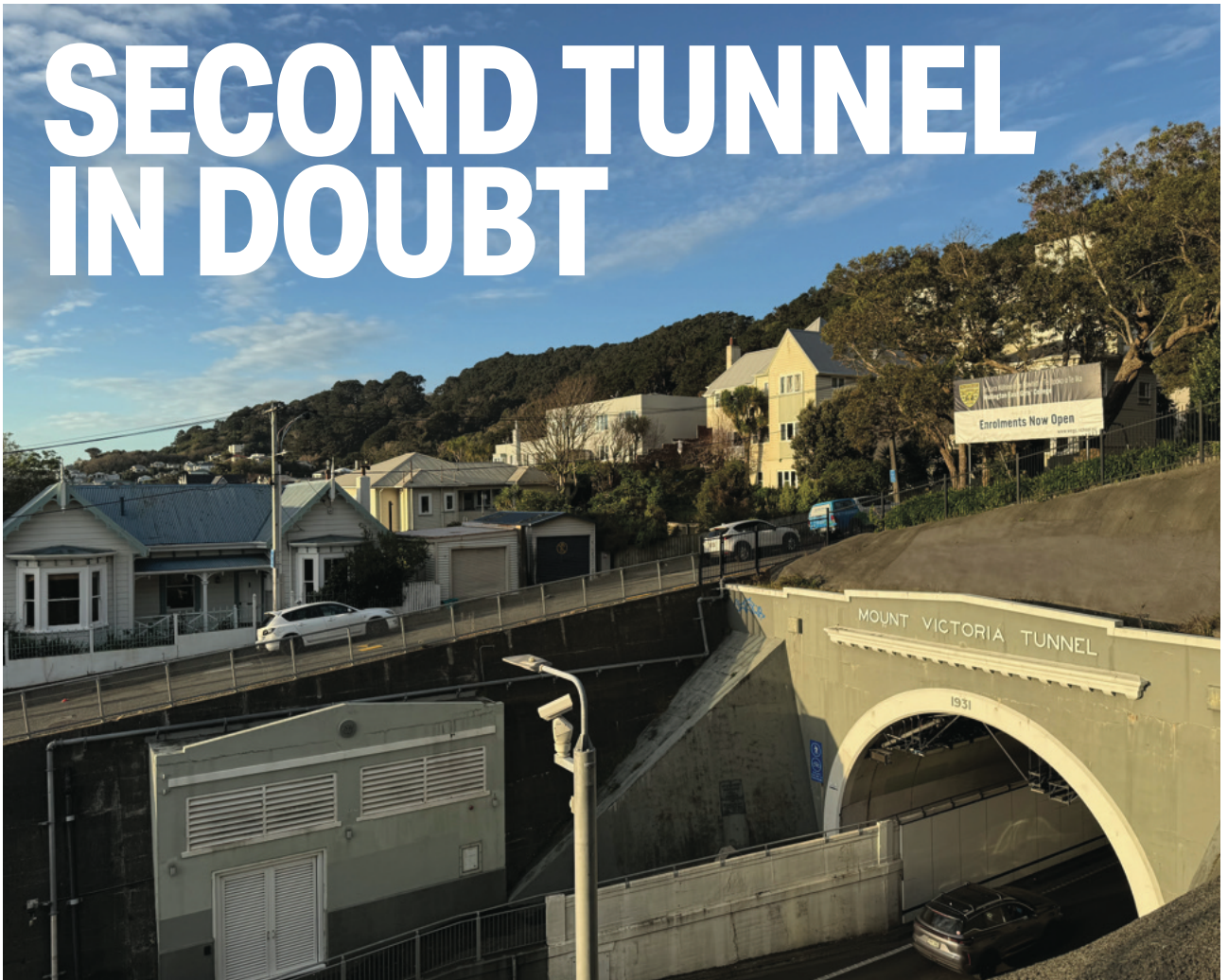


THE LOCAL Mt Victoria

NGĀ KARERE HAPORI O MATAIRANGI

SECOND TUNNEL IN DOUBT



A second tunnel through Mt Victoria now seems doubtful, after the government's roading agency published an updated list of priority roads that didn't include it.

