

THE LOCAL Mt Victoria

NGĀ KARERE HAPORI O MATAIRANGI



HUB SNUB SHOCKS COMMUNITY

The Mt Victoria community has been rocked by the news that funding for its community hub has been abruptly cancelled.

The news is even more surprising as the action was spearheaded by a local councillor, Nicola Young. Although Wellington City Council officers recommended continuing to provide funding to the Hub,

the council's grants subcommittee voted unanimously to remove funding altogether, after the amendment was made by councillor Young.

Many in the community have expressed outrage at the move and the way it has been conducted, and are planning a public meeting to protest the action.

Read more on page 3. ➔

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Gazley **G**



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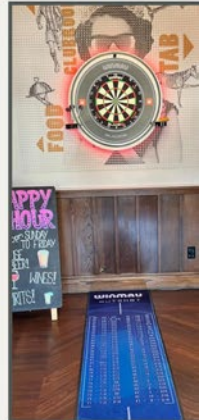
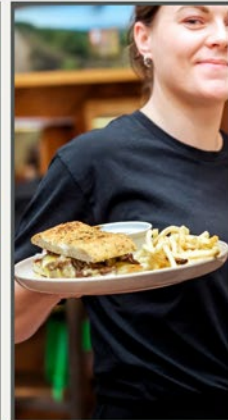
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Hub snub shocks community

Jane O'Loughlin gets reaction to the news that funding for the Mt Vic Hub had been cancelled.

A flurry of furious emails, phone calls and social media posts followed the shock news that the Mt Vic Hub's funding was to be cut at the Wellington City Council's grants subcommittee on 20 May – meaning that it would be unfunded after 30 June.

Hub staff and its board revealed that the news arrived in the form of what board member Trish Given described as a “bizarre and deeply unprofessional evening phone call” by councillor Nicola Young to the Trust's chairperson, made less than 48 hours before the grants meeting took place, where Young told them she would oppose the Hub receiving further funding as it was not delivering value for money.

Young, who chairs the subcommittee in charge of awarding grant money to a range of community groups each year, had organised support from fellow councillors for an amendment that would remove funding altogether from the Hub. This was despite council officers recommending awarding the same funding as last year, and raising no issues with the Hub's performance.

Young told *The Local* that it was made clear to organisations that there were no guarantees for funding going forward and the subcommittee decided not to grant the recommended \$79,627 to The New Crossways Community Trust (that runs the Mt Vic Hub) in order to prioritise other applications.

“Last year, after more than 20 years of historic funding arrangements for community groups, Council

moved to 12-month transitional grants that run until the end of June. Council's grants pool is for the whole city, and the new criteria will allow applications from a wider group of community organisations.

“Existing recipients of grants had a year's notice that existing funding would cease in 2026 when every organisation would start from scratch. It was made clear there were no guarantees for organisations that had previously received ratepayer support, so it is not correct to say that grants have been cut.

“Councillors are conscious of delivering maximum effect for ratepayer money given Council's (and Wellingtonians') fiscal constraints. This year's grants funding pool was oversubscribed by \$3million, so the Grants Subcommittee (which I chair) considered officer recommendations, then sought to recognise the demand for a city-wide range of services and programmes.

“This decision (which is final) was supported by all three of the Pukehinau/Lambton councillors. It is easy for Councillors to spend ratepayer money, but a lot harder to make – often tough – decisions when funding is constrained and rates keep increasing.

“Officers will work with the New Crossways Community Trust to provide advice and support any transition required with the changes in Council funding.”

Trish Given, who was clearly furious as she fronted the council subcommittee with Hub coordinator Joel Cosgrove, said the Hub had delivered more than 6,600 hours of engagement and activity to the wider Mt Vic Community during the 2025-26 financial year.

“That work is real, those outcomes are documented, those relationships matter.”

She took issue with the fact the Hub had been given no warning of the change and no chance to respond to criticism or address any perceived performance issues.

“We believe this process has been arbitrary, unfair, and deeply damaging.”

Hub chair, Johnny Crawford, told *The Local* the board had no idea there were any concerns, and he had never previously spoken to Nicola Young.

The Hub is now organising a public meeting to rally community support for the service. **TL**

The Mt Vic Hub public meeting on 3 June at 5.30pm will talk about Mt Vic funding and support as well as future goals and aims for the suburb. This meeting will be held in the Clyde Quay School Hall.

