

THE LOCAL



Te Aro

NGĀ KARERE HAPORI O TE ARO



WIN

a copy of Jaimie Baird's book *Here Today Gone Tomorrow: Wellington Street Art* – see page 7 for details.

Please keep off the grass

ULTRA IMPACT

Waitangi Park is still off limits to locals, following damage to the turf caused by the Ultra music Festival in April.

The Ultra music festival was the first major music festival to be held on the Wellington Waterfront since Homegrown departed the city last year, and its arrival was welcomed by hotels, bars and restaurant owners.

Around 23,000 people attended the one-day concert, injecting much needed revenue to the city's economy, and giving a boost to the city's spirits.

But while the festival was counted as a major success, those living nearby say they have paid a high price, and hope that organisers and the Wellington City Council will do things differently next time.

Read more on page 3. ➔

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Kia ora Te Aro!

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!

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Parliament Buildings, Wellington. Funded by Parliamentary Services.



Gazley **G**



Wellington Marathon

Half Marathon, 10km, Kids' Magic Mile

JUNE 28th

Run, Walk,
Flat, Fast, Scenic



www.wellingtonmarathon.co.nz

ULTRA IMPACT

Alex Brocklehurst talks to locals still affected by disruption caused by a concert in April.

The arrival of the Ultra music festival in April was a welcome boost to Wellington's economy and spirits, attracting 23,000 concert goers, but those living nearby say the disruption was more than they expected – and they still can't use their local green space.

Waitangi Park became a dust bowl after damage caused by the festival before the dust turned to mud after heavy rain later that month. The 'keep off the grass signs' are still in place two months later.

Residents near the waterfront said they experienced weeks of noise and traffic as the site was set up and dismantled.

Areta, who did not want to give her surname, told *The Local* she was surprised when scaffolding for the festival stage completely blocked the windows of her apartment.

She said the residents of her building had been given no warning. After she emailed the council directly, she was offered tickets to the festival.

An Oriental Bay resident, whose property also overlooked the festival, and who did not want to be named, said the scale of the event was far bigger than they expected.

"We've had other concerts in Waitangi Park ... this one just seemed bigger and longer in terms of the disruption it caused. I don't think we were ready for that."

The festival's stages took two weeks to set up, and another ten days to dismantle. This involved trucks coming and going, traffic restrictions and "constant banging", including on Sundays.

Walkways, parking spaces, and the children's play area in the park were inaccessible at various times – in a period that coincided with the Easter weekend and school holidays.

Peter Hughes-Hallett, chair of the body corporate at the Chaffers Dock Apartments, said the body corporate supported events in Waitangi Park when they were well-planned, with sufficient notice and engagement with residents and businesses.



Waitangi Park became a dust bowl after damage caused by the festival.

He said the Ultra festival was implemented with a tighter timeframe than usual, which caused issues for residents.

"These issues have been communicated to [Wellington City Council] and I am confident that with advance engagement we will be able to overcome any potential issues for future Ultra events", he said.

A spokesperson for the Wellington City Council said the consent for the festival included conditions to notify residents and businesses, and that the organiser confirmed two letter drops were completed in the lead-up.

The council had engaged with nearby residents and businesses, and provided information via its website, channels and through the media.

The spokesperson said they did not pass on park remediation costs to the festival.

"At the end of each events season the Waterfront has a scheduled lawn remediation work which includes Waitangi Park, so there's no additional charge for this specific event.

"This year's planned lawn remediation work cost \$22,860.30 plus GST. The works included routine remediation as well as additional repairs required following the significant weather event on 20 April."

The event was one of several to receive funding from MBIE's Events Attraction Package, with the aim to support 'showstopper' events that attract large audiences and international visitors. MBIE wouldn't say how much money from MBIE's Events Attraction Package was used to bring Ultra to Wellington.

Deborah Jones, MBIE's Manager Major Events told *The Local* the individual funding amounts for each event will not be disclosed for commercial reasons. Once all events are announced, the total funding for all events supported by the Events Attraction Package will be released. **TL**

What's Wellington?

I've always found Wellington to be a pretty confusing term.

If you say you live in Wellington you could mean Wellington City – an area that ends just before Porirua and Petone – or you could mean the Wellington region, a much vaster area that includes the Kapiti Coast, Hutt valley and Wairarapa.

Personally, I identify very much as a Wellington City person – my map of the civilised world ends at the railway station and beyond that, there be dragons.