The tunnel is part of a package of State Highway 1 improvements through Wellington.

The transport agency NZTA released its 'major transport projects pipeline' last month, showing

SH1 Wellington Improvements sitting in a 'future pipeline' section that has no timeline for construction. Confirmed work now only includes progressing route protection.

Previously Minister Chris Bishop had promised construction would start within the Government's first term.

Read more on page 3. ➔

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09 Linda Wilson - a stalwart of Circa theatre

14 AI doesn't understand us

15 One of Elizabeth St's oldest houses

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Tamatha Paul
MP for Wellington Central

E: wellington.central@parliament.govt.nz

P: (04) 3891290

Auth by Tamatha Paul, Green Party MP.
Parliament Buildings, Wellington. Funded by Parliamentary Services.





After much debate and discussion, a package of State Highway 1 improvements has hit a funding roadblock, as **Jane O'Loughlin** reports.

A second Mt Victoria tunnel appears to have hit a funding dead end, despite promises that construction would start during the Government's current term, which concludes in November this year.

The New Zealand Transport Agency released its 'major transport projects pipeline' in July, revealing that SH1 Wellington Improvements project (which includes the tunnel) sits in a 'future pipeline' section that has no timeline for construction.

Confirmed work now only includes progressing route protection, and NZTA says on its website that detailed design work that had already started would be put on hold.

Consultation on the design of the SH1 improvements project, expected to cost between \$2.9 billion to \$3.8b, took place at the end of last year. It includes a second Terrace Tunnel, a second Mount Victoria Tunnel, a major roading upgrade at the Basin Reserve, and changes to the state highway corridor through central Wellington and through Hataitai and Kilbirnie.

Prior to the last election National had promised construction would start within the Government's first term.

In 2023 Chris Bishop (now Transport Minister) said Wellingtonians were sick of the arguing over the Basin Reserve and a second Mt Victoria tunnel.

"The current tunnel was built in 1931 and services 37,000 vehicles per day. It is long overdue an upgrade and the next National government will deliver where Labour has failed."

Despite the lack of funding for implementation,

the Government says it remains committed to its Roads of National Significance programme.

NZTA said that "current funding and delivery capacity constraints mean projects need to be sequenced over time."

"The SH1 Wellington Improvements project team remains focused on securing our statutory approvals and route protection, so the project is ready for detailed design, pre-implementation and construction when funding becomes available."

The roading agency is going ahead with its application for statutory approvals under the Fast-track Approvals Act (FTAA). "We expect to lodge our application in August and complete this work over the next year."

"Completing the approvals process will protect the route and ensure we are ready to progress when funding becomes available.

"It will also provide greater certainty for residential homeowners, businesses and the community because we will know what the project will look like and where it is going to go."

The Green Party's MP for Rongotai, Julie Anne Genter, who is a long-time critic of the project, said it had been a massive waste of money, time and energy.

"National won't actually come out and admit it in an election year but the tunnels project is not happening. Despite all the promises, Minister Bishop has majorly backed down on the project. It has no implementation date and no funding. It has no realistic chance of getting funding in the future."

She said people needed to accept it was not going to happen and look at initiatives that would work quickly to alleviate congestion, such as public transport investment, a second public transport spine along the Quays, trialling congestion charging, and making 'affordable' changes to existing roads. **TL**

Tunnel limbo

A second Mt Vic tunnel (third if you count the bus tunnel) has been mooted and planned for by NZTA since the 1970s.

This Government has been the most determined to get it started, promising in 2023 that construction would begin during the current term.

Three years on, the project has no committed funding to proceed beyond its current stage.

National Party Ministers, MPs and candidates for Parliament are now dancing on the head of a pin about its future, claiming that geotechnical work means there have been the promised 'spades in the ground' this term, and that it will go ahead when funding is available.

There is no point pushing on with uneconomic projects just to make a political point or to save face, so we should probably be relieved that National's Ministers have accepted that there are higher priority projects than this one.

