



HAVE YOUR SAY



Image credit: NZTA
Artist impression only

Now is the time to give your feedback on NZTA's proposed changes to the State Highway 1 roading network around the Basin Reserve, including a new tunnel through Mount Victoria.

The scale of the changes is revealed in engagement documents now available, which show areas of the Town Belt and Kent/Cambridge Terrace reserve turned into roads, the direction of traffic around the Basin Reserve reversed, and a new

underpass on the Mt Cook side of the Basin.

Some property owners will also be directly affected: NZTA says it has identified 176 properties in Mt Victoria, Hataitai, and adjacent to the second Terrace Tunnel that may need to be fully or partially acquired and a further 146 properties where substrata (below ground) land may need to be purchased to enable the construction of the two tunnels.

Read more inside. [➔](#)

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Have your say

Drilling is underway in the Hataitai Park area of the Wellington Town Belt until January 2026 to provide an understanding of the local ground conditions. Image credit: NZTA

As consultation starts on new Mt Victoria and Terrace tunnels and roading changes around the Basin Reserve, community groups are concerned about the fate of historic homes along the route. **Jane O'Loughlin** reports.

Roading agency NZTA (Waka Kotahi) has kicked off a brief four weeks of community engagement on the \$3.8 billion project to build two new tunnels and reorganise traffic around the Basin Reserve. The series of events to answer questions and get feedback from the public runs until Sunday 14 December.

Documents released as part of the engagement show major changes to the roading layout around the Basin Reserve and along Ruahine Street on the Hataitai side of the tunnel. This includes making use of Town Belt land, currently protected by legislation.

Once implemented, motorists will travel counter-clockwise around the Basin Reserve, allowing traffic on SH1 to have a more direct route through from the tunnel onto Karo Drive.

NZTA says the next three years are a 'pre-implementation programme' which includes progressing design, securing consents, and purchasing any property that may be required for the project. It also said it was exploring options for some 'early enabling works' in 2026 which could include house demolition, site clearance, and road improvements.

Ellen Blake from the Mt Victoria Residents' Association said she would be concerned if demolitions

were to proceed before more details and timelines were released on the project.

"We have been living with this project since at least 1978 when St Patricks College was demolished and an ugly car lot replaced it, and more recently when the historic horseshoe shaped shops were demolished on the corner of Kent and Ellice St leaving an underused green space."

Mount Victoria Historical Society intends to highlight the heritage value of the Paterson Street area to NZTA, and ask the Agency not to demolish any houses until the second tunnel is confirmed as definitely going ahead.

"If a second tunnel goes ahead, every effort must be made to retain the heritage of this area," said convenor Joanna Newman.

A spokesperson from NZTA said that the timeline for the main construction of the project was still to be confirmed, and was subject to further funding decisions.

"This means no decisions have yet been made about the demolition of houses, site clearance, or any other early works. However, all options will be considered as part of future planning, including relocating, recycling, or on-selling properties. **TL**

More information about the project and dates for community engagement are on the website along with a survey for feedback: nzta.govt.nz/projects/sh1-wellington-improvements/community-engagement.

A lot of pies

“There’ll be a lot of pies,” said my partner, after studying the plans released by NZTA for the new Mt Victoria tunnel.

I thought he’d lost his mind, but he was referring to the vast number of workers in high-vis we will eventually see – if this project goes ahead – who inevitably will also need to buy lunch and coffees as they work on the new tunnel and the significant changes around the Basin Reserve.

Perhaps his assessment of the dietary habits of roading workers is out of date, and they are all nibbling on sushi these days, but overall, the message is correct – this is a massive project and it means years of construction and disruption for our area.

With that comes some benefits probably, such as jobs and the economic boost of activity in the neighbourhood. It might be time now to start thinking about investing in a coffee cart!

