

THE LOCAL Mt Victoria

NGĀ KARERE HAPORI O MATAIRANGI

TEN YEARS OF TOMBOY COMES TO AN END



A decade of cheese scones, bacon and egg pies and friendly faces have been celebrated and remembered by patrons of Tomboy, as they bid goodbye to owner Kate Bresolin, after she sold the café operation to new proprietors. Regular customers will also miss her father

Zukov Marinkovich, who was a well-known and much-loved presence at the Majoribanks St café.

Fans of the institution flocked in to see Kate and Zukov before they departed, but locals will be relieved to know the café will continue to operate under new ownership. Read more page 3. ➔

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Ten years of Tomboy comes to an end

Much loved local café Tomboy has changed hands after a decade. Jane O'Loughlin paid a visit.

After 10 years operating Tomboy café in Mt Victoria, Kate Bresolin has seen a lot of local life taking place.

“In 10 years I’ve watched kids be born and grow up. I’ve watched people on first dates evolve into marriage and a baby. I’ve had conversations with people through so many different parts of their lives.”

But now it’s time to move on. A health scare for Kate involving two lots of heart surgery made her think she needed to re-think her lifestyle.

The café has been sold and is under new ownership: 23 August was the last day under the Tomboy name.

The last weeks were busy as the word got out and fans headed in to say their goodbyes.

But Tomboy’s baking has often had people lining up out the door on the weekends for a treat. Asked for the most popular item, the list is long – responses from Kate and the staff include cheese scones, the donuts, the ginger loaf, and the bacon and egg pie (“People don’t realise how much butter is in it.”)

The bacon and egg pie was a recipe from Kate’s mother Lynsey. Until a couple of years ago she was an integral part of the business, helping with “accounts and the dishes and backrubs and wiping away tears when I was overwhelmed.” Now, sadly, Kate’s

“tower of strength” has Alzheimer’s and is looked after in a home.

Tomboy has always been a family business, with Kate’s father, Zukov, a very familiar and friendly ‘front of house’ face for Mt Vic patrons. He made a point of getting to know names, ensured people could find a seat and were given a glass of water, and would happily strike up a conversation – making everyone feel at home.

That conviviality and desire to bring people together was always part of the approach for Tomboy, Kate says.

When they started, they deliberately had a big table, so people could sit around it and get to know each other. When the layout later changed, patrons would still get placed at shared tables; something of a necessity as well as a virtue in the small café.

Food is a big part of Kate’s life, given she is also married to Leonardo Bresolin, owner of Scopa and 1154, and it will continue to be, as Kate is taking the Tomboy brand with her.

She has plans for it – an online store where she will continue to sell some of the products she sources from around the country like olive oil and honey. She is also thinking about a cookbook – that includes stories from customers.

“I want to be able to share the recipes and the stories of Tomboy from the last decade. I get asked a lot for recipes from people who used to live in Wellington who live overseas, and they miss it. They just want a taste of home.”

Locals shouldn’t fret: the café will continue to operate under new ownership, with the set up expected to remain the same in the short term at least, and most of the staff staying on. But there will be the noticeable absence of Kate and Zuke, who had become an important part of many people’s daily lives, and who locals will undoubtedly miss. **TL**



Saying goodbye to some familiar faces

I popped into Tomboy on their last Sunday to get a few things – I wasn't the only one.

I think I managed to buy the last ever raspberry cream pillow donut sold by Tomboy – so sorry to all those people in the queue behind me who were eyeing it up.

The last day of the old Tomboy before owner Kate Bresolin passed on the business to a new proprietor was certainly a busy one, with lots of locals crowding in and buying up large.

Tomboy clearly had the formula right when it came to food, but it was not the only thing that made it so well loved by the community. Being greeted by the kindly Zuke was a constant of many people's daily or weekly routine. It's amazing what a difference a friendly and familiar face makes to our day – it makes us feel part of a community.

It's sad to see the family departing our suburb, but we look forward to meeting the new proprietors who have hopefully been given the recipe for the raspberry cream pillow donut.

It's not the only change happening in Mt Victoria – the Hub in going 'into hibernation' meaning that another friendly and familiar face will no longer be in our lives in the same way: Joel will no longer be the coordinator. Thanks for all your hard work Joel!

This change has been forced on the trust that runs the Hub, as they now scramble for money to fill the gap left by the sudden and unexpected removal of Wellington City Council funding. Read more about what's going on, on page 18.

With an intention to retain the lease until the end of December, the clock is ticking on finding a sustainable funding source for the venue. There is the suggestion that 'the Hub' could operate without a physical premises but I get the sense a lot of people in the neighbourhood see value in having some kind of community facility that anchors the operation.

If you're interested in contributing to the thinking, keep an eye out for the public meetings the Hub is going to hold, to consider how to move forward.



Change is hard, but let's not assume it's always for the worse, and do what we can to make it positive! **TL**

Jane O'Loughlin
Editor



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Local band makes the Rockquest finals

A local band has made it into the final of the Smokefreerockquest band competition, taking place this year in Wellington.

Lux is made up of five high school students: (from left) Abe Savage, bass; Evan Wyllyams, guitar and vocals; Leo Anthony, guitar and vocals; Reuben Levine, guitar and Reuben Fraser, drums.

Leo and Reuben Levine live in Mt Victoria, and all are at Wellington High except for Reuben Fraser, who goes to Tawa College.

Lux has made it through months of regional heats and finals to get to the grand final, to compete against seven other talented bands from around Aotearoa on 18 September. **TL**

Are you enrolled to vote?

To vote in the 2026 General Election, you need to be enrolled by midnight, Sunday 25 October.

Enrolment packs were mailed out between 17 and 22 August. If you haven't received one in the mail, it means your address is out of date, or you're not enrolled, according to the Electoral Commission.

You can enrol or update your address online at vote.nz using your New Zealand driver licence, New Zealand passport or RealMe verified identity.