But there is wider point that particularly affects neighbouring suburbs. For decades Mt Victoria has been living in limbo, waiting for a tunnel to happen. NZTA owns a long strip of southern Mt Victoria (Patterson Street) in anticipation of knocking down all

the houses and turning it into State Highway 1. A set of shops by the Basin Reserve (once known as Bogart's Corner) were removed in 2011 and replaced by nothing, and uncertainty about impending years of construction has caused angst for residents and businesses.

Now where are we? The tunnel is not going ahead anytime soon, but it's also not definitively cancelled. Once again we are in limbo. If the most gung ho road-loving Government can't get this one across the line, is it time to admit defeat?

If we accepted the tunnel was never going to go ahead could we turn our minds to other solutions to alleviate the congestion? Should we once again explore the idea of light rail, but this time going somewhere useful, like the hospital, the stadium, the airport, and the eastern suburbs? Could we look at traffic demand management solutions, like time of use charging?

I've no doubt many people will cling to the idea of a tunnel forever, but at some stage we

have to face reality. When we do, we can then start planning for a different future for the southern end of Mt Victoria. **TL**

Jane O'Loughlin
Editor



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

Design: **homestudio.nz**

Amalgamation feedback

More than 3000 people submitted their views to the Wellington City Council on a proposed amalgamation with neighbouring councils.

The council says it is now reviewing and analysing the feedback, and a summary will inform the Mayor and Councillors to help inform their decision-making as they consider whether to support submitting a Wellington region proposal.

The council emphasised that the Government's tight deadline mean formal consultation was not possible.

"If a Wellington region proposal is accepted and progressed through to detailed design, we expect to consult with the community at that next stage." **TL**



Foodies in Wellington are rejoicing after three restaurants in the city were awarded Michelin stars in the very first assessment by the esteemed Michelin Guide in Aotearoa – including one for Mt Victoria's own Ortega Fish Shack in Majoribanks Street.

Logan Brown and Jano Bistro were the other two Wellington awards, out of the 14 restaurants given stars in Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Queenstown.

On its website, Michelin describes Ortega: "With a nautical ambiance, Ortega focuses on seafood prepared in diverse styles. The menu draws from global influences to highlight the natural qualities of fresh ingredients."

Ortega staff described the news on social media as "pretty damn epic!"

"Such things have always seemed far outside the realm of our colourful yet humble little world."

They went on to thank staff past and present.

"Ortega is very much a team effort. For our amazing team who show up and pour each their individual love into the place every day, this is such beautiful recognition. And for our amazing employees past who left each their unique impression, this is as much yours!" **TL**



Mt Victorians may have been surprised to suddenly hear the bells of the Carillon once more in July.

Sydney-based carillonist Isaac Wong performed a programme of French Baroque arrangements including 'Le Sauvages' and 'Andante' on Saturday 18 July, and music favourites from films like Harry Potter and Interstellar on Sunday 19 July.

Residents can look forward to recitals from visiting carillonists on the third weekend of every month at Pukeahu National War Memorial Park.

Recitals are 30 minutes long and begin at 2pm on Saturdays and 12pm on Sundays. **TL**

New water bills on their way

The first separate water bills issued by new water entity Tiaki Wai will start arriving with residents this month.

Tiaki Wai took over responsibility for the delivery of water services from councils on 1 July 2026. Water charges are being removed from council rates bills, and will be billed by Tiaki Wai instead. Bills for Wellington City Council properties are going out from 29 July 2026.

The way water is charged will remain the same in year one, according to the agency.

"This year, Tiaki Wai water services charges are calculated in a similar way to how councils calculated them previously, using a mix of fixed charges and charges based on the capital value of your property.

"Over time, Tiaki Wai plans to move to a single regionwide pricing system, where charges are consistent across the region. There will be public consultation before decisions are made."

