Regional News

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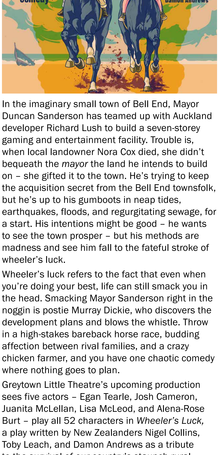


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News

A mare for the mayor



In the imaginary small town of Bell End, Mayor Duncan Sanderson has teamed up with Auckland developer Richard Lush to build a seven-storey gaming and entertainment facility. Trouble is, when local landowner Nora Cox died, she didn't bequeath the mayor the land he intends to build on – she gifted it to the town. He's trying to keep the acquisition secret from the Bell End townsfolk, but he's up to his gumboots in neap tides, earthquakes, floods, and regurgitating sewage, for a start. His intentions might be good – he wants to see the town prosper – but his methods are madness and see him fall to the fateful stroke of wheeler's luck.

Wheeler's luck refers to the fact that even when you're doing your best, life can still smack you in the head. Smacking Mayor Sanderson right in the noggin is postie Murray Dickie, who discovers the development plans and blows the whistle. Throw in a high-stakes bareback horse race, budding affection between rival families, and a crazy chicken farmer, and you have one chaotic comedy where nothing goes to plan.

Greytown Little Theatre's upcoming production sees five actors – Egan Tearle, Josh Cameron, Juanita McLellan, Lisa McLeod, and Alena-Rose Burt – play all 52 characters in *Wheeler's Luck*, a play written by New Zealanders Nigel Collins, Toby Leach, and Damon Andrews as a tribute to the survival of our country's staunch rural backbone. The actors inhabit each hilarious role flawlessly and move from one to the next with but a flick of the wrist (a change of a single costume piece or a cross-stage bound). The set is minimal, the technical trickery high, and the ending... unexpected, to say the least.

Don't foal around: race to Studio 73 from the 18th to the 28th of November to see the madcap *Wheeler's Luck* from seasoned directors John Gilberthorpe and Victoria Ross.

Jam-packed theatre



A smorgasbord of sumptuous theatre is coming to BATS to demonstrate that the arts are truly alive and well in the capital. As per tradition, each year the Master's students of Te Herenga Waka Victoria University MFA (Creative Practice) in Theatre and Performance Studies serve up a range of fun, quirky, serious, thought-provoking shows as part of the Six Degrees Festival.

This year, 12 emerging theatre practitioners are putting on four main bill shows and two smaller studio performances that are split across two spectacular programmes over two weeks.

The first lineup will take place between the 25th and 28th of November and features *Since She Burned*, a queer-feminist adaptation of Espy W.H. Williams' *Witchcraft Or The Witch of Salem*; *Endemic PARK (The Musical)*, which centres gender-diverse voices under the trans umbrella; and *The Awakening*, a play exploring grief in young adults that follows Rory as she discovers a magic that could bring her brother back to life, and begs the question: what price will she have to pay?

The following week, from the 2nd to the 5th of December, Six Degrees Festival will feature a staging of Duncan Macmillan and Jonny Donahoe's *Everything Brilliant*; a ghostly visitation in a rehearsal room in the play *The Final Rehearsal*; and *Undreamt*, a physical solo performance exploring the murky depths of dreams and nightmares, informed by dream interviews with anonymous participants.

Since it was established in 2019, the festival has served as a launchpad for the careers of many successful art practitioners. This year's performances will be jam-packed with music, Kafkian absurdity, magic, mystery, and, of course, a whole lotta talent from Pōneke's next generation of theatre practitioners. Why not head along and get a glimpse of the future?

Cover:
Jesus Christ Superstar. Photo by Dave Simpson.

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News

The myth and the man



Photo by Dave Simpson.

With iconic songs like *I Don't Know How to Love Him*, *Gethsemane (I Only Want to Say)*, and *Superstar*, the award-winning theatrical juggernaut *Jesus Christ Superstar* is a groundbreaking rock opera about the final days of Jesus Christ, as told through the eyes of Judas Iscariot. Entirely in song, it explores personal relationships and struggles among Jesus, his disciples, his followers, and the Roman Empire.

Created by Emmy, GRAMMY®, Oscar®, and Tony Award winners Tim Rice and Andrew Lloyd Webber, it was first performed on Broadway in 1971. The following year it opened in London, where it ran for eight years to become the longest-running musical in West End history at that time. Since then, it has continued to thrill audiences with its electrifying score, powerful storytelling, and timeless exploration of faith, fame, and sacrifice.

Bringing this major production to life at St James Theatre between the 18th and 28th of November is a company of some of the world's most celebrated theatrical performers, with collective credits that span Broadway, The West End, Off-Broadway, and major international tours, where they've been in productions seen by millions of theatregoers.

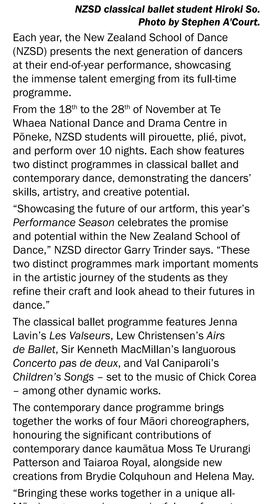
Taking on the role of Jesus is British performer Luke Street. Opposite him is Green Room Award winner Javon Kind as Judas, while the role of Mary Magdalene will be played by Hannah Richardson. Together this holy trinity leads a multinational team of extraordinary talent, bringing to the stage one of the most ambitious theatre tours Aotearoa has ever seen.

Jesus Christ Superstar has been reproduced regularly around the world, but this production, helmed by director Timothy Sheader and choreographer Drew McOnie – and produced by GMG Productions, David Ian for Crossroads Live, and Work Light Productions – won the Olivier Award in 2017 and has been taken to every corner of the globe.

Completing the creative team is design by Tom Scutt, lighting design by Lee Curran, sound design by Nick Lidster, and music supervision by Tom Deering.

Described as a "Gorgeous, thrilling, heavenly musical", (*The Guardian*) and "An almighty revelation" (*The Daily Telegraph*), *Jesus Christ Superstar* is a sparkling story brought to vivid life by a spectacular cast and crew.

The future of dance



NZSD classical ballet student Hiroki So.
Photo by Stephen A'Court.

Each year, the New Zealand School of Dance (NZSD) presents the next generation of dancers at their end-of-year performance, showcasing the immense talent emerging from its full-time programme.

From the 18th to the 28th of November at Te Whaea National Dance and Drama Centre in Pōneke, NZSD students will pirouette, plié, pivot, and perform over 10 nights. Each show features two distinct programmes in classical ballet and contemporary dance, demonstrating the dancers' skills, artistry, and creative potential.

"Showcasing the future of our artform, this year's *Performance Season* celebrates the promise and potential within the New Zealand School of Dance," NZSD director Garry Trinder says. "These two distinct programmes mark important moments in the artistic journey of the students as they refine their craft and look ahead to their futures in dance."

The classical ballet programme features Jenna Lavin's *Les Valseurs*, Lew Christensen's *Airs de Ballet*, Sir Kenneth MacMillan's languorous *Concerto pas de deux*, and Val Caniparoli's *Children's Songs* – set to the music of Chick Corea – among other dynamic works.

The contemporary dance programme brings together the works of four Māori choreographers, honouring the significant contributions of contemporary dance kaumātua Moss Te Ururangi Patterson and Taiaroa Royal, alongside new creations from Brydie Colquhoun and Helena May.

"Bringing these works together in a unique all-Māori programme is a meaningful way for us to acknowledge and support Te Ao Māori within our creative environment, while celebrating the depth, diversity, and future of contemporary dance in Aotearoa," NZSD head of contemporary dance Paula Steeds-Huston says.

Since the school was founded nearly 60 years ago, the end-of-year performances have become a treasured tradition. As the official school of the Royal New Zealand Ballet and The New Zealand Dance Company, they offer a glimpse into the future of dance in Aotearoa and around the world.

Witness the extraordinary talent, dedication, technical skill, and individuality of the New Zealand School of Dance students this November in *Performance Season 2026*.

SNIPS

Sleighing fees?
Wellington City councillors have submitted a Notice of Motion proposing free parking on weekends from the 5th of December 2026 to the 10th of January 2027 at Barnett Street, Clyde Quay, Frank Kitts, Clifton Terrace, and Tory Street carparks, with existing time restrictions and enforcement remaining in place. Clifton Terrace is subject to NZTA approval. Mayor Andrew Little says 'tis the season for WCC to share the festive cheer and make this holiday season brighter for local businesses and their staff.

Ready for roadworks
Drainage works are underway on Transmission Gully, with congestion and delays expected. The aim is to have them finished by the 18th of December, and the motorway operating as normal before the busy holiday period.

Wakefield Street
Is ready for its close-up ahead of the Town Hall re-opening in February. Two-way traffic is flowing freely and carparks have been reinstated. Upgrades include new seating, landscaping, and paving.

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News

Baroque splendour



Vesa-Matti Leppänen.

The New Zealand Symphony Orchestra (NZSO) will bring the elegance and splendour of the Baroque era to audiences this summer with a six-date chamber music tour. The first stop is at Te Raukura ki Kāpiti in Paraparaumu on the 4th of December.

The NZSO's *Baroque Delights: NZSO Summer Tour* features NZSO concertmaster and violin virtuoso Vesa-Matti Leppänen and internationally acclaimed New Zealand soprano Anna Leese, whose distinguished voice brings brilliance and expressive power to the beauty and drama of Italian Baroque.

The programme of French and Italian Baroque favourites is centred on Giovanni Pergolesi, one of the most influential composers of the 18th century. Pergolesi's legacy is even more extraordinary given that he died at just 26 years old of tuberculosis. Like Mozart after him, his untimely death became the stuff of legend, inspiring countless stories and cementing his reputation as one of the great musical prodigies. Despite his short life, Pergolesi's music has had an enduring impact on European opera and remains celebrated for its vitality, elegance, and emotional richness. Led by Leppänen, the NZSO chamber ensemble will perform highlights from four of his most celebrated operas: *La serva padrona*, *Adriano in Siria*, *L'Olimpiade,* and *Il prigionier superbo*.

The programme also ventures into France with a sparkling suite from Jean-Philippe Rameau's comic masterpiece *Platée*. Rameau's dazzling orchestral writing provides a magnificent conclusion to an evening of Baroque treasures.

Enter the gameverse



Dream Team Supreme.

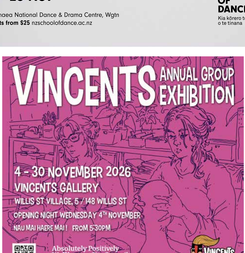
Game development is alive and well in the capital, with the fourth Wellington Games Review of the year happening at Respawn Esports Centre on Manners Street on the 27th of November.

Seven local developers are giving regular, everyday gamers the chance to playtest their games and provide feedback for further development. Playing is free with no registration required; people can simply turn up, try out the games, fill in a short survey, and perhaps enjoy one of Respawn's fantastic burgers while they're at it.

Adventure through the spirit world in *Cooking For MA!* to save your grandma from an evil serpent using the power of Korean cuisine; enter a multiplayer space battle in *Death Vector*; reclaim your home and outrun the clock in the relentless bullet-hell roguelike game *Alien Extermination*; take the wheel in a retro-inspired, first-person psychological indie horror game where you are a journalist who must spend three days alone in a reclusive tech CEO's cabin in *Unhomely*; learn the language of music in *Note Worthy*; in *Dream Team Supreme*, pilot a giant robot with another scientist to defeat a monster invasion; and in *Adaptory,* join a crew of four explorers who crash-land on a mysterious planet deep in uncharted space, where rebuilding the ship takes a back seat to unravelling the mysteries of a seemingly dead rock.

The developers are excited to answer questions, and the organisers at Big Adventure Games will be there playing games and chatting from 6pm until late.