Studying the plans, I have to say I feel some relief for Mt Victoria. Things could have been worse – thankfully there’s no flyover. Nevertheless, the impacts will be significant, so have your say in the short period available to us. Design elements to

consider might be access to and from our suburb resulting from the new roading layout. For instance, residents wanting to drive north or west will have to use Elizabeth St or Majoribanks Street to get onto Kent Terrace – there will be no access from Ellice Street or Pirie Street.

We should also be concerned about the construction of the project – the noise, disruption and vibrations, and how these will be managed. And we may wonder what will happen to the turn-of-the-century houses along the route that NZTA owns – will they be bulldozed or is there a chance to move them elsewhere?

We should engage, even though there is still the outstanding question of whether the Government will ultimately find the money to see this go ahead – a project that has been on the cards since the 70s and never actually managed to get off the drawing board.

In other words, will there be lots of pies, or is it all still pie in the sky?

This is the last edition of *The Local* for the year – we’ll be back in February. Thanks for all your support, feedback and engagement, and I wish you a relaxing summer break. TL



Jane O’Loughlin
Editor

THE LOCAL Mt Victoria

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The Local is distributed to Mt Victoria letterboxes and local cafes on the first weekend of every month (except January).

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Design: homestudio.nz

Resource consent recommended for Mayfair

The Wellington City Council's planning team is recommending that resource consent be granted for the controversial Mayfair apartment building proposal in Austin Street, subject to a set of conditions.

These include carrying out a new geotechnical report, employing a geotechnical professional to monitor earthworks, noise monitoring, realignment of the driveway and installation of a judder bar, and no truck movements during school periods and peak traffic hours during demolition and construction.

Only the four properties on Westbourne Grove were allowed to make submissions on the proposal for the seven-storey 32-unit block to be built at the end of the narrow driveway. Five residents and/or property owners made submissions in opposition.

The matter now goes before a hearing commissioner on 15-16 December. **TL**

Kent Terrace intersection in limbo

A brand new intersection at Kent Terrace will sit unused by pedestrians for months, while the Wellington City Council reviews the Golden Mile project.

Re-aligning Courtenay Place with the Embassy Theatre instead of Majoribanks Street was phase 1 of the Golden Mile project, and the intersection work has been largely completed except for pedestrian shelters that were supposed to be installed in November.

However it will now sit in limbo for at least three to six months to accommodate a review requested by Mayor Andrew Little into the escalating costs associated with the Golden Mile project.

The intersection has opened for cyclists, but opening the pedestrian crossing was contingent on the rest of the Golden Mile works going ahead.

It's not clear what will happen if the Golden Mile project is cancelled. Currently the new intersection leads to a concrete wall on the Courtenay Place side. **TL**

Revamped playground

Crossways Community Creche on Majoribanks Street has unveiled a new playground.

The new layout features a sandpit, slide, water play area, plantings, shed and wharehenui.

Creche chair Hannah Chisnall (pictured below, left) said it was a relief to have the work finally done. "It's been talked about for many years."

Creche parent Paloma Fernandez (pictured below, right) said the new playground created more space for tamariki as well as some fun spaces to explore, and made it easier for kaiako (teachers) to keep an eye on children.

The project was initiated by the committee, with support from the families and kaiako to get the renovation done. The creche would like to acknowledge specifically the contribution of parent Hamish Waterhouse, who did much of the building work.

The Creche's next plan is for a mural to brighten up the large wall on Hawker Street. **TL**



Summer events

Summer will see several events Wellington residents can look forward to.

The Courtenay Carnival is back for New Year's Eve, with music, food and dance to see in the new year. See eatdrinkplay.co.nz for more details.

The Wellington City Council is running Christmas in the Quarters with four free whānau-friendly events, in four different parts of the city. Visit wellington.govt.nz/Christmas for more information.

Wellington City Council's iconic free summer event, Gardens Magic, is back 6-25 January 2026. Check out the details at wellington.govt.nz/gardens-magic. **TL**

Town belt for all

In this opinion piece, the Mt Victoria Residents Association's president **Ellen Blake** makes the case that walking-only tracks are needed on Matairangi.