But many of those I work with come into the city from the Hutt or beyond and also consider themselves Wellingtonians.

The mayor said in a recent speech it was only once he became mayor of Wellington city that he started to regard people who commuted from Upper Hutt as visitors from another city.

He was talking in the context of amalgamation of course, and the question of identity is now live as we contemplate which of our neighbouring councils we

want to join up with – as remaining separate doesn't seem to be an option on the Government's agenda.

What will that mean for representation, rates, and service delivery? What does it mean for Wellington's identity as a city?

Would we even call ourselves Wellington – or could this be an opportunity to rename ourselves something relevant, rather than after a British duke who never set foot in the city?

Te Whanganui-a-Tara is often used for Wellington, but the 'big harbour of Tara' encompasses Wellington and the Hutt only. A better option could be te Upoko o te Ika a Maui. Being the head of the fish sounds good and appropriate for a capital city – here's where the brains are!

Although the debate may trigger an existential crisis, we need to also focus on the practicalities. How can a merger of councils make our region more functional, more affordable and more attractive to live in – and how can we ensure all Wellingtonians

– or whatever we are called in the future – continue to have a say?

Make sure you have your say well before the 9 August deadline. **TL**



Jane O'Loughlin
Editor



The Local is published monthly by The Local News Limited. Find out more at the-local.co.nz

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Deliveries and Distribution

The Local is distributed to Te Aro letterboxes and local cafes monthly (except January).

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

Subscribe to the electronic edition via our website: the-local.co.nz

Design: homestudio.nz

Views sought on the future of Wellington

Wellington's Mayor Andrew Little is asking Wellingtonians to contribute their views on amalgamation, after the Government set a surprise deadline for councils around the country to come up with ideas to combine councils by 9 August – a 10-week timeframe.

The Government wants to reduce the number – currently 78 – of city, district, regional and unitary councils across the country ahead of introducing a new planning regime. Groups of councils have been invited to submit proposals for how they might be joined up – if not, the Government has said it will “do it for you”. If agreed, changes would be put in place with the 2028 local body elections.

Little has expressed his frustration with the short deadline but in a speech to community groups and leaders in early June, has asked the public to engage.

A ‘Greater Wellington’ amalgamation could result in Wellington City, Hutt City, Upper Hutt, Porirua City coming together. Kāpiti and the Wairarapa councils are also options.

The mayor has asked communities to talk about the challenge and let the council know their thoughts at mayor@wcc.govt.nz 



The Freyberg Beach Play Area is scheduled to get a makeover. The Wellington City Council is seeking community input by 21 June 2026 on two design options for the playground. Both designs see all the current equipment removed, and replaced with one of two options for a climbing tower with slides, along with swings and new surfacing.


More info: letstalk.wellington.govt.nz/freyberg-playground-upgrade 



Toi Pōneke is moving to its new premises on the waterfront this month.

For around 20 years, Wellington's artistic community has had access to a space in Abel Smith Street, supported by the Wellington City Council. Now the facility is moving to 3 Market Lane. The organisation says that while the new building is smaller than the previous premises, it is designed for multipurpose use, accommodating a variety of art forms.


“We’re confident this space will allow Toi Aro to continue fostering a vibrant and interconnected arts community.”

The centre provides fixed-term rental artist studios and arts offices, exhibition opportunities, brand new hireable spaces for creative sector use, artist residences, public programmes, and a range of activities and events. Hireable spaces bookings open 10 June. 

Wellington Marathon

The 39th Gazley Volkswagen Wellington Marathon takes place on Sunday 28 June, and is expected to attract some 4000 participants from more than 20 countries.

All races start and finish at Hnry Stadium and take an “out and back” route along the Quays, around Oriental Parade, Evans Bay Parade, Cobham Drive and Shelly Bay Road to Shelly Bay. Full info and online entry is available at: wellingtonmarathon.co.nz.

To ensure participant and public safety, the entire route will have various road controls between 6:00am and 1:00pm. Full info can be found at: wellington.govt.nz/parking-roads-and-transport/roads/road-works/current-road-works-and-closures/street-event-road-closures. Bus and taxi access may also be impacted. 

New Writers Walk sculpture in te reo Māori

Wellington Writers Walk is getting ready to unveil its first new sculpture since 2013, and the first one in te reo Māori. It will be located in the area of planting between Te Papa and the waterfront promenade, and will be ready in time for Matariki.

