



THE LONG ROAD TO A NEW TUNNEL

Image credit: NZTA
Artist's impression –
indicative only



After a long wait, Mt Victoria will finally see tangible progress towards a new tunnel, with geotechnical investigations to start in the Town Belt, and the possible demolition of houses along the planned route.

This follows approval of the investment case by the roading agency NZTA/Waka Kotahi and Minister Chris Bishop, which moves the project into its next

stage of design and property acquisition.

As part of this, NZTA has already issued letters to some property owners, telling them that the agency may wish to purchase their property.

Meanwhile protesters are already making their views known, arguing that there are far better ways to spend up to three billion dollars.

Read more inside. [➤](#)

In this issue:

06 Limited say for neighbours in Mayfair resource consent

07 Iona Pannett steps down as councillor after 18 years

08 Circa's Dame on Pantomime fun and Christmas spent on stage

14 Mt Vic football fans that invented a board game

The long road to a new tunnel



Image credit: NZTA

The Government has finally announced the next steps towards a new Mt Victoria tunnel.

Jane O'Loughlin reports.

The city has embarked down the long road to a new tunnel, with a decision by Transport Minister Chris Bishop to green light the next stage of work on State Highway 1 improvements around the Basin Reserve.

Drilling will start soon in the Town Belt as part of geotechnical investigations. However the tunnel, estimated to cost between \$2.9 and \$3.8 billion, will be many years away, with construction not starting in earnest until at least 2028.

Minister Bishop announced last month that the NZTA Board had endorsed the investment case along

with \$185m to progress design, consenting, and early works development.

The State Highway 1 improvements package includes the construction of a second Terrace Tunnel, a second Mt Victoria Tunnel, and a major roading upgrade at the Basin Reserve.

Upgrades to the Basin Reserve include grade separation for state highway and local road traffic. This will allow state highway traffic to travel directly from Mount Victoria Tunnel to the Arras Tunnel.

Drilling will start soon in the Town Belt as part of geotechnical investigations.

Once constructed, the tunnel will have a 3.6 metre shared path for walking and cycling, replacing the existing narrow pathway.

NZTA said ‘pre-implementation’ work would involve property acquisitions, geotechnical investigations, further design work, and securing consents.

Some road improvements, housing removal/demolition, and site clearance may also start to occur.

Engagement with affected landowners was to start immediately, however this appeared to take the Wellington City Council by surprise.

Councillor Geordie Rogers wrote to residents’ associations in Mt Victoria, Mt Cook and the inner city on Labour weekend to warn them that NZTA had started sending letters to property owners they had identified as being “affected” by the development of the second tunnel.

The letter advises the property owners that NZTA may wish to purchase their property to complete the project.


“Please know that despite WCC Councillors and Senior Staff working openly with NZTA the Transport Authority did not give us a heads up that they were sending letters out. Our staff have made it clear to NZTA that we don’t see this way of working as acceptable and are also requesting NZTA to urgently provide a briefing for City Councillors.”

As reported previously in *The Local*, NZTA already owns 12 properties in Mt Victoria, on Paterson, Austin and Brougham Streets. It’s not clear whether it would need to acquire more on this side of the tunnel.

Also likely to be controversial is the recommendation by NZTA that the tunnel be tolled. The decision will be made once construction timing and funding is confirmed and will be subject to consultation and Government approval.

Once constructed, the tunnel will have a 3.6 metre shared path for walking and cycling, replacing the existing narrow pathway.

Among the various benefits listed is improved travel times for the number 2 and Airport Express buses – if rerouted through the new tunnel instead of through Mt Victoria’s streets and the existing bus tunnel.

The project is now in the pre-implementation stage, which is expected to take approximately 3 years. During this stage, NZTA will continue to develop project designs, further investigate options for tolling, purchase the property required for construction and secure any necessary consents and approvals through the Fast-track Approvals Act (2024). 

November will see geotechnical investigations by NZTA contractors get underway.

This involves drilling five boreholes and collecting core samples from four geotechnical investigation locations in the Wellington Town Belt to provide an understanding of the local subsurface conditions.

The boreholes will be between 40m and 80m in depth. NZTA says it expects to find silty soils, overlaying in situ Rakaia terrane sandstone and mudstone (locally known as Wellington greywacke).

“Taking soil and rock samples is fundamental in geotechnical investigations because it provides direct, physical evidence of subsurface conditions. This is essential for identifying rock strength, joints and faults, then planning the tunnel alignment and retaining structures.”

According to NZTA, two drill rigs will work in parallel to minimise the duration of disruption. Investigation works will require the temporary closure of some sections of track in the Hataitai Park area of the Wellington Town Belt. Track signage will be put in place.

One of the types of rigs is shown in the image.



Bumper news month

Welcome to a bumper 24-page edition of *The Local*. There was so much news this month, we had to jump to the next size. My delivery people will probably be cursing me but I hope you will enjoy a slightly longer read.

The tunnel announcement has finally been made. It seems clear now the announcement was delayed until after the local body elections, to avoid the tunnel becoming a lightning rod for candidates. With a large cost, a very long construction period and dubious benefits it still seems incredible it will ever happen at all.

Speaking of elections, congratulations to our newly elected councillors for the Lambton/Pukehinau Ward – Geordie Rogers, Nicola Young and Afnan Al Rubayee. We look forward to seeing them around and about in Mt Victoria.

