered in the hospital to make it more convenient for patients...”

“The site has worked really well, but it’s gotten a bit tired and a bit tight.” Jeff says. The team will be making the shift in stages as it transitions from the current to new premises, with steps taken to minimise disruption to patients.

“We’re excited to be able to move to new premises and be able to continue to look after and care for the Karori community,’ said Jeff. ‘During Covid we showed how seriously we take looking after our community – we look forward to continuing offering excellent services to our patients and an expanded range of services for the next 50 years.’ **TL**



An image of the future Karori Medical Centre

Community news for Karori

Welcome to the first edition of *The Local – Karori*.

When you live in the country’s capital city, there’s plenty of news and commentary about the big issues our nation faces.

What sometimes gets lost is the smaller stories, about communities and people. That’s where *The Local* comes in – we’re a community newspaper operating at a hyper local level – your suburb.

The Local has been delivering community news in Mt Victoria for over two years, and in Te Aro (central Wellington) since the beginning of this year. Now we’re excited to be in Karori, and we’ve assembled a small but brilliant team to bring you news about the suburb you live in.


As paper that champions local, you won’t see us promoting businesses that send their profits overseas. We’re about supporting homegrown artists, entrepreneurs and businesses – people that are grounded in Aotearoa, and more importantly, this patch of Te Whanganui a Tara: Karori.

I’d like to pay a special thanks to the Karori Residents Association whose initiative it was to bring a community newspaper here, and who have provided significant assistance in getting started. I would also like to acknowledge the valuable support of the Karori Business Association. You can read more about these organisations in this edition.

In putting together this first paper I’ve been struck by the number of talented and passionate people who call Karori home. It’s clear this is a strong community of people who care deeply about their neighbourhood and making it a better place to live.

I believe a good local paper is an essential part of a community. It tells us stories about ourselves, recounts our history, and gives us a place to record and debate issues of the day.

If you’re in a position to support us through advertising, please get in touch. It’s a free paper but readers can also make a donation – see details below.

If you have ideas for features or news you would like to see included in *The Local*, feel free to send an email. We look forward to getting to know you. 



Jane O’Loughlin
Editor



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Deliveries and Distribution

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If you missed out on your copy, want extras or would prefer not to have a paper copy delivered, contact us at: editor@the-local.co.nz

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Futuna chapel among the world's most beautiful buildings



Photo: Futuna Chapel Trust

Futuna Chapel has been honoured by Time Out magazine as the 21st most beautiful building in the world alongside the Taj Mahal and La Sagrada Familia.

Featured in the global publication's list, which showcases stunning architecture across 59 countries and 333 cities, Futuna Chapel is the only New Zealand building to be named.

The magazine praised the "beautiful little space" "hidden away in the Wellington suburb of Karori."

"Inside, you'll find marvellous displays of light over the floor and walls through the pretty stained-glass windows, wood, layers, a load of texture and plenty of sharp angles."

The Futuna Chapel Trust said the recognition by Time Out brings international attention to the chapel's enduring cultural and architectural significance. **TL**



Shereen Singh, Radius Care General Manager Home Support; Andrew Peskett, Radius Care CEO; Rachel Garrard, Metlifecare Operations Manager; and Sara Harwood, Karori Village Manager (who will stay on as the Care Home Manager)

Radius Care purchase

Radius Care has purchased Karori Village rest home on Messines Road, previously owned by Metlifecare.

The New Zealand owned company announced the acquisition last month.

"We've entered into an agreement to acquire Karori Village, a well-established 90-bed care home in Wellington offering rest home, hospital, secure dementia and respite care.

"This will be our first care home in Wellington and a meaningful step forward as we continue to grow our presence throughout the country. The Karori community will benefit from Radius Care's nationwide resources, specialist care expertise, and this acquisition ensures continuity of specialized care for residents."

CEO Andrew Peskett said: "This acquisition represents Radius Care's 25th care home and establishes our presence in one of Wellington's most prestigious suburbs. It is a further step in Radius Care's measured growth as a health services provider, reflecting a continued focus on acquiring large well located care homes." **TL**



Community constable update

A message from our community constable:
 "Hi, I'm Constable Chris Wake from the Johnsonville Community Policing Team. I've just taken up the Karori portfolio and am excited to get stuck in! You'll see me out and about walking the beat, so please say hello if you come across me. We are working on a few little projects that we will be doing in Karori so watch this space. In the meantime, if you want to get in touch with me, send an email to Johnsonville.cpc@police.govt.nz to have a chat. As always, call 111 in an emergency and 105 to report non-emergency matters." **TL**




Chair's note

The Karori Business Association is proud to support *The Local – Karori* – a great new addition to our thriving community.