Hit job on Mt Vic

You could almost feel the hot steam emanating from Elizabeth Street when the Hub received the shock news that its local councillor – and chair of the council's grants committee – was spearheading a vote to kill its funding.

The indignation is understandable; this came out of nowhere for the Hub, and they barely had a chance to defend themselves. It's almost unheard of for a councillor to volunteer to lose funding from their own community, and – what some are calling a 'hit job' – was clearly kept quiet until the last moment.

Although the Board of the Hub says it was completely taken aback by Nicola Young's accusation that it is not providing value for money, it would be fair to say there have been some murmurings of dissatisfaction in the community about the service the Hub provides.

Many residents hark back to the golden times when Trish Given (now on the Board) ran the Hub, and it was known as a place you could pop in and have a cup of tea at almost any time during the day.

I suspect Trish was doing a lot more hours than she was being paid for, simply because she loved the job.

My gripe with the Hub has been that they continue deliver a newsletter when I have offered several times to run their notices and news for them in *The Local* – freeing up their time to do the things they are better at, like running community events.

It doesn't help that the body that runs the Hub has no accountability to the community. The 'New Crossways Community Trust' was set up years ago as a fundraising body to buy the former Crossways Community centre. When that failed it morphed into an organisation that gets public money to act as kind of community events organiser, but it is a law unto itself. It holds no public meetings, doesn't seek for input on its work programme, and its directors are 'appointed' by mysterious means.

Despite all that, I'm sure they are well meaning people who are doing their best, and I also think the community would have much preferred to get a heads up on this decision, and a chance to debate it. Now that \$70k for Mt Vic has gone, and we are very unlikely to get it back. **TL**



Jane O'Loughlin
Editor

THE LOCAL COMMUNITY NEWS

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Nature Baby moves

Nature Baby is moving from Jessie Street to College Street, bringing another Kiwi-owned business to the street.

Sandwiched between Wallace Cotton and Trinity apartments, the two-storeyed building at 25 College St is undergoing extensive renovation. The new premises has had many lives, including as a bakery, a barbeque restaurant, and a gym.

Nature Baby manager, George Lane is excited about the new premises and what it will offer the neighbourhood. "We will have multiple community spaces that people can come to and commune with other parents," she says.

The store is expected to open by October. **TL**

Most heritage owners happy with status quo

Most Mt Victoria owners of heritage houses wish them to remain that way.

Owners of heritage-listed buildings and buildings in heritage areas throughout the city were surveyed by the Wellington City Council in March to find out their attitudes towards their heritage status.

Owners of 61 schedule 1 heritage buildings – including six in Mt Victoria – told surveyors they wanted to remove their heritage listing,

Within heritage areas, those that wished to be removed included one out of nine owners in Armour Avenue, four out of 46 in Porritt Avenue, and one out of 55 in the Doctors Common heritage areas. Many more owners said they preferred to keep the designation.

Councillors at the City Strategy and Delivery committee meeting in May noted the report and agreed that council should advocate for "a fair process and/or law changes within the new planning system that will provide owners of heritage listed properties a chance to challenge their categorisation". **TL**

No pedestrians allowed

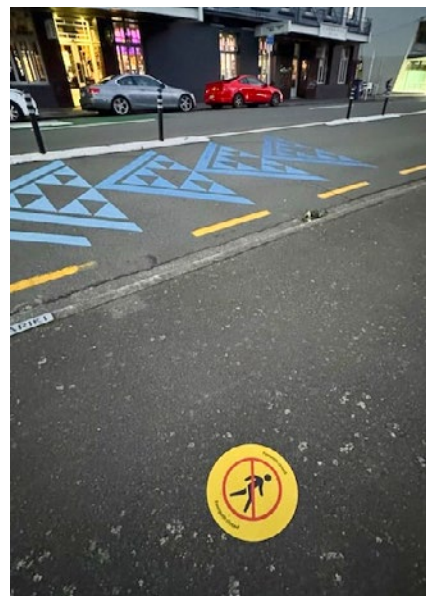
Mt Victoria walkers may be surprised to learn they are no longer welcome on one of the pedestrian islands in the middle of Kent and Cambridge Terraces.

Recently stickers have appeared indicating pedestrians are not permitted on what is formally known as the canal reserve, at a spot that many Mt Victoria residents use to cross the road.