Commiserations to those candidates who put in lots of work during the election period but missed out. There's always next time! We thank you for taking part in the democratic process and giving us a choice.

The decision on the Mayfair apartment block resource consent has also been released. It shows the power of the new District Plan – a seven-storey apartment block can


be built in the midst of a one to two storey character/heritage area and no one needs to be notified at all. The only reason the four most affected households were, is due to the benevolence of the developer.

As the decision document mentions at several stages, such a large development is “to be expected” according to the new rules. If it goes ahead, it will be the start of significant change for the neighbourhood.

When I started *The Local*, it was to help keep our community more informed about what's going on, and to share stories I thought were worth sharing.

I'm pleased that it's struck a chord; people often stop me on the street and tell me how much they like the paper, and sometimes will offer to donate. Until now I have turned down those offers, but the truth is that it's hard to get by on advertising, despite the wonderful businesses that support me.

So I have now put in place the ability for readers to donate to the paper. On the website the-local.co.nz there is a button on the top right that

says 'become a supporter'. You can make a one-off or regular donation. I will be very grateful for any contributions you can manage! 



Jane O'Loughlin
Editor

THE LOCAL Mt Victoria

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Review to follow storm death

Wellington City Council will review its current approach to assessing the risks around trees, following the tragic death of a walker in the Town Belt during high winds.

Retired GP Richard Tyler died after being hit by a falling branch on Mt Victoria on 21 October.

“The Council’s Parks kaimahi carry out tree risk assessments across the Town Belt and wider city, including Matairangi–Mt Victoria, and a review of current procedures will be undertaken in response to recent events,” said a council spokesperson.

The council was not considering installing signs to warn people of the dangers of falling trees and branches in windy weather.

“Council does already share content from MetService, Civil Defence and Wellington Regional Operations Management Office (WREMO) through its channels, and provides further communications when significant weather activity like an orange or red warning is issued to give people more information about the dangers and potential impact across all our outdoor spaces, impacted services and facilities, plus relevant sites to visit online, and how to report hazards.”

The Council said it issued a public safety message on Facebook around 10.15am on 21 October, and issued a further warning to news media just after mid-day, shortly after Police had publicly issued news of the fatality.

The Mt Victoria Residents’ Association president Ellen Blake believed that the old pine trees needed to be replaced faster.

“More funding for native bush restoration is needed to help speed the changeover from these big heavy exotics like pine, to more site appropriate wind resilient natives, like flax, taupata and māhoe.” **TL**

New Lambton rep

Lambton’s Afnan Al–Rubayee is the new councillor representing the Lambton/Pukehinau Ward. She joins Geordie Rogers (Green Party) and Nicola Young (independent) on the council following the local body elections in October. It was Al–Rubayee’s second time running for council. **TL**

Tunnel protest

Anti-tunnel protesters have put literal stakes in the ground, in an early message to roading authorities and the Transport Minister Chris Bishop.

A guerilla gardening event in October attracted over a dozen gardeners, who planted trees and flowers on NZTA land acquired for the proposed new tunnel.

A spokesperson, James Fraser, said spending so much money on a tunnel was the wrong thing to do in a ‘climate emergency’.

Planting trees was showing the alternative.

The planting took place at Bogart’s Corner, which used to be the site of shops and housing before it was bought and cleared by NZTA. **TL**



Bus consultation on hold


Public consultation on the Route 2 Miramar/Seatoun–City bus improvements project will no longer take place in early November.

Wellington’s councils are working on proposed changes to increase capacity on the route.

The proposed changes will include making some stops longer, removing or consolidating some stops to improve bus stop spacing and reduce journey times, and some bus shelter changes.

New consultation dates are yet to be announced. **TL**

Path to protest



The Mayfair developer proposes removing the footpath along the narrow driveway to allow trucks and machinery to pass. This is opposed by the other users of the accessway, who are joint owners.

“Significant change” is what the new District Plan envisages for Mt Victoria, and neighbours should expect to lose the privacy, sunlight and other amenities they have enjoyed to date, as higher buildings are introduced.

That’s the message emerging from the resource consent decision issued by the Wellington City Council regarding the first real test of the new high-density rules: the Mayfair apartment block proposed for Austin Street.

The resource consent application is to construct a seven-storey apartment building containing 32 residential units, 29 carparks and 25 cycle parks, with associated earthworks and ground works. The application also requests subdivision of the site.

The council has formally notified just four households as part of considering the resource consent for the controversial development, despite requests from many neighbours to be part of the legal process.

In the decision document the council says it believes the new high-density rules for the area mean there was no obligation to notify any properties at all, and it has only notified the four along Westbourne Grove because the applicant requested it.

The council’s planning officer says the council has considered potential adverse effects but concludes they are not beyond what is expected in the new District Plan, which has introduced rules that encourage much more high density.

The report acknowledges that the development will “generate a level of bulk and dominance effects on surrounding properties, and the neighbourhood generally, that are significantly greater than the existing residential environment”, and that it may have privacy impacts.

However, the report says this is an unavoidable consequence of high-density developments, and that the apartment block is exactly the kind of development expected in the District Plan:

“In the High Density Residential Zone, increased density with associated tall buildings and more intensive development are a desired urban form outcome. The policy direction of this zoning seeks to provide for buildings of at least six stories, and the proposal represents an outcome sought by this policy.”

Except for areas with heritage or character protection, Mount Victoria is now zoned for high density development.