KBA represents and supports local businesses while working alongside community groups to help make Karori an even more vibrant place to live and shop. We're funded by a targeted rate from commercial properties in the Business Improvement District, along with membership fees from local businesses.

A bit about me: I've called Karori home for 40 years. It's where I've raised my family, run a business, and been involved in many community groups. I believe we all have a part to play in making Karori a great place to live – somewhere with plenty to see and do close to home, especially as living costs continue to rise.

With Mother's Day coming up on 10 May, I'll be catching up with my three adult sons – in person and over Zoom. If you're planning to celebrate the mums and mother figures in your life, you'll find lots of options right here in Karori, from dining and pampering to gifts, books, fashion, and unique pre-loved treasures. 

Heather Baldwin

Chair, Karori Business Association

Aho Development

The Aho development on the corner of Karori Road and Campbell St is due for completion in July 2026. The new-build is a mixed-use blend of residential and commercial spaces. Aho comprises 2 commercial spaces with street frontage at ground level, and 20 residential townhouses or apartments. Leigh Adgo of Stratum Management advises that an experienced cafe operator has leased one of the commercial

spaces, adding another quality hospitality offering to Karori's already vibrant food scene. Contact leigh@stratumsales.co.nz



KBA calendar

- **The WCC Draft Annual Plan** is out for consultation, with submissions closing **10 May**. It includes proposals about short-term accommodation, cycleways changes, contaminated waste fees and establishment of an Urban Development Office to make efficiencies. Go to wcc.govt.nz and search for Annual Plan consultation.
- **KBA networking event 5.30 – 7.30pm Monday 18 May** at The Pickle Jar, 5 Parkvale Road, Karori. KBA members, Karori businesses and community partners all welcome! Enjoy your first drink and a bite from KBA. RSVP to members@karori.org.nz by Thursday, 14 May. See you there!
- **KBA board meeting 6–8pm, Monday 22 June** at Karori Community Centre, 7 Beauchamp St. Open to KBA members. RSVP to members@karori.org.nz by 18 June.

KBA contacts

- BID Manager: manager@karori.org.nz
- Marketing/communications: connect@karori.org.nz
- Membership enquiries: members@karori.org.nz
- Website: karori.org.nz

Let us know any business news or events you would like KBA to highlight in our monthly column. Contact KBA comms: connect@karori.org.nz

Karori community comes through for local book store

Postal services will remain at Marsden Books, after an outpouring of community support. **Stella Carruthers reports.**

Postal services are more than just about sending letters and parcels, they are also about community connection. Briony Hogg, owner of Marsden Books in Marsden Village, discovered this first hand when she faced losing postal services at her store. When the announcement came from NZ Post in late January about the closure, floods of people came into the store wanting to know what they could do.

The community rallied to the cause and wrote letters, called NZ Post directly and sent multitudes of feedback and complaint forms through the NZ Postal Services website.

“The volume was so big they actually had to sit up and take notice,” said Briony. “We’re so grateful to the community because they are the ones that made it happen.

“It’s so lovely and reassuring to know that in this day and age community voice still makes a difference. You can actually fight these decisions.”

The proposal would have seen the suburb’s only postal service reduced to a petrol station – the BP near the central shopping centre. Marsden Books’ customers were also upset for the business itself, a shop that has been running for 45 years.

While the postal service itself was not a major revenue generator, Briony said, it helped generate sales. People could buy a book, buy a card, and then have it gift wrapped on site before it got immediately sent out in the post. “For us it was important for NZ Post to understand that you do have to consider that complementary service that is offered in outlets.”

But it was not just about the loss of possible sales. For a lot of elderly people in Karori conversations at the store were sometimes the only social interaction they would get all day.



Briony Hogg is thankful for the support of her customers. Photo: Stella Carruthers

“We’re so grateful to the community because they are the ones that made it happen.”

“They’re coming in to buy a stamp and to have a chat... it’s not just a transaction, it’s a connection, it’s a conversation.”

Ever since the announcement that NZ Post are reversing the service cutback at Marsden Books, there has been a wave of people coming into the store to say how happy they are, such as community member Elle Henderson.