Our town belt is a treasure where we can enjoy a back-to-nature tranquil time wandering up and down hills, walking the dog, hanging out on our own or with friends. It was set up in the 1800s for the people of Wellington to be able to recreate in, as it continues. Fast forward to the present and now we see 12 mountain-bike-only tracks and all the rest above Palliser Road south are 'shared'. The Mt Victoria Residents Association is calling for a fairer allocation of tracks for all users to enjoy.

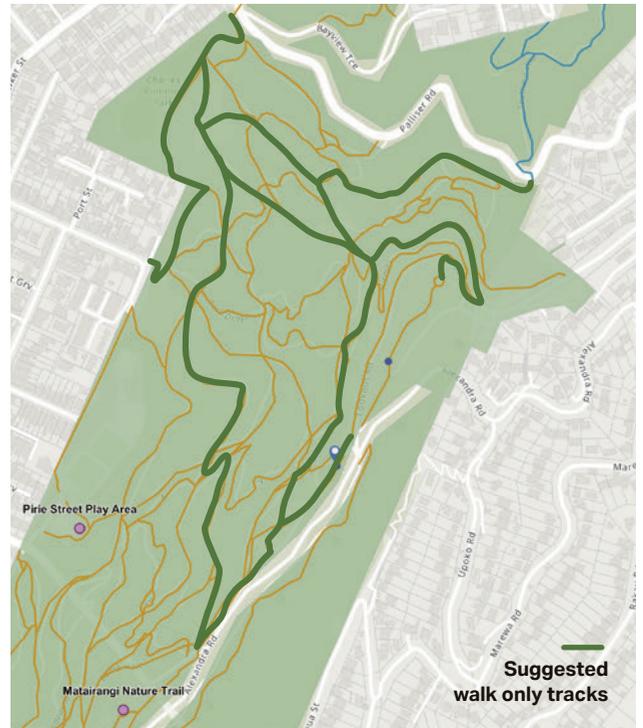
Until the last 20 years, recreation meant getting out on foot and the park management strongly reflected this. Some commuter cyclists have used one or two routes for a long time and are usually long gone by 9am. Two mountain bike tracks were created in about 2002. Now 12 mountain-bike-only tracks exist and all others are shared. Many of these mountain bike tracks were guerilla works and not well designed and only work for fast downhill descent. Considering this with two such different ways of getting around, there have been many issues. Putting aside the erosion risk and damage to regenerating bush that has gone along with the mountain bike tracks, the conflict between users has come to the fore. Mt Victoria Residents Association has raised this clash of use many times. We have heard of many people feeling frightened as high speed vehicles whoosh past them disrupting their park experience, and often with people in full face helmets – a clear sign to watch out. There have been serious injuries recorded, not least by local filmmaker Gaylene Preston, who has written of her experience.

Wellington City Council's 2015 management plan documented the tracks and there was agreement that no new tracks would be built. However one eastern side mountainbike-only downhill track has been built since then. Over three years ago a Council resolution

tasked staff to investigate this issue. In the latter part of this year people were invited to two meetings, one for on-foot users and one for mountainbikers. WCC has conducted a limited survey of some users and it plans more consultation.

The Council now has to look at fairly allocating existing track space. There just isn't enough space to build more tracks and maintain native vegetation. Council has recently installed signs to indicate that people on foot have priority on the tracks. Signage rarely solves design issues and therefore we think better management is required.

To enjoy our parks they need to be safe and pleasant for all users. There is no suggestion that more tracks will be installed so we have to make the best of what we have. Mt Victoria Residents Association suggests an equitable allocation of tracks and to have at least 12 walk-only tracks through our park so people on-foot can enjoy a tranquil vehicle-free experience. Ideally they need to be continuous so we can walk safely and totally separated. See the map for our ideas. **TL**



We are interested in your views on where these walking/on-foot sections should be. Contact mtvicra@gmail.com with your suggestions.