“While neighbouring residents have raised concerns about the proposal’s visibility and character effects, I note that the zoning no longer affords character protection to the site and instead envisages significant change. On this basis, and taking into account expert advice, I consider the height and bulk to be appropriate and consistent with outcomes encouraged by District Plan policy.”

One of the neighbours, Ralph Highnam, said the four properties would respond as a collective.

“We are as one in our determination to protect our property rights and community.”

One of the issues that had caught the attention of the neighbours was the proposal to remove the pedestrian footpath. The access way is jointly owned by all the properties along it.

Highnam said the group was “geared and organised for the long run”.

“We continue to want to see appropriate and respectful development.”

The four were given 20 working days to put forward their views on the development, which were due on 7 November. **TL**

Haere rā and ngā mihi nui

A message from outgoing Wellington city councillor **Iona Pannett**.

As I stand down from the Wellington City Council as one of your representatives for the Pukehinau Lambton Ward I want to give a huge thanks to the Mt Victoria community which I have lived in for many years.

Our excellent schools and early childhood education centres, the Residents' Association, The Hub, Historical Society, *The Local*, Tramping Club, local businesses, conservation groups, religious institutions and many more have done so much to make our suburb one of the best places to live in the city. I have also greatly appreciated the personal and political support that many of you have given me.

Over my time at Council many people have worked together for some great wins such as protecting the Town Belt with its own act of Parliament, stopping

the Basin Reserve flyover, running numerous community building events, protecting our heritage, planting thousands of trees, building tracks through the Town Belt and so much more.

There are some big issues coming up: another roading proposal (again!), ensuring that Matairangi is a place for all users particularly walkers, protecting our heritage whilst making room for new and affordable housing, slowing traffic down and building on the excellent work that The Hub, Clyde Quay School and others are doing to make sure that we build the strongest community hub possible on Elizabeth Street. 2026 will be a busy year.

Whilst I won't be in a leadership role on city issues, I will not be disappearing and will continue to work on issues like stopping a second Mt Victoria tunnel and researching the history of our suburb.

See you around the neighbourhood. Thank you again your support. 



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Street view

Late Victorian Wellington comes to life in a new book based around the famous Thomas Ward maps. **Jane O'Loughlin** talked to the author.

Have you ever wondered how your house looked in 1898? Are you curious about the materials used for the roof, or whether it featured bay windows?

You may find the answers in the Thomas Ward maps, an extraordinary resource that details the geography and architecture of late Victorian Wellington.

Historian, Elizabeth Cox, has used these maps as the foundation for a book of social history, focusing on the 1890s—a period of significant change for the city.

Cox's interests in Wellington history, women's history, and architectural history all converge in her new book, *Mr Ward's Map*.

Her book includes all 88 maps, which cover Wellington's inner-city suburbs within the town belt—where most Wellingtonians lived until the advent of the motor car around the turn of the century allowed residents to move further afield.



Thomas Ward, originally from Oxford in the United Kingdom, worked as an engineer in Wellington.

According to Cox, Ward was troubled by the lack of a comprehensive map of Wellington. He contacted the council and offered to create an accurate map of the city. Initially, his proposal was for a simple map of legal titles.

“But while he was working on it, he had another idea: he offered to draw every single building in the city,” says Cox.

“He drew every commercial building, every house, every outdoor toilet, every outdoor shed, and all the legal titles, every street light...and all the fire hydrants.

“Not only did he draw the footprint for every building, but for each house he recorded how many rooms there were – not bedrooms, but rooms, total. And he noted what the walls were made of and what the roof was made of, and he drew every verandah and every bay window.”

For the next ten years, Ward held a series of rolling contracts to keep the maps up to date. He faced a considerable challenge, as the city was rapidly growing with many new developments and subdivisions.

Cox uses the maps as a starting point to tell stories about the social history of the people who lived and worked in the houses and buildings.

This includes stories about early Mt Victoria, which was being transformed by new subdivisions at the time. Cox notes that houses in Mt Victoria were not built by the wealthy gentry, but by well-earning tradespeople.

In one Mt Victoria story, Cox investigates the work of early suffragettes. Through research, she reconstructed the likely journey a petition collector took up and down Mt Victoria's streets, gathering signatures.

Another story examines a devastating fire on Hawker Street.

To help fund the book, Cox is selling prints of the maps. This has become another source of information, as people have been eager to learn about their homes and share their own stories with her. She has enjoyed helping people choose their map and discussing their houses with them.

The book, which is released in November is substantial – at 2.5 kilos it makes a hefty and impressive potential Christmas gift for any person interested in Wellington's history. **TL**

Elizabeth Cox will be speaking about her book at a talk for the Mt Victoria Historical Society on 23 November 2025. To buy a framed map go to masseypress.ac.nz/books/mr-ward-s-map.

Matairangi track consultation coming



Conflict between walkers and cyclists on Mt Victoria has meant the authorities have had to get involved.

Track changes may have to occur to ensure the everyone can enjoy their time in the town belt.

The Wellington City Council will be consulting the public in November on safety issues in the town belt walking and cycling paths.

The council's open space & recreation planning manager, Sherilyn Hinton, updated local councillors on the issue prior to the local body elections.

According to Hinton, an online public survey in November will aim to gather views on perceived safety and user conflict issues.

It will also ask whether some proposed solutions will address the problems.

Solutions could include improving junctions, no downhill biking on some shared tracks, walking-only tracks, and bridges.