The project is a partnership and collaboration between Wellington Writers Walk and Te Ātiawa/Taranaki Whānui ki Te Upoko o Te Ika, with support from Wellington City Council.

The text for the new sculpture, “He Karakia mō Puanga mā Matariki”, was composed by Ben Ngaia (Te Āti Awa) and gifted to Wellington Writers Walk by the Wellington Tenths Trust and Palmerston North Māori Reserve Trusts. This karakia underlines the importance of Matariki and Puanga as a locally and nationally unifying event in our calendar.

Since the unveiling of the first eleven sculptures in 2002, Wellington Writers Walk has grown to include a series of 23 quotations which honour and celebrate the lives and works of New Zealand writers – poets, novelists, and playwrights, all with some connection with Wellington. **TL**



Testing laser-cut text and design elements into aluminium for the sculpture. Design: David Hakaraia. Manufacture: Human Dynamo Workshop. Credit: Human Dynamo Workshop.



Get your message seen in Te Aro

The Local is delivered direct to letterboxes, cafes and retail stores each month and is available from news stands at New World Wellington, Fresh Choice, Thistle Hall and Moore Wilson. Get in touch to discuss options to promote your product, service or event: sales@the-local.co.nz



Marsden & Chelsea Clubs



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 9691 or visit: marsdenclub.org.nz



The photographer who never stopped looking

Kerry Meadows-Bonner meets the man who spent four decades photographing what Wellington wrote on its walls.

Jaimie Baird's fascination with street art started in the 1980s when he ran into a group of the street kids – calling themselves “The Homeboys”.

The group invited him along to Radioactive, a Wednesday night programme called The Uncut Funk Show, hosted by a man named Mark Cubey. Jaimie went. Then he kept going and brought his camera along.

“In 1985, I don't think the word ‘street art’ even existed,” he says. What they were doing, the kids called “bombing”. The 80's hip-hop subculture had reached New Zealand from New York and Philadelphia, and it was landing, raw and new, on the walls of Wellington.

Jaimie started hanging around on Wednesday nights after the show, following the group to walls across the city. “It was just interest,” he says.

But interest, with Jaimie, tends to become something more. He printed T-shirts. He set up Club Graffiti – and started writing to people all over the country asking them to point him toward anything

worth photographing. He still has all the letters he received back then.

What he collected over those four decades, was photographs; more than 20,000 of them. Some on old slides in projection frames. Most now digital, sitting on his computer. Everything from spray-can murals and political slogans to the moment during lockdown when someone draped a scarf around the Queen Victoria statue on Cambridge Terrace – a makeshift face mask.

“I'm quite interested in the social anthropology and the historical component of it,” says Jaimie.

A plan to publish a book about it in 1986 came to nothing. The people likely to be interested didn't have the money to pay for it. He shelved it, built a career, raised a family.

Some decades on, he tried again. *Here Today Gone Tomorrow: Wellington Street Art* came out in 2024. The book contains 224 pages, more than 1,200 images, and a foreword by Wellington historian Redmer Yska. The foreword inside says it all: Open this book at your own risk.

“Whilst the creativity is inspiring,” Jaimie says, “it is also mixed with a level of human depravity.”

Today, he still raises his camera whenever something catches his eye on the street.

“I'll continue to do that,” he says.

“I do think it's quite important to record some of this unofficial communication,”

“One day somebody will look back and say, hey, that's really interesting” **TL**



WIN
a copy!

Here Today Gone Tomorrow: Wellington Street Art is available from selected booksellers, RRP \$70 and from his website: wellingtonstreetart.co.nz. Win a copy by emailing admin@the-local.co.nz with your favourite piece of Wellington street art.



Theatre for changing the climate dialogue

Jane O'Loughlin talks to the director of *Don't Look Now*, a Bats play about community responses to climate change.

How do you energise communities to care and act on climate change?

Don't Look Now is a performance of seven short plays by Angie Farrow that's hitting Bats theatre after a run of successful and critically acclaimed performances to communities and schools in Wellington.

Focusing on empowering community, it asks: how can we make an impactful difference to the climate crisis?

Direction is in the very capable hands of David O'Donnell, who relishes the challenge of taking actors through seven separate and distinct stories, that jump from one style to the next and have to quickly engage the audience.

"I really enjoy the challenge of it: directing all these short plays and trying to make them all quite different from each other and to tell you the whole story or to take you on a little journey and then leave you with something to think about."