Music news

The interstellar bard



Photo by Silken Weinberg

Dermot Kennedy's journey has taken him from busking on the street to playing stadiums around the world. Now a multi-platinum recording artist, he's shared the stage with the likes of Niall Horan, Noah Kahan, and Zach Bryan and forged emotional connections with audiences around the world, including Shawn Mendes and Taylor Swift, who praised him for his poetic songwriting and his soulful cover of her smash hit *Anti-Hero*.

In 2026, Dermot made history as the first Irish solo artist to have their first three studio albums reach number one on the UK charts. In *The Weight of the Woods*, the singer-songwriter chronicles life, death, faith, and love, drawing inspiration from his native Ireland across 14 poignant tracks.

Out in April this year, the album balances beat-driven, chorus-belting anthems like *Funeral* with lyrics that embody loss and longing like "And I held my breath on that frosty morning / Dreaming maybe you're still there" from the aptly titled *Honest*. Written and recorded alongside Dermot's close collaborator Gabe Simon – who has collaborated with Noah Kahan, Dua Lipa, Lana Del Rey, Maroon 5, and more – it has been described as a "Magnificent third album from Ireland's stadium bard... a clarion call for a musician who went interstellar with the albums *Without Fear* and *Sonder* to return to his folk roots" (Will Moore, *Hot Press*).

Dermot kicks off the New Zealand leg of *The Weight of the Woods Tour* this month, playing TSB Arena on the 27th of November with support from Mountain Boy.

Intergalactic groove explorers



Photo by Philine van den Hul.

The kaleidoscopic Dutch groove explorers YÏN YÏN are taking us to their sonic universe, rinsed in disco, funk, psychedelia, and dance, at San Fran on the 27th of November.

The instrumental quartet from Maastricht in the Netherlands consists of Erik Bandt on the guitar, Kees Berkers on drums, Jerôme Scheren on keyboards, and Remy Scheren on bass. Emerging in 2017 out of a jam session in a remote ballet school village, they released their critically acclaimed debut album *The Rabbit That Hunts Tigers* in 2019 and went on to release three more, tour relentlessly, and chase rhythms across the globe.

Renowned for their genre-bending records and transportive live experience, YÏN YÏN collect sounds, textures, and musical flavours like souvenirs, drawing from a smorgasbord of musical influences including 70s Thai funk, Japanese city pop, and crate-dug global disco.

Their latest album *Yatta!* arrived in January this year, taking its cues from Italo Disco: the psychedelic, futuristic dance sound that swept Italy in the 70s and 80s.

"It has something of a mystique," the band explains. "All the producers were using new recording techniques and effects and stuff like that, but there aren't many pictures or videos of how they were creating things in the studio. You have to use your own fantasy and create your own story about how that music was created."

Energetic and enigmatic, the evening will transport you to an alternate realm that only YÏN YÏN can access.

Sun's out, horns out



simple ∞ animal's new album *Horns on the Hood* has been a long time in the making – long enough for the band to grow horns, singer-songwriter John McDougall says.

"We have created music together, jamming, bullsh***ing, surprising ourselves, laughing, fighting, and making songs. Songs born out of dreams, dreams born out of the wind, wind born out of song, song carried on the winds. Wind blowing through our horns."

If that doesn't intrigue you enough to toot your horn all the way to the album launch, we don't know what will! The Welly favourites will pull up to Meow on the 21st of November with a set that spans songs of heartache, protest, love, and silliness, reflecting the wide, wild, and weird lives we all live.

simple ∞ animal features John alongside guitarist Steve Jessup, bassman Murray Costello, drummer Tim Robinson, keyboard maestro John Niland, and powerhouse vocalist Annie Ruddock. These musos have been at the heart of the capital's gigging scene, with roots in bands like The Hulamen, The Tombolas, and the Holidaymakers, best known for their number-one single *Sweet Lovers*.

With loads of live experience under the hood, simple ∞ animal is known for blending raw emotion with funky rhythms, all tied in a seatbelt bow. Every show is a party! And with special guests Sam Ford & Trudi Green with their Soulahula Band, the grooves are all but guaranteed.

In her orbit

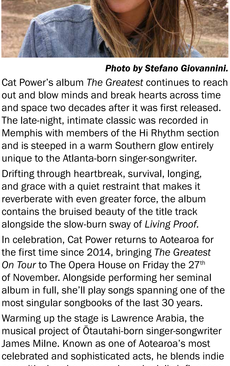


Photo by Stefano Giovannini.

Cat Power's album *The Greatest* continues to reach out and blow minds and break hearts across time and space two decades after it was first released. The late-night, intimate classic was recorded in Memphis with members of the Hi Rhythm section and is steeped in a warm Southern glow entirely unique to the Atlanta-born singer-songwriter.

Drifting through heartbreak, survival, longing, and grace with a quiet restraint that makes it reverberate with even greater force, the album contains the bruised beauty of the title track alongside the slow-burn sway of *Living Proof*.

In celebration, Cat Power returns to Aotearoa for the first time since 2014, bringing *The Greatest On Tour* to The Opera House on Friday the 27th of November. Alongside performing her seminal album in full, she'll play songs spanning one of the most singular songbooks of the last 30 years.

Warming up the stage is Lawrence Arabia, the musical project of Ōtautahi-born singer-songwriter James Milne. Known as one of Aotearoa's most celebrated and sophisticated acts, he blends indie pop with chamber pop and psychedelic influences, and has earned some of the country's greatest musical accolades, including an APRA Silver Scroll for his hit song *Apple Pie Bed*, and the inaugural Taite Music Prize.

There are few artists who can hold a room the way Cat Power can. Experience the magic and re-enter the orbit of this incomparably hypnotic artist as she performs one of the most astounding records ever made.

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The Trumpet Shall Sound!



Erin Helyard.

The New Zealand Symphony Orchestra (NZSO) is thrilled to celebrate the festive season with Handel's inspirational *Messiah* in Wellington this December, bringing its 2026 season to a joyful close at Michael Fowler Centre on Saturday the 19th at 7:30pm.

In his NZSO debut, sensational Australian conductor and harpsichordist Erin Helyard leads the orchestra, local choir The Tudor Consort, and four exceptional singers: soprano Samantha Clarke, mezzo-soprano Ashlyn Tymms, tenor Kyle Stegall, and bass-baritone Andrew O'Connor.

Clarke won the 2019 Guildhall Gold Medal and has engagements with Opera Australia, English National Opera, West Australian Opera, and Sydney-based Pinchgut Opera. Tymms is a Royal College of Music graduate with a strong association with West Australian Opera who brings a versatile career across opera, concert, and contemporary music. Stegall studied at Yale's Institute for Sacred Music and has worked with renowned conductors including William Christie, Manfred Honeck, and Masaaki Suzuki. Perth-born O'Connor won the 2020 Royal Melbourne Philharmonic Aria Competition and is a founding member of AVÉ (the Australian Vocal Ensemble).

Helyard has won two Helpmann Awards for Best Musical Direction and was named *Limelight* magazine's Critics' Choice Australian Artist of the Year in 2023. He will both conduct and play the harpsichord parts, bringing his expertise in Baroque music to *Messiah* and its unmistakable, unforgettable *Hallelujah* chorus.

A cunning plan



"I have a cunning plan," Baldrick the loyal, turnip-obsessed sidekick said to his master Edmund Blackadder time and again in the British sitcom Blackadder. Now, the man who brought this memorable character to life returns to Wellington for one evening of storytelling, career highlights, and fascinating historical insights on the 28th of November at The Opera House.

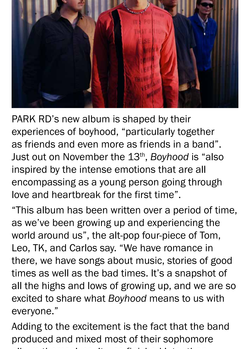
Sir Tony Robinson is one of Britain's most beloved thespians. With a career spanning five decades, he first began acting at the age of 13 in the original West End production of *Oliver!* and went on to be widely celebrated for his historical broadcasting, which earned him a knighthood in 2013 for public and political service.

Sir Tony hosted the long-running archaeology series *Time Teams*, *The Worst Jobs in History*, *Britain's Ancient Tracks*, and *Tony Robinson's Wild West*, as well as two Australian programmes: *Tony Robinson Explores Australia* and *Tony Robinson's Time Walks*. What's more, he is the author of 16 children's books, has voiced numerous audiobooks, and last year released his debut novel *The House of Wolf*, an epic historical tale about Alfred the Great and the bloody birth of England.

Join him at *An Audience with Sir Tony Robinson: From Blackadder to Alfred the Great*, where you will hear the best behind-the-scenes stories from his onstage and onscreen career alongside exciting historical tales from a man whose knowledge is palpable and enthusiasm is infectious.

Capturing coming of age

by Madelaine Empson



PARK RD's new album is shaped by their experiences of boyhood, "particularly together as friends and even more as friends in a band". Just out on November the 13th, *Boyhood* is "also inspired by the intense emotions that are all encompassing as a young person going through love and heartbreak for the first time".

"This album has been written over a period of time, as we've been growing up and experiencing the world around us", the alt-pop four-piece of Tom, Leo, TK, and Carlos say. "We have romance in there, we have songs about music, stories of good times as well as the bad times. It's a snapshot of all the highs and lows of growing up, and we are so excited to share what *Boyhood* means to us with everyone."

Adding to the excitement is the fact that the band produced and mixed most of their sophomore album themselves. It was finished later than expected "(Sorry to our label...)" but put out relatively soon after. "It still feels fresh for us."

"We hope you'll feel alive and feel joy and feel the emotion and relate to it in some way and we hope you'll have a really good time if you catch us playing *Boyhood* live at a show."

After relocating to Sydney in early 2026 and crushing the Aussie live music scene, PARK RD's upcoming tour marks their first home-country gigs in nearly a year. On December the 4th, they'll fulfil a long-time dream: headlining San Fran.

"That's going to be special. We're a different band since our last shows back home and we can't wait for everyone to see what we've been working on!"

A Leviathan catalogue



After a stacked year celebrating some of rock's greatest albums, including Bruce Springsteen's *Born To Run*, Radiohead's *OK Computer,* and Talking Heads' *Stop Making Sense*, *Come Together* are closing their 2026 run with a massive end-of-year bash: *Festival Anthems.*

From Bob Dylan going electric at Newport Folk Festival and the monolithic mud-soaked Woodstock of 1969 to Led Zeppelin performing at Knebworth and the modern-day spectacles of Glastonbury and Coachella, buckle up and enjoy the ride as an all-star lineup of Kiwi rockers take you through the annals of festival history on the 4th of December.

Gracing St James Theatre are Jon Toogood (Shihad), Milan Borich (Pluto), Jennie Skulander (Devilskin), and Seamus Johnson (Sea Mouse), backed by the powerhouse Come Together band featuring Jol Mulholland, Brett Adams, Mike Hall, Matthias Jordan, and Alistair Deverick.

Together they'll tackle a Leviathan catalogue of festival-defining music from the countercultural revolution of the 60s and 70s through to the genre-bending grunge and shoegaze of the 90s and on to the stadium anthems of today. Expect sounds from artists like Jimi Hendrix, The Who, Pink Floyd, R.E.M., Radiohead, Queen, U2, The Killers, and so much more.

Since its inception, *Come Together* has built a reputation for bringing to spectacular life the greatest songs and albums of rock history. *Festival Anthems* is set to be an unforgettable night of expert musicianship, where all the music moments that transcended the stage come together under one roof... without the mud, rain, and Portaloo queues.

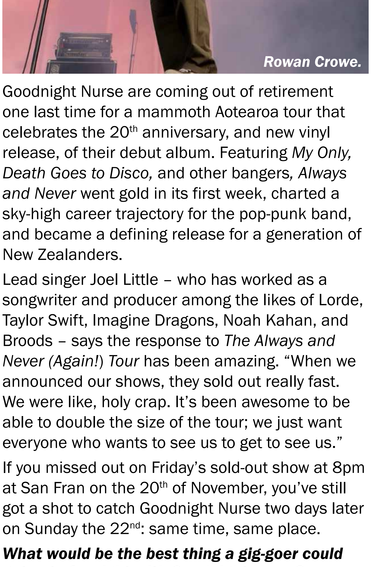
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Revel in the glory days

by Madelaine Empson



L-R: Jaden Parkes, Joel Little, Rowan Crowe.