“I’m very glad for the community speaking up – because I think the postal service is important stuff!”

The postal service was important not just for the service it provided but also for the connections it supported, Briony said.

“It’s good for us and it’s good for the community.” TL

PEOPLE IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD



Few suburbs enjoy the benefits of a local butchery but, at the Gipps St Butchery, Bill Allan continues to greet customers with a cheery “hello”, and the littlest ones with a cheerio. **Lee-Anne Duncan** popped in for a chat.

Bill the Butcher was almost Bill the Builder. However, as he was fixing to leave school in 1975 the building trade was in a slump. He couldn't nail an opening.

Back into the classroom Bill went for sixth form (year 12) but not for long. “It wasn't for me. I saw a job advertised in the *Dominion* newspaper for an apprenticeship at Manners Street Meats. I started the next day.”

In those days there were about 30 butcher shops in Wellington's inner city, back when supermarkets weren't so much in the meat business. It was “good fun”, Bill says, and he enjoyed camaraderie with the other shops' apprentices.

Now that supermarkets very much are in the meat business, there's a total of zero butcheries in the city, while Bill's Gipps St Butchery remains one of only a few suburban butcheries in Wellington. “We get customers coming here from all over the city, even from Seatoun and Whitby. Karori has always been a really good spot, as far as I'm concerned. We're still here, so hopefully we're doing something right. We have very loyal customers.”

An Aro Valley boy, Bill and his family moved into Karori in 1989, two years after he reopened the Karori Park Butchery in 1987. He then closed that and bought the Gipps St business in 1995, back when not-yet-

trendy lamb shanks were called “mutton knuckles” and cost significantly less than today.

Bill and I are chatting the day before Easter Friday, and there's a steady stream of loyal customers popping in and out, picking up their meaty treats. “We've been doing a lot of roast pork and lamb, and hams this Easter,” Bill says, breaking off to greet a customer by name. “And haggis! We had a lot of haggis ordered for this Easter, for some reason.”

Bill and his off-siders – Martin, James and Gavin, who have all worked there for twenty years – do it all themselves. They fill the haggis, smoke the hams, mix and link the sausages, and break down animal carcasses into various cuts for customers' careful selection, whether they're buying a whole standing beef roast or a couple of lamb chops. It's that quality, convenience and service that keeps specialty butchers going, Bill says.

While prices and preferences change – and beef cheeks now slightly out-perform lamb shanks – what hasn't altered over the years is the job's physicality and long hours. Despite the fact Bill could officially claim retirement, he has no plans to lower the blinds on his business, even after 50 years in the business.

Which I find amazing, as someone who prefers to outsource the hard yards on my meat prep – and I set Bill to work dicing 2.5 kg of chuck steak for me. Especially as that first day on the job might have cowed a lesser man. “It was a Friday in the days of late-night shopping, so I cleaned from 7 am until 8:30 pm. They hadn't had an apprentice there for a couple of months so, yeah, it was a pretty hard first day!” **TL**



A Community Voice: The Karori Residents Association

Karori has always been the kind of place where people take an interest – in their street, their neighbours, their local park, and what’s happening around them. That sense of looking out for the place, and for each other, sits behind the Karori Residents Association. The Association has been around in one form or another for over a century. It began in 1920 as the Karori Progressive Association, around the time Karori became part of Wellington City. It later became the Karori Residents Association in 1996, went quiet for a period, and was re-established by locals at a public meeting in 2014, under the leadership of its Chair at the time, Lesleigh Salinger and retired senior civil engineer Bill Guest.

A lot has changed since those early days and the way the Association operates has changed too. Since Andrea Skews took over as Chair in 2019, there has been a deliberate shift in direction. Rather than positioning itself as a traditional lobbying group speaking on behalf of the community, the focus has moved toward enabling residents to be part of the conversation themselves. Karori is one of Wellington’s largest and most diverse suburbs. There is no single voice that can represent everyone and trying to do that can miss the mark. Instead, the role of the KRA

In a suburb this size, helping people engage for themselves is often more effective than attempting to speak for them.



The KRA committee is Andrea Skews (chair), Belinda Hussey (secretary), Derek Neale (treasurer), John Sinclair, Navleen Kaur Bindra, and Riley Fraser.

today is to help people stay informed, connect them with what’s happening, and support them to have their own say on the issues that affect them. That might mean sharing information about upcoming changes, highlighting when submissions are open, or making sure residents know how and where to provide feedback directly. In a suburb this size, helping people engage for themselves is often more effective than attempting to speak for them.