The Electoral Commission estimates around 440,000 eligible New Zealanders are currently not enrolled, including approximately 200,000 people aged between 18 and 24.

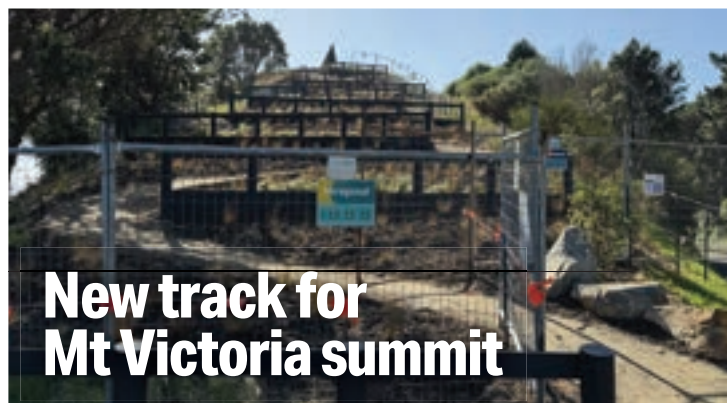
Voting begins on October 26, and anyone who has not enrolled by the deadline will not be able to enrol during the voting period. **TL**

Wellington high schools compete in The Big Sing

Wellington high schools are well represented in the finale of The Big Sing, taking place in Christchurch 27–29 August.

The Big Sing is Aotearoa's premier choral showcase, attracting more than 9,100 students from 269 secondary school choirs to take part in regional festivals held across the country earlier in the year.

Five Wellington groups from six Wellington high schools made it to the finale: Blue Notes from Tawa College, Con Anima from St Patrick's, Ngā Korimako from Wellington College and Wellington Girls' College; Rāwhiti from Wellington East Girls' College, and Seraphim from Chilton Saint James School. **TL**



New track for Mt Victoria summit

A new windy track to the summit of Mt Victoria should be open in September.

Previously, walkers taking a short cut to the summit on the south side had worn a path up the steep hill, and according to the Wellington City Council, over time, this informal track had widened significantly.

"The result has been an increasingly large rocky scar across the hillside, with ongoing erosion and a decline in the visual amenity of the area."

The solution will improve safety, reduce ongoing erosion, rehabilitate the damaged hillside and enhance the overall appearance of this prominent part of Matairangi, the council said.

Mana Whenua have been engaged and have advised on the general design as well as the cultural overlay design concept work, ensuring the completed landscape reflects the cultural significance and stories associated with Matairangi.

The total project budget is \$500,000 and is being funded through the Charles Plimmer Bequest Fund. **TL**

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Ayesha Verrall has been an MP and a Minister but now she's having a go at winning an electorate. **Jane O'Loughlin** reports.

Ayesha Verrall – who has been a list MP since joining Parliament in 2020 – is enjoying her first experience of campaigning for an electorate seat.

“The experience of doing politics differently with more local focus and door knocking and individual engagement. I’m just loving that.”

The job of representing Wellington North comes as the city faces a challenging time of job losses and business closures.

“Right now, the city needs a strong local MP who can get things done. As a senior MP with Cabinet experience, I believe I’m that person.”

She thinks it would make a massive difference to Wellington to have a supportive MP that was also a Minister.

“It’s clear that that’s not happening right now. Not only is the city neglected in terms of infrastructure funding from the government, but Government Ministers take pride in kicking public servants and parts of Wellington City. So, ending that, and making sure that the city has a strong voice who can get things done is an important priority.”

She kicked off the hard work of engaging with the electorate early, with door knocking starting about April this year. Public healthcare is unsurprisingly a topic many are keen to raise with her, but she says a common theme in the conversations with the public is the economy, and more specifically for Wellington, planned public service job cuts which she describes as “destructive and reckless”.

She says the impact on the city already from the prospect of public sector job cuts has been huge.

“Someone said to me, it’s not that the Government has fired 6000 people. They’ve made 60,000 people insecure about their jobs.”

She says she is getting a warm reception for Labour’s campaign promises aimed at bringing the costs of living down – such as three free GP visits, a public transport fare cap, and financing to put in place solar energy.

“When the economic climate is so bad, people just want help with the basics. They don’t want grand promises.”

She is confident she will do well in the newly



formed Wellington North electorate, and garner votes from across the spectrum.

“There’s a number of people who are giving their party vote to National, who recognise [the electorate] as a two horse race and are likely to give their support to me.

“And then, there’s a lot of Left voters who are recognising the economy as the dominant issue and want a party with credibility on those issues.

“And I get a lot of positive feedback about my work in healthcare, particularly from older parts of the community.”

Verrall lives in Brooklyn currently, and has previously lived in Newtown and Hataitai.

In her spare time she likes running, ideally in the green belt.

“If I can get a run in before Parliament, that just makes me feel so happy for the rest of the day’s circus!” she laughs.

A lot of time is spent around her daughter’s sport. She and her partner Alice like to go to shows in Wellington, when they get a chance.

“Being both busy working mums mean we don’t always get to as many things as we want to now.” **TL**

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



20 years of community hands in the soil

Innermost Gardens has recently celebrated 20 years of not just hard slog, but of sharing, guiding, and bringing locals together. Rowena Fry went to have a look.

Back in 2006, the former Mt Victoria Ladies Bowling Club site took on a new lease of life as a community garden. Created on the old bowling green and marching lawn, the māra kai were developed using the three permaculture principles: Earth care, People care, and Fair share.

Not long after, ex-Chair, and now current Innermost Gardens committee member, Tim Packer came to the party. Already studying permaculture, he heard about the work that a group of gardeners were doing at the top of Lawson Place and had to get involved.

“I turned up and have been there ever since. It’s kinda like Hotel California,” he jokes. “You get there and then you can’t leave.”

One of the first major tasks was testing the soil. Raised beds with new soil were set up on the marching lawn for communal growing while the former bowling green required work. “We had to deal with the fact there were toxins in the soil – so we set about remediating the soil.”