Rowan Crowe.

Goodnight Nurse are coming out of retirement one last time for a mammoth Aotearoa tour that celebrates the 20th anniversary, and new vinyl release, of their debut album. Featuring *My Only, Death Goes to Disco,* and other bangers, *Always and Never* went gold in its first week, charted a sky-high career trajectory for the pop-punk band, and became a defining release for a generation of New Zealanders.

Lead singer Joel Little – who has worked as a songwriter and producer among the likes of Lorde, Taylor Swift, Imagine Dragons, Noah Kahan, and Broods – says the response to *The Always and Never (Again!) Tour* has been amazing. "When we announced our shows, they sold out really fast. We were like, holy crap. It's been awesome to be able to double the size of the tour; we just want everyone who wants to see us to get to see us."

If you missed out on Friday's sold-out show at 8pm at San Fran on the 20th of November, you've still got a shot to catch Goodnight Nurse two days later on Sunday the 22nd: same time, same place.

What would be the best thing a gig-goer could get out of a night with Goodnight Nurse?

There's a bit of a need out there for people to get to relive some of their old glory days: get that sense of nostalgia, forget about the craziness of modern times for a minute, and remember what it was like to just be that young person who didn't have a care in the world – the person who was going to shows for the first time, making lifelong friends, and just figuring out who they were with a little less weight on their shoulders. When I think back to that time, that's how I remember feeling. We're wanting to give people a night where they can feel like that as well.

Speaking of those times... All For You was anthemic for me as a teen! How does it feel to have so many of your songs emblazoned in the psyche of a nation?

That's so cool. It feels good, I love it! When you write something to express yourself, and then other people feel like it expresses what they're feeling as well, it's a pretty powerful thing.

You've produced and co-written some massive global anthems as well. What have been the maddest moments of your career as a producer?

When *Royals* took off, obviously that was very unexpected for us. A pretty wild rollercoaster for a couple of years there. Moving to LA was also huge. And if somebody had told me when I was in Goodnight Nurse that I was going to be writing songs with Taylor Swift one day, I would've told them they were insane... It's been a hell of a ride!

Do you need to rark yourself up to put the frontman hat back on?

I was out the front for Goodnight Nurse for a long time – we were together nine years – so it's all very familiar and so much fun that I haven't had to think about getting back in the zone. I'm excited to be up there – to be able to see everyone's faces, sing the songs, and have a great time with everybody.

We're so excited too! But why Never Again?

[Laughs.] The thing is, these songs are really fast and really high to sing! It's quite a physical thing actually doing it, and we want to make sure that we're fully capable of doing the songs justice. We're going to put on these shows and give it everything we got, but at some point, you've gotta say, 'Hey, it's time.' Time to let the next generation take over and hurt their necks and backs like we always have!

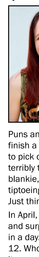


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A word from Maddi...

At a standstill

by Madelaine Empson



If you've followed my column this year, you'll know that I went from being a phone addict to a bookworm. Burrowing into books wasn't easy at first, but I managed to replace algorithms with alphabets, square eyes with... photoreceptor cells (worms don't have eyes).

Puns and wormplay aside, I used to find it hard to finish a book a year, and that's if I even managed to pick one up outside of work. I missed reading terribly though. Being wrapped up in a cosy blankie, hot chocolate in hand, fire roaring, rain tiptoeing on the roof – is there anything better? Just thinking of it gives me the warm fuzzies.

In April, I picked up a crime fiction on a whim and surprised myself by reading the whole thing in a day. Since then, I'm proud to say I've read 12. Whole. Books. But it would've been more if it weren't for *The* blimming *Stand* by Stephen bloomin' King.

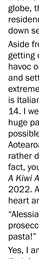
The Stand is 1,232 pages. 1,232! Have you seen a book pillow? It's a specially designed beanbag that you can rest your book in so you can read handsfree – quite the miracle thingamajig that comfortably holds textbooks. But *The Stand*? No, *The Stand* is too big. I borrowed it from the library and had to renew my loan four times. Of course, I returned it each time. Then I would go and find it back on its shelf, watch it like the early bird, and only reissue it if I was certain no one else wanted it. And why would they? What possible sense of satisfaction could one gain from reading all day, only to put the bookmark back in the same fricking-fracking place? What fulfilment from chapters that take three to five business days to finish?

Okay, perhaps I'm being unfair. It's true that *The Stand* and I are in a standstill, but it is actually an epic book in all senses of the word. It's a 1,232-page dark fantasy that explores the human condition over 1,232 pages. Set in a post-apocalyptic world, it says, in 1,232 pages or less, that we will all die. It's unthinkable to survive. I got up to page 700 in less time than it took me to read 12 other books! And I will continue to valiantly persist. What can I say? The can has been opened. *The Stand* has wormed its way into my heart. Only 532 pages to go.

A Kiwi abroad

Here we go again

by Alessia Belsito-Riera



Just as life here on Catalina Island seems to be slowing down and we are settling into some form of routine after our pan-hemispheric upheaval, we have decided to do it all over again.

Yep, as if one cross-continental shift per year wasn't enough, I am pleased to announce that we will again be moving halfway across the globe, this time for three months as we set up residence in our home in Italy during the Avalon down season.

Aside from packing my life into a suitcase (again), getting on a 12-hour-plus flight (again), wreaking havoc on my nervous system with jetlag (again), and setting up life in another country (again), I am extremely excited. While Dad's side is Kiwi, Mum's is Italian, and I grew up in Tuscany from age six to 14. I went to school there, and my *italianità* is a huge part of my identity. I try to visit as much as possible – who wouldn't, it's Italy – but living in Aotearoa for the last eight years has made that rather difficult due to the 24-hour travel time. In fact, you may remember from the first iteration of *A Kiwi Abroad* that the last time I was in Italy was 2022. A long time when one has left a part of their heart and a sliver of their soul there.

"Alessia, you're so lucky, now you get to sip prosecco and flounce about eating pizza and pasta!"

Yes, I am very lucky, and I will be doing plenty of that, but these 90 days in Northern Tuscany will not be a vacation. We have trees taller than telephone poles to cut, fences to mend where wild boar have made pathways, water tanks to empty and refill, stucco to repair, wood to chop, shelves to build, and the ever-encroaching wildlife to fight off on a daily basis. It's also chestnuts and woodfires, nativity scenes and Christmas markets, long evenings with friends and crisp mornings carpeted in frost.

This is the life I love: the one we have been working towards. One lived slowly, manually, convivially, seasonally, intentionally, and fuelled by a fridge full of the best cheese in the world.

Who wears the crown?



After three heats of fierce, fun, and fabulous competition between up-and-coming drag performers hailing from Pōneke and around the motu, the high-energy, high-tension, high-stakes *Rising Star: Drag Competition Finale 2026* is taking over Ivy Bar on the 28th of November.

The finale is the last chance for performers to "show our judges what they're made of and prove why they should be crowned the next Rising Star," judge and prominent local drag artist Veronica Heart says. "The energy will be electric, but overall, there'll be an overwhelming feeling of support and community as we spend the night uplifting the future of Wellington Drag – no matter who wins."

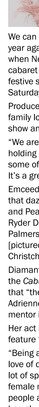
So far, the judges have seen everything from dancing divas and mad doctors to the Queen of Hearts and politician impersonations. The finale will take it to the next level, offering up a feast of theatrics, costume, dancing, glamour, camp, and so much more.

Hosted by *RuPaul's Drag Race Down Under* star Olivia Dreams [pictured], *Rising Star* is an opportunity for emerging talent to receive feedback from well-established artists.

As the finale draws near, Veronica says, "I'm most excited to see what each person brings to the plate. While we are here to crown a winner, I'm more interested in seeing how these performers have pushed themselves and witnessing their evolution and growth from the heats."

"Competitions can be very stressful, but they also push us to level up and exceed what we previously thought we are capable of."

A whole lotta sparkle



We can hardly believe it either, but it's that time of year again! Have yourself a very merry *Caburlesque* when New Zealand's longest-running burlesque cabaret returns to The Fringe Bar to celebrate the festive season in shimmering, glimmering style on Saturday the 5th of December from 8pm.

Producer Adrienne Lindsay says the *Caburlesque* family loves throwing their non-themed Christmas show and every year just gets better and better.

"We are especially excited with our lineup of title-holding and award-winning performers bringing some of their best acts to the *Caburlesque* stage. It's a great way to end the year!"

Emceed by the one, the only Constance Craving, that dazzling lineup includes Cardiac Mercenary and Pearly Shells & Em's Gems from Wellington, Ryder Dailey and Tenacious Venom from Palmerston North, Jeff Coates and Diamante Doll [pictured] from Nelson, and Heaven Z'dor from Christchurch.

Diamante Doll's favourite thing about performing in the *Caburlesque* series – no matter the theme– is that "they are professionally run and produced by Adrienne Lindsay, who is such an icon and fantastic mentor in the New Zealand burlesque scene".

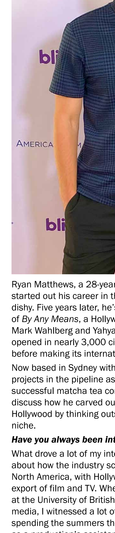
Her act in *Have A Very Merry Caburlesque 14* will feature "magic, glitz, and glamour".

"Being a burlesque performer brings together my love of dance, audience connection, and a whole lot of sparkle", Diamante Doll delights. "Being a female magician and illusionist definitely surprises people as there aren't many in New Zealand. Magic has always been recognised as more of a male-dominated industry and I love how I can represent female empowerment in my magic as well as my burlesque performances."

Close-up

by Isabella Smith

It wasn't the fish



Ryan Matthews, a 28-year-old from Kāpiti Coast, started out his career in the film industry as a dishy. Five years later, he's an executive producer of *By Any Means*, a Hollywood blockbuster starring Mark Wahlberg and Yahya Abdul-Mateen II which opened in nearly 3,000 cinemas across the US before making its international run.

Now based in Sydney with a plethora of other film projects in the pipeline as well as an internationally successful matcha tea company, we caught up to discuss how he carved out a space for himself in Hollywood by thinking outside the box and finding a niche.

Have you always been interested in film?

What drove a lot of my interest was learning about how the industry scaled, especially in North America, with Hollywood being such an export of film and TV. When I was in Vancouver at the University of British Columbia studying media, I witnessed a lot of production. I ended up spending the summers there and working on set as a production's assistant for a big budget TV show called *The Magicians*. I was on set washing dishes and doing the dirty work. And these are long days. You'd be the first on and the last to leave. I remember being there for 15, 16 hours. But it was those early days that allowed me to understand how it all works. How a production happens, especially at scale.

Seeing the size of some of these sets in comparison to a couple of years later, when I was working in New Zealand for *The Brokenwood Mysteries* – a much smaller scale production – that really showed me the two ends of what film can be. I thought, 'Okay, there's obviously a difference in how these productions are financed.'

Films in America have fundamentally so much more money.

That was what stood out to me. In New Zealand, film is often financed more so through grants or what we call soft money, like tax incentives. Whereas in the US, you have financiers take on greater equity investments. There's a real business behind it.

Initially, I was more creative and wanted to write and direct, but I realised being creative in that industry was going to be very difficult, so I went to the opposite side: the commercial side.

I began to think about how I could add value. As a 20-year-old from New Zealand, it's very hard to go into a room full of executives and persuade them you have value that they can't replicate. I always refer back to that quote, 'We don't know who discovered the ocean, but we know it wasn't the fish.' For me, being an outsider, I thought that could give me an edge. I wanted to really niche into one of the main difficulties in the industry, which is bringing on financing.