Performed in different styles, including absurdist and naturalistic drama, the plays follow multiple perspectives: from a man facing the impending doom of rising waters in a small Pacific nation, a nurse arrested for attending a demonstration, to an elderly woman protesting the felling of a majestic native tree.

"It's a positive, joyous community orientated show, not a depressing show about climate change. But I also feel that it's quite urgent to bring this work to the stage – the climate is getting worse and unpredictable..."

David is quick to emphasise that the plays are not grim or negative – in fact the opposite.

"It's a positive, joyous community orientated show, not a depressing show about climate change. But I also feel that it's quite urgent to bring this work to the stage, too, – the climate is getting worse and unpredictable, and I think theatre was always there to investigate some of the hard issues facing humanity, going right back to ancient Greece and beyond."

The plays look at ways humanity can respond to this existential environmental crisis.

"They're not telling you what to think. They're more sort of opening up questions...about how do we work on a community grass level, and this is where live theatre is great, because people can come together in the same room, experience some drama, and talk about it."

After the play, the audience has the opportunity to stay for a discussion led by the playwright. David says that this element worked very well in previous runs, where audiences in community halls and students in school halls engaged on solutions the community could deliver.

Thursday 18 June will see a special open forum featuring experts and spokespeople on climate change – the Green Party's local MP Tamatha Paul, the Labour party spokesperson for climate change Deborah Russell, and four climate change academics.

David promises audiences will come away feeling more energised and more hopeful about climate change than when they went in.

"It is absolutely to be positive, to be hopeful, and say, what can we do?" **TL**

***Don't Look Now* is at Bats 16–20 June. Written by Angie Farrow, directed by David O'Donnell. Presented by Theatre for Climate.**

Ten weeks to shape Wellington's future

Jill Wilson encourages residents to engage on the urgent question of amalgamation.

Most major decisions affecting our city follow a familiar pattern. There are discussion papers, public meetings, workshops, consultations, submissions, hearings, and months of community debate.

But a decision that could reshape local government across the Wellington region is on a much faster timetable.

The Government has directed councils around New Zealand to develop proposals that may include council amalgamations and submit them by 9 August. RMA Reform and Infrastructure Minister Chris Bishop and Local Government Minister Simon Watts have made the Government's position clear: *"Lead your own reform, or we will do it for you. Either way, change is coming."*

In Wellington, local leaders now face a deadline of around 10 weeks to determine whether they can agree on a regional proposal. The compressed timetable leaves little opportunity for the extensive public engagement that would normally accompany a change of this scale. So Wellington Mayor Andrew Little has urged residents to share their views as Wellington develops its response.

As Mayor Little has said: *"This is a critical moment for Wellington City. It's a critical moment for our region. The future of how we deliver for our communities, plan for the long term, and speak as a city is being decided, whether we like it or not."*

For residents of Te Aro and Wellington Central, this discussion matters.

The inner city is home to around 17,000 people living in apartments, townhouses, and mixed-use neighbourhoods. We face challenges and opportunities that are often different from those in suburban communities. Public transport, housing, city-centre revitalisation, and emergency preparedness all affect inner-city residents in distinctive ways.



"For me, the bottom line is this: local people should decide the future of their local governments."

— Mayor Andrew Little

How would these perspectives be represented in a new governance structure?

Supporters argue that a larger council could improve regional coordination, reduce duplication, and provide a stronger voice for Wellington. The Mayor has suggested that a unified region could potentially have greater influence when attracting international visitors and investment than Wellington City acting alone.

Others worry that decision-making could become more distant and that communities such as ours could have less influence over issues affecting their daily lives.

In his speech, the Mayor acknowledged that there are still "many unknowns and issues". But with the Government requiring this 10-week deadline to be met, key decisions will need to be shaped. **TL**

Inner City Wellington urges residents to learn more, discuss the issue of amalgamation with each other, and then share what you think, what you worry about, and what you hope for directly with the Mayor and elected representatives while the proposal is still being developed.

Email to: mayor@wcc.govt.nz

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*.