The Association still works closely with Wellington City Council and other organisations on local issues, including transport, safety, green spaces, community facilities, and future development. The approach is practical: supporting good outcomes, keeping communication open, and helping the community stay connected to the decisions being made.

You can see this approach in action through local projects and initiatives – from environmental work such as restoration efforts along the Karori Stream, to community events and public meetings that bring residents face to face with decision makers. These are tangible ways people can get involved and help shape their suburb. Just as importantly, the KRA supports others to step forward. Many of the best ideas in Karori come from locals who see a need and want to do something about it. The Association’s role is often to help those ideas gain momentum by connecting people, sharing information, and backing community led projects where it can.

The Karori Residents Association is run by volunteers – locals who give their time because they care about where they live. Committee members are involved across different parts of the community and bring practical experience and local knowledge into the Association’s work. For more information about current projects, events, and how to get involved, visit the Karori Residents Association website: karoriassociation.nz

What buyers are really looking for right now

Andrea Skews from Lowe & Co explains what's actually driving buyer decisions in Karori right now.

Last week I had a buyer stand in a north-facing lounge on Cornford Street and just... exhale. Not because the kitchen had been renovated or the bathroom was new. Because the sun was streaming in, the house felt dry and warm, and she could walk to Karori village, the school, and the park. She made an offer that afternoon.

That moment sums up what I'm seeing on the ground. Buyers have shifted. The question used to be "Does it look good?" Now it's "Does it work?" I've seen this shift before, and when it happens, the homes that meet it move quickly. The ones that don't get left behind.

Buyers aren't just buying a house. They're buying into a suburb, and Karori's fundamentals are genuinely strong.

I'm seeing buyers ask different questions now. What's the insulation like? Is there a heat pump? Where's the storage? What's the sun doing in winter? These aren't renovation questions. They're liveability questions. Homes that answer them stand out.

Buyers aren't just buying a house. They're buying into a suburb – and Karori's fundamentals are genuinely strong.

Presentation still matters. But a beautifully staged home that's cold, damp, or awkward will get polite interest and low offers. A well-maintained, practical home with good bones will get serious buyers making offers.

Location within Karori is playing a bigger role too. Close to the village, within school zones, near public transport. These have always mattered, but they're being weighted more heavily now. Karori's median sale price sits at \$926,250, down 4.2% on the prior year, but homes that tick the liveability boxes are still selling inside 35 days. The rest sit longer and are forced to adjust.

Which brings me to pricing. Getting it right at launch is everything. Karori buyers watch closely. They know when something is priced to test and when it's priced to sell. An overpriced home doesn't just sit. It quickly becomes the one buyers start to question.

There's also something harder to quantify that makes Karori special. The community itself. Neighbours who know each other. Streets with pride. A village that functions. Buyers feel it at open homes, and it's part of why demand here has held up while other Wellington suburbs have softened.

Resilience isn't a crisis concept. It's just good living. And the homes in Karori that embody it are the ones selling well right now. TL

If you want a clear view of where your property sits in this market, I'm always available for a straight conversation.

Call Andrea Skews on **0220 SELL IT** or email andrea@loweandco.nz

Source: realestate.co.nz insights



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The Karori local cafe that gives back to conservation


Every bite supports Zealandia's conservation work
Located on Level 2 of the Zealandia Visitor Centre
End of Waiapu Road, Karori

Rātā

CAFE

ULO ? Unidentified Local Object

Identify the mystery object – something in Karori – to win a \$20 book voucher.

Email your answers to us at karori@the-local.co.nz. If there's more than one correct answer, the winner will be selected at random. 





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.

For more information contact: Angela 027 349 969 or visit: marsdenclub.org.nz



Get your message seen by Karori residents

The Local is delivered direct to letterboxes every month and is available from newsstands in Karori town centre. Support local journalism and get your message across through your community newspaper.

See our website for more details:
the-local.co.nz/advertise



[karori community centre.org.nz](http://karoricommunitycentre.org.nz)

We've helped make our suburb a great place to live for nearly 60 years

We have affordable, well equipped facilities for community and commercial use as well as mobility equipment, tables and chairs for hire. All in one convenient location (behind Mobil).