The survey would also try to ascertain demand for walking-only options irrespective of significant

safety issues – for example, “desire for bike-free peaceful nature experience”.

The consultation follows stakeholder workshops with representatives from walking/running, biking and ecological restoration groups with a specific interest in Matairangi.

Hinton said the council had also undertaken on-site surveying of track users to gather supplementary information of user experiences and the extent of user conflict experienced by general users.

Once the survey is complete, officials plan to develop recommendations which will go to the councillors for consideration in the middle of next year. **TL**

Solutions could include improving junctions, no downhill biking on some shared tracks, walking-only tracks, and bridges.



Pantomime time

Image credit: Aimee Sullivan, Maeva O'Connell

It wouldn't be a Wellington Christmas without a pantomime that mashes political commentary with an age-old story.

Jane O'Loughlin reports.

This year the Circa Pantomime is based on the heroic outlaw: 'Robin Hood steals from the rich and gives to the poor in an oldie timey place where people are doing it tough and the landed gentry hoard the money all for themselves: Wellington 2025'.

Written by Pantomime regulars Gavin Rutherford and Simon Leary, and directed for the first time by Leary, the show promises good vs evil, archery and swordfights, and a lot of dance numbers.

Jthan Morgan is preparing for her fourth year in the iconic role of the Dame, and her eleventh consecutive summer spent on stage.

"I haven't had a summer for now 11 years," she laughs.

But it's a sacrifice she's happy to make; spending summer on stage has now become a tradition for her.

Morgan's journey to becoming the Dame was shaped by seven years spent learning alongside pantomime legend Gavin. Traditionally, the Dame is played by a white male in drag.

"Not being a white male" adds another layer to the performance, she explains. "I was able to bring my own flavour and twist after Gavin stepped down."

The Dame is a disruptive force in the story, often serving as the punchline and delighting audiences

with her silliness and knack for saying the wrong thing at the right time. "She's generally the punchline of lots of jokes. She's just silly, and the audience loves that," Morgan says. But the magic of pantomime lies in its spontaneity—Morgan thrives on responding to the audience and keeping the laughter flowing, even if it means catching her fellow actors off guard. "It's all for a laugh."

If the faces on stage seem familiar, it's no coincidence. This year's cast features six performers, five of whom are pantomime veterans. "Once you're in the family, you're kind of stuck for life," Morgan jokes. "The role is always offered to family first."

No Wellington pantomime would be complete without a dose of political commentary. While the show sticks to the Robin Hood storyline, it's set firmly in contemporary Wellington, peppered with TikTok gags, jokes about local events and politics from the past year.

Younger audience members are drawn to the heroes, the music, and the interactive moments when they're invited on stage to help solve problems through song and dance. "Every year, we include the audience," Morgan says. "We invite the tamariki and rangatahi down on stage to help solve the problem, usually through song or dance—or both." **TL**

Robin Hood The Pantomime is on at Circa, 15 November – 21 December 2025, and 2–10 January 2026.

Intersection opening

Overview of crossing island looking towards Courtenay Place



The first part of the Golden Mile project, the realignment of the eastern end intersection of Courtenay Place, is nearly complete.

Cyclists are already using the new route through the intersection of Kent/Cambridge Terrace near the Embassy Theatre, and pedestrians don't have long to wait.

The Wellington City Council announced last month that the dedicated two-way bike lane was open for use. Pedestrians will be able to use the shelters from around mid-November, once the new wind/rain shelters are installed.

There had been concern in the community about the removal of the current shelters, which were designed with community input to provide protection from different wind directions.

The council says the new shelters are the same design as the old one, and will offer the same level of service. They will have LED strip lighting in the rafter, and there will be new street lighting in the intersection as well.


The Mt Victoria Residents' Association had also raised concerns with the council about potential clashes between cyclist and pedestrians at the median strip,

where cyclists have to wait for any pedestrians crossing the path.

The council says that signal phasing will help to make sure that cyclists and pedestrians don't arrive at the median strip at the same time.

A new addition to the Embassy area is new planter boxes outside Capitol restaurant and Deluxe café.

The planter boxes were requested by Capitol and Deluxe to add colour and life to the area, and create a more pleasant space for outdoor dining, according to the council. "The area along Kent Terrace is wide and very exposed so the planters and paving help that particular area feel cosier. The planters also contribute to greening the city," said a council officer.

Capitol and Deluxe have agreed to maintain the planters themselves, a condition which was necessary for getting the permit to install the planters. 

A new addition to the Embassy area is new planter boxes outside Capitol restaurant and Deluxe café.

Shop local this Christmas

It's that time of year! **Emily Callam** looks at local shopping options.

This Christmas, skip the online scroll and explore what's right here in our own backyard. Mt Vic is surrounded by a mix of creative, independent businesses that make the area what it is – lively, distinctive, and full of character. Supporting them keeps that spirit alive.

Pick up one-of-a-kind home décor from Small Acorns, with a stop at Squirrel next door

for something sweet to fuel your shopping. For the art lover in your life, check out Ora Gallery, or gift someone a moment of calm with an O-Studio voucher.

Moore Wilson's has it all – ingredients for the festive feast, a whole floor of toys for the kids, a fine drop for the wine enthusiast, or a gadget for the home cook who already has everything.

Shopping local means your money goes back into the community – to the people and places that make this neighbourhood worth celebrating. **TL**

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Mt Vic locals invent strategy game



The beautiful game has been translated into a boardgame by entrepreneurial locals. **Jane O'Loughlin** reports.