Probus Wellington Central



The next meeting of Probus Wellington Central is on June 19 at 10:00 am for coffee/tea and biscuits, and a 10:30 am start. The speaker, Mark Douglas, Maritime Domain Analyst, is talking about: "Tracking shipping movements throughout the world, including when ships attempt to hide, such as in the Straits of Hormuz". Probus 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/

The Work That Reconnects

The Work That Reconnects is a popular international education programme that helps participants to feel strong and respond effectively in the face of global challenges like social injustice and environmental crises. It is coming to Wellington on Saturday 11 July, as the one-day workshop *Turn Your Climate Concern into Confident Action for a Better World*. Details at events.humanitix.com/twtr

Squash Bucklers – Inclusive Squash in Wellington



Squash Bucklers is Wellington's new rainbow squash club, welcoming LGBTQIA+ players and allies of all ages and skill levels. We offer friendly social squash in a supportive and inclusive environment. Whether you're new to the sport or an experienced player, come along, meet new people, and enjoy a game. Learn more at squashbucklers.org

Thistle Hall

30 June – 10 July Thistle Hall is hosting a two-week Matariki exhibition by teachers and learners from Te Ataarangi ki Te Upoko-o-te-Ika Māori language movement (tereorangatira.org)

Zeal: Stories Espresso Café

Stories Espresso Café at 40A Cuba Street, Te Aro is operated by Zeal Wellington, combining quality coffee with opportunities for young people entering hospitality. Through a 15-week barista programme, participants gain hands-on café experience, workplace skills and confidence in a supportive environment. Every purchase helps support Zeal's training programme and future employment pathways for local youth.

DCM Wellington

We work at the sharp end of things and are the leading social service working with people who are experiencing homelessness in Wellington. Our services range from free dentistry through to Housing First. If you know of someone rough sleeping who may need support, contact 04 499 4444. To learn more: dcm.org.nz

Talks at Te Matapihi ki te Ao Nui Central Library

Activists, Allies & Beyond: 40 Years Since Homosexual Law Reform. 2–3pm, Sunday 14 June. Free panel discussion marking 40 years since the Homosexual Law Reform Act 1986, featuring Trevor Mallard, Linda Evans, Bill Logan, Onjei Bond and Gareth Watkins.

The Lies We Tell About Burnout and Self-Care. 12–1pm, Tuesday 23 June. Clinical psychologist Dr Kerry Makin-Byrd discusses burnout, overwhelm and practical wellbeing strategies.

Between Dreams: Resistance and Representation in Asian Aotearoa. 5:30–6:30pm, Tuesday 23 June. A panel discussion exploring Asian identity, diaspora histories and experiences of living between cultures in Aotearoa.

The Decades Before the Hospital Bed. 12–1pm, Thursday 25 June. Women's health specialist Lynda Lovatt explores women's health across the lifespan, from hormones and stress to menopause and ageing.

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ULO ? Unidentified Local Object

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

Email your answers to us at editor@the-local.co.nz. If there's more than one correct answer, the winner will be selected at random. Congratulations to Hannah Teonea who identified the May ULO as the sign on top of El Matador restaurant on Cuba Street. 



EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

Kerry Meadows-Bonner lists the must-see events in Wellington's arts and entertainment scene in June and July.

LIVE THEATRE, MUSIC & VISUAL ARTS

The Marriage of Figaro- New Zealand Opera

St. James Theatre | 17, 19 & 21 June | nzopera.com
Mozart's masterpiece makes its debut in the capital. This NZ Opera staging by trans-Tasman creatives Lindy Hume and Tracy Grant Lord combines love, lies and chaos unfolding over a single day- and remains a peak stage event in the company's history.

LIVE MUSIC



Engelbert Humperdinck – The Celebration Tour

Michael Fowler Centre | 26 June | ticketmaster.co.nz

Sixty years in and the legend shows no signs of stopping. Engelbert Humperdinck returns to Wellington with a set stacked with crowd favourites – expect Release Me, The Last

Waltz, A Man Without Love, Can't Take My Eyes Off of You, and Quando, Quando, Quando.



REforms – Shayne P. Carter and the NZSO

Michael Fowler Centre | 19 June | ticketek.co.nz
One of the country's celebrated singer-songwriters meets the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra in a one-night reimagining of his songbook. REforms is ten of Shayne P. Carter's songs and gives them full orchestral treatment, with arrangements by Tane Upjohn Beatson and conducted by Hamish McKeich.



Peter Hook and The Light

The Opera House | 10 July | ticketmaster.co.nz

A founding member of both Joy Division and New Order, bassist Peter Hook brings his band The Light to Wellington for a night of the most influential music of the past half-century. New

Order's album *Get Ready*, will be performed in full to mark its 25th anniversary.