According to the calculator on the website, a house valued at \$1m in Wellington City would pay \$2,550 a year for water charges. **TL**

Jonathan Pitts

National Party Candidate
for Wellington North

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✉ jonathan.pitts@national.org.nz

🌐 national.org.nz/team/jonathanpitts

📘 JPFForWellingtonNorth



Authorised by J Pitts, jonathan.pitts@national.org.nz



Marsden & Chelsea Clubs



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POLITICAL PROFILE

The ambition to be a politician started at least 20 years ago for National's Wellington North candidate – but an influential person told him to get a career first.

Jane O'Loughlin reports.

Jonathan Pitts got to know Prime Minister John Key at an event for Rotary scholars in the early 2000s. He asked the Prime Minister how to get into politics.

“He said, ‘Nah, don’t go into politics. Get a career first. And then when you’ve got a career and you’ve got something to fall back on, then you can go into politics.’”

Pitts took heed, going on to become a lawyer, but retaining an interest in the National Party. Now, the stars have aligned for him to make his move.

Pitts and his team think they have a chance in the newly created electorate of Wellington North, due to the boundary changes.

“We think it’s in play. We think it’s very much winnable. There’s a lot more bluer areas in there.”

Priority issues for him start with education and law and order. “We need to get those fixed. That’s going to save a lot of money in the future. And there’s also things like getting early access for children with disabilities, increased funding for getting people with neurodiversity issues seen as soon as possible. That’s something I’m pretty passionate about as well.”

For Wellington, he says getting the second Mt Victoria tunnel done is important for decreasing congestion, improving transport times and reducing fuel use.

Another issue he’s heard a lot about from potential voters is parking and the controversial topic of bike lanes – where he’s interested in influencing council policy.

“A lot of people I talk to say they are not happy about the lack of parking. I have no issue with bikes, I bike around. I love biking. I rent an e-scooter from time to time, but I feel like the balance [has shifted] too much to bikes and e-scooters. So I think we need to dial it back a bit.”

Pitts was born in the UK, and partly educated in Japan due to his father working there. Going to International school with an American curriculum had a lasting impression: he can still recite all the names of US presidents, their vice presidents and who they beat in the in their respective elections.



Pitts takes a pop

Family holidays were spent in a camper van in New Zealand where he developed a love for the place. He eventually returned here in 1997, with the aim of being a pilot. While he didn’t make the Airforce’s officer selection, he stayed anyway, and his parents then followed.

Except for one year back in the UK, he’s lived in Wellington since 2005, in a variety of places: Newtown by the hospital (“every time a helicopter would land, the house would shake”) Mount Victoria for two years (“I lived on the corner of Brougham Street, in Elizabeth Street, above the dairy. It was actually one of my favourite flats”) and then in Mount Cook for until 2014. Currently he lives in Khandallah.

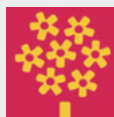
He’s a lawyer for Chevron, where his work includes dealing with the fallout from some of the oil transport issues currently affecting the Middle East.

He has two boys, 8 and 10. Helping with school activities keeps him busy as well as some unusual hobbies. He’s a keen guitar player, owns seven guitars, and can play guitar behind his head (“I used to be in a punk band when I was at school.”)

He’s also an avid Lego collector, and keeps an eye out for rare Lego sets. He recently had to invest in a new cabinet to keep his Lego in.

But right now his time is being spent on the campaign trail, finally getting the chance to fulfill his long held aspiration to try his hand at politics. **TL**

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



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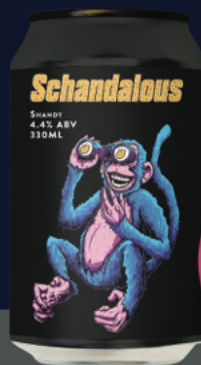


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A Circa theatre stalwart

Sharon Greally meets a Mt Vic resident who is passionate about theatre.

Mt Vic local Linda Wilson is passionate about theatre, and in particular Circa Theatre, based smack dab on Wellington's waterfront at number 1 Taranaki St. She has been involved for almost 50 years, since Circa's inception, initially as a stage manager, actor, secretary, honorary resident archivist, and box office manager.