Over two years, they grew oyster mushrooms. “This broke down DDT to its most common compounds and made it safe,” Tim explains.

The volunteers continued to process and lay compost, plant beneficial flowers, comfrey and nitrogen fixers. Stepping back, they let nature do her thing.

The whenua now supports an orchard, personal allotments, and sharing gardens open to the wider community.

Tim is very proud of the work the team has done in the orchard. “When we first put down trees in

2011, it was standard Wellington clay soil. It had no nutrients whatsoever.”

He says the soil is now so rich it’s black. “We facilitated nature and the labour is now minimal. This proves you can grow soils that easy.”

Tim jokes that, “if you dig in particular parts of the orchard now, you’ll lose your spade!”

Of course, the transformation of the gardens wouldn’t have happened without the dedication of many local volunteers. From its beginnings, Innermost has relied on people willing to put in the work, learn from the land, and respect the place they are helping to grow. As well as a thriving garden, friendships and community have grown.

Working with Victoria University and Wellington City Council, the Village Garden project began in 2019. This project has helped demonstrate the wider value of community gardens. An evidence-based framework was developed and measured its social, economic, and environmental contributions.

Community composting is one example. A survey found 93% of users felt that by bringing their waste to the garden’s compost bins, was an act of climate change mitigation. The service is now so popular that the facilities expanded to handle the volume and since 2023 has been a WCC Compost Hub.

Another measure of success is the regular community dinners. Innermost volunteers work with the Mt Victoria community, bringing neighbours together with kai, waiata, and plenty of kōrero.

Tim is proud of everyone’s time spent in the garden. “Innermost is about gardening with people, and learning the art of growing good, healthy, nutrient-dense produce at the same time.”

Rā whānau ki a koe – Happy birthday Innermost Gardens. 

Getting rid of a deadly climber

Henriette Busch reports on dedicated volunteers who are trying to get rid of Old Man's Beard.

In a 1980s TV ad, British ecologist David Bellamy famously shouted 'Old Man's Beard must go!' after getting his own beard cut. Bellamy was referring to the invasive plant 'Clematis vitalba', better known as 'Old Man's Beard' (OMB) due to the fluffy plumes attached to its seeds. Now, decades later, a group of volunteers has declared one part of Wellington – covering an area between the waterfront to Prince of Wales Park – OMB-free after seven years of cutting vines, killing roots and controlling the potential growth of seedlings.

"It's not just a one-and-done, it's an ongoing job," says Sam Newton. Along with Nigel Charman, they are key figures in the group, which launched in 2019 and went city-wide around five years ago.

More than 50 volunteers are currently active in clearing properties all over the city, while more than 150 people are spotting and registering OMB on an online map via the App iNaturalist. Currently, there are more than 4,300 registered OMB sites in the Wellington area, of which only 18 percent — represented by yellow and green dots on the map—are controlled.

"It's not just a one-and-done, it's an ongoing job."

First introduced to New Zealand some 100 years ago as a garden plant, OMB has been declared an unwanted organism under the Biosecurity Act 1993 due to it smothering and suffocating every plant it grows on, making it the most damaging alien climber in the country. The plant thrives in Wellington, because of the wind dispersing the seeds over large areas.

While the Wellington City Council is managing



Getting rid of a deadly climber

public land and contractors are taking care of particularly steep slopes, the volunteers are tending private properties and reserves. The group provides people with training in identifying OMB (ribbed vines and five leaflets per stem), distributes weedkiller and tools, and organises working bees to control the growth of seedlings. The first Zone might be clear for now, but the group will have to regularly check for new seedlings.

"We don't get it all the first time. Sometimes we generally have to go back to a site at least once more. And in addition to that the seeds can hang around for ten years," says Sam. Their goal for the next year is to clear Zone 2, the eastern side of the ridgeline between Oriental Bay to Island Bay. When asked how long it will take to make Wellington OMB-free, Nigel and Sam estimate around 30 years, while acknowledging that complete eradication may not be possible. "Really just getting all those dots on the map converted to yellow and green is a large motivation," says Sam. **TL**



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Auth by Tamatha Paul, Green Party MP.
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Restoring the Monks Garden

From overgrown litter space to community park: **Henriette Busch** reports on a group of neighbours restoring the park in front of St Gerard's monastery.

It's neither the first nor the last empty beer bottle Ellen Blake has collected out of the shrubs in front of St Gerard's monastery. At the end of a windy Saturday evening Ellen, Bianca Grizhar and Marian Evans will have collected a small pile of litter, mostly bottles and cans. It's a peek into the small park's past. Only half a year ago the area in front of the monastery had been overgrown, dog owners had left their pets' poo, while others, who used the sole bench for late evening meetings, left their litter, says Bianca. Originally from Germany, Bianca has been calling the monastery her home for two years. She and Marian – a resident of the nearby 'zig zag' walkway linking Oriental Bay with the monastery – started the project after the Council declined their application to make the park a spray-free zone. According to Bianca, the Council – the park's owner – had mowed and sprayed the property only once a year and subsequently liked her idea of a resident-led group taking care of it, and is helping by providing plants.

The one-hectare area used to be the garden of the Redemptorists, the religious order which occupied the monastery till 1988. The monks had tended a hen house and an orchard on site, a pear tree being the sole survivor of the latter.

The volunteer group, which has given the project the title 'Monks' Garden', wants to add new fruit trees, creating a mixture between the restored old garden and a native bush restoration. There might even be a community garden in the future.

The park is defined by terraces and naturally bordered by the hill slope down to Oriental Bay. There are two lookout spots, one of them hidden and without a proper path yet.

"It's a fantastic place," says Bianca looking out over the harbour. She would like to install a bench or a picnic table at the site.