A spokesperson for the Wellington City Council says the move is for safety reasons, related to the new crossing further down the road that is not open for pedestrian use.

"While the independent review into the Golden Mile project is underway, these temporary pavement signs have been installed for safety reasons until the new crossing is activated. The planters were placed there as a precautionary measure too. The site is being monitored as public safety is a priority."

The crossing near the Embassy was built on the assumption that the Courtenay Place realignment would go ahead. The Golden Mile project is under review, with findings to be presented to the council on 25 June. **TL**



Mt Victoria olive harvest

Around 20 people helped out with the Mt Victoria olive harvest this year.

Hub coordinator Joel Cosgrove said it was a good harvest, in terms of volume and also quality. "Apparently our olives were riper than Wairarapa's this year! That's a win for Mt Vic."

The oil will be used for our community dinners and local community fundraising. **TL**

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Veggie thieves thwart eager growers

Innermost Gardens' plot owners are losing produce they've worked hard to grow, as **Rowena Fry** discovers.

At the end of the near-vertical ascent of Majoribanks Street where the road takes a dog leg and changes its name to Lawson Place, is a little piece of paradise. Flanked by Victoria Bowling Club, the town belt, and the city, Innermost Gardens is now 20 years old, helping mainly apartment-dwellers grow their own produce.

Computer programmer Erin Higgins is one such urban farmer. Working remotely, she enjoys making her way up the hill to tend her allotment where her bed currently sports beans, leeks, kale, and a chilli plant that has been less than impressed with our latest summer.

"I was looking for somewhere to take my food scraps," she says. "I found there was composting here so I started coming up with my food scraps for the compost bin and then saw a sign about the gardens and got myself on a waiting list." It took about a year before a plot became available and four years later she's on a roll.

Erin says she grew up with gardens but hadn't grown veges solo until she came to Innermost, apart from herbs on her deck. What she plants depends on what is available in the city's garden shops. "I try to mix it up and not grow the same things each year."

Erin's plot neighbours, one bed away, are Ben Laksana and Rara Sekar. They used to have a space at the Ōwhiro Bay community gardens until that closed down last year. Also apartment dwellers, Ben and

Rara both work in community education and share a passion for both growing their own produce and contributing to the wider community's food security.


Innermost Gardens has both private plots and sharing gardens; ones that the public can pick from. Many of the gardeners, as well as those with gardens at home, contribute spare seedlings, time, and sweat to maintaining and feeding the sharing gardens. Signs are scattered around the gardens kindly asking people to leave the private beds and find the public ones.

Unfortunately, everyone who rents a plot at Innermost has experienced having their gardens raided. Every few weeks tell-tale signs are found, whether that be a few carrots wrenched from the ground, or an entire crop missing. Ben says he feels bad for his neighbours. "Their cabbages were already beautiful and big, ready to harvest. Then they were all gone. It's been a bad year for gardening. Then the little stuff that can grow is taken."

Rara says there was talk of getting security cameras but agrees the issue stems from a bigger problem, "I don't want to be gardening like that. We can't punish people wanting food," she says. "It's just that people expect something from what they grow. You're putting work into it. It's emotional as well."

The gardeners hope that greater awareness of how the gardens work will help stop the thefts.

People are always welcome to join the Innermost community. A gardening working bee is held on the first and third Sunday morning of the month. The bee starts with a short lesson on what's growing and then finishes with a cup of tea.

innermostgardens.org.nz/home 

Unique ceramics in a Mt Vic garage

Rowena Fry talks to the person making some delicate and sought-after pottery.

Folks out for a stroll in Matairangi–Mt Victoria might come across a garage, painted black, and adorned with a collection of what looks like pastel-coloured, ceramic flowers. But behind the door you won't find a car or motorbike; instead, work surfaces, a sink, sacks of clay, tools, containers of glaze, and a kiln. On the far wall shines a work of art in itself; a magnificent colour palette display of close to 100 colours over just as many plates.

Angela Francis has been operating her ceramics studio, *One of a Kind*, on Brougham Street for the past five years. Originally an intermediate art teacher, ten years ago she decided it was time she started creating her own work.

It all started when she needed some porcelain clay for a jewellery project. A 10-kilo bag was the minimum purchase so she found herself with most of the bag staring back at her and just a basic understanding of ceramics from her teacher's college days.