Two Mt Victoria locals have invented a board game they hope will bring the thrill of football to the tabletop.

Called Olé11, the game was created by Wren + Jem (Renata Sain and Jemma Dacy) following a moment of inspiration at the end of the 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup Final in Sydney.

The game takes 15-90 minutes, and is for 2-6 players.

"While inspired by football, you don't need to know anything about football to play," says Jem.

"It is considered a gateway game by the industry, which means there's depth to master but it's easy to learn and play, and family friendly," says Wren.

Wren and Jem are originally from Australia, and described themselves as football and game loving enthusiasts. Wren is also a licenced football coach and Jem still plays for fun. It is the first game they have invented, but has already attracted interest, with over 140 backers already pledging over \$15,000 towards the project. **TL**

Olé11 is available to pre-order on Kickstarter. Wren + Jem are offering a free expansion pack to anyone who pre-orders Olé11 with an address in Mt Vic or neighbouring suburbs. Just add MV after your name in the name field when ordering. Backers to get their copy from April 2026. kickstarter.com/projects/kickoffthefun/ole11.



The mystery writer in Mt Vic

A local academic has written his first novel – and it includes some familiar places.

Jane O’Loughlin reports.

International mystery novel *Lepan’s Shadow* is about a retired professor living in Mount Victoria who travels to Chile for work, where he gets mixed up in a suspicious death.

It’s written by a retired professor living in Mt Victoria who previously travelled to Chile for work – coincidence?

Local author Douglas Pearce acknowledges there are some strong biographical parallels between him and his protagonist, Cliff West. However he assures me: “I haven’t hauled the body of a French anthropologist out of a hot pool in the Atacama!”

Pearce is an emeritus professor of tourism management at Victoria University, who has lived in Mount Victoria for 25 years.

Keen to continue writing into retirement, he decided to turn his hand to a genre he enjoys – mystery.

A visit to the dramatic Atacama Desert in Chile as part of a work trip gave him the idea of a setting for a crime. A Professor is found dead in a geothermal hot pool. The New Zealand academic gets involved, and before long starts to uncover a range of suspects and motivations for the suspicious death. The action in the novel mainly takes place in Chile, France and in Wellington, all places the author is familiar with.

Pearce has published several academic books on tourism, however this is his first work of fiction, and admits he did find the move to writing a novel “a major learning curve”.

A first draft sent to a manuscript reviewer resulted in some pointed feedback about the mechanics of writing, such as dialogue, story arcs and pace – and how to leave the audience hanging at the end of a chapter.

“I found that from the feedback I got, that clearly there’s an art to writing fiction,” he says with a wry grin.

He was less keen to take the advice to remove detail about the lives of academics, and the feedback from former colleagues is that one of the strengths of the book is the accurate portrayal of academic life.

Pearce has ended up self-publishing his book,



meaning a hands on approach to cover design, printing and distribution.


He puts the difficulty of finding a publisher down to the novel not fitting neatly into certain genres – being neither ‘cosy murder’ nor the other extreme of including multiple ‘improbable’ murders with gruesome levels of detail. The mix of settings means the book can’t easily be marketed as a ‘New Zealand’ book.

However Mt Victoria readers will be pleased to see some familiar places appearing in the book. The protagonist lives in a Pirie Street townhouse, goes for a walk along Oriental Parade and even pops into Moore Wilson’s.

After a couple of years of writing the novel, Pearce says his protagonist, Cliff West, became “very much part of the family”, and he has enjoyed bringing him to life.

When asked – somewhat mischievously – if the novel is a chance to create a glamorous alter ego for himself, Pearce says the parallels are mainly limited to settings he is familiar with. However he does think the world of the academic researcher and the detective solving mysteries are all that distant. As he has his character Cliff West say:

“Ask the right questions, collect and analyse the right information, draw your conclusions.”

Lepan’s Shadow is available to purchase from The Underground Bookshop. 

Bento box, Mount Victoria

*Clutching a bento box I ascend stepwise
from the streets of the city to the topmost ridge.*

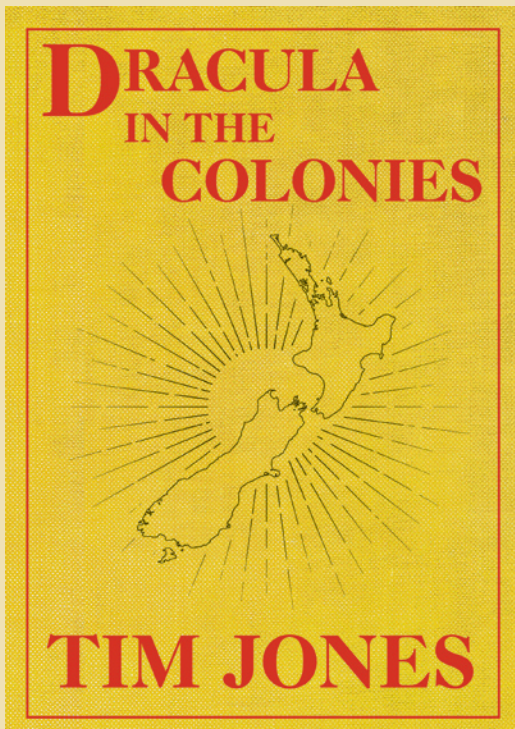
*Mountain bikes plunge past on either side,
heralds of erosion. Above them a lookout rich*

*in pou and explanations. You may expect
some puffs of wind. Bring hat or hang glider.*

*Bring tectonic plates. Bring a deep awareness
of your faults. Bring the bowling unit –*

*fast bowlers and slow bowlers too. Bring your lunch.
There are seats, entire geographies. Each small*

*compartment conceals a wealth of clues.
Bite the sun to summon all its flavours.*



About Tim Jones and his new poetry collection:

Tim Jones lives in Mount Victoria. He's a novelist, poet and editor. He is the author of climate fiction novel *Emergency Weather* (The Cuba Press, 2023).