Over the past months, a group of eight to ten volunteers has focused on clearing invasive weeds, creating a small path, and planting kānuka and two fruit trees. Today, Ellen, Marian and Bianca are planting hebe, maple, flax and broadleaf around the edge of the park, hoping to create a natural wind-shelter.

Once spring starts, the group wants to plant vegetables and some smaller trees and shrubs.

"It's already pretty, we are just making it prettier," Marian adds. "I'd just love for the locals to have a much more open space at the monastery. I can imagine an ice-cream truck here." **TL**

FEATURE

Wellington will soon see some bees with meaning flying about, as **Solomon Lee** reports.

"BE like a BEE" is a motto that local artist Cecily Guarrera says she hopes Wellington will take to heart.

Cecily is the artist working on the art piece representing the Rotary Club of Mount Victoria in the Bee in the City Life Flight project launching this month.

Cecily says her vision for her bee came from a personal story that blends her health struggles, time as a teacher, and life as an outsider in New Zealand.

When Cecily received her stage four cancer diagnosis, doctors said she had three months to live. Over a decade later, she credits her survival to her ability to break away from things she felt conditioned into believing.

"I learned as part of my cancer journey, I was still trying to control parts of my life instead of being a neutral observer and make good decisions," Cecily says.

The same lesson presented itself when Cecily was a schoolteacher. She found that trying to control students didn't work, but when she let the kids lead themselves in the classroom, she saw them working together without needing direction. "I've done it – I'm just watching!"

Bees use swarm intelligence – they all fly one direction, everyone is in charge of themselves, and the only rules are to do your job and not bump into anyone around you.

In swarms, group decisions occur quickly, as "the



BEE-coming a better community

whole becomes greater than the parts" Cecily says, in comparison to humans who "don't tend to give time to consensus decisions."

Successful communities work together with equitable contributions and resources.

Cecily says she hopes the ripple of this project will cause a change in the right direction for the Wellington community. "If my little bee can encourage one person to change their mind about something I'll be very pleased."

Cecily's art piece and the words on it aligns with the philosophy of the Rotary Club of Mount Victoria – foundation of purity, purpose, and community.

The citywide sculpture trail will buzz through the streets from 14th September through 8th November, with an auction for the 50+ bee sculptures on 26th November. Proceeds raised will go towards Life Flight Trust. **TL**

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Big Buddy has the mentors, now it needs the boys

Kerry Meadows-Bonner talks to a Wellington mum whose twin sons found lasting friendships through Big Buddy, as the charity calls for more local families to come forward.

For years, Big Buddy has been known for its waiting list, with boys often waiting between nine and 12 months to be matched with a volunteer mentor.

Now, for the first time in Wellington, the situation has flipped.

The New Zealand charity, which matches boys aged 7 to 17 who don't have a dad in their lives with positive male role models, has volunteer mentors ready and waiting. The challenge now is making sure families know the opportunity exists.

Big Buddy offers two programmes: one-to-one mentoring for boys aged seven to 13 and an eight-week group programme for teenagers aged 14 to 17. The aim is simple – to give boys regular one-on-one time with a trusted adult through friendship, encouragement and shared experiences.

For Wellington mum Anna Clare, the programme has changed the lives of her twin sons in the past decade.

The boys joined Big Buddy at seven years old, each matched with their own mentor.

Anna says, "I felt incredibly grateful for the fact that they both got one each. Dave really bent over backwards to keep it as fair and as even as he could. He even took into account the fact that, as twins, everything has to be exactly the same size and it all has to start at the same time."

One mentor later moved away, but Anna says the transition was seamless.

"I feel like he managed that really well. That need in them not to have inequality was accommodated above and beyond where they needed to go with it. He was just amazing."

Today, the friendships have morphed into everyday life. Seamus and his Big Buddy, Thomas, catch up for sessions at the gym, movies, video games and brunch, while Flynn and Ryan head out for 5am runs, cook dinner together at Ryan's home, and some paid work for Ryan's business.

She says the support has extended well beyond her sons.

"At the same time, I know for both of these men they see our family as a bit of their family as well. It's never just with the boys or just with me. It's first with the boys and then with the family."

Anna says as a single mother, she says she has always felt supported rather than judged by Big Buddy.

"I've never felt judged for any of it. I've just felt that the work they do sits alongside the work that mums do, rather than seeking to replace it at a certain age."

"It feels very much like a partnership, like pulling in more of the community to help raise these boys. It's lovely. They just manage it really well."

For boys growing up without a father figure, having a consistent, positive male role model can mean regular outings, someone to talk to, encouragement through life's challenges and, as Anna's family has experienced, relationships that turn into family.

With mentors currently available in Wellington, Big Buddy hopes families who could benefit from the programme and encourages those interested to contact them and find out more. 

Links

<https://www.bigbuddy.org.nz/>
info@bigbuddy.org.nz

Chekov for the modern era

How do you make a 130-year-old Russian play relevant for a contemporary audience? **Jane O'Loughlin** went to find out.

In the classic Russian tragicomedy *Uncle Vanya*, the mannerisms and obsessions of a middle- and upper-class Russian society from the late 19th century are very much part of the action – the cast drink tea made from water boiled in a samovar, servants and peasants come and go, and women and men have their distinct roles.

How then, does a director and cast make this relevant to a New Zealand audience today?

That is the challenge director Andrew Foster has been grappling with for most of the past year, as he prepares his 'modern adaptation' of Anton Chekhov's play *Uncle Vanya* for his opening at Circa on 12 September.

"I don't want it to be a costume drama. I don't want it to be a period piece, and I want to escape the sort of portentous reverence we have for Chekhov as one of these great writers in the canon of Russian literature. What's interesting to me is kind of re-finding the magic that audiences had with his work – originally."

Because back in its day, Chekhov's work was revolutionary – introducing 'naturalism' to theatre and portraying the mundanity of everyday life – without villains, melodrama, climaxes or tidy endings.