Angela's husband murmured something about how they needed little plates to fit in their little dishwasher and the spark was lit. She could build her knowledge of pottery by challenging herself to make not just enough for their dishwasher, but enough for 50 dishwashers.

"I'd talked to someone who had made 1,000 tumblers and that seemed like a good way to focus the mind," she says. "So, I bought a little library stamp and I numbered them." Not daunted by the grand number, she says she found it great fun and a year

and a half later the project was completed.

Ten years later, Angela's work is stocked in galleries around the country, as well as in *Small Acorns* on Blair Street.

Back up the hill, Angela says she loves her neighbourhood. Because her studio is right on the footpath, and next to Clyde Quay School, there is never a shortage of passing foot traffic and inevitable admiration and conversation. "I carry on with my work while a few people come in and sit down at the couch and chat. There's a real sense of community."

Her colours, as well as the petal-delicateness of her plates, bowls, and tumblers, is what draws people to her art. Angela works solely with porcelain; a fine, kaolin-based white clay that can be rolled to a thinner slab than the more common earthen or stoneware clays. Colour is added to the porcelain before she starts creating, meaning that the colour is solid all the way through each dish. And because Angela's plates are formed on a slab rather than on a wheel, each dish has no alternative but to have its own, unique shape.

A humble creator, Angela clearly enjoys her craft. "Successful? I don't know if I'm really successful, but I really like it and while I keep liking it I'll do it. I might not do it forever." **TL**

Once a year Angela opens her garage door for an official open day – this year it's 10–1pm on Saturday 20 June. Otherwise, contact her through Instagram: [one.of.a.kind.ceramics](https://www.instagram.com/one.of.a.kind.ceramics)

The Other Boleyn Girl for King's birthday



Celebrate 100 years of Wellington Repertory with its second production of its centenary year, *The Other Boleyn Girl*.

Based on Philippa Gregory's million copy best-selling novel, *The Other Boleyn Girl*, Wellington Repertory is bringing to the stage this large-scale production for their official centenary celebration over King's Birthday weekend.

Director of the production, Ewen Coleman, is also the longest serving member of Wellington Repertory's committee. As the society enters its 100th year, he will mark 50 years of service in 2027. **TL**

The production runs to Saturday 6 June at the Gryphon Theatre, 22 Ghuznee Street. Tickets are available at wellingtonrepertory.org.nz



Kia ora Mt. Vic!

Let's talk about our community.

Get in touch about any local issues or if you need support. I'm here to help and would love to hear from you!

Tamatha Paul
MP for Wellington Central

E: wellington.central@parliament.govt.nz
P: (04) 3891290

Auth by Tamatha Paul, Green Party MP.
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Appreciating what we've got

Anji Foster from Lowe & Co on seeing Wellington with fresh eyes.

After a few recent complimentary comments from visitors to Wellington about our capital city, it made me think how easy it can be for Wellingtonians to forget just how remarkable our city actually is.

Recent discussion around overseas buyers once again being able to purchase certain New Zealand homes has understandably centred around Auckland and Queenstown. On paper, that makes sense. Auckland offers scale, international connectivity and the appreciation of bling, while Queenstown has firmly established itself as a global luxury destination with a world class landscape to boot.

But it does raise an interesting question. If an overseas buyer was looking at New Zealand through fresh eyes, would Wellington be considered more than we realise?

Not necessarily as a flashy luxury market. Wellington has never really been that kind of city. In fact, we likely do not even have enough suitable housing stock to attract significant international attention in the first place. Very few Wellington homes are valued above the \$5 million threshold being discussed, and there have been less than a handful of sales above that level in recent years.

Globally, there is growing interest in cities that feel human in scale. Walkable cities. Liveable cities. Places with character, culture, nature and authenticity rather than simply size and spectacle. Data would indicate that many wealthy buyers are looking for calm, privacy and quality of life over overt displays of luxury. And I think Wellington does quietly deliver all of that.

Few capital cities in the world allow you to leave a morning meeting in the CBD and be walking a bush track, sitting beside the harbour or on a south coast beach 15 minutes later. Our city remains remarkably compact and connected. For Mt Vic locals and our neighbours in Roseneath, Thorndon and Oriental Bay, it is still entirely possible to walk to work, meet

friends for coffee, spend time on the waterfront and be home again without even getting in a car. That balance is becoming increasingly rare internationally.