Support for science sponsorship

A Wellington East Girls' College student will attend the Rotary National Science and Technology Forum in Auckland, thanks to the Rotary Club of Mount Victoria.

Jade Nafatali has been selected for one of 168 places in the January programme for high achieving Year 12 students who have a strong interest in science, maths and technology.

“The Rotary Club of Mt Victoria is extremely proud to sponsor Jade to enable her to be accepted to attend this prestigious Science Forum,” says club president Avinash Figueiredo.

“This recognises not only the Club’s commitment to supporting young talent, but also its dedication to fostering the next generation of innovators and leaders in science and technology.”

The Forum provides the students with valuable opportunities to engage with industry professionals and visit leading organisations such as Auckland Medical



School, Centre for Brain Research, Fisher & Paykel Healthcare, NZ Police, Royal NZ Airforce, Babbage Geotechnical laboratory, HERA, Rocket Lab, Space Institute, Design for Additive Manufacturing Laboratory, Landcare Research and the NZ Institute for Public Health and Forensic Science.

Nafatali says the opportunity is a chance to step out of her comfort zone.

“I am the first child in my immediate family to study science and mathematics. I hope to be an example to encourage others in my family, but also my peers and future Pasifika students to study science, technology and/or mathematics.” 

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The Warratahs: their Mt Victoria reign

The Warratahs members are (from left) Nick Theobald (bass, vocals), Caroline Easterher (drums, vocals), Barry Saunders (vocals, guitar), Alan Norman (keyboards, accordion), and Nik Brown (violin, mandolin)



As the band enters its 38th year and performances are lining up for 2026, band member and Mt Vic local **Nick Theobald** explains the strong connections that the much-loved country music legends the Warratahs have to Mt Victoria.

It's Austin Street, 1987. Mt Victoria residents Barry Saunders and Wayne Mason produce alchemy with the chords G, E minor, C and D that results in 'Hands Of My Heart', the band's debut hit single. Fast forward to 2025 and 38 years of touring, one-night stands, sold-out shows and scores of great songs have been rewarded recently with the band's induction into The New Zealand Music Hall of Fame.

While Saunders' songs such as *Taranaki*, *Big Sky*, *Ruby Bay*, *Cape Turnagain* and *Kupe's Tears* take the listener across the land, it's his song *Mount Victoria Rain* that brings it all back home.

*And all our shattered times were here
and the pieces still remain
and I can see them shining clear
through the Mt. Victoria Rain*

Lead singer, guitarist and songwriter Barry Saunders has lived locally since 1987, but he's not the only one of us to love the location.

Our keyboard and accordion player, Alan Norman, has history here. From 1983 to 1989 he ran The Victoria Cafe, on the corner of Brougham and Queen Streets. Between 2001 and 2005, Alan and his brother ran 'Stamp & Go' the Caribbean-style restaurant in Majoribanks Street.

I'm the bass player in the band and am still resident in Mt Victoria. I began my tenure in Austin Street in a small apartment that years after I'd long gone, became a dormitory for 'working girls'. In the late 1980's, my Queen Street house was a target for local burglars - until a trap was successfully sprung. Never mind, we move on.

Perhaps it's the location, the views either over the city, or up to the majestic Town Belt. For The Warratahs, Mt Victoria hits all the right notes. **TL**

The Warratahs are playing Meow on Sunday 7 December at 4pm. Book at meow.nz.

The year that was

Anji Foster from Lowe & Co reflects on 2025

The final month of the year is always a time to reflect on what has been achieved, and to set goals for what is to be achieved in the year ahead. Looking back on 2025 I feel really chuffed with what James and I have achieved as a team. At the time of this month's edition of *The Local* going to print, James and I have had more listings in our suburb than any other real estate salespeople, and I wanted to take this opportunity to thank all of the wonderful local clients we have worked with this year with to get us to that position.