Visit karoricommunitycentre.org.nz or phone 04 476 4968



Do you have a regular or one-off event, class or service you would like to promote? 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*.

Karori Repair Cafe

Our next Repair cafe will be at Sunday 14 June 10am-1pm at the Karori Community Centre. Bring your broken or worn thing and our skilled volunteers will help you with repair, and bring any spare parts needed. For more information, or if you'd like to get involved head to [Facebook.com/KaroriRepairCafe](https://www.facebook.com/KaroriRepairCafe)

Karori Arts & Crafts Centre

Karori Arts & Crafts Centre offers art and craft classes, workshops, and social interest groups for adults, and afterschool classes for children in the heart of Karori. In May try drypoint etching, Zentangle, wax jewellery carving, spinning, or a magical Night Art session. Visit kacc.org.nz to explore the full programme and enrol.

Colours of Futuna Concert Series 2026

The Colours of Futuna concert series 2026 has a stunning line up of exceptional musicians performing in the newly restored Futuna Chapel – known for its exceptional acoustic quality. Detailed concert information and tickets are \$15 and available at [events.humanitix.com/colours-of-futuna-2026/tickets](https://www.events.humanitix.com/colours-of-futuna-2026/tickets). Futuna Chapel Trust is extremely grateful to the Wellington City Council for supporting this event. Coming up in May: 3 May Choro Ao Vento, 10 May Krakerjack: Polish folk and klezmer band, 17 May Saxcess: Saxophone Quartet, 24 May Kugels: Wellington based klezmer, 31 May WOSOSI.

Karori Lions Club

Do you know someone who could use a little extra kindness this winter? A neighbour, a family, or someone quietly doing it tough? Karori Lions Club Inc. Winter Wishes Program is here to help – delivering a Special Act of Kindness to those who need it most. Nominate someone today by visiting Gamboni's Deli, Marsden Books, Florence Boutique to pick up a form. This project has been made possible thanks to our partners BOWEN Plumbing & Gas, Gamboni's Deli, Marsden Books, Florence Boutique and DRB Construction. Coming together as a community to make this winter a little warmer for someone in need.

Your Website Should Be Your Best Salesperson



Digital Voice has helped local businesses just like yours turn their online presence into a steady stream of enquiries. We're not just web developers – we're your growth partner. We handle the website, the content, getting found on Google, and the ongoing support so you can focus on what you're good at. 10 years' experience. Real results. Free consultation to see what's possible. Visit digitalvoice.co.nz/local or call 021 564 222 today.

Friends of Karori Cemetery

Events coming up in May include Murder and Mayhem tour (3 May); Tales from the Vaults tour (10 May); and an evening tour (22 May). See our website for more information: friendsofkaroricemetery.co.nz

IT Recycling & Disposal

Free collection of IT/computer equipment from homes & businesses in Karori, Northland, Wilton & Wadestown by appointment. Desktop Computers, Laptop Computers, Tablets, Mobile Phones, Printers, other electronic equipment may also be taken. There is a cost for television sets and computer monitors – currently \$30.00 per item but subject to change. By appointment – text or phone: 021 257 2382, e: info@service.co.nz, w: www.service.co.nz

Games night @ Te Kororia

We host a games evening every third Monday of the month at Te Korōria starting at 7pm. Some light snacks are provided and it is a great opportunity for games and good company. It's pretty casual, we just decide what to play on the night depending on who turns up with what. We would love to see you! Bring along any of your favourite games. We try and finish up by 9pm.



For better, for worse

In the first of a regular column for *The Local*, Leah McFall considers Karori Mall.

Karorians are a mixed bunch, divided in our choices. We cycle, or beep angrily at cyclists. We love the hills or prefer the flat. We're cat people, unless we're bird people. We're for, or against, trick or treating. We vote for every colour, but one thing truly unites us.

It's how much we hate the Mall.

Good grief! What a disappointment! It lies heavily across the block like a fat Labrador. It has zero street appeal and is as inviting as a high security prison. By comparison the library, with its glittering windows facing Karori Road, looks like a Vegas showgirl.

Once inside, like every mall, ours has annoying routes to shops, no clocks and little light. They're designed to trap you in. But at least some distract you by offering play areas, entertainment, fountains and plants.

Not ours, unless you count the odd bench. There should be a sign across the entrance: 'Karori Mall – Undead Since the Late 1980s'.