His new poetry collection is called *Dracula in the Colonies* (The Cuba Press, 2025). Dracula arrives in 19th century colonial New Zealand and feels right at home.

Tim Jones and his family arrive in 1962 but get a colder reception. These are poems of family and found family, as the spiritual successors of Dracula put the bite on the body politic.

Dracula in the Colonies is available from Unity Books Wellington and from the Cuba Press: theclubapress.nz/shop/dracula-in-the-colonies.

Buyers looking for high quality homes

Anji Foster from Lowe & Co notices more people choosing to renovate instead of move.

Aside benefit of taking our dog, Jock, for regular walks is that I get to see what is happening around the neighbourhood. With a number of homeowners electing to stay put for now rather than bring their largest asset to the market, it seems that many are now making improvements on their current residence.

The number of homes I've seen with scaffolding around them in the past few months has been noticeable. Homes being fully sanded and re painted, new window joinery installed, new roof, it all seems to be going on. This is also reflected in economist Tony Alexander's latest View Weekly newsletter where he says:

"The home renovation sector has had an improving outlook since right after monetary policy started easing last year. Interest rates matter for this area of lumpy spending with levels of stress not accompanying other big purchases like cars and furniture. The latest rate cut has delivered an extra boost to this sector with the reading near a four-year high."

That makes sense to me from what I'm hearing and seeing. Rather than walking away from what might feel like, and sometime is, a financial loss when selling, many home owners are investing back in to their current home to make it fit for purpose in the short to medium term.

So, will this love-the-one-you're-with strategy impact on the number of good quality homes we see coming to our local market? Recent conversations with active buyers would indicate that they feel the quality of the Wellington housing stock right now is poor, largely made up of a number of ex rentals where landlords are selling rather than investing further.

When a well renovated and beautifully presented home comes to the market the level of interest from the buying public is high. Our recent listings at 8

Matai Road and 292 The Parade are absolutely testament to this. But homes of that eye-catchingly high quality do seem to be few and far between right now, with those home owners electing to sit tight and get on with enjoying their space with a few thoughtful modifications.

If you are one of the many home owners looking to make the most of what you have rather than move right now, and you'd like a sounding board for ideas you have for improvements around your home, please reach out. Where money is best spent, and where value is best achieved is important to know before investing too significantly in your home, and I'm always happy to share thoughts on this.

You should also get some confidence that the market really is rewarding quality at this point in the cycle, so an investment in this area will certainly provide you with options. **TL**

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Lowe & Co
REALTY

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E-Scooters: Your fastest way from A to A & E

In this opinion piece, Local resident **Nick Theobald** argues that e-scooters are causing more harm than good.


Will it be your partner, child, friend, or pet that gets injured next by an e-scooter careering along on a footpath? Or will it be the rider? You know the type – the person with head protection consisting of sunglasses and headphones? “Aw Jeez c’mon mate. They’re saving the planet, they’re cheap and there’s always one lying around.” Sure. Usually across a footpath.

Walking along Wellington footpaths, that we are forced to ‘share’ with e-scooters, is akin to swimming with jet-skis. Personally, I’ve had about a dozen near-misses while walking.

E-scooter riders aren’t thick. They know it’s dangerous riding in the traffic. Why should they fret about a few pedestrians or people with a disability getting in the way? To me, the e-scooter licensing big-wigs are playing on Wellingtonians’ compliant

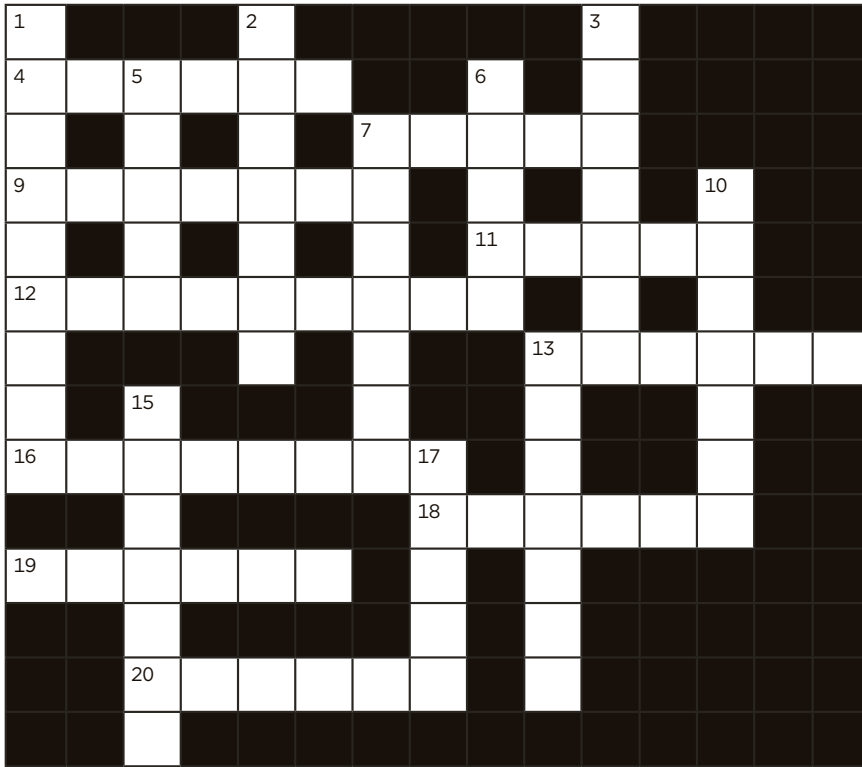
nature. But time is up. Claim cost figures, kindly provided by ACC, should convince you that it’s time for e-scooters and cyclists on our footpaths to hit the road. Or the cycle lane.