If we had our way, we would only sell in Mt Vic (don't pass that on to our non-Mt Vic clients). Zero commute time, selling in a neighbourhood that we personally choose to call home and working with a community and on properties that we appreciate. It doesn't get much better than that.

We have loved the opportunity to support so many of our wonderful local businesses this year through giveaways and competitions, and as of September 2025 we are also donating to Clyde Quay School upon every local sale that our team achieves. In 2026 we will continue to look for ways that we can give back to a community that has shown us incredible support this year.

Looking to 2026 it would be great to see some more confidence come into the Wellington property market. Prices have declined further this year, with the median value in Mount Victoria dropping 17.4% in the past twelve months. Looking on the bright side, there was 0% change in the past month, so have we perhaps hit the bottom?

There have been 74 sales in our neighbourhood in the past twelve months totaling \$82.97m. Homes are currently selling slower than last year at 45 days on the market, compared to 32 days 12 months ago, which clearly demonstrates the lack of confidence we have been seeing from both buyers and sellers.

This article is being written a few days before the 26 November OCR announcement, but the general feeling seems to be that a further cut is coming. Interest rates falling is certainly a common precursor to the market stabilising, and with the apparent brakes now on further price falls, this could make for an interesting start to the year. We have several fantastic local listings coming to the market on 13 January, so I'm looking forward to testing the market mood early on.

I look forward to keeping Mt Vic locals up to date with stats and what we are seeing at the coal face through 2026, and hope that this information is helpful for local buyers and sellers. For anyone who wants to talk about the Mt Vic market, whether you are thinking of buying or selling in the New Year, I would love to hear from you.

Wishing the Mount Victoria community a wonderful end of the year and the very best of New Years! 

Source: REINZ Suburb Report
November 2025

I look forward to keeping Mt Vic locals up to date with stats and what we are seeing at the coal face through 2026, and hope that this information is helpful for local buyers and sellers.



Lowe & Co
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Margaret Mahy musical premiere



A pirate-themed musical is making its world premiere at the Hannah Playhouse this December, as **Jane O'Loughlin** found out.

In the Margaret Mahy classic children's book *The Man Whose Mother Was a Pirate*, office worker Sam is convinced by his pirate mother to take a break from working for his boss Mr Fat and to head off with her to see the sea. But their long voyage – with Sam pushing his mother in a wheelbarrow and trailing a kite – is interrupted by various naysayers along the way.

Now musical performance artist Nino Raphael has adapted the book into a musical that is soon to have its premiere at the Hannah Playhouse, directed by Sara Brodie.

Raphael – who was born in the UK but grew up in New Zealand since the age of 9 – encountered the book when he was about 25 in his auntie's cellar in Leicester.

"I didn't know the story, but my (British) cousins all knew it. And my mother knew it really well. It was just there at Christmas time. I read it three times in one go, and it just spoke to me, in its starkness and its honesty about how challenging it is to suddenly make a decision in your life that sends you away into the unknown."

This is Raphael's first musical but he's clear on the approach he wanted to take – interactive theatre that brings the audience into the story, enlisting them to help move the story along through singing.

"A lot of my ethos around art and music, and especially singing, is that it's for everyone, and making music and art and singing accessible can, I think, change people's lives. It can start communities. It can bring a huge amount of change to people's daily life ... being a choir leader and, being part of choirs I've seen it happen and I work towards making that happen."

Further inspiration came from a place across the

road from the Hannah Playhouse: the Welsh Dragon Pub, where Raphael was struck by a diverse crowd with a mix of confidence levels happily belting out shanties on a Wednesday night – and he realised it was a style that was perfect for a pirate-themed musical.

"Everyone joins in and it is raucous, and it reminded me that shanties are for everyone."

One audience member Raphael was keen to impress was Margaret Mahy's daughter Bridget, the custodian of the Margaret Mahy estate, who came along to a development session and subsequently gave her blessing.