Uncle Vanya is about the return of a celebrated novelist Alex Serebryakov with his much younger wife to his rural family estate, where his son and brother (Uncle Vanya) have spent years keeping the family estate running to support him.

Rather than the Russian farm, this version is loosely set in a rural location in New Zealand. Grapes are mentioned. It's a setting that "could be Martinborough".

Andrew believes Wellington audiences in 2026 can relate to a story from 1897, which explores themes that have some surprising parallels to life today.



"Themes like global warming, he talks about deeply in that play. And also this sort of sense of being adrift in middle age and sort of losing a grip on purpose in life. It couldn't be more real in, in this day and age with the sort of political environments we see around the world and this whole sense that people are feeling disenfranchised from anything that gives their life an anchor or meaning."

Challenges for Andrew in adapting the script to make it comprehensible and relevant for a modern age have included how to capture the role of women, where some of the constraints on gender roles in the 19th century no longer exist. Other changes to update the script was to remove anachronistic roles such as servants.

The ensemble cast of six includes Tawhi Thomas (Ngāti Maniapoto) as Vanya, the man who has spent years holding the family vineyard together only to see that sacrifice threatened. Peter Hambleton appears as Alex, the once-celebrated writer whose plan to sell the vineyard sets the family crisis in motion. Hambleton most recently appeared at Circa in *Local Library*.

Andrew hopes his adaptation will achieve his goal of re-presenting Chekhov in a way that made it so engaging when it was first performed.

"What I hope is that people are energized by the way in which the play actually can lift them up and carry them along with the drama of the story. I think it's when you strip away some of the stuff that makes it feel old-fashioned it's really an exciting story, and it's really kind of riveting to sit there and watch these children and adults just negotiate, navigate their way around each other. It's like any great contemporary drama." TL

**UNCLE VANYA is at Circa Theatre
12 September – 10 October 2026**

LOCAL PERSONALITY

Sharon Greally talks to Mt Victoria artist Derek Cowie.

With exhibition titles such as 'My Tribe is Extremely Violent', and 'If the river were running red, people would see', you get the feeling Derek Cowie has some pretty strong views on certain things. An artist who has been working for the last few decades in England and Europe, he has decided to return 'home', and home these days is in Mt Victoria.

I meet Derek in his light-filled studio near the waterfront, just a stone's throw from his home.

A big beautiful calligraphy brush sits proudly on the table. "Max Gimblett gave me that. I've never used it. I keep meaning to find a way to use it".

He has been working for 55 years, and his contemporaries are some other well-known New Zealand and UK artists. He exhibited with Peter McLeavey Gallery in the 80s, and in London he worked as a scenic painter for the National Theatre. He is also an award-winning visual artist for film and television. Some of his work hangs at Te Papa, and is held in several public collections.

Looking around his studio is like fossicking around a collectibles shop. He has a range of various treasures, including a semi-circular shape he shows me. "It's used in hip transplants," he tells me after making me take a guess. Another collection is a compartmentalised shelf of glass and ceramic antique eye baths, some dating back over 100 years. They're beautiful with the light from the window behind them, like glowing gems.

He clearly likes things that generate thought, and conversation.

He works full time in his studio, which he calls "my cave", which also houses his extensive and wide-ranging book collection.

"It's political fact, art, environmentalism and biographies. I like fiction on holiday, but these inform me, my work."

Derek's practice encompasses various mediums and styles, and his work is generally centred strongly around environmental concerns.



An artist returns home

Generational history also plays a major role. In a recent exhibition 'My Tribe is Extremely Violent', he talks to confronting his own uncomfortable colonial heritage, using caricature type portraits. "So much of the destruction of the earth stems from Europe."

Seemingly innocuous everyday objects are used as motifs in his work: vessels, tea cups, and milk jugs, and upturned chairs represent the ever-looming threat of climate change and economic and societal collapse, driven by consumer choice.

At the moment he's making one of forty in a series in response to Cyclone Gabrielle. "I was just so shocked at some the images, the slash that came down, the destruction."

He's enjoying reengaging with Mt Victoria after 30 years away. "I used to live in MacFarlane St. Jenny Morris was next door. It was a student flat, a really nice building. I was at Design School. It's now called Massey. Gordon Walters went there in the 70s, some really interesting people.

"I love Mt Victoria, It's so wooded and mysterious. It's so beautiful. I love the sun, the view, the proximity to the city, my neighbours. There's plenty going on." 

Derek Cowie has an upcoming show at Aratoi in Masterton, 14 March to 6 June 2027.

The era of The Buyer

The property market is a bit like a pendulum, reflects Anji Foster from Lowe & Co.

Sure as day follows night, a buyer's market will follow a seller's market. It's one of life's certainties.

The most recent seller's market really began in late 2015, coincidentally around the time we opened the doors at Lowe & Co. The market had been flat for eight years following the GFC, while Auckland had taken off several years earlier. Then, around September 2015, we started noticing the signs of change: queues down the street at open homes and prices being achieved that exceeded everyone's expectations.

That steady growth, after such an extended flat period, gathered pace before taking off like a rocket during the pandemic.

2020 and 2021 delivered the strongest seller's market conditions I have witnessed in almost two decades in real estate. They were literally bonkers. And we were all drinking the Kool-Aid because life during those Covid years had become so surreal, and at times verging on dystopian, that anything seemed possible. Maybe perpetual premium prices really were possible after all?!

Of course, thank goodness, they weren't.

At the beginning of 2022, we all returned from our summer holidays and headed to the first open homes of the year. I remember standing there alone, wondering if I had missed the apocalypse. Where had all the buyers gone?

Open homes in November 2021 had been pumping. Tens of groups were wandering through even the most humble properties, with multiple offers commonplace. Suddenly, it felt like the market had simply fallen off a cliff.

Fast forward to September 2026 and the landscape has settled somewhat. Open home numbers have stabilised. They're not huge, but they're steady. Buyers are putting pen to paper and transactions are

happening. Around seven in ten properties coming to the market are selling.