ACC’s active claim costs for e-scooter related injuries for the year 2024 were: \$14,479,461. And they are increasing: in 2020 annual costs were \$5,920. As at 28 July this year, active claim costs are already \$8,953,492.

Regarding footpaths, to misquote George Orwell: “Two legs good, two wheels bad.” 

Walking along Wellington footpaths, that we are forced to ‘share’ with e-scooters, is akin to swimming with jet-skis.

Beau's Crossword #2



Across

4. Sends signals down the optic nerve. (6)
7. The often forgotten of the five basic tastes. (5)
9. To stop buying something in protest. (7)
11. Type of carbohydrate that's great for the gut. (5)
12. Having authorisation. (9)
13. Guiding light. (6)
16. Atrocious (like this clue.) (8)
18. Rebel against. (6)
19. A Christmas calendar. (6)
20. A magician's headwear. (3, 3)


Down

1. Medieval siege weapon. (9)
2. European country sandwiched between Spain and France.
3. Protects a sewer's thumb. (7)
5. A clock measures this herb. (5)
6. An embarrassing mistake. (5)
7. Dining implement. (7)
10. A downward journey. (7)
13. Boldness to impress others. (7)
15. It's preventing us from flying. (7)
17. To outburst suddenly. (5)

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

ULO ? Unidentified Local Object

Identify the mystery object – something in the Mount Victoria area – to win a \$20 voucher for your favourite local cafe.

Email your answers to editor@the-local.co.nz. If there's more than one correct answer the winner will be selected at random. Congratulations to Ian Garrett, who identified the October ULO as part of the Anne Frank memorial in the quarry at the top of Ellice Street. 



COMMUNITY NOTICEBOARD

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*.

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.

Pikopiko Clyde Quay Kindergarten

Spaces Available! Pikopiko is open for 2-5 year olds, Monday to Friday, 9am-3pm during school terms. 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

61 Majoribanks Street, is a parent-run early learning centre for children aged 1-5. It is open Monday to Friday and offers 20 hours of state-funded ECE for over 3s. Contact us at **04 384 8201** or email info@crosswayscreche.org.nz.

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 eight tables and play three times a week at the stadium on Alexandra Road. We want to encourage new people to join our fun social event. Only \$4 each time - no subscription. For more information contact Diana Winn, email winnich@xtra.co.nz or phone **04 801 9556**.

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.

Mt Victoria Residents Association

MVRA holds regular monthly meetings at the Mt Vic Hub on the first Thursday of the month at 5.30pm. All members welcome.

The Quakers

Each Sunday at 10:30am Wellington Quakers gather for Worship as part of unprogrammed Friends Meetings. Our address is 7 Moncrieff St. We welcome all. For more information email wgtnquakers@gmail.com.

Quaker meeting rooms

7 Moncrieff Street has meeting rooms for regular or one-off meetings for non-profit and government agencies. Wifi and projector available. Call **04 385 4897** or email wgtnquakers@gmail.com.



Do you offer guitar lessons? Are you a dog-walker looking for customers? The Listings section is an affordable way to let people know about your service. Advertise in *The Local* for as little as \$40.

Probus Wellington Central in November



Probus Wellington Central is part of the worldwide Probus organisation, promoting fun, friendship, connections and activities designed to meet the needs of retired senior citizens. Our speaker on 21 November will be

New Zealander of the Year 2025 Professor Bev Lawton, ONZM. As founder and director of Te Tātai Hauora o Hine (National Centre for Women’s Health Research Aotearoa), she has driven critical advancements in cervical cancer screening, maternal health, and indigenous health equity. 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.

U3A in November



‘Eliminating cervical cancer within grasp’ is the powerful title of Professor Beverley Lawton’s talk opening the November line-up for U3A Wellington City on Tuesday 4 November. Professor Lawton, this year’s Kiwibank New Zealander of the Year, shares her research and vision for eradicating cervical cancer in Aotearoa and beyond. Other topics this month include the science behind sex and gender with Professor Hamish Spencer and the realities of hospital-based palliative care with Dr Jonathan Adler. In the final lecture for 2025, on Friday 14 November, Suzanne Snively gives a a fresh take on ageing and economic wellbeing. Talks are held Tuesdays and Fridays, 10:30am at the Embassy Theatre. \$5 for visitors; \$50 membership. Check the website u3awellingtoncity.org.nz for events and activities over the holiday break before lectures restart in February 2026.