"She really enjoyed it, so that was the only opinion I really cared about."

Although the show has had some initial outings, the version opening at the Hannah Playhouse in December is the most 'refined' version of the musical, with a full set, and an orchestra of actor/musicians.

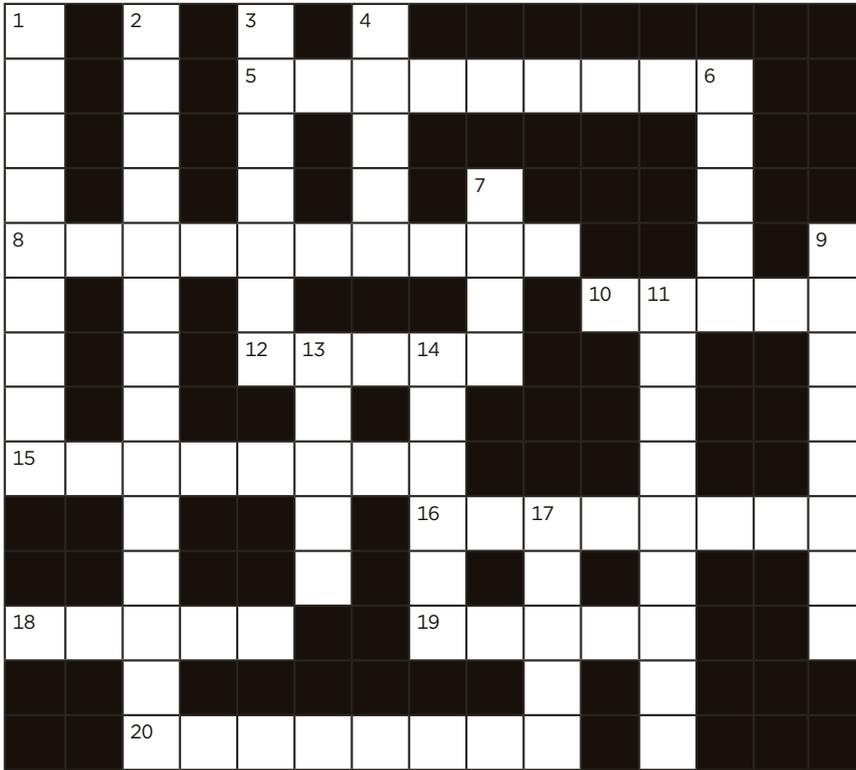
Raphael says the show is designed to appeal to young and old. Funding from the Performing Arts Foundation enables children's tickets to be more affordable, and at one hour long, the show is a suitable length for those with short attention spans.

Raphael hopes it will have longevity, even dreaming that one day it will be in the West End in London. Daring to take a chance is the theme of the musical after all, with a key line in the play being 'we won't know if we don't go'.

"It's about trusting your instincts and going off on an adventure and doing the thing that scares you... and I would like that to be a message to children here as well, that they should be brave, feel the fear, and do it anyway." **TL**

The Man Whose Mother Was A Pirate – The Musical is on 5–14 December at the Hannah Playhouse. Tickets from piratemothermusical.com.

Beau's Crossword #3



Across

5. Four-legged. (9)
8. A young committer of minor crimes. (10)
10. A gemstone or movable barrier. (5)
12. Only element of the periodic table starting with X. (5)
15. A mental tool to help you remember. (8)
16. A suggestable mental state. (8)
18. Corridor or a homophone of a word meaning island. (5)
19. A Greek tree nymph. (5)
20. A short yarn. (8)