But nobody could seriously argue that sellers are calling the shots.

It is, indeed, the era of The Buyer. And who can blame them for loving it? When you've been on the other side of the fence for so long, there is nothing quite like having the shoe on the other foot.

But if there is one complaint we hear from buyers day in, day out, it is that there simply isn't enough good quality homes to look at.

There are significantly more properties on the market than at this time in previous years, yet the quality of that stock is often disappointing. This is across all price ranges but is particularly true of homes over \$1.5 million.

Many owners of the higher end homes recognise that the market may not currently meet their expectations, so they are prepared to sit tight. The irony is that many would actually be open to selling and moving on to their next chapter; they're simply reluctant to formally come to market.

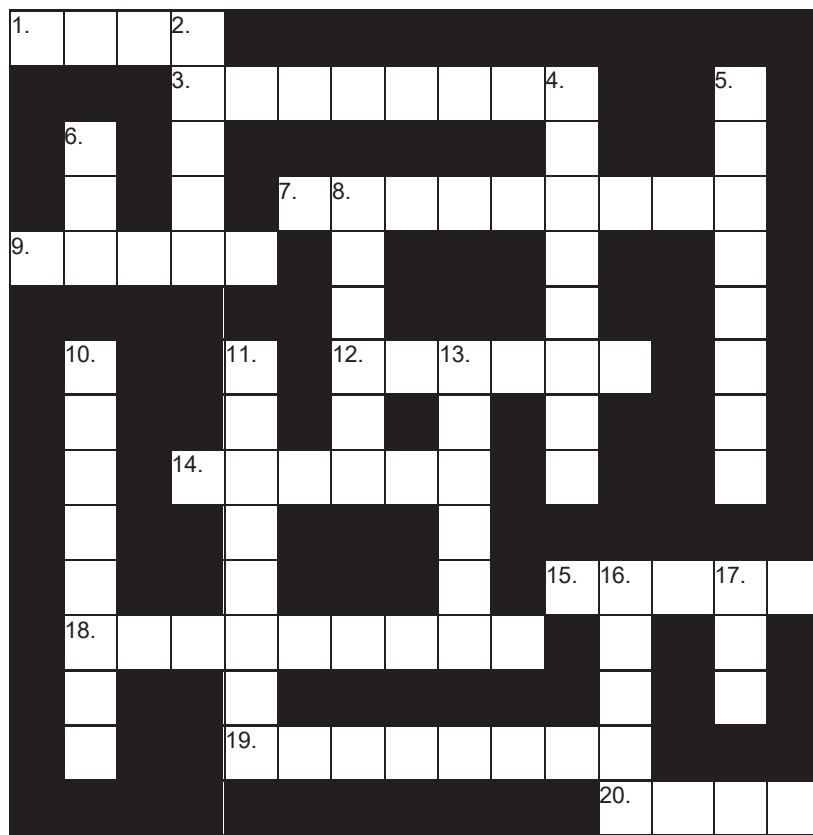
This interesting dynamic has led James and me to include a service where we reverse-engineer the traditional home-buying process. We are working closely with motivated buyers who are genuinely ready to purchase, establishing exactly what they want, and then going out to find it. The number of homeowners who would consider selling if the right opportunity and price came along is surprisingly high.

Until the market finds its balance again, bringing motivated buyers and willing sellers together will require initiative, creativity and a willingness to think outside the traditional process.

But, as we all know, once balance arrives it will be fleeting. Before long the tables will turn again, the balance will shift in the alternate direction, and the cycle will begin once more. 



Beau's Crossword #11



Across:

1. Tea from the east. (4)
3. Poise, dignity. (8)
7. Beam of brightness. (9)
9. Startle, frighten. (5)
12. Perfect world. (6)
14. Feel remorse. (6)
15. A quick look. (5)
18. Trusted person. (9)
19. Succulent. (8)
20. There's one in this clue. (4)

Down:

2. Icy hut. (5)
4. Small conflict. (8)
5. Acknowledgement in a written work. (8)
6. Seed, --- at the post. (3)
8. Browse. (6)
10. Guidelines, etiquette. (8)
11. Happy. (8)
13. Gain possession of. (6)
16. An epic mission. (5)
17. Abbreviation often found at the end of a company's name. (3)

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 cafe voucher.

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 Margaret Garrett who identified the August ULO as part of the sign from the dairy on the corner of Brougham Street and Elizabeth Street. 





A time of change for the Mt Vic Hub

A message from the Trustees of the Mt Vic Hub.

Kia ora koutou,
As many of you will know, Mt Vic Hub (New Crossways Community Trust) was unsuccessful in securing ongoing operational funding from Wellington City Council this year. Over the past few months as we have worked our way through this, it has meant some very difficult decisions for the Hub, our staff, our trustees and everyone who has worked so hard to make this little community space what it is.

We are incredibly proud of what has been created here.

Over the years, the Hub has become so much more than a building. It has been a place to meet your neighbours, share food, learn something new, volunteer, have a cup of tea, ask for help, offer help, attend an event or simply walk through the door and find someone to talk to.

While the Hub in its current form is changing, we don't believe the kaupapa behind it needs to disappear. Over the coming months, we have a window of opportunity to work together as a community to explore what comes next.

Operational update:

The last few months have been a time of change for the Hub. The disruption to our funding has happened at a time when the Board was actively working to refresh its governance arrangements. It has also coincided with a period in which four of our trustees have had to step down. Johnny, Matthew and Becky and Trish will all finish their terms by the end of August, to let a revitalised board take the Hub in a new direction. We have welcomed Sophie as a new Trustee. Alice Carmody is the new Chair.

While this still gives us a quorum to manage the immediate responsibilities of the Trust, we have made the decision to effectively put **New Crossways Community Trust into hibernation** while we work through what comes next with the community behind us.

To enable us to do that, Mt Victoria Hub has joined Gift Collective.