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/pmwiki/pmwiki.php?n=TTC/Hall-Hire 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. Each gathering features engaging speakers and lively conversation. 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

What do the health reforms mean for you?

Retired Emeritus Professor Gregor Coster will discuss the death of the district hospital board system and development of NZ Health. This public meeting hosted by Grey Power Wellington will help you understand what the changes mean for you, the health consumer. Thursday 6 November, 11am, followed by finger food lunch. Tararua Tramping Clubrooms, 4 Moncrieff Street, Mt Victoria. RSVP (for catering purposes): Colleen Singleton, email president@greypowerwellington.org.nz, mob 027 200 0066.

First world shopping

We were buying sushi and dumplings for lunch when I spotted her among the fresh produce. "It's Nadia Lim!" I cried.

"Oh no, mum don't be embarrassing," muttered my daughter through gritted teeth as I took out my phone, and started snapping photos through the window like some kind of low grade culinary paparazzo.

The lovely Nadia Lim was signing copies of her latest cookbook in Moore Wilson's. How famous!

But I don't know why I was surprised. Moore Wilson's credentials as a foodie mecca are unrivalled in Wellington. Where else are you going to find a celebrity chef? Certainly not lurking in the cereal aisle of Pak'n'Save.

Although celebrity chefs at Moore Wilson are not an everyday occurrence it's a pretty good place to spot some well-known faces.

You will regularly see the great and the good there – semi-famous lawyers and judges, artists, public servants, captains of industry, former and current politicians.

I'm not sure why I'm there. To be brutally honest, it's handily on my way home and I treat the place like some kind of upmarket dairy.

But it's a lovely place to hang out: it has interesting produce, cut flowers, and it smells of freshly squeezed orange juice and coffee.

And it's easy to get caught up in the allure of fancy food. Many's the time I pop in for a bottle of milk and end up \$100 later with artisan bread, some tiramisu, a lovely wine and some kind of trendy fermented drink.

The funny thing is when I'm at a regular supermarket you can hear me in the dairy aisle muttering angrily to myself about the price of butter and cheese, as I choose the plain pack brand that will save me 50 cents.

When I enter Moore Wilson's my penny pinching fades away, and you will find me perusing the specialty sauces and exotic milks. I knew I had lost



I didn't get Nadia Lim's autograph; my daughter wanted to eat her dumpling and not wait for me to stand, starry-eyed in a queue.

any credibility as a authentic representative of the common person, when I came home once with truffle butter. I'm not even sure I had a use for it.

I recently ran into an old work colleague, who was concentrating hard in the produce aisle. She confessed she was deciding whether to buy packaged pomegranate seeds or a fresh pomegranate. She looked at me guiltily. "Jane, I think this is a first world problem," she said.

Moore Wilson's is such an institution that Real Estate agents mention it in their advertising for local homes in Mt Victoria, along with school zoning and sun. That million-dollar townhouse you're contemplating will be worth it, if it comes with the ability to pop into Moore Wilson's on a regular basis for wagyu beef and artisan yoghurt.

I didn't get Nadia Lim's autograph; my daughter wanted to eat her dumpling and not wait for me to stand, starry-eyed in a queue.

But I have my photo and proof that I am almost literally rubbing shoulders with famous chefs. Perhaps the talent will rub off on me. I should look in the back of the fridge for that truffle butter and see if I can find something to do with it. **TL**

Kitts with the Duke of Edinburgh, crossing Cuba Street, December 1956.
 Photographer: Morrie Hill.
 [Alexander Turnbull Library
 1/2-177213-F]



A Mayor for the people

With Wellington City Council elections delivering us a new Mayor, it seems a good time to write about a truly local one, says **Joanna Newman** from the Mt Victoria Historical Society.

Frank Kitts (Sir Francis Kitts after he was knighted in 1966), was Wellington’s longest-serving Mayor, holding the office for 18 years from 1956 to 1974. He lived in Shannon Street for many years and was known for walking to work.

Kitts was a full-time mayor at a time when most Mayors treated the role as a part-time sideline to their main businesses.



Kitts coming down Kennedy Street on his way to work, 28 March 1957. (We know he continued on down to the end of Hawker St before turning right to Courtenay Place, because the photographer captured him there, too.)
 [Alexander Turnbull Library EP/1957/0989-F]

Kitts stood on a Labour ticket, but throughout his entire mayoralty Labour never had a council majority. He adopted a leadership style that encouraged impartial chairmanship of council committees. His neighbour on Shannon Street, Cath Kelly, shared with Mt Vic Historical Society in 2006 that “he didn’t take a strong line on political things”.

He oversaw some significant changes during his tenure. In 1964, trams were replaced by trolley buses. The council became involved in public housing, opening Hanson Court flats in Newtown in 1965, followed by several other developments. In 1969 the council pedestrianised Cuba Street.

Kitts was a big man who could apparently swallow sausage rolls at official functions “like he was posting a letter”. Cath Kelly also recalled his popularity, saying “he always talked to everyone, and he’d walk into town and say hello to everyone ... And you’d meet people all sorts of places and they’d say ‘Oh, I know Frank Kitts. He always says hello to me.’” **TL**



Anji & James - Working Hard For Sellers *and* Buyers...

*'Dear Vendor,
Even if I am not successful in purchasing your
property, I would still like to express my appreciation
for James's **professionalism** and **dedication**
throughout the process.
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Alice - 5 Dawson Street

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