Have you ever been there after a day of rain? Good luck dodging the buckets, left out to catch the drips. It's like driving the chicane at a Grand Prix. I don't

By comparison the library, with its glittering windows facing Karori Road, looks like a Vegas showgirl.

want to have the moves like Verstappen! I only came in for milk and fabric softener!

We're blessed with two supermarkets, which compete. If only we could finish one complete shop in one of them, without having to pop to the other for items the first one doesn't stock. We spend our lives crossing from one to the other. Think what we could be doing with all those lost minutes! Learning a language, or painting in oils!

Then there are the empty shops. Remember Flight Centre? It closed years ago and nothing replaced it. The dry-cleaner's left and lay empty for weeks. There used to be a shoe shop, which became Ballantyne's, which became nothing. It's disconcerting to shop in a half-populated space. It unnerves you.

It's rumoured there's a reason for this slow bleed of shops. Something better is coming, we tell each other hopefully. A redevelopment. Then we gaze at the half-finished Event Centre and stop talking.

Still, something's changing in my feelings towards Karori Mall. I'm seeing beauty in it.

Its retailers are busy, cheerful, and useful. The stationer. The pharmacy. The greengrocer, with the best value flowers in the city. Who hasn't been cheered up by good cough syrup or scented lilies?

Little boys in the barber's, getting their first cut. Scouts selling baking. Lions selling Christmas cakes. Retirees sipping tea over polished tables at Rosina's. Tradies queuing for sushi. The roar of the coffee grinder at Gamboni's.

Downstairs, if you listen, the coo of pigeons. They settle in the car-park despite the netting. Zee, the mall cat, curled in a chair at the Sallies'. Small moments of grace ("Would you like to go ahead of me?").

We enliven the Mall with every smile, friendly exchange, and door held open. Yes, it could be better. Couldn't everything? But without each other, so much worse. **TL**

Leah McFall is an author and columnist who has lived in Karori since 2017.

Walk the historic trail from Karori to the city

Bakers Hill looking west. C. 1880.
(MacDonald Wilson Collection, Wellington City Libraries.)

The old access route to Karori is an easy 60 minute walk through the history of one of Wellington's earliest suburbs. By **Gordon Tait**.

Going to the city from Karori in the 1880s was usually by horseback or private wagon or gig. Public transport existed in the form of Speirs coaches, that departed three or four times daily from stables near what is now the Karori Park store to Lambton Quay. Roads were little more than clay and dirt tracks – wide enough for a single wagon, but rarely wide enough for two wagons to pass. In winter or rain the road became muddy and treacherous.

Your journey begins on the Main Road near today's shopping mall. In the mid-1870s, Karori was home to around 70 houses, with roughly 20 of them located in South Karori.

Start by walking up Church Hill. At the crest of Church Hill stood St Mary's Church, a wooden structure built in 1866. There was no road cutting at this time, requiring travellers to climb a steep path on foot.

Beyond Church Hill lay what would become Karori East Village. In the 1880s it consisted of only a few houses, surrounded by farmland. From Karori East, the road descended Bulkeley's Hill. Today this is the cutting between Flers Street and Lancaster Street. The cutting was created in the late 1890s to provide a tram-friendly gradient. The excavated earth was used to fill the gully that became Flers Street. In 1880,

however, this gully contained a stream that had to be crossed on foot.

The route continued toward Old Karori Road and through another cutting. Chaytor Street – then known as the Deviation – would not be developed until 1885, when an earth ramp was constructed across the Kaiwharawhara Stream

The road passed Devil's Bridge, near what is now a childcare facility. From there, the route climbs Curtis Street and Raroa Road, a steady ascent to the top of Bakers Hill.

On the city side of Baker's Hill, the road – now a path – descended past the present childcare site and emerged on Glenmore Street opposite the bus stop. From there the road continued down the Rigi, named after a mountain in Switzerland. On the journey to Karori, healthy passengers on coaches and wagons were obliged to get off and walk up the Rigi to the top of Bakers Hill.

The route follows Glenmore Street, then known as Karori Road, skirting along cliff face toward the Botanic Gardens. This road followed the Pipitea stream and was bush covered. Travellers passed the garden entrance and continued down Tinakori Road. The coach service and travellers usually stopped at the Shepherd Arms hotel for refreshments before heading down Tinakori Road to Hill Street and on to the city.

And now dear walker – you can take the Number 2 bus home! **TL**

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