Gift Collective provides a fundholding service for community groups across Aotearoa. Sitting under its umbrella means we have support with financial management, accountability and administration (which was a huge overhead) while we explore the future of the Hub and develop a new governance model.

Importantly, it also means we can continue to seek funding for community-led work without rushing to create a new organisation model or Board before we know what the community actually wants.

New Crossways Community Trust is not being dissolved. Our remaining trustees (Alice and Sophie) will ensure the Trust's existing responsibilities and obligations are taken care of while it is in hibernation.

Considering our limited financial position and reduced administration obligations by joining Gift Collective we will be farewelling our co-ordinator, Joel, at the end of August. We will retain our lease until the end of December.

We have applied for \$15,500 from Council and will hear back in September, and we're exploring other funding options too.

The newsletter will take a break during this time. We are grateful to The Local to be able to share our updates and progress in this forum in the meantime and sincerely thank the volunteers who have been delivering the Newsletter for many, many years.

So, what happens now?

We know many people are wondering what comes next for the Hub. The honest answer is that we do not have all the answers yet. Rather than rushing into recreating what existed before, this is a chance for all of us to step back and think differently about what Mt Victoria needs now and what a sustainable community-led model could look like in the future.

What kind of community do we want to build together for the future?

Does the community hub need to be a building? Could it be a network of people, activities and organisations? What do we already have in our neighbourhood that we could strengthen? What is missing? And how do we create something that is sustainable rather than constantly vulnerable to changes in funding?

But none of this happens without you. If you want a thriving, connected Mt Victoria, now is the time to help shape it. Whether you have ideas, skills, time, connections, or funding leads, we need your involvement to turn this opportunity into something real. We want to involve residents, community organisations, businesses, schools, young people, older residents and the many different communities that make up Mt Victoria.

To kick off those conversations and hear how you want to be involved we will be holding public community meetings in September and October (details TBC).

We will also be available on Friday mornings at the hub for the coming weeks.

Please keep watching this column, look on our Facebook and website, read the posters in the Hub window, and send us your contact details to join the mailing list at hello@mtvichub.org.nz to hear when the next activity is and for progress updates.

We are looking at ways the current Hub space might continue to be used until our lease finishes at the end of December. If you have ever wanted to have a pop-up shop or run small workshops or know someone who would – please get in touch at hello@mtvichub.org.nz

Thank you

We want to take this opportunity to say a huge thank you to Joel.

Joel has brought his own unmistakable mix of joviality, boisterousness, humour and warmth to the Hub, all underpinned by kindness and a genuine commitment to community. He has helped create the welcoming environment and made connections that so many people have valued and has been there through an incredibly busy period for the Hub and, more recently, a very uncertain one.

While we are incredibly sad to see him go, we are enormously grateful for everything he has contributed.



Thank you to every person who has walked through our doors, volunteered, attended an event, donated, shared an idea, baked something, moved a chair, made a cup of tea or simply helped make this place feel like a community.

Whatever comes next, you have all been part of getting us here.

Ngā mihi nui,

Alice, Johnny, Matthew, Becky, Trish, Sophie

The Trustees of New Crossways Community Trust / Mt Victoria Hub. 

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 AGM

Join us on Thursday 3 September, 6pm at Clyde Quay School Hall for our Annual General Meeting followed by a discussion on waste minimisation, what WCC does, our local community compost facility and who picks up the rubbish. There will be an opportunity to swap garden plants too. Join the association and get involved to make our community better for residents. Join the committee! Get in touch at mtvicra@gmail.com

Mt Victoria Meet the Candidates meeting

Come and hear from the candidates standing for election in Wellington North, as we head towards the General Election in November. Thursday 1 October – venue and time TBC – check the MVRA Facebook page for details.

Mt Victoria Historical Society

Our Annual General Meeting takes place 13 September, 2pm – 4pm. Friends Meeting House, Moncrieff Street, Mt Victoria. New members welcome. More information: <https://mtvictoriaheritage.nz/>

Curtain Bank Fabric Sale

Come snap up a bargain on fabric and supplies! All proceeds go to supporting the Wellington Curtain Bank, who provide upcycled curtains to whānau living with low-income. Save textile waste, find some funky crafting supplies, and contribute to warmer homes for Te Whanganui-a-Tara households. Saturday 12 September, 10am–4pm, Te Aro Zero Waste, 2 Forrester Lane, Te Aro. <https://www.facebook.com/events/2205789580276388>

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.

Pikopiko Clyde Quay Kindergarten

SPACES AVAILABLE! Pikopiko is open for 2–5-year-olds, Monday to Friday, except public holidays. We are operating as a full year kindergarten from 2026. 20 hours free from 2 years old. Phone 04 385 0441 or email: pikopikoclydequay@wmkindergartens.org.nz

Please see www.wmkindergartens.org.nz for more information.

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

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 www.onemindfulbreath.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.

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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What should we do about the Super age?

Come and hear three sharp-witted thinkers put their case for the future of NZ Super in an evening of stimulating debate: Cameron Bagrie (economist), Susan St John (Professor of Economics, University of Auckland), Dr Bill Rosenberg (Economist). Monday 21st September, 6-7:30pm, The Ballroom – Foxglove Bar and Kitchen, 33 Queens Wharf, Wellington. Please RSVP for this free event hosted by IDEA (Institute for Democratic and Economic Analysis) by Monday 14th September.
<https://events.humanitix.com/what-should-we-do-about-the-super-age>

Probus Wellington Central



The next meeting of Probus Wellington Central is on Friday, September 18 at 10.00 am for morning tea and a 10.30 am start. The speaker on Sept 18 will be John McBeth, sports broadcaster and anecdotal commentator on all things sport. 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: <https://www.probusouthpacific.org/microsites/wellingtoncentral>

Feldenkrais classes

Awareness through Movement (Feldenkrais) classes in Quaker Room, Tuesdays 6-7pm. Sue 0274667123.
As featured on Radio New Zealand – take a listen to learn more about the method. (Google "Feldenkrais RNZ")

Host Your Next Event at the Taranua 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.