She is now programme manager, and is very proud to be involved in celebrating Circa's 50th birthday anniversary of showing plays from New Zealand and all around the world.

Sir Sam Neil, who recently died, kicked things off earlier in the year with a special fundraiser.

He was a great supporter of Circa, Linda says, making his professional debut here 50 years ago, in 1976, performing in Juno and the Paycock.

Linda proudly shows me around the Green room, where actors are taking a break between rehearsals. The wall of photos shows the background and history of the new and old buildings. Circa moved from its original home in Harris St, to Taranaki St in 1993.

Linda has even made an amazing waistcoat to showcase all the productions she has done in her 24 years as Stage Manager. She wears it when giving tours to various groups. It's an archive and performance piece all on its own. One of her favourites is New Zealand playwright Robert Lord's Joyful and Triumphant, depicted with gorgeous gold stars. The play took her from New Zealand to Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, and onto London, with over 200 performances. "We toured it for over 5 years, from



1992 to 1997, and I had a baby in between all of that, just to take things up a bit."

Circa is an incorporated society and a charitable trust, and Linda works primarily voluntarily, such is her passion. The building cost \$2.8 million initially, and runs mainly on volunteers. "Our livelihood depends on people walking through the doors. The annual pantomime is a customer favourite. We know it's always going to do well, especially with this year being election year. It's very satirical!"

Linda moved to Mt Victoria in 2008. "I'd always wanted to live in Mt. Victoria. It means I can walk everywhere I want to go. It's what I love about living here. Sometimes I walk to the Botanical Gardens. And I'm so happy the Library is back – I love the Library! I go at least once a week. And I walk around the waterfront a lot. I love walking up Hawker St., and down to Oriental Bay. And Tomboy and Mt. Vic Chipperry are favourites, as well as the proximity to the Lighthouse and Embassy and Bats theatres. I can see from Mt. KauKau to the Brooklyn windmill out of my living room window, and it's a panoramic view. I don't need any paintings – just the view." TL

Wellington winning streak

We can all contribute to our city being a great place to live, says **Anji Foster** from **Lowe & Co.**

How many suburbs in Wellington can claim a Michelin Star restaurant plus two Michelin selected restaurants?! Congratulations to Ortega, Rosella and Koji for getting a very firm nod from one of the pinnacles of food appreciation, Michelin.

This news was amongst a few recent wins for the Capital. I was unfortunately away for the epic Hurricanes Super Rugby win, but I was delighted to read all about it while in Vietnam. ULTRA Wellington attracted around 25,000 attendees and generated an estimated \$5.4 million in new visitor spending. Then the All Blacks bucked their patchy Cake Tin record by securing an important win just a few weeks later.

I was struck by a comment made by Kirsty Stanaway from Sky Sport in the pre-game build up when she referred to the “great vibe in the Capital”. I feel like it’s been a while since I’ve heard our town referred to in that positive light.

So, are things shifting in a slightly more half glass full direction, or is that just how I’m choosing to look at it? And does that even matter? When James and I started working together in 2024, we made an early decision to use our social media platform to promote not just ourselves and our client’s homes for sale, but also to support other local businesses. In our weekly Bulletin we refer to this as We Love Welly Weekly and we visit cafes, shops and experiences in Te Whanganui a Tara in an effort to spread the word about supporting local.

In our suburb, we have given away countless vouchers to many of our Mt Vic dining establishments, and last month we had a \$1000 giveaway to dine at Wellington’s three Michelin Star restaurants. We donate to The Wellington City Mission for every sale we make, and as of January 2026, we are donating \$250 to Clyde Quay School for every Mount Victoria sale we achieve.

These are all small gestures in the grand scheme of life but are reminders that small steps can make big differences. If others can also benefit from our success, then surely that is a good eco system to live in. How does any of this relate to property?

As agents, we often say we’re not just selling homes, we’re selling a lifestyle. The funny thing is, that lifestyle only exists if we all play a part in creating it. The cafés we support, the restaurants we celebrate, the local schools, sporting successes, community events and independent retailers all contribute to the reasons people choose to live here.