Down

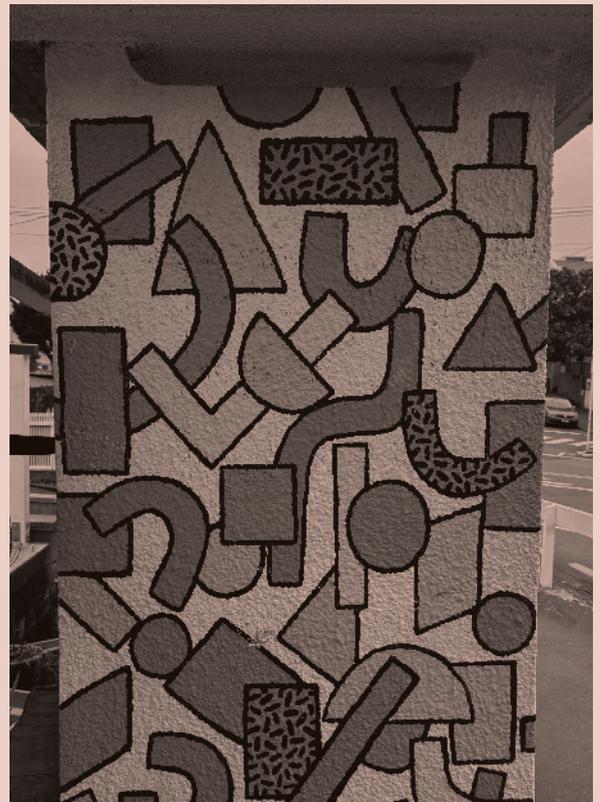
1. A false name. (9)
2. A collective of educated people. (14)
3. Where day and night are of equal length. (7)
4. Type of poem with a "5-7-5" syllable structure. (5)
6. The fourth letter in the Greek alphabet. (5)
7. An old-fashioned way of saying soon. (4)
9. To chuck something off a plane. (8)
11. The first known explosive. (9)
13. Feeling of boredom or dissatisfaction. (5)
14. Exotic flower. (6)
17. A person receiving money. (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 Kseniya Platova, who identified the November ULO as the number on the apartment building at 5 Hawker Street. 



COURTENAY CARNIVAL 2025

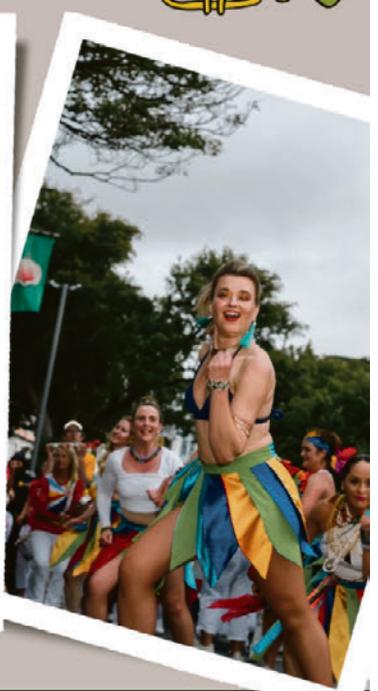
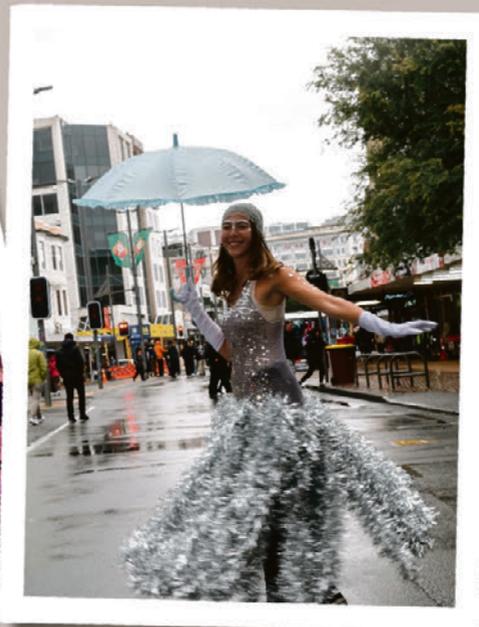


NYE 2025

COURTENAY CARNIVAL

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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.

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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.

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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.

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.

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.

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.