Te Wehi – I'm Home NZ Album Tour

St James Theatre | 26 June | ticketmaster.co.nz

A debut album, a first-ever headline tour, and a number one on the Aotearoa Music Charts throughout 2025. 2026 is shaping up to be a great year for Te Wehi, whose distinctive sound blends reggae, soul and country.

Stereolab

Meow Nui | 24 June | banishedmusic.com/tours/stereolab

Legendary Anglo-French avant-pop group Stereolab are returning to Aotearoa this June, with a special Wellington show.

VISUAL ARTS

Lōemis -Midwinter Festival

Wellington | 9–21 June | loemis.nz

Now in its eleventh year, Lōemis is a multi-night, multi-venue, multi-sensory arts festival that includes food, sculpture, immersive art, music, poetry, film and more. Held over the winter solstice, it embraces discovery, curiosity and ritual. Expect a night market, a waterfront procession, pop-up restaurants, documentaries and site-specific artworks across more than 20 events over 12 nights.



Hairdresser Highlight! When asking people about their style, **Felix** noticed that people were always keen to share where they got their trim, so he went to the source, and put the hairdressers on the spot for a quick fit check.



Michael, owner of Cuba Barbers, wears his bold floral shirt unbuttoned over a grey v-neck, light-wash jeans, and classic Nike Air Max. Proof that maximalist prints never really go out of style.



Malika @malikajoy rocks head-to-toe black with neon green hair and Doc Martens platforms – the kind of person who makes a rainy car park look like a runway.



Matt, owner of Blendings, wears chunky brown cords, an oversized checked shirt worn open over a white tee, Converse, and sunglasses pushed back on his head. Two dogs included, no extra charge.



Daria @dariaj4de is inspired by Paris Hilton. "I loved pink and black, only to realise it didn't make me comfortable. That's where my love for purple comes from – it represents a rebirth of my character."

Have you got a story to tell? *My Night Out* is section where we feature contributions from readers about their interesting time out on the town. Published stories will get a \$50 book voucher. Find out more at tearo.the-local.co.nz/lifestyle

Everything Wellington has to offer

Emily Callam has a memorable night out.



“Online friendship.”

The words had barely left his mouth before every warning bell in my brain started ringing.

My friend J was still politely chatting to the man in the trench coat outside Aunty Mena’s. He’d approached us asking for vegetarian restaurant recommendations,

which, standing on Cuba Street, seemed perfectly reasonable.

Then a folded piece of paper appeared.
And I knew exactly who we were talking to.
The Sugar Daddy Guy.

The one Wellington women warn each other about online.

But perhaps I should start a few hours earlier, before we found ourselves seeking refuge in a vegan institution and consulting Vic Deals like it was an emergency services hotline.

It had begun as a cultural mission.

A crisp late-autumn evening. Full moon. Clear skies. Bitter wind.

J and I had decided to spend the night consuming as much Wellington culture as humanly possible.

At the NZ Portrait Gallery we wandered through the *Adam Portraiture Award* exhibition, admiring everything from photorealistic faces to a portrait painted onto a gel nail. We stumbled across a live drawing session and briefly wondered what it might be like to create rather than consume.

Then Wellington Museum’s new *Capital of Kai* exhibition pulled us through the city’s culinary history. Tiny replicas of long-lost dishes sparked memories and second-hand nostalgia. Strawberry Fare’s *Death by Chocolate* made an appearance, prompting the only reasonable response: grief.

Wellington’s lost many things over the years, but none as devastating as the disappearance of Strawberry Fare.

Feeling inspired by the exhibition’s interactive drawing station, almost certainly intended for children, I contributed a magnificent bacon-and-egg artwork to the city’s cultural legacy. J created something tasteful and artistic.

We all have different gifts.

From there we crossed Queen’s Wharf to the NZ Art Show.

At one painting, both of us stopped.

A gallery assistant asked what I saw.

“I think I’m always drawn to women in art,” I replied.

There was a pause.

The assistant gently informed me that the subject was Jesus.

In my defence, art is subjective. Maybe God is a woman.

By the time we reached Cuba Street we were hungry and incapable of making a dinner decision. We eventually landed outside Aunty Mena’s.


An institution. A staple. Frankly, they should put Aunty Mena’s in the museum.

Which is where the man in the trench coat appeared.