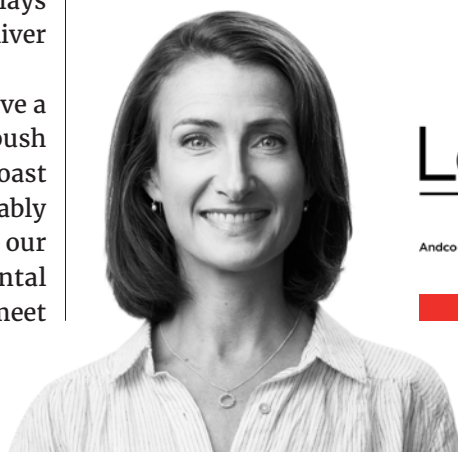
There is also the beauty of Wellington itself, something we often normalise because we see it every day. The harbour, the hills, the constantly shifting light, the dramatic arrival into the airport. Visitors regularly comment on the feeling that Wellington is somehow both urban and deeply connected to nature at the same time.

Then there is our very Wellington architecture. Unlike many luxury markets increasingly dominated by oversized speculative homes, Wellington's best houses often feel personal and deeply connected to their sites. Contemporary recent builds perched above the harbour, carefully renovated villas hugging the hills and compact cottages peppered throughout. The streetscape, particularly in a suburb like ours, is distinctly Wellington.

Wellington still carries an understated quality. Wealth here has traditionally been quieter and more private. In a world which can feel increasingly saturated with "look at me" luxury, that subtlety may actually become one of Wellington's most appealing features for people who appreciate a whisper over a shout.

None of this is to suggest Wellington is suddenly about to become the next Queenstown. It almost certainly won't, and most of us are pretty comfortable with that. But perhaps the more interesting thought is this: while Wellingtonians often focus on what our city lacks, outsiders may increasingly see something different entirely. A compact harbour capital with culture, creativity, architectural character and an enviable lifestyle balance.

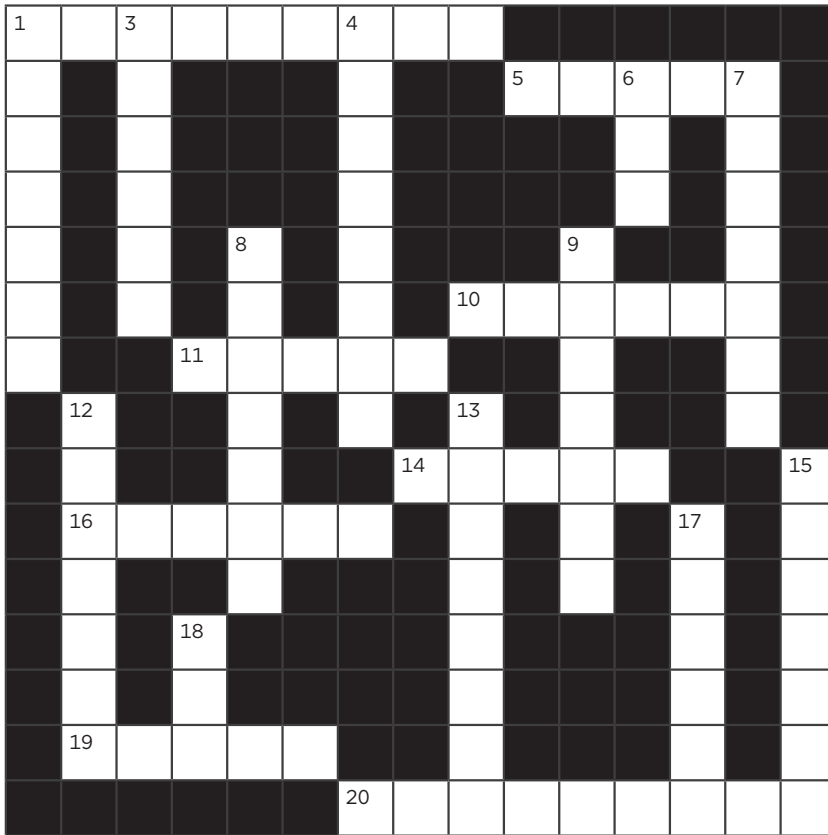
Wellington's greatest challenge may not be convincing the world of its appeal. It may simply be convincing ourselves. **TL**



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Beau's Crossword #8



Across:

1. Reluctantly agree. (9)
5. Copper + zinc = (5)
10. Can be achieved. (6)
11. Location dedicated to hosting contest. (5)
14. Doctrine. (5)
16. Poodle. (anag.)
19. A type of heron. (5)
20. Sacrilege. (9)


Down:

1. Tall cupboard. (7)
3. Relieve, to ----- your thirst. (6)
4. Attention seeker. (4,4)
6. Portion of a circle, character ---. (3)
7. A regular monetary benefit to live on. (7)
8. Immoral. (7)
9. An unrelated spiel. (7)
12. Spend money frivolously. (7)
13. A Thai chilli sauce. (8)
15. Unverified information. (7)
17. How/where you stand. (7)
18. A rocky outcrop. (3)

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

ULO ? Unidentified Local Object

Identify the mystery object – something in the Mount Vic 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 Gabrielle Warren who identified the May ULO as the sign on KFC. 



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*.

Wellington East Girls' College Enrolments Open

Online enrolments for Year 9 students starting in 2027 are now open at Wellington East Girls' College. **Key date: 22 July 2026** – Applications for all Year 9 students, including out-of-zone applicants, should be submitted by this date. Families living within the home zone are encouraged to apply by 22 July for planning purposes, although in-zone applications can be accepted at any time.

Mt Victoria Residents Association

Find out what the locals are up to at our next Mt Victoria Residents Association meeting on 4 June at 6pm Clyde Quay School Hall. We have invited local groups to join us and let us know what they do and how we can join in. Bush restoration, history, gardening and recreation all feature strongly in our suburb. Come along and share your Mt Victoria based group or activity. Contact mtvicra@gmail.com



Te Kura Kōhine o te Rāwhiti o Te Upoko o Te Ika
Wellington East Girls' College

OPEN DAY

Thursday 11 June
3pm and 6pm

Please register your interest by booking a ticket on our website:

www.wegc.school.nz

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 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 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 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 play 3 times a week at the stadium on Alexandra Road. Only \$5 each time – no subscription. For more information contact Diana Winn, email winnich@xtra.co.nz or phone **04 801 9556**.

LISTINGS

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

Probus Wellington Central



The next meeting of Probus Wellington Central is on June 19 at 10:00 am for coffee/tea and biscuits, and a 10:30 am start. The speaker, Mark Douglas, Maritime Domain Analyst, is talking about: "Tracking shipping movements throughout the world, including when ships attempt to hide, such as in the Straits of Hormuz". Probus meets on the third Friday of the month (Feb to Nov) at Prefab Hall, Jessie St, 10:00 am to noon. Membership \$50 per annum. Stay for buffet lunch at Prefab \$25. More information: probussouthpacific.org/microsites/wellingtoncentral/

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

Investing for Kids

Brooke Roberts and Susannah Batley of Sharesies host this practical community event designed to help parents, guardians, aunties, uncles and children learn about investing together. Roberts and Batley will discuss topics including KiwiSaver for children, how much people really need to invest, simple ways families can get started, common mistakes parents make, and the habits that make the biggest difference over time. The event is being hosted by Roseneath School and the Friends of Roseneath fundraising committee. Wellington East Girls' College on Wednesday 3 June from 6:30pm to 8pm.

Host Your Next Event at the Tararua Tramping Club Hall!



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

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, massagewellington.nz



Marsden & Chelsea Clubs



Day Programme for those with dementia, cognitive or other conditions

The Marsden Club in Newcombe Crescent, Karori, (and the Chelsea Club in Lyall Bay) provide high quality, professional day programmes for people with dementia and other cognitive conditions. Funding from Health NZ is usually available.

For more information contact: Angela 027 349 9691 or visit: marsdenclub.org.nz



Going for a walk

Jane O'Loughlin heads up to the town belt.

I'm going for a walk I told my family. Where they asked. I don't know, I said, but of course I did know. I was going to walk in the place I always go to when I just need to walk without errands to run: the town belt.

It was a sunny autumn day. The air was warm; not too hot and not too cold. It was a Sunday morning, so all the strong people were at Pirie Street Park doing their complicated things on the gym equipment. Elsewhere kids were on the swings with their parents chatting. It's nice to see the park being used, I thought, as I headed up the steps.

A walk is a thing to clear your head, to get some vitamin D, to get some exercise. A walk in the town belt is always something of an adventure. Who will you meet? What will you see? On a well-used route, I came across a tree that had fallen across the track. Tentatively I crawled under it to the other side and wondered how safe it was. I gave it a kick. Seemed solid. Nevertheless, I got out my FIXiT app to let the council know.