Going from a creative approach to getting clued up about finance must've been a big jump.

It was, but it took a long time. After Vancouver, during COVID, I moved back to New Zealand. I worked for Rena Owen, one of New Zealand's most acclaimed actresses. A lot of the work that I did for her was admin related, but she showed me what being in a show as a season regular looked like, and I got to go on set.

It's definitely true that it's about who you know in film. Someone always gives someone else a helping hand to evolve and learn, and that gets forwarded on over time. Rena helped me when I moved back and was in limbo about what I wanted to do. At that point, I didn't really have much awareness about equity investment in film, but I was definitely thinking, how do I create disruption in a very traditional industry?

I looked at a few things. One was importing the first technocrane – a very complex filming rig – into New Zealand, but there's not a huge degree of need for it. Then I looked into virtual production. But the third thing, which became integral, was licensing film posters and selling them as digital assets. I licensed a poster for one of the most iconic games to movie franchises, *Resident Evil: Welcome to Raccoon City*.

Because I offered a creative way to add an ancillary revenue to film, suddenly everyone in town wanted to talk. Over several months I had over 300 calls with some of the most respected and influential producers in town. That was a unique moment where I could leverage access, that I'd cut through.

Obviously, once the market corrected in terms of the NFT downturn I thought, 'Well, I've got quite an impressive and well-connected network here.' The conversations then shifted from licensing posters to what's your next problem, which was financing.

Sounds like it snowballed pretty quickly?

Yeah, that's over the space of three or four years. When you think of most people, they don't go from being an assistant to an executive producer of a big budget film in that time. The industry is very traditional; the average producer is much older than I am.

What was that like, working on By Any Means?

Because it was an independently financed film, I was able to be relevant to it by bringing on investment. It was later acquired by Paramount Pictures, but if it had been a studio film from day one, they would have built the project from development through to distribution, and they would own that capital investment. I was very interested in the film because it's based on a true story and has an element of thrill, but most importantly because of the collateral that was already in place in the cast and presales.

It's been a really cool project to be involved with. I intentionally didn't read the script or watch the cut until I was at the Paramount lot for the premiere, which was special. It was a pinch-me moment looking back, to go from washing dishes to being at a premiere at Paramount.

What else is in the pipeline?

Yeah, there's quite an exciting slate for me and my business partner Scott Cohen. We've got a film called *White*, a small-budget film with Kate Beckinsale leading it, as well as *Slime*, an animation featuring the voices of Kid Cudi, Teyana Taylor, and LaKeith Stanfield.

I'm also producing a couple of films with Unified Pictures: *The Ark and the Aardvark* with Miles Teller and Aubrey Plaza doing voices, and one called *The Smack* with Casey Affleck and Sam Rockwell.

I can't believe you have another full-time job on top of that!

To be honest, the last four or five years, I haven't really done much else apart from build both the film and the tea. It's been a lot of work. But when you see the growth that we've had on both sides, it shows you that it's worth it.

That's partly why I wanted to reach out. If someone does read this article and they're a young kid who wants to be a producer or an actor, I want them to know they don't have to be related to a star or have the last name or have money or even be in LA. I had none of those things, but I found a way to make it happen. It's incredibly difficult, but not impossible.

New Zealand has a tiny market of five million people, and it's hard to create. Let's say you make a movie for a budget of $10 million, you have a small fraction of the country watch it for $20, the theatres take half, plus you've got a prints and advertising budget on top of the production budget – that commercial equation is very difficult. Making a film in New Zealand for New Zealanders, that's expensive, it doesn't scale.

But in saying that, I don't think that New Zealand films have to stay there. I'm quite bullish on the New Zealand film economy; there's a real upswing because we have a really great way of telling good stories. It comes naturally to Kiwis, and I think we export comedy quite well. It's extremely doable, now more than ever. The fact that you can find someone's phone number or email – if you have the right pitch, the right leverage, and the understanding of what value you can provide, you can get a response.

Are there plans to use your skills to uplift the film industry in Aotearoa?

If there's anyone out there that wants to learn, I'm always happy to help. Like I said before, there are people who've helped me a lot; I've learned a lot from my mentors. Still, there's a lot I've got to do and learn. But there's always that interest in supporting young New Zealand filmmakers and helping them turn their dreams into reality.

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World AIDS Day

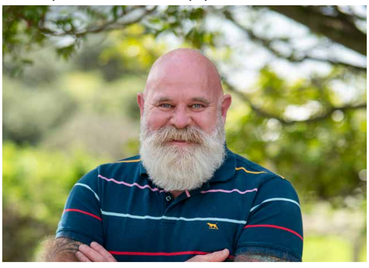
Red for solidarity

On the 1st of December, there'll be advocates, health professionals, and everyday people donning red ribbons. World AIDS Day commemorates those who have passed, recognises the resilience of those who have shaped the HIV response, honours those who are affected by HIV today, and reaffirms dedication to an HIV-free future.

This year's theme for World AIDS Day is access – seeking to improve access to services, resources, rights, and political leadership for people affected. Stigma is a major barrier for people accessing the right care, support, and treatment. Currently there are 3,500 people in Aotearoa living with HIV, and better access could see the number of transmissions reduced to zero by 2030.

Tackling stigma remains essential for prevention, treatment, and community support. On World AIDS Day, discover events happening near you or create your own to stand in solidarity, commemorate, celebrate the wins, and raise awareness about the need for more action.

Wraparound support



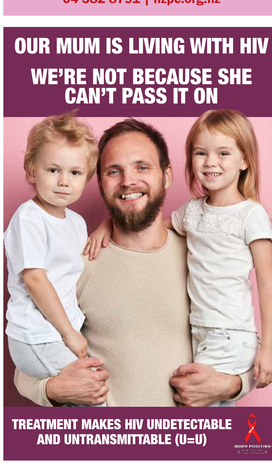
Body Positive Inc. has been around since the early 1980s, advocating for and supporting people living with HIV, building community, raising awareness, and providing educational resources. Their free HIV and STI testing offers same-day results and treatment. Regardless of gender, sexual identity, or immigration status, anyone can book an appointment with a Body Positive sexual health nurse.

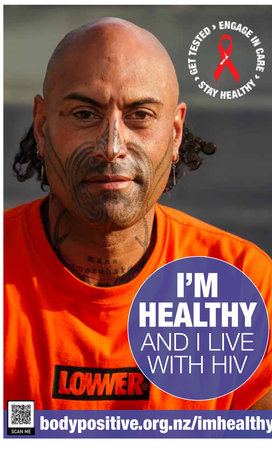
On the 1st of December, The Healthy Futures (Pae Ora) (Eligibility) Regulations 2026 are coming into effect, which changes the eligibility of different groups to receive publicly funded healthcare services. Importantly, this now means that public funding for health services is available to anyone suspected of having or being in contact with someone who has an infectious disease, provided that the diagnosis and treatment of the disease addresses public health risks.

People living with HIV have had access to care since 2021, but the new regulations now offer wraparound support, stipulating that all people are eligible to receive publicly funded HIV prevention treatments when they are prescribed medicines, including PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis) and PEP (post-exposure prophylaxis) treatments. The funding relates to the medicines as well as associated laboratory testing, monitoring, and assessment.

Body Positive and its range of services for people living with HIV is crucial to building community, improving wellbeing, and breaking down stigma and the sense of isolation people often experience.







World AIDS Day

By Māori for Māori



This year's theme for World AIDS Day is 'Rethink. Rebuild. Rise.' Toitū te Ao is the only kaupapa Māori-driven HIV support and advocacy organisation in Aotearoa. Centred on hauora, it supports and advocates for Māori living with and affected by HIV through promoting mātauranga and research, enhancing awareness, reducing stigma, and supporting whānau.

Pou tāhuhu Milly Stewart was brought up around the skirts of her kuia. She was nurtured to embrace what it means to be Māori and embarked on a journey of self-discovery. She now holds a Bachelor of Bicultural Social Work and a Postgraduate Diploma of Professional Supervision, which enable her to advocate for Māori within Pākehā-dominated institutional settings.

Māori continue to face inequities driven by stigma, their voices often going unheard within spaces that shape their lives. In 2020, Milly established Toitū te Ao, responding to the absence of a kaupapa Māori lens within the sector and to whakamana Māori and Indigenous peoples through support grounded in manaakitanga, whanaungatanga, dignity, and respect.

Toitū te Ao offers a range of services, including free, rapid HIV and syphilis testing, one-on-one peer support, support navigating services, access to counselling, and connection with peers.

Better access to support, information, and treatment could see AIDS ended by 2030. Because access starts with awareness, find ways to get involved in World AIDS Day on the 1st of December.

Removing barriers

In 1987, Aotearoa became the first country in the world to introduce a state-sponsored needle exchange programme. Now, the New Zealand Needle Exchange Programme (NEP) operates from Whangārei to Invercargill and distributes over three million needles each year.

Thanks to the early introduction of the programme, Aotearoa has the lowest rate of HIV among people who inject drugs in the OECD. The Drugs and Health Development Project (DHDP) in Wellington operates six days a week offering free sterile syringes and needles, safe needle disposal, drug testing, advocacy, peer support groups, and resources to prevent the spread of HIV and other blood-borne viruses like Hepatitis C.

DHDP also offers free peer testing for Hepatitis C. Often asymptomatic in its early stages, regular testing is crucial, with a 99 percent cure rate when treated with a fully funded antiviral medication. A key barrier to harm reduction is stigma. DHDP provides a non-judgemental, confidential environment based on empathy and trust.





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Trustworthy business



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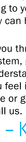
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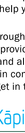
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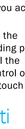
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"Focussing on our residents needs" Operated by a charitable trust
Three great options - Sevenoaks Retirement Village
- Midlands Gardens Retirement Village - Muriwai Court

04 297 0116 | www.retirekapiti.co.nz

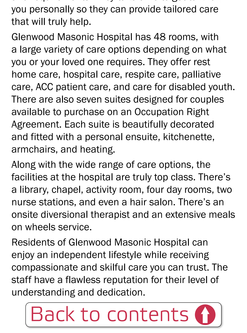
Nearly 70 years ago, a group of Kāpiti Coast residents came together to create a charitable trust that would give locals the opportunity to retire and receive care options in the community they loved. Today, Kapiti Retirement Trust continues to provide Coasters with a range of options for their retirement.

Kapiti Retirement Trust operates one village across three locations in Paraparaumu. Sevenoaks, Midlands Gardens, and Muriwai Court feature a variety of well-designed houses and apartments set on spacious landscaped grounds. Care services include rest home, dementia, respite, and day options, plus care suites. With lots of activities, great neighbours, onsite security, helpful and compassionate staff, a supportive environment, sunny spacious homes, beautiful grounds, capital gains, and transparent fees, residents love their lives!

Within New Zealand, retirement villages and care homes have become a major business due to the increasing older demographic and a demand for the services offered by these facilities. Where the Kapiti Retirement Trust differs is that it benefits residents rather than shareholders. Funds are reinvested into the trust to provide continuously improved services and standards of living – that way the people investing in the trust are benefiting the most.

Kapiti Retirement Trust focuses on its residents' needs first – after all, they're the ones who call the network of villages home. Find out more about an enjoyable, tailored lifestyle at www.retirekapiti.co.nz

Warm and welcoming



Glenwood Masonic Hospital is here to look after you or your loved one. Based in the heart of Masterton, they offer residents the very best care within a warm and welcoming community.

The staff are compassionate, understanding, highly trained, and dedicated to providing everyone with the best care possible. They recognise that each person in their care has their own unique needs and requirements. They take time to get to know you personally so they can provide tailored care that will truly help.

Glenwood Masonic Hospital has 48 rooms, with a large variety of care options depending on what you or your loved one requires. They offer rest home care, hospital care, respite care, palliative care, ACC patient care, and care for disabled youth. There are also seven suites designed for couples available to purchase on an Occupation Right Agreement. Each suite is beautifully decorated and fitted with a personal ensuite, kitchenette, armchairs, and heating.