School daze

On the way to work I pass Clyde Quay School and I often see a small scene play out. A parent or caregiver bids farewell to a child on Elizabeth Street, and watches them walking a short distance up the street to the school.

As days and weeks go on, the scene starts to change – the parent drops them off further and further down the street, letting the child run off confidently up the hill with the parent waiting and watching, straining their neck until they are reassured that their child has made it to school, and they can get on with their day.

Finally, there is no parent, just an independent student wandering up the hill to school.

This is the story of primary school – such an extraordinary time in a kid’s life – when they go from being barely able to write their name to being a teenager and telling their parents what to do. Kids grow up fast. Even the teachers notice it. I remember going into the classroom at the start of a new year and seeing a teacher looking surprised at his new set of students. “I’d forgotten how small they are when they start!” he said. By the end of the year they would probably have grown 20 centimetres.

With our child about to exit primary school for high school, I would like to acknowledge Clyde Quay School for the role it has played in our lives.

It’s not just the education of our kid but also how it connects us to our community. For many years the routine was for one of us to be there at drop off and pick up, waiting in the school grounds with other parents and caregivers. Like having a dog, having a kid gives you an excuse to strike up conversations with other adults. We’ve gotten to know a whole lot of people we would never have run into if it were not for school. In fact, as our daughter got older and we no longer had to pick her up from school, we started to realise we were missing that excuse to catch up with people from around the neighbourhood.

It’s hard to believe that our child is about to move to high school. It does seem not all that long ago we headed into school for the first time, to figure out where her school bag went, and where she was supposed to put her lunch bag.



It’s not just the education of our kid but also how it connects us to our community.

I remember at the time seeing one of the older kids coming into the classroom to pick up the paper for recycling and how big and grown up they looked. Now my daughter has that job.

As the saying goes, the days are long but the years fly by.

I really appreciate Clyde Quay School’s strong school values and commitment to te ao Māori.

One of my favourite memories is going along to an inter-school session for kapa haka performance. Our school was performing last and as I watched the excellent other performances from other schools I got worried for our group – I didn’t think they could match the high standards that had been set.

I shouldn’t have been concerned. Clyde Quay was last for a reason – they were incredible, and I was so proud to see my daughter and her classmates delivering an impassioned, confident performance, full of mana and wairua.

It’s a class of great kids and I am sure they will all go on to do wonderful and interesting things. It’s time for the next stage, but primary school will always have a special place in our hearts. **TL**



The arrival of Father and Mother Christmas at The Economic Fancy Fair, 1905. [Freelance, 9.12.1905]

A Father Christmas first in Wellington

As we approach the festive time of year, **Joanna Newman** from the Mt Victoria Historical Society looks at how Christmas was celebrated in the past in Wellington.

These historic Christmas scenes have a particular connection with Mount Victoria. The house at number 145 Brougham Street (which is still there) was built in 1899 for Harry Kersley, of George & Kersley drapers. Their Wellington department store on Lambton Quay, 'The Economic', which opened in 1894, is believed to be the first in New Zealand to 'parade' a Father Christmas.

Despite the poor reproduction, we get some idea of the novelty from a photograph titled "Father Christmas arrives at 'The Economic'" in a 1903 newspaper.

The accompanying story tells how Father Christmas "was buzzing around in a motor-car... The old gentleman 'arrived' every day at The



[Freelance, 26.12.1903]

Economic, where he is staying until he heads out in his car for the South Pole once again. He recently drove in state to the Hospital and shed presents on the children in the ward, brightening their lives and helping Messrs. George and Kersley along... It is the first time in Wellington that the gay old gentleman has come in his motor-car. No child has ever yet seen him without his team of reindeer."

Maybe they were also the first to have a Mother Christmas, too, as a drawing two years later shows?

Merry Christmas from Mount Victoria Historical Society! 



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Wishing you all a happy and safe Christmas and looking forward to meeting more of you in 2026.

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