Minutes later we were safely inside, slurping laksa and curry noodles while reading yet another account of the mysterious “online friendship” pitch. What had started as an evening of galleries, museums and artistic enlightenment had somehow become a story we’d be telling for years.

The night ended with a thirty-minute queue at Duck Island. Naturally, we ordered the same flavours.

Standing on Cuba Street with melting ice cream and numb fingers, I realised we’d accidentally experienced the perfect Wellington evening: art, food, friendship, a mildly unsettling local legend, and the comforting knowledge that women in this city quietly look out for one another.

You can’t find that in the Louvre. 

180 years of serving in Te Aro

For 180 years, St Peter's Church on Willis Street has shared Te Aro with its neighbours and has a rich history to tell. **Niels Reinsborg** explains.

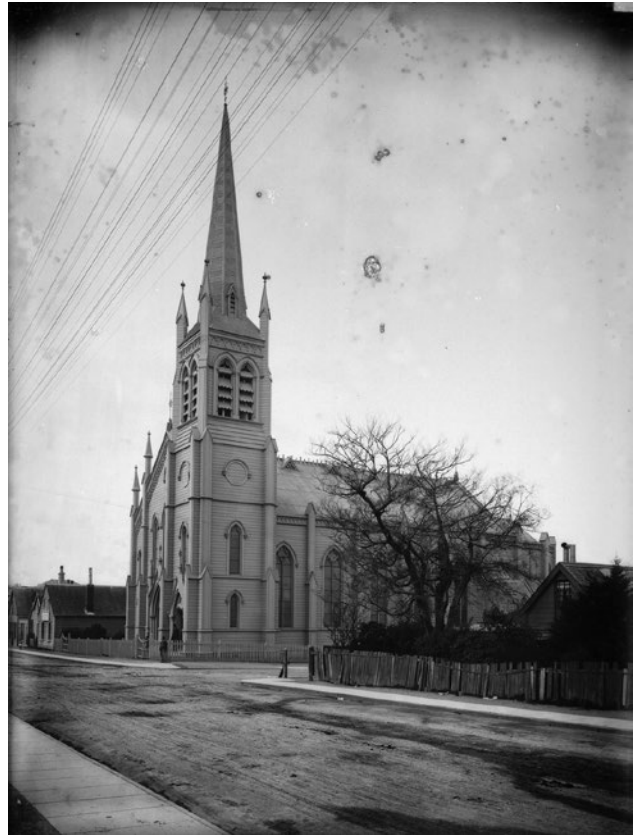
While St Peter's today is a landmark building in Wellington, when it opened on the present site in September 1848, the first St Peter's church was a simple wooden building seating 250. At this time the neighbouring streets of St Peter's were filled with tight rows of small clay and wooden cottages, the houses of Wellington's working families.

It was only six weeks after St Peter's opened its doors, on Monday 16 October 1848, that a magnitude 7.5 earthquake struck. The jolt and its aftershocks shook down every brick and clay building in Wellington, and toppled every single chimney. Te Aro, with its clay cottages, was especially impacted, and hundreds were made homeless.

The wooden St Peter's, however, stood, relatively unscathed, and the church opened its doors to its



The first St Peter's Church. This picture shows the building as it appeared after four enlargements to the church of 1848. This framed photo was given to the church by the family of a Miss Keap-Read who died in 1942 at the age of 89. According to the inscription she had attended the church from 1865 and was a Sunday school teacher from 1869. The frame of the photo is made from the foundations of the original building.



The second version of St Peter's church, as it appeared in the 1880s. (Alexander Turnbull Library.)

neighbours. For more than a month Te Aro families lived, ate and slept in the church.

It was perhaps a result of this dreadful event, and with being forced into such close proximity with the neighbours, St Peter's first sparked an awareness of the needs of its Te Aro neighbourhood, and a desire to give assistance. And one of the church's first moves was to supply the town with a much-needed clock.

In 1849, when the Rev Cole heard that a large clock had been imported from England, he immediately opened a subscription to purchase the clock, and the necessary £50 was soon raised. The large turret clock with a bell for striking the hours was placed in the tower of St Peter's Church. Indeed, it was the first town clock in all of New Zealand.

By the mid-1870s population growth necessitated a larger building. In 1879 a new one was completed – the one that exists today. This church was designed by architect Thomas Turnbull in the popular Gothic style.

In 1892 a chancel screen and front porch, both designed by architect Frederick de Jersey Clere, were added. **TL**



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