Along with the wide range of care options, the facilities at the hospital are truly top class. There's a library, chapel, activity room, four day rooms, two nurse stations, and even a hair salon. There's an onsite diversional therapist and an extensive meals on wheels service.

Residents of Glenwood Masonic Hospital can enjoy an independent lifestyle while receiving compassionate and skilful care you can trust. The staff have a flawless reputation for their level of understanding and dedication.

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Retirement

Aged care is health care



Most New Zealanders think of hospitals when they think about healthcare. But every day, thousands of older New Zealanders receive complex healthcare somewhere else: in aged residential care.

When an older person can no longer be cared for safely at home, they do not stop needing healthcare. In many cases, they need more of it.

Residents in aged residential care receive 24-hour nursing support, medication management, rehabilitation, dementia care, palliative care, clinical oversight, and regular medical review. These services are delivered by skilled health professionals every day. That is healthcare.

Every rest home, hospital, and dementia care bed is part of New Zealand's health infrastructure. These services care for people who would otherwise remain in hospital longer or be admitted more often. They support families during some of life's most difficult moments while ensuring older New Zealanders receive the right care in the right place.

As our population ages, the demand for aged residential care will continue to grow. Strengthening aged care is not simply about supporting older people. It is about protecting the capacity of our entire health system.

The conversation about healthcare must include aged residential care. Because aged care is health care. When aged residential care is strong, New Zealand's health system is stronger.

Learn more at www.aca.org.nz

Personal care



Justin Williamson is the proud local owner of both Silverstream Pharmacy in Upper Hutt and Simon's Pharmacy in Tawa, Wellington, representing over 150 years of combined involvement in their communities. As a seasoned pharmacist, his passion for health and dedication to his community is shared by his expert teams across both locations.

People are often surprised by the services a pharmacy can provide, believing that certain levels of care require a visit to the GP instead of a walk-in at your local pharmacy. Since COVID, there has been a renewed focus on providing more services locally, and pharmacies have embraced the challenges, providing vaccinations (COVID-19, Flu, whooping cough, tetanus, and heaps more); consults and treatment for urinary tract infections, eye infections, erectile dysfunction, emergency contraception, thrush, coughs, colds, and other minor illnesses; blood pressure readings; blister-packed medications; assessment and treatment for sleep apnoea; and passport photos and ear piercings.

Local pharmacies operate within the communities they serve. At Simon's Pharmacy and Silverstream Pharmacy, this means knowing our customers by name, providing personalised care and advice, and recommending products and services necessary to your health and wellbeing. Our customers deserve the utmost care, and we are never too busy to help. If you're unsure of what's on offer, why not come in and ask our team?

Aged Care Association NEW ZEALAND

aca.org.nz

Aged Care *is* Health Care

When an older New Zealander can no longer be cared for safely at home, aged residential care becomes part of our health system.

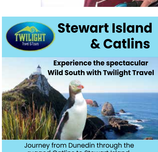
Every rest home, hospital and dementia care bed supports older New Zealanders, their families and helps reduce pressure on our hospitals.

When aged care is strong, our whole health system is stronger.



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We are located on the banks of the Waiaoeka River adjacent to the town wharf and boat ramp. The nearby Waiotahi and Hukawai beaches are popular for fishing, swimming and surfing. Relax in a rural setting, only 200m from the Opotiki town centre with a range of cafes, restaurants and shops. Enjoy a dip in our swimming pool, kayak along the river, fish from the wharf, or enjoy a native bush walk. Our accommodation ranges from park motel to cabins to suit every budget, along with plenty of spacious power and tent sites.

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Enliven's Kandahar Village



Boutique Retirement Community in beautiful Lansdowne, Masterton

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Modern and spacious 2-bedroom villas available now







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Call Sharon to view on 06 370 0662 or visit enlivencentral.org.nz

Reevedon Retirement Village by Enliven



Only $330,000

Enjoy retirement living in a vibrant community in central Levin, just a stone throw from everything Levin has to offer. Keep living life your way at Enliven's Reevedon village.







ONE VILLA AVAILABLE NOW
Call Murray & Sue to view 06 349 1409

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Modern 2 bedroom villa $645,000

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- Two-bedroom villa with stunning Tararua Ranges views
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ONE VILLA AVAILABLE NOW
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Contact Anna to arrange a viewing on **04 464 2020**
Visit: enlivencentral.org.nz

Retire with Enliven, knowing you can continue living life on your terms within a supportive community.

Visit enlivencentral.org.nz/retirement-living

Retirement Advice from Alan

Retirement village financing

by Alan Knowsley, consultant, Rainey Collins Lawyers



For many retirees, moving to a retirement village is an important step toward a more secure and supported lifestyle. However, the timing of selling a family home and paying for entry into a village can create financial pressure.

One solution is a retirement village access (or bridging) loan, which allows homeowners to unlock equity in their property before it is sold. This type of loan is specifically designed for people who are committed to moving into a retirement village and need short-term funding to make that move possible. Typically, borrowers must be aged 60 or over (with some flexibility where one borrower is aged between 55 and 59). The loan is secured against the family home and can be used to pay the lump sum required to acquire an occupation right in a retirement village, repay any existing mortgage on the property, or set aside funds for retirement village-related expenses through a cash reserve facility. Borrowers are encouraged to take only what they need, helping to preserve equity in their home over time.

The property must be worth $250,000 or more. The maximum loan amount is generally capped at 50 percent of the home's value, with a minimum borrowing amount applying. Interest is calculated on the amount actually drawn down and is compounded monthly. Importantly, while regular repayments are not required, borrowers may make repayments at any time without penalty.

These loans are designed as short-term solutions, with the total loan (including interest) usually repayable within three years. Repayment is commonly made once the home is sold, with any remaining proceeds retained by the homeowner or their estate. To support borrowers, retirement village access loans often include key safeguards, such as limited recourse guarantees that ensure the loan repayment will not exceed the net sale proceeds of the home, equity protection options that allow borrowers to protect a portion of their future equity, and cooling-off periods that give borrowers time to change their mind after settlement.

Borrowers are required to obtain independent legal advice, and independent financial advice is strongly recommended.

Exciting new chapter



Found in the leafy suburb of Woburn, the Woburn Masonic Apartments is a stylish, boutique retirement village where residents find not only a home but a community. Set in landscaped grounds with views across Hutt Valley, the complex features one to three-bedroom apartments that are modern, self-contained, and promote independent retirement living.

Conveniently situated on the premises are a hairdressing and beauty salon, library, pool room, indoor bowls and games area, and a movie theatre that regularly screens films. These facilities extend off the two-storey atrium, which serves as the reception area and the heart of the community. With its large windows and spacious architecture, it is an entrance that every resident feels proud of.

Woburn Masonic Apartments is also home to two conservatories, a men's shed, and two bars. If you choose to participate in the range of activities on offer weekly, residents enjoy playing mahjong, taking yoga classes, and participating in regular arts and crafts activities.

Weekly servicing of your apartment means that you can get on with enjoying your retirement. The onsite health suite provides peace of mind and Hutt Hospital is only a three-minute drive away. The swipe card access provides extra security, but the apartment-style living means you can continue life as usual, hosting visitors in your home that comes with ample living spaces and a complete kitchen. Get in touch today to arrange a private viewing and discuss your next exciting chapter.



Phantom Eldercare

www.phantomeldercare.co.nz

Everyone is welcome



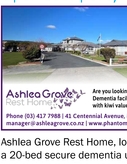
Highview Rest Home & Hospital is a charming character home found on the hill in Mornington, Dunedin with views overlooking both the harbour and peninsula. At Highview they offer rest home and hospital care, including end-of-life palliative care.

With a registered nurse available 24/7 and a hospital onsite, loved ones can feel assured that the right kind of help is readily available. Highview focuses on promoting wellbeing, with plenty of activities, exercise classes, live entertainment, and van outings that keep residents feeling engaged.

The staff at Highview Rest Home & Hospital meet their residents where they're at, promoting independence while also offering a helping hand wherever needed. The busy activities programme and shared living spaces mean residents enjoy busy social lives and lots of laughs over meals cooked by the in-house chef.

Highview welcomes everyone into their home: they are proudly LGBTQIA+ friendly, speak nine languages between the staff, offer kaupapa Māori services, cater to cultural and religious needs, and offer rooms suitable for couples.

Open-door policy



Ashlea Grove Rest Home, located in Milton, offers a 20-bed secure dementia unit alongside its 20-bed rest home. The recently refurbished rest home has new furniture, drapes, carpet, and wallpaper that have amplified the safe, warm, friendly, and country-style atmosphere.

The experienced staff work hard to help residents maintain as much independence as possible, while the dementia care unit provides whānau assurance that their loved one is safe and receiving round-the-clock care.

Operating under an open-door policy, Ashlea Grove is a family-run rest home that encourages families to visit and form part of the community. There is a variety of activities available to residents, including indoor bowls, outings, live entertainment, arts and crafts, and board games. Ashlea Grove pays particular attention to special events, including Christmas and birthdays, receiving positive comments from residents and those who visit.

Ashlea Grove Rest Home welcomes short-term and respite stays, offering end-of-life and palliative care to ensure that residents and their families are supported and comfortable.

Live everyday life

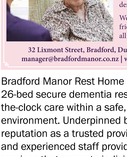


Located in the heart of Gore, Resthaven Care Home & Village offers rest home and hospital level care as well as a small onsite village complex. The dedicated team of nurses and trained carers provide tailored care to each resident, all administered with respect and compassion, overseen by a clinical manager, and bolstered with weekly check-ups from a GP.

The private, spacious rooms have pleasant outlooks of gardens, patios, and greenspaces, while the meals provided are seasonal, prepared onsite, and cater to all dietary requirements. Resthaven offers a range of activities and outings that encourage residents to continue to live everyday life. One need only walk out the front door to be in the main shopping area and close to cafés. Visitors are welcome any time, any day, and rooms can be furnished with residents' own belongings to make the place feel even more like home.

Ensuring that the golden years are comfortable requires teamwork. Resthaven Care Home works closely with residents and their whānau to ensure they receive the best care possible.

Where family comes first



Bradford Manor Rest Home located in Dunedin is a 26-bed secure dementia rest home offering round-the-clock care within a safe, warm, and homely environment. Underpinned by Bradford Manor's reputation as a trusted provider, the compassionate and experienced staff provide tailored care and services that promote individual wellbeing.

The excellent activities programme is developed for each residents' needs alongside group activities like indoor bowls that encourage fellow residents to connect with one another.

Bradford Manor takes pride in their high staff-to-resident ratio with a host of registered nurses, practitioners, and caregivers onsite, including two caregivers who monitor residents overnight. Families can feel comforted knowing their loved one is in safe hands and are encouraged to participate in the planning and provision of care.

Residents have free access to stroll and sit in the secure gardens of Bradford Manor Rest Home, creating a peaceful and relaxing atmosphere. The doors are always open so residents can receive visitors any time, with a cup of tea always ready.

Community and companionship



Located just a few blocks from St Kilda Beach, Thornbury House is a small rest home for dementia that provides comfort and security for its residents, no matter what stage they are in.

The rest home has two areas under the same roof known as The House and The Cottage. Residents can move freely between them and the two lovely shared living spaces foster community and companionship.

Thornbury House focuses on quality of care, with a special emphasis on purposeful activities. The in-house diversional therapist works with residents to develop an activities programme that promotes independence, wellbeing, and engagement. Offering a range of group activities, residents love heading down to St Kilda Beach to watch surfers catch waves while drinking a cup of tea, and enjoy receiving visits from live entertainment and animal friends.

The experienced staff encourage whānau to visit and be a part of the planning and care of their loved ones. Thornbury House prides itself on fostering a homely and safe environment where residents can enjoy living life to the full.

Albany Court
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A Safer Tomorrow, A Brighter Today

Albany Court - Opening on the 12th January, 2027
28 Albany Street, Gore | Phone 03 202 6510

Nature is calling!



Takahē. Photo by Scott Langdale.