Every week James and I hear buyers tell us they love a particular suburb because of its “vibe”, its local shopping village, its favourite coffee spot, the friendly locals or the sense of community. Those things don’t happen by accident. They’re built by people choosing to support one another.

So while buying a coffee locally or dining at a neighbourhood restaurant might seem insignificant, collectively those choices help create vibrant suburbs that people genuinely want to call home. To me, that’s good for our businesses, good for our communities and, ultimately, good for our property market too. **TL**

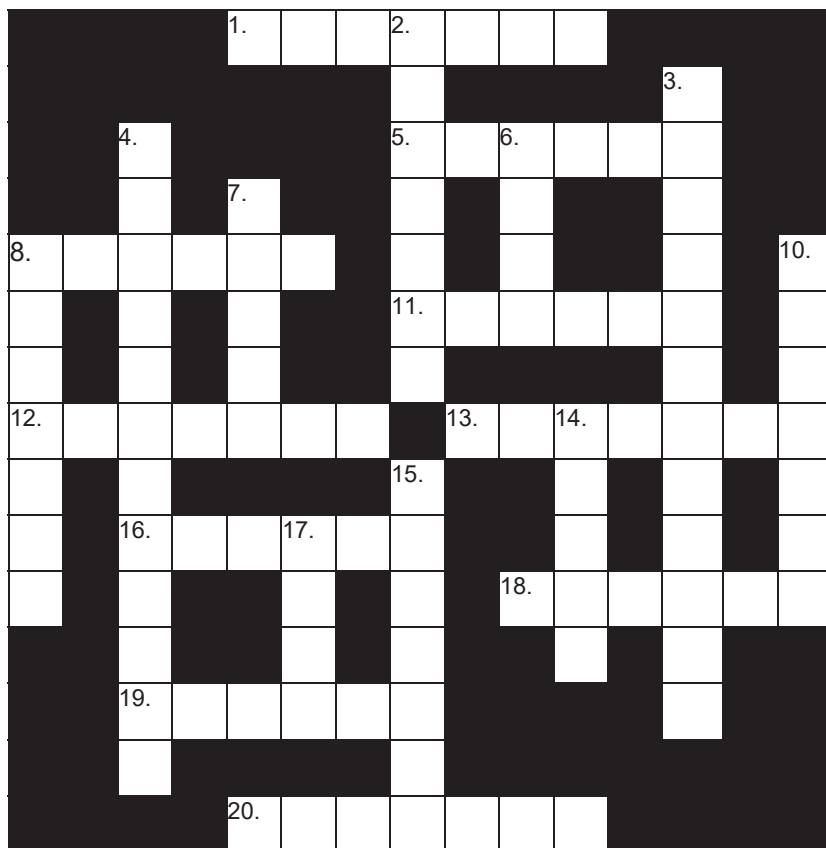
As agents, we often say we’re not just selling homes, we’re selling a lifestyle. The funny thing is, that lifestyle only exists if we all play a part in creating it.



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Beau's Crossword #10



Across:

1. Person who is skilled and experienced. (7)
5. Crept forward. (6)
8. Provides stability in turbulent waters. (6)
11. Answer to #19. (anag)
12. A regal type of penguin. (7)
13. Protection. (7)
16. Unconfirmed statement/idea. (6)
18. Enraged spiel. (6)
19. Yellow fruits. (6)
20. Mogul. (7)

Down:

2. Completely embodies a quality. (7)
3. Quirk. (12)
4. Infinitely unique. (12)
6. Ring. (4)
7. ---- bear, ---- opposites. (5)
8. Greek goddess of the hunt. (7)
10. Payback. (7)
14. Smooth, graceful. (5)
15. Craftsperson. (7)
17. A preposition. (4)

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 to Tomboy cafe on Majoribanks Street.

Email your answers to us at admin@the-local.co.nz. If there's more than one correct answer, the winner will be selected at random. Congratulations to David Udy who identified the July ULO as the top of the Prestige building on Pirie 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*.