I continued upwards, warming up as I reached the steep rugged bits. Coming towards me was an older gentleman struggling down the bumpy path with a

I came across two women looking lost. "Where is the summit?" I heard one mutter. "It's that way," I pointed. And added, possibly unnecessarily: "Keep heading up."

one of those canvas shopping trolleys people take to the market. I remarked that he might have found an easier path than this steep rocky one. He told me he was a forager and then went on to do various David Attenborough impressions about mushrooms. He followed that up with Donald Trump impressions, at which I smiled weakly and carried on.

My usual route is either to get to Alexandra Road and then head back down, or if I've got time I'll walk over to Roseneath and go back via Oriental Parade.

Today was a short burst so I headed back down, via another path.

I came across two women looking lost. "Where is the summit?" I heard one mutter. "It's that way," I pointed. And added, possibly unnecessarily: "Keep heading up."

Further on were more walkers, people with dogs, kids with sticks, mountain bikers. Off track I spied people hunting around in the undergrowth. What were they searching for? Were they also foraging?

The thing about the tracks on Mount Vic is that they criss-cross each other; the people you see on the way up are sometimes the same people you see on the way down having criss-crossed the other way. I wondered if I'd come across David Attenborough again and whether I would hide behind a tree if so.

If you manage to walk quietly, you will encounter birds. The warble of a tui, a kākā tearing apart a tree, or the whump of the wings of a fat kereru. If you look closely you will see interesting nature things, like lichen and spiders, perhaps even mushrooms if you have the patience.

But I really go walking so I can think. At some point during a walk the to-do list stops bothering your mind and you go into some other place where your unconscious mind takes over. Ideas arise, solutions appear, and the puzzle pieces start to fall into place. I don't really understand the primitive magic of walking but I trust that it works. And sometimes I'll grab my phone out and start punching in words and every so often they end up in an article like this. **TL**

Intriguing Roxburgh Street house

An historically intriguing Mount Victoria house has recently gone on the market, as **Joanna Newman** from the Mt Victoria Historical Society explains.

Number 30 Roxburgh Street is a grand house dating from the early days of European settlement in Wellington. It was built in 1868 by Constantine Zohrab. Zohrab was born near Liverpool and came to NZ in 1863. He was one of the first to go to the Dunstan goldfields but moved to Wellington after two years there. He was a general merchant and, by 1870, owned two acres on Roxburgh Street. By the 1880s, he was doing business all over the colony and had the sole agency for such luxuries as Glenlivet whiskey and Perinet et Fils champagne.

The two front rooms of 30 Roxburgh Street are built in kauri. It may be that Zohrab chose superior timbers for the ‘front rooms’.

Constantine died very young, at the age of 54, having suffered “apoplexy” and dying a few days later of “paralysis”. He left his widow, nine daughters and two sons. Members of the Zohrab family continued to

live in the house until about 1920.

The Zohrabs sold it to JM Dawson, an architect who designed many buildings round Wellington. Major changes were then made to the house in the 1920s and the section was subdivided in 1924, destroying the orchard and glass-house that had been behind the original home.



Dawson’s 100-year-old mother lived upstairs after he divided the house into two dwellings. When the current owner, who bought the house in 1983, was doing renovations, they found written in pencil behind scrim “We love Mrs Dawson”. Joseph Dawson’s son, Eric, who also became a well-known architect, lived there from 1946, and number 30 remained in the Dawson family until 1981.

For many years, the house was covered in distinctive grey roughcast concrete and adorned with green shutters. That was, until 2024. That year, the owner was rudely woken to an almighty crash. Rushing outside, he found that a large section of the stucco had fallen off the front of the house. Since then, it has all been removed, exposing the original kauri and rimu weatherboards.

A quirky discovery after they moved in was finding, under the concrete courtyard, a large iron plate covering a hole. This turned out to be a four-metre deep, hand-hewn well from the 1800s. They incorporated the well into their new kitchen as a feature and at one stage used the water (via a marine pump) to water the garden.

Although it has seen many changes, between 1868 and 2026 essentially only three families called this house a home. **TL**

Left: Group portrait of women from the Zohrab family, c.1900s [ATL 1/2-169169-F]



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Anji Foster
027 274 5047

James Lowe
027 345 0600