Forget the long drive, Wellington's wildest adventure is just minutes from the CBD. Step into a world alive with birdsong and native wildlife flourishes within the sanctuary's predator-free valley.

Zealandia Te Māra a Tāne is the world's first fully fenced urban ecosanctuary, and summer is a wonderful time to explore winding trails and immerse yourself in the sights and sounds of a regenerating forest. Watch kākā soar overhead, listen for tīeke/saddleback calling through the trees, and keep an eye out for hihi/stitchbird, takahē, and tuatara along the way.

As daylight fades, experience the sanctuary in a different light on a guided Night Tour. Explore the forest after dark and discover some of Aotearoa New Zealand's most remarkable nocturnal wildlife, including the chance to spot kiwi in their natural habitat.

Better still, give the gift of nature this Christmas. A gift membership offers unlimited visits for a year. From peaceful walks and family adventures to seasonal wildlife encounters, it's a gift that creates lasting memories while supporting conservation.

Every visit helps support Zealandia's mission to restore nature in Wellington and grow the sanctuary's conservation impact beyond the fence. Whether you're visiting for the first time or returning to a favourite track, there's always something new to discover, from thriving native species to seasonal changes in the forest. Share the experience with someone special this summer and create connection. Visit www.visitzealandia.com to find out more.

Modern lifestyle, rural feel



Artist impression.

A new retirement village and care home with harbour views, native bush, and a rural feel is coming to Whitby, with Bupa New Zealand announcing development plans for a 10.7-hectare site that will create a new community for older people in the Wellington region.

Bupa Te Awarua Views Retirement Village is expected to include approximately 150 retirement living units and a premium care home, with the first villas expected to be ready in the second half of 2027.

Set high above Te Awarua-o-Porirua, the Porirua Harbour inlet, the site has spectacular views towards the harbour and surrounding hills. Despite being just minutes from local shops, it has a secluded, rural feel, with around one-third of the site covered in native bush.

The development will offer a mix of independent living villas, apartments, and residential care, giving people a choice about how they live and the option to move if their needs change. Planned community facilities include a gym, swimming pool, theatre, library, workshop, and bowling green, along with landscaped gardens, walking paths, and outdoor spaces.

The development has been named Bupa Te Awarua Views to reflect its elevated outlook over Te Awarua-o-Porirua and its connection to the local landscape. Around 30,000 square metres of native bush will be protected as part of the development with landscaping and outdoor areas designed to work with the natural surroundings.

Visit www.bupa.co.nz/teawarua



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Bereavement

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Wellington City Funerals is the only funeral home in the capital city that is owned and operated by people who live in Wellington. Not only do they not have shareholder targets like corporate-owned funeral homes, but they work with locally owned small businesses and sustainable, environmentally friendly options wherever possible, providing high-quality boutique services at a fair and accessible price.

Stu Print and Mary Little first met as funeral directors in 2022, quickly forming a dynamic partnership that inspired the founding of Wellington City Funerals earlier this year. Located in the charming Tinakori Road village, their mission is to provide high-quality, professional funeral services for their community. With over a decade's funeral experience between them, they help whānau create a farewell that feels right, taking care to accommodate all cultural, religious, and family traditions.

Whether death is expected or not, it's normal to feel shock. Stu and Mary will guide you through and ease the stress of the many decisions that need to be made after a death, from organising the funeral service, flowers, and casket to cremations and burials, transport and care of body, newspaper notices, and ways to remember your loved one, be it a memorial bench or something else bespoke.

There is no single way to say goodbye. Wellington City Funerals are here to help you create a service that is memorable and meaningful for you and your whānau.

A beautiful tribute



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At Tributes Funeral Supplies, the focus is on creating unique, environmentally conscious, and quality crafted products. Their curated collection of coffins, caskets, urns, scatter tubes, and keepsakes is designed to help you say farewell to a loved one in your own special way.

Working with local artists and manufacturers is important to Tributes Funeral Supplies. They complement their catalogue with products from Tributes UK, an innovative company that creates funeral and pet memorial supplies. The most recent additions to their range are locally handcrafted ceramic keepsake hearts designed to hold a small portion of your loved one's ashes. They come in a range of stunning colours and designs and allow you to hold a treasured memory close to your heart.

The natural wicker willow coffins, caskets, and urns are handmade from sustainably sourced willow saplings, making them an environmentally friendly option. Each coffin can support up to 150 kilograms and comes with fully lined, unbleached calico and sea grass handles. Both coffins and urns are suitable for cremation or burial, and because they're made with non-toxic chemicals, they are 100-percent biodegradable.

Scatter tubes are unique cremation urns designed to scatter ashes. They come in many designs and personalised options and are fully biodegradable.

Honour your loved one and honour our beautiful environment by choosing sustainable, personal, and unique options from Tributes Funeral Supplies. Their products are available in New Zealand from your local funeral home.

Crafting a legacy



We create a wide range of headstones and plaques from traditional to modern – Custom designs for cultural heritage to beloved vehicles. We also do memorial restoration and cleaning. ***FREE QUOTES.***

Serving the Lower North Island
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Memorials are a story of love, family, and life that act as a lasting tribute to a loved one, a link through generations of whānau. Crafting traditional and custom memorials for families across the Lower North Island, Mark Memorials in Levin can give your loved ones the tribute they deserve.

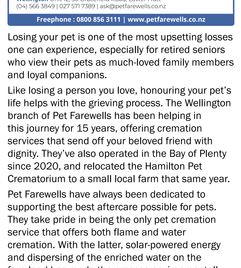
Established in 1960 and family owned for generations, Mark Memorials know a thing or two about legacy. Chris Mark is a third-generation monumental mason with 20 years in the industry. With his wife Melissa, he has been at the helm of the company since 2021 but spent years working alongside his mum and dad before that. He understands the importance of family, which is why he is dedicated to helping you honour yours.

All of the plaques and headstones are created by hand in Levin. Whether you're looking for something traditional or you're after a more custom look, the team can bring your vision to life with care and compassion. They know that choosing a memorial can be an emotional and sensitive process, which is why they take the time to gently guide you through it and make the most fitting tribute.

With Chris being one of the few people in New Zealand trained to complete traditional lead lettering work, Mark Memorials can also help with restoration services, including cleaning and re-lettering, through to full removal and reconstruction of existing memorials.

Find out more and get in touch at www.markmemorials.co.nz for a free consultation and to get started on your loved one's tribute.

Beloved companions



We are pet owners too, and we understand how difficult it is to say goodbye. But when the time comes, we are here to help at each step.

Mount Maunganui 55 Aerodrome Road
(07) 574 5544 | 027 459 9438 ask@petfarewells.co.nz

Hamilton 286 State Highway 26, Newstead
(07) 856 3111 | 027 292 8057 | ask@petfarewells.co.nz

Wellington Unit 12, 50 Gracefield Road, Lower Hutt
(04) 566 3949 | 027 571 7389 | ask@petfarewells.co.nz

Freephone : 0800 856 3111 | www.petfarewells.co.nz

Losing your pet is one of the most upsetting losses one can experience, especially for retired seniors who view their pets as much-loved family members and loyal companions.

Like losing a person you love, honouring your pet's life helps with the grieving process. The Wellington branch of Pet Farewells has been helping in this journey for 15 years, offering cremation services that send off your beloved friend with dignity. They've also operated in the Bay of Plenty since 2020, and relocated the Hamilton Pet Crematorium to a small local farm that same year.

Pet Farewells have always been dedicated to supporting the best aftercare possible for pets. They take pride in being the only pet cremation service that offers both flame and water cremation. With the latter, solar-powered energy and dispersing of the enriched water on the farmland has made the process environmentally superior to any other way of dealing with the left-over waste.

Another new initiative as part of the farm's gully restoration is to plant a native tree on top of your pet's ashes with unique GPS coordinates that allow you to identify your pet's exact location. There is also the increasingly popular option of scattering your pet's ashes in Pet Farewells' memorial garden. Regardless of which service you choose, Pet Farewells will endeavour to make the process as stress free as possible.

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Tickets and vouchers for Christmas

Bah, humbug!



Photo by Alex Rabina Photography.

Christmas cheer is overflowing at Gryphon Theatre, with Stagecraft's new adaptation of Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* opening on the 25th of November.

"*A Christmas Carol* is one of the most iconic Christmas tales – a tale of kindness, forgiveness, and redemption," director Aimée Sullivan says. "Featuring a phenomenal cast of performers, this is a festive, theatrical treat for all those looking to laugh, cry, and maybe even have a sing!"

Stagecraft has teamed up with Wellington City Mission to create a donation station in the foyer of The Gryphon, where you can drop off new toys, gifts, kai, or money to support Wellington City Mission's efforts this Christmas.

A Christmas Carol is on until the 5th of December. Bring along your donated goods to the theatre, where you'll discover a fresh perspective of a timeless story that resonates with audiences of all ages.

A magical menagerie

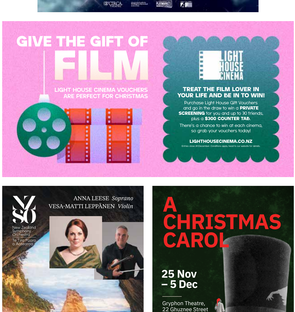


She is beauty, she is grace... she's ended up in an awfully strange place. Belle is on a quest to save her kooky mother from her own doing! She must return a magical rose to the grounds of a mysterious castle in the quaint village of Wellingville. But when she arrives, Belle meets a castle of crazy characters and a monstrous Beast with bad manaakitanga. As the castle comes to life, Belle must navigate challenges her mother didn't prepare for.

Zut alors! For the first time ever, the Circa Theatre pantomime gets Frenchified with a fresh take on a family favourite. *Beauty and the Beast – The Pantomime* features spectacular songs, goofy gags, and a spellbinding story for all ages.

Written by Simon Leary and Gavin Rutherford, and starring Rachel McSweeney, Bronwyn Turei, Jthan Morgan, Natasha McAllister, Andrew Paterson, Jack Taylor, and Te Mihi Potae, the panto sells out every summer, so book now for this magical night at the theatre!

See you at the movies!



Light House Cinemas offer a sophisticated night out at the flicks. With three locations – Cuba, Petone, and Pāuatahanui – a voucher for any of these boutique theatres is the perfect gift for a movie lover this Christmas.

As well as showing a great range of movies, Light House has a terrific selection of wines and craft beers to choose from, plus a cabinet full of yummy, fresh food.

There's an excellent lineup of films available this summer, from blockbusters like *Avengers: Doomsday*, *Dune: Part Three*, and *Jumanji: Open World*, to acclaimed dramas like *The Debut* and *I Play Rocky*. There's plenty for the family too, with the locally filmed *The Dog Show* and the new adaptation of *The Cat in the Hat*.

Light House has a range of weekly ticket specials on offer, and any one of their three cinemas is the perfect place for your private function. Find out more or book your tickets at www.lighthousecinema.co.nz



Tickets and vouchers for Christmas

Rotorua's must-do



Step into the picture, become the adventure...

Forget ordinary sightseeing – it's time to become part of the attraction! At 3D Trick Art Gallery, New Zealand's one and only immersive 3D art experience, the impossible becomes possible, and your imagination takes centre stage!

With over 50 incredible, life-size artworks, you'll find yourself escaping giant crocodiles, dangling from towering cliffs, dodging sharks, exploring magical worlds, and even taking a flight in a hot air balloon! One minute you're inside a famous masterpiece, the next you're travelling through New Zealand's spectacular landscapes or discovering places beyond your wildest imagination.

But here's the twist – *you* are the star of the picture! Strike a pose, follow the photo markers, and let your camera capture unbelievable 3D illusions that will have family and friends doing a double take. Expect plenty of laughter, outrageous poses, and photos you'll want to share!

Perfect for families, couples, friends, and all ages, 3D Trick Art Gallery is an unforgettable, all-weather attraction. Located at Rotorua Heritage Farm, just eight minutes from Rotorua city centre, it's the perfect rainy-day escape or a fun addition to your Rotorua adventure.