Mt Victoria Residents' Association

Join us on Thursday 6 August, 6pm at Clyde Quay School hall for a Mt Victoria Residents Association session on 'mapping the community'. We will continue the dialogue on what we need in transport, greening the suburb and preparation for our next emergency management workshop later in the year. All residents welcome. Contact mtvicra@gmail.com for more information.

Mount Victoria Historical Society

Mt Victoria has a unique history that we can see all around us. Mt Victoria Historical Society researches and shares these stories, through newsletters, talks, and other events. To find out more or join, phone 027 7577 984 or contact us via our website: <https://mtvictoria.history.org.nz/>

Tramping talk

"One Boulder Too Many: a traverse of Westland's Wanganui River" - by Chris Munn. Tararua Tramping Club, 4 Moncrieff St, Tuesday 4 August, 1-2pm. Tea and coffee provided, feel free to bring your lunch.

Tararua Tramping Club

Our club meetings are held on Tuesday nights at our clubrooms at 4 Moncrieff Street commencing at 7.30pm. Visit ttc.org.nz/TTC/ClubNight to see our current Club Night programme of 45-minute presentations on a range of interesting topics including outdoor activities and overseas travel. All welcome.

Crossways Community Creche

We are a not-for-profit early learning centre welcoming children aged 1 to 5. We are passionate about delivering quality early childhood education, with a curriculum shaped by play, partnership, and respect every day. Open Monday to Friday, including school holidays, we are located at 61 Majoribanks Street. Contact us on 022 153 4604 or enrolments@crosswayscreche.org.nz. For more information, visit www.crossways.org.nz

Innermost Gardens

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

Table tennis for over 60s

Table tennis is a fantastic sport for older people as it helps with movement, brain stimulation, and muscle/bone strength. We have 8 tables and play 3 times a week at the stadium on Alexandra Road. We want to encourage new people to join our fun social event. Only \$5 each time - no subscription.

For more information contact Diana Winn, email winnich@xtra.co.nz or phone 04 801-9556.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Feldenkrais classes

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

Probus Wellington Central



The next meeting of Probus Wellington Central features Helmut Modlik, Chief Executive of Te Rūnanga o Toa Rangatira, as the speaker on Friday 21 August. Probus usually meets on the third Friday of the month (Feb to Nov) at Prefab Hall, Jessie St, 10.00 am to noon. Membership \$50 per annum. Stay for buffet lunch at Prefab \$25. More information: <https://www.probusouthpacific.org/microsites/wellingtoncentral/>

Host Your Next Event at the Tararua Tramping Club Hall!



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

Rotary



The Mt Victoria Rotary Club is part of Rotary International, a global network of 1.2 million volunteers committed to “Service Above Self.” We meet for dinner on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of every month (5:30pm for 6pm) at The Oaks, 89 Courtenay Place, Te Aro. 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

Mushy air

You are a columnist who is on deadline because you have procrastinated too much and you have left this to the last minute once again and you need to produce a column very quickly...

Jane O'Loughlin enlists the help of AI to do some writing.

Ok ChatGPT, give this a go. You are a columnist for a community newspaper called the local capital T it should have a capital T and a delete delete. Oh for heavens sake what's the point of voice recognition if I have to correct everything?

The column is called Mushy Air... what? What on earth? musings! How do you get mushy air? It's called musings capital M never mind.

You are a columnist who is on deadline because you have procrastinated too much and you have left this to the last minute once again and you need to produce a column very quickly... stop me if this is all too much information but I was told you need context.

For further context we should note the columnist you are impersonating is actually not lazy and disorganised but probably has a bit too much on her plate and while it's true I did spend one evening watching Netflix... anyway the point is that she needs a column written pronto and I don't think I need to provide some kind of justification it's not like you're the boss of me or judging. I hope!

It's just 500 words so I am assuming you can whip one up for me no problem after all I'm not asking you to hack into a bank. Ignore that! It was a joke.

It needs to be about Mt Victoria. That's Mt Victoria Wellington, not the one in Australia or Papua New Guinea. Mt Victoria the suburb on the side of the hill that is Mt Victoria that is confusing now I say it out loud.