Yoga in Daily Life

YOGA IN DAILY LIFE (23 Jessie Street, opposite Prefab offers a variety of traditional yoga classes for beginners and for experienced yogis. Unpretentious and authentic.

Early morning, lunchtime and evening classes.
www.yogaindailylife.org.nz/locations/wellington

Nine Fathom Deep exhibition

The latest exhibition 'Tableaux' by Andrea Gardner is now open and a catalogue of works available online. The exhibition will run until 10 September.
Nine Fathom Deep gallery, 52 Cambridge Terrace.
<https://ninefathomdeep.co.nz/>

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



Yellow car

A yellow van can also be a car.

Jane O'Loughlin is on the receiving end of a game that makes no sense.

Do you have a yellow car? In that case you are responsible for the bruises on my arm.

If that doesn't make sense to you, perhaps you don't have a kid in your household.

For some reason, seeing a yellow car is the sign that you should punch someone in the arm. Don't question it: it's just a thing that happens. But if you're really curious, there's a whole website describing the rules in elaborate detail.

If you're competitive – in other words, you are a person in my household – then you will be scanning the horizon for yellow vehicles like a lion on the Serengeti looking for gazelle. Although in practice the prey is the slow person next to you that hasn't spotted the vehicle, and gets punched, ie me.

I say 'vehicle' because the rules of 'yellow car' seem strangely loose at times, and appear to allow for vehicles that are not cars. This has, at times, included vans, buses, diggers, helicopters, kayaks on the top of cars, scooters and trollies, depending on whether it suits the puncher or not.

"Ow, that's not a car, that's a tractor!" I say.

"So what, it's got wheels!" is the response.

It appears that any sort of travelling device can qualify, if you can mount a good argument. For example, once it was argued that a yellow house is a car,

because Dorothy travelled in one in the Wizard of Oz (although now that I check the facts I'm not sure this is true). Famously, a portaloo was once argued to be a car, because it was travelling on a back of a truck at the time, and had the word 'porta' in its name.

Another area of dispute is colour. What is yellow, one might ask oneself philosophically? Is it also mustard? Orangey yellow? Greeny yellow? That depends, largely on who is doing the punching and how determined and vociferous they are.

Generally the rules seem to say that if I make the call, then the colour probably doesn't qualify as 'yellow' but if someone else does, it's definitely 'yellow' even if it was really orange.

And so it goes on. I can tell you that it's a strange thing to have a perfectly normal family walk and talk suddenly disrupted by people yelling 'yellow car' and punching one another and then descending into arguments about shades of yellow and whether it matters if a vehicle has an engine or not.

I suppose it's good that they have their wits about them but if only some people would pay the same level of attention to finding their school books I can't help feeling the world would be an easier place on a Monday morning.

Anyway, the point is, if you do have a yellow car, I'd appreciate it if you didn't drive anywhere near Mt Victoria.

Because my arm hurts. **TL**

The war hero who loved swimming

One famous New Zealander you could say was 'formed' in Mt Victoria is Bernard Freyberg – who later became a War hero and seventh Governor General of New Zealand. The Mt Victoria Historical Society's **Joanna Newman** explains.

Bernard Freyberg came to Wellington from England in 1891 with his parents and siblings when he was two years old.

The family went to live at what was then 40 Hawker Street, then moved to No. 60 in 1895. Unfortunately, 60 Hawker Street burned down in the great fire of 1901 and they moved to 27 Hawker Street (now No. 43). That house, from the road, looks almost the same today as it would have in 1901 when they moved in.

The five Freyberg boys were a tight-knit group: tall and strong, good athletes – particularly swimmers – and keen sailors. Bernard was nicknamed Tiny as a boy – no doubt because he was the youngest and smallest. Even though he grew to be six foot one and a half, he continued to be called Tiny by New Zealanders, even when he was a General.

Bernard's mother refused to let them attend Clyde Quay School so he was taught at home until, in 1897, he went to Wellington College. He never excelled academically, however – his passion for swimming dominated his school life. The description of one of his contemporaries at school shows how at home he was in the water: "His movements were seal-like, in fact he reminded one very much of that animal. Rather clumsy and awkward on land, but given a few feet of water, immediately transformed into a body of grace and vital activity and flowing movement." When he was 16, he went to Australia to represent New Zealand in the Australasian Championships and in 1906 he was swimming champion of New Zealand.

In December 1904, Bernard suddenly left Wellington College. His authoritarian father had decided he



Freyberg at Te Aro Baths, c.1906
[ATL 1/2-044404-F]

Major General Sir Bernard Cyril Freyberg VC, painted by Peter McIntyre
[Archives New Zealand Ref: AAAC 898 NCWA 015]



should be apprenticed to become a dentist. Legislation was about to be introduced abolishing apprenticeships and requiring four-year degrees but this would not come into effect until 1 January 1905. Clearly, Bernard's father was keen to get him in, and earning, under the old system. It happened that a well-known dentist lived nearby in Hawker Street so, at the age of 15, Bernard was apprenticed to him. He remained a member of the dental profession until he left Wellington nine years later.

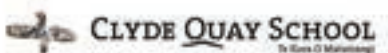
Bernard lived mainly for swimming, though. One of the principal attractions of the apprenticeship for him was that it allowed him to continue living at home in Hawker Street, close to the Te Aro Baths for swimming and water polo and to Oriental Bay for sailing. He was also interested enough in military matters, however, to join the Corps Volunteers when he left school.

The rest, as they say, is history. **TL**

**In addition to our donation to The Wellington
City Mission for every sale we make,
every Mt Victoria sale that Anji and James
achieve will result in a
\$250 donation to Clyde Quay School**



**If you are considering a move, call for a chat
about how a successful sale for you can also
support your community.**



Anji Foster
027 274 5047

James Lowe
027 345 0600