Don't just look at the art – jump in and become part of it! Your next great photo, and a whole lot of fun, are waiting.

Christmas is better shared



When we look back on Christmas memories, it is rarely the gifts we remember most. It is the love shared with family and friends gathered around our table. That spirit of sharing and caring for others is at the heart of The Salvation Army's Christmas Appeal: Christmas is Better Shared.

While many people will spend Christmas in celebration, others are facing rising costs and financial pressures that make it difficult to cover everyday essentials. For some families, the season can bring added worry at a time when they simply want to create happy memories for their children.

The Salvation Army is seeing the ongoing impact of financial hardship on individuals and whānau, who face difficult choices between paying bills, keeping food on the table, and meeting other household costs.

That is why the Christmas Appeal is so important.

Every year, generous New Zealanders help make Christmas better by sharing what they can and supporting The Salvation Army's work in communities around the country. Donations help provide food, practical assistance, and support not only at Christmas, but throughout the year.

Small acts of generosity can make a big difference. Whether it is helping a family through a difficult period or easing some of that pressure, donations help ensure people know they are not alone.

This Christmas, The Salvation Army is inviting Kiwis to share and help bring hope and practical support to those who need it most. Please donate at www.salvationarmy.org.nz/christmas

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Back to contents

Christmas is better shared.



Sharing food, gifts, time and hospitality are what makes Christmas special.

But for many families, Christmas will be marked by difficult choices between food, bills and other essentials, leaving little for gifts and festivities.

Christmas is about caring for one another. Sharing what you can makes a difference. Your donation provides practical support for people in need.

Please share what you can and give to our Christmas Appeal.

SalvationArmy.org.nz/Christmas

THE SALVATION ARMY

Te Ope Whakaora

Countdown to Xmas – 38 days to go

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- ☐ **2. SaveMart**
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- ☐ **4. Unichem Cuba Mall**
- ☐ **5. Kura Gallery**
- ☐ **6. The Pantoloons**
- ☐ **7. Snorex**
- ☐ **8. Shalari Boutique**
- ☐ **9. GoodFor Wellington**

Just tick the box of the business you wish to spend money with.
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Sun 20 Dec 2026, 1:00pm
Little Theatre, Lower Hutt
Mon 21 Dec 2026, 11:00am and 1:00pm
Te Raukura ki Kapiti, Coastlands Theatre, Paraparaumu | Tue 22 Dec 2026, 1:00pm
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- ☐ **9. Unichem Johnsonville**
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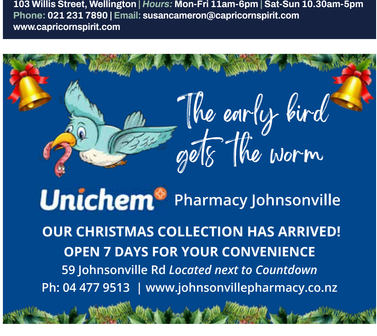












Countdown to Xmas – 38 days to go

Be in to win!

A $100 voucher from one of the businesses below

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- [ ] **7. Lloyd Kelly**
- [ ] **8. The Wellington Comedy Club**
- [ ] **9. Mighty Mix**

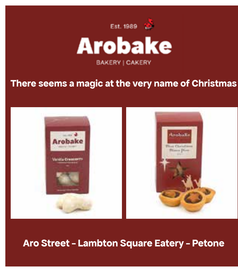
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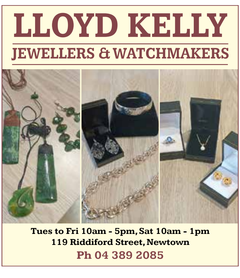
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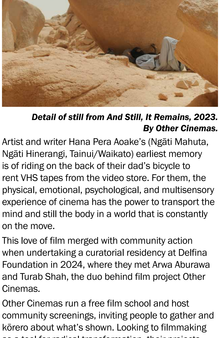


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Gallery news

by Isabella Smith

Global nexus



Detail of still from And Still, It Remains, 2023. By Other Cinemas.

Artist and writer Hana Pera Aoake's (Ngāti Mahuta, Ngāti Hinerangi, Tainui/Waikato) earliest memory is of riding on the back of their dad's bicycle to rent VHS tapes from the video store. For them, the physical, emotional, psychological, and multisensory experience of cinema has the power to transport the mind and still the body in a world that is constantly on the move.

This love of film merged with community action when undertaking a curatorial residency at Delfina Foundation in 2024, where they met Arwa Aburawa and Turab Shah, the duo behind film project Other Cinemas.

Other Cinemas run a free film school and host community screenings, inviting people to gather and kōrero about what's shown. Looking to filmmaking as a tool for radical transformation, their projects reflect on environmental harm, displacement, colonial legacies, and other forces that shape and marginalise communities. Upon meeting, Arwa and Turab invited Hana to organise a screening, where they selected Merata Mita's *Patu!* and a film by Alaa' Breighith and Anna Rankin. This laid the foundations for an intercontinental collaboration, manifesting in *Unseen. Unheard. Unarchived.*, on at Enjoy Contemporary Art Space.

Curated by Hana, the exhibition is a two-part screening programme of (mostly) short films from Other Cinemas, their students, and artists connected to Aotearoa, who explore topics ranging from archives, colonialism, and migration to sovereignty, community, and history. "I really love the synergy between different film projects", Hana says. "For instance, telling stories about whakapapa and the love we have for our whānau."

The artists include Sarah Hudson (Ngāti Awa, Ngāi Tūhoe, Ngāti Pūkeko), Leila Gamaz, Edith Amituanai (Sāmoa), Todd Karehana (Ngāi Te Rangi, Ngāti Ranginui, Te Arawa, Ngāti Awa, Ngāti Ruapani ki Waikaremoana), Jazz Money (Wiradjuri nation), Amel Moyersoen, Li Ming Hu, Leena Habiballa, and Chanthila Phaophanit. The first half of the programme is currently screening, and the second half will show from the 2nd to the 19th of December.

Unseen. Unheard. Unarchived. explicitly draws on the works of Māori filmmaker Barry Barclay and Black feminist, filmmaker, academic, political organiser, and writer Toni Cade Bambara: two artists and thinkers whose legacies of internationalist solidarity and compassion have had a global reach.

Barry's "approach to the camera and writing all centre Indigenous artists and filmmakers as able to tell stories on their own terms", and much of the kōrero Hana and other Cinemas hope to have in the context of Aotearoa comes from watching *The Toni Cade Bambara School of Organizing*, a documentary by Louis Massiah and Monica Henriquez.

The thing that binds both artists is not that they wrote and made films, but that they gathered people together. "Their work is centred around community. Even when working in communities that were not their own, they recognised the responsibilities involved with telling the stories of others."

The films run on a cycle so audiences can pop in whenever they like. Inheriting the tikanga of Other Cinemas, Barry, and Toni, the exhibition facilitates a global nexus of connection and compassion through the radical lens of cinema.

Divine monsters



Photo by Isabella Smith.

Walk up the stairs of Hunters & Collectors and enter through the soft, toothy maw of the maternal monster into the cosy home of a brood of fleshy, bestial, erotic creatures, each conjured from the mind and loins of artist Lily Hodgson Bell.

Inside 'Her' the walls are lined with thickly daubed paintings in every hue of red and pink, threaded with beads and layered with fabrics depicting flesh, skin, teeth, and nails.

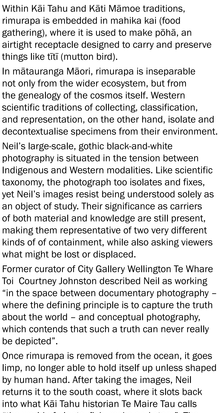
"My work is weird and gross and sensual and soft all at once because I am all those things at once," Lily says. "It's personally important to express all these things and have them take up space to vindicate the young girl who felt trapped and othered because her internal world was too full for the boxes she was given."

Growing up in Whangārei, Lily recognised early the predetermined, narrow margins imposed on what it meant to be a girl. "Naturally I rebelled and went hard in the 'tomboy, not-like-other-girls' direction." But after moving to Wellington to study Fine Arts at Massey University, she realised, "It was never the concept of the skirt I hated; it was the slim number of options as to what a skirt could be and the expectations tied to it that I wanted to reject."

Womenagerie is on until the 27th of November. Stepping into the exhibition is an invitation into a chthonic, other dimension; a place that surrenders to the spirit of the abject and houses a multitude of decadent, tactile, and divine monsters.

"We like to think misogyny is a thing of the past, but it is absolutely alive and well," Lily says. For her, it's important for "women, girls, and gender non-conforming people who feel the same to see themselves reflected and celebrated."

Different kinds of containment



Installation view, Kōrimurimu. Photo courtesy of Nine Fathom Deep.

When big southerly storms collide with the south coast, tearing rimurapa (bull kelp) from the reef and washing it onto shore, photographer Neil Pardington (Kāi Tahu, Kāti Māmoe, Ngāti Kahungunu, Pākehā) gathers it from Te Raekaihau Point (the headland that eats the wind) and Huetepara (the ripe gourd) Lyall Bay.

Within Kāi Tahu and Kāti Māmoe traditions, rimurapa is embedded in mahika kai (food gathering), where it is used to make pōhā, an airtight receptacle designed to carry and preserve things like tītī (mutton bird).

In mātauranga Māori, rimurapa is inseparable not only from the wider ecosystem, but from the genealogy of the cosmos itself. Western scientific traditions of collecting, classification, and representation, on the other hand, isolate and decontextualise specimens from their environment.

Neil's large-scale, gothic black-and-white photography is situated in the tension between Indigenous and Western modalities. Like scientific taxonomy, the photograph too isolates and fixes, yet Neil's images resist being understood solely as an object of study. Their significance as carriers of both material and knowledge are still present, making them representative of two very different kinds of of containment, while also asking viewers what might be lost or displaced.

Former curator of City Gallery Wellington Te Whare Toi Courtney Johnston described Neil as working "in the space between documentary photography – where the defining principle is to capture the truth about the world – and conceptual photography, which contends that such a truth can never really be depicted".

Once rimurapa is removed from the ocean, it goes limp, no longer able to hold itself up unless shaped by human hand. After taking the images, Neil returns it to the south coast, where it slots back into what Kāi Tahu historian Te Maire Tau calls "the world of plants, fish, rocks and stars". The exhibition *Kōrimurimu* is on at Nine Fathom Deep until the 3rd of December.

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NZ heritage, history, and outdoors

Remarkable heritage



Learn about the fascinating story of Waipu, a unique Northland settlement with a remarkable Scottish past. The Waipu Scottish Migration Museum celebrates the extraordinary journey of around 1,000 Gaelic-speaking Scots who left the Scottish Highlands in 1817, first settling in Nova Scotia before arriving in Waipu in the 1850s.

Founded by descendants of the original settlers, the museum brings this incredible history to life through engaging, interactive exhibitions and an outstanding collection of photographs, documents, and artefacts.

Recognised for its historical significance, the museum's award-winning collection was added to UNESCO's Memory of the World Register in 2016, preserving a remarkable story with connections spanning the globe.

Whether you have Scottish roots or simply love discovering fascinating history, a visit to the Waipu Scottish Migration Museum is a must. Discover more than you expect and make Waipu a stop on your Northland journey!

Calling all autophiles



A 10-minute drive from the centre of New Plymouth sits the Hillsborough Holden Museum, home to an extensive private collection of Holden cars and memorabilia.

The museum emerged out of a lifetime passion from Steve Fabish, whose love for Holdens started when he bought his first 1972 HQ Ute. Steve and his wife Joy now invite other autophiles and grease monkeys to appreciate the collection of classic and modern cars, ranging from well-preserved early models to restored models and late-model new cars.

This summer, why not make a day of it? A great place for the whole family, the complex also features Hideaway Luge Taranaki – with a train that takes you to the top of the hill after each run – a mini putt golf course inspired by the famous Mount Panorama Motor Racing Circuit in Bathurst, New South Wales, and a soundshell set up to host live music events.