Please give me some ideas for a topic.

Hmm.

'A regular meditation on the different species of wind that visit Mt Victoria'?

'The mysterious disappearance of a perfect parking space moments before you reach it'?

I don't mean to be rude but those ideas are a bit naff – sorry! Wind, hills, waiting for the bus – boring! Sounds like you've just googled Mt Vic and some really cliched things have popped up.

'Where do all the tennis balls found in the Town Belt originate?'

Well that is intriguing. I'm interested now. Write me a 500 word essay on that.

[...]

Ok so it was dogs? Dogs put them there. That was the answer? Mystery solved. Look, the thing is chat jibbed... G-P-T not jibbed! The thing is I was looking for something a bit more personal and the problem is you don't actually live here, you can only read stuff people put online about Mt Victoria and that's not enough. You need to live here, and walk the streets, and dodge the dog poop, and wait for the bus and talk to your neighbours and pop into the dairy and walk your kids to school and breathe the fresh air in the town belt and get puffed walking up the hill and do all the things that people who live here do. Until then, it's all going to sound a bit plastic. So I'm sorry, I am sure you are good for some things but I don't think this task is the one for you after all, which means someone like me is going to have to write this Mushy Air ... what? For goodness sakes... 

Heritage status for Elizabeth Street cottage

Alan Olliver checks out one of Mt Victoria's oldest houses.



A modest two-storey cottage at 74 Elizabeth Street has recently gained heritage status from Heritage New Zealand. The initiative came from the present owner and Mount Victoria Historical Society member, David Lee, who has compiled a detailed history of the house.

The 1875 cottage likely predates the construction of Elizabeth Street. It is set back behind 70, 72 and 76 Elizabeth Street facing west. Locals long referred to it as the “farmhouse”. It was built for William McIntosh Muir, who bought four adjacent town acres in 1874. Muir then subdivided the land and named the private lane after his sister.

Number 74 has had at least 20 owners and numerous tenants since it was built 152 years’ ago. One of the more notable owners was Robert Mowatt, the first mayor of Melrose and a former gunnery instructor in the Crimean War.

Another early owner was Keren Krull, whose husband, Frederick Krull, bought it for her. He was the first German honorary consul in New Zealand. Frederick ran an importing business with goods from Germany, France and Sweden. Renovations exposed, Baltic pine tongue and groove match lining and one piece of pine was labelled “BREMEN”, which was a German town. This could well date back to the Krull’s ownership of the cottage.

The Krulls sold the cottage to Francis Thompson, who in 1901 appeared in court charged with poaching trout with a pitchfork. He was found guilty and fined £5. In 1924 Charles McGill bought the house. Charles

was known in social circles as the Chairman of the Wellington Camera Club and Vice President of the Society of Magicians.

Terrance Logan owned the house in the 1970s. He was maître d’ at the White Heron Lodge, in Kilbirnie (now the Brentwood Hotel). He often invited celebrities to his house, including The Animals, a blues-rock band formed in Newcastle upon Tyne in 1963 with hits like “The House of the Rising Sun” and “We Gotta Get Out of This Place”.

David bought the house in 1982 and began restoring it almost immediately, with the help of his late father, Ted, a retired shipwright. They used a considerable amount of recycled materials. The floorboards came from the demolished part of Clyde Quay School nearby. The barge boards were from William Tonk’s cottage in Cuba Street when it was part of a demolition yard. The pair became accidental archaeologists finding the original totara shingles under the corrugated iron roof. They also found numerous other items including a cart shaft used as a stud in a wall of the cottage. The shaft links the cart to a horse’s harness. A horse’s leg bone was found under the veranda.

Like many Victorian-era cottages in Mount Victoria, David’s cottage was deemed “unfit for human habitation” by the Wellington City Council in the 1930s. Through years of renovation work with a lot of care and attention to detail, David and his father have brought the cottage back to life, creating a home now worthy of heritage status. 



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City Mission for every sale we make,
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