Your connection *by Paul Veart*



What connects you to Aotearoa New Zealand's heritage? The properties we care for at Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga are celebrated for their historical significance, but often people's connections to them begin with more personal, childhood experiences.

Growing up, my own summers were spent travelling through Northland. As well as fishing and exploring, we would stop at places like Kerikeri Mission Station and Te Waimate Mission. It wasn't just the historic importance of these properties that stood out, it was the little details. Antique toys; wild gardens; the old coal range.

Years later, these experiences have stayed with me. Our visitors often describe similar connections, bringing their children and grandchildren to begin adventures of their own. As summer gets underway, we're excited to welcome this new generation of young explorers.

Find out more at www.visitheritage.co.nz

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Explore Kāpiti Island's native forest and coastal scenery on guided walks learning about conservation efforts. There are opportunities to encounter kākā, takahē, tīeke (saddleback), and the little spotted kiwi in this renowned nature reserve.

To learn more about either tour or to secure your seat, call Tranzit's friendly team or visit www.tranzittours.co.nz

Majestic manu



Taking a drive on the Otago Peninsula in Ōtepoti Dunedin is spectacular on its own, but what awaits you at the end at Taiaroa Head is even more awe-inspiring. The Royal Albatross Centre is located on the windswept headland beside the only mainland toroa (northern royal albatross) breeding colony in the world. Around this time of year, these majestic manu – with three-metre wingspans – are busy laying and incubating their eggs, with each parent taking turns to sit in the nest or head out to sea to feed.

At the Royal Albatross Centre there are 60-minute and 90-minute fully guided tours featuring views from the glassed observatory and a presentation on albatross breeding cycles and the rich history of the headland.

With the colony busy with the next generation, what better place to visit as the weather warms than this iconic wildlife attraction where you can get up close with the world's largest seabird.

Heart of the desert



Known as 'the heart of the desert', the carved-out terrains of schist and baked earth of the old gold town of Bannockburn make you feel like you've stepped into the wild west.

Cairnmuir Motor Camp offers a traditional camping experience in the heart of this stunning landscape. Located on the doorstep of the Lake Dunstan Cycle Trail, the Kawarau Gorge Trail, the Bannockburn Sluicings Historic Reserve, and the Bannockburn inlet where swimming and water activities abound, the Cairnmuir Motor Camp is the perfect place to launch your adventures into nature and history.

With powered and unpowered sites for tents, campervans, and caravans, as well as cabins that accommodate up to 10 guests, there are options for every traveller. In business for over a decade, Cairnmuir Motor Camp features shared kitchen, shower, and laundry facilities as well as beautiful communal areas, making it an idyllic place to spend time with friends and family.

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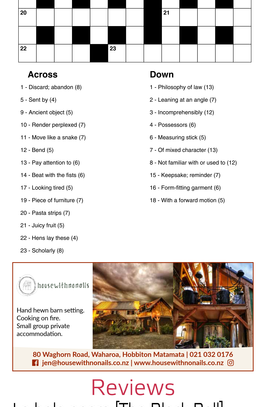
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Puzzles

7						9		1
9								
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2			9				3	
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Across

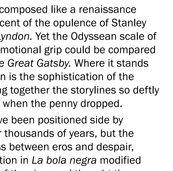
1 - Discard; abandon (8)
5 - Sent by (4)
9 - Ancient object (5)
10 - Render perplexed (7)
11 - Move like a snake (7)
12 - Bend (5)
13 - Pay attention to (6)
14 - Beat with the fists (6)
17 - Looking tired (5)
19 - Piece of furniture (7)
20 - Pasta strips (7)
21 - Juicy fruit (5)
22 - Hens lay these (4)
23 - Scholarly (8)

Down

1 - Philosophy of law (13)
2 - Leaning at an angle (7)
3 - Incomprehensibly (12)
4 - Possessors (6)
6 - Measuring stick (5)
7 - Of mixed character (13)
8 - Not familiar with or used to (12)
15 - Keepsake; reminder (7)
16 - Form-fitting garment (6)
18 - With a forward motion (5)

housewithnonails

Hand hewn barn setting. Cooking on fire. Small group private accommodation.

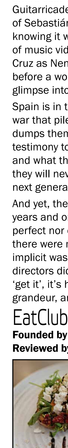


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jen@housewithnonails.co.nz | www.housewithnonails.co.nz

Reviews

La bola negra [The Black Ball]

M16
155 minutes
★★★★★
Reviewed by Isabella Smith



With a spectacle so operatic and layered, it's difficult to know where to start with *La bola negra* [The Black Ball], directed by Javier Calvo and Javier Ambrossi. This maximalist cinematic feast intertwines three storylines across three eras in Spain – pre-Francoist 1932 through to the Civil War and into the 2010s – depicting the shifting, painful environments in which queer love manifests itself. Based on an unfinished play written by Spanish poet and playwright Federico García Lorca, who was murdered by Nationalist forces before he could ever finish it, the film is a poetic treatise on the endurance of queer desire in the face of intolerance and decisive, ideological violence.

Each scene was composed like a renaissance painting, reminiscent of the opulence of Stanley Kubrick's *Barry Lyndon*. Yet the Odyssean scale of the film and its emotional grip could be compared to the likes of *The Great Gatsby*. Where it stands entirely on its own is the sophistication of the structure, braiding together the storylines so deftly I was left winded when the penny dropped.

Love and war have been positioned side by side in stories for thousands of years, but the outright starkness between eros and despair, hope and desolation in *La bola negra* modified the atmosphere of the cinema. I thought the entire cast was fabulous, but my standouts were Guitarricadelafuente's bittersweet portrayal of Sebastián – made all the more spectacular knowing it was his first acting performance outside of music videos – and the ever-magnetic Penélope Cruz as Nené Romero, whose electric cabaret act before a wolfish crowd of troops offers a small glimpse into a more tolerant and free society.

Spain is in tatters; entire towns are collateral in a war that piles boys up on the back of trucks and dumps them at makeshift hospitals. The film is testimony to the total disintegration of a country, and what that means for people who must accept they will never get a shot at love, that that is for the next generation.

And yet, there is the turn of the century, both light-years and only two generations away; neither perfect nor complete, but more fertile soil. While there were moments where something beautifully implicit was later overstated as though the directors didn't trust that the audience would 'get it', it's hard to fault *La bola negra*. Its colour, grandeur, and tenderness put wings on my heart.

EatClub

Founded by Marco Pierre White and Pan Koutlakis
Reviewed by Madelaine Empson

TRA Coffee and Eatery.

The cost of living is diabolical right now, and that means less bums on seats everywhere. The EatClub app offers a solution. Patrons can get up to 50 percent off their food bill, and restaurants, bars, and cafés can fill otherwise empty tables. Hospitality venues choose when to go live, so if they're already staffed but the place is quiet, they can hop on the app, send out an offer, and see who bites. Enter Maddi, a practised biter.

So, how does it work from a diner's perspective?

The setup is straightforward but does require a few minutes and an NFC-enabled smartphone that can make contactless payments. Once you download the app, you link in your credit or debit card (with higher discounts available if it's a Mastercard) and the app generates you a special digital card that you add to your Apple or Google Wallet. This part was a bit finnicky, due in large part to Google's online security protocols, but I've used EatClub Pay without a hitch since.

When you're ready to eat, you open the app and look for offers near you. It might be new to Wellington but there's already a huge range of restaurants available. I've been to five so far, three of which I hadn't dined at before. I'll go back to all of them – EatClub deal or no.

Once you find an offer (typically ranging from 30 to 50 percent off the bill), you accept it, enter your details (time of arrival and how many people), and just rock up. There's no booking and you don't need to say your name or mention the app. Ask for a table, make your order, tap to pay the bill with your EatClub card, and that's it. Stupidly easy for such amazing savings.

I can verify the reported statistic that EatClub users dine out 70 percent more frequently. Through the app, I've had a killer steak at The Welsh Dragon Bar, the butteriest Danish at Black Lion Bakery & Café, the most succulent fried chicken at Winner Winner, flavour-bomb Mexican blackened fish tacos at Superfina (with a jalapeño salsa to die for), and the insanely artful avocado toast pictured here at TRA Coffee and Eatery. I've saved an average of 43 percent and couldn't recommend it more.

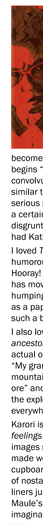
If you love dining out but need to guard your pennies, join the (Eat)Club!

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Book reviews

Revelation Valley

Written by Lisa Maule
Published by Kaharore Valley Press
Reviewed by Margaret Austin



"Can you be underground / When you start writing poetry in your 50s?" asks Lisa Maule, author of *Revelation Valley*, a collection of poems published to coincide with her performance piece of the same name. This small but impressive book shows that you can!

Maule's preoccupation with racial matters becomes evident in *Dear Futura Karori*, which begins "In the past this suburb Karori smelt like convolvulus and / micro-racism". I delighted in similar touches of humour lending lightness to serious subjects. I even enjoyed her overuse of a certain expletive when describing life, and her disgruntled reaction when, as a school pupil, she had Katherine Mansfield shoved down her throat!

I loved *The pull of the bull* in which Maule humorously describes a bull as a male cow. Hooray! Punning similes to my own ears: "This doctrine has moved in by stealth / These were Popes tramping Westminster". (A papal decree was known as a papal bull.) The poem's impact is enhanced by such a brutal analogy.

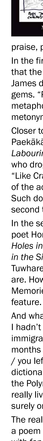
I also loved *Inspired by Aoraki*, subtitled *an ancestor poem*, where Maule laments her actual or metaphorical grandmothers thus: "My grandmothers are English and Scottish mountains / They have been mined for coal and ore" and continues in a similar vein describing the exploitation of natural resources occurring everywhere.

Karori is recalled again in *Places of conflicted feelings*. Maule remembers her family home in images some readers will recognise: "custom made wooden joinery / a fancy Formica bench. A cupboard for trays, a double sink". These pieces of nostalgia are followed by a series of clever two-liners juxtaposing then and now. I am admiring Maule's linguistic ability coupled with a lively imagination.

What sets these poems apart is that they signal the likeability of the writer. Maule is not resentful, aggrieved, or angry – emotions that steer writing in a particular direction. Instead, she brings a lightness, a tolerance, humour, and above all, an optimism to her work. This is best signalled in a line from her last poem *Jagged and rolling*. "Go to the dangerous dark joyous place. Art absorbs / tension." Her work is an example of just that!

Black Gold

Written by Mark Pirie
Earl of Seacliff Art Workshop
Reviewed by Margaret Austin



Black Gold is an evocative title and one that captures the theme and content of this collection. With James K. Baxter as its inspiration, the poems metaphorically dig into the soil of Aotearoa and celebrate the treasures therein. Here are names and places we recognise with nostalgia and praise, poetically framed by writer Mark Pirie.

In the first eponymously titled section, we learn that the author keeps a notebook, just as Clive James did, in which he stores literary tips and gems. "Poets mine for gold," he says, "of similes, metaphors, symbols, onomatopoeia, rhetoric, metonymy..." Great vocabulary for budding poets.

Closer to home is a homage to poet, publisher, and Paekākāriki railway historian Michael O'Leary. In *Labouring*, Pirie likens O'Leary to poet Hart Crane, who dropped out of school to become a labourer: "Like Crane / you moved between the twin worlds of the academy / and the earthiness of the street." Such double-sided life experience is recommended: second tip for budding poets!

In the section titled *Tangi* is a heartfelt tribute to poet Hone Tuwhare and his poetry collection *Small Holes in the Silence*. In *On Reading Small Holes in the Silence*, Pirie describes his admiration for Tuwhare thus: "Hone you were a Giant Kauri, / Still are. How would my / small roots be around you?" Memories and tributes to family members also feature.

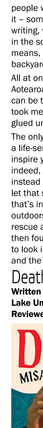
And what about the section titled *Black Sheep*? I hadn't heard of Edward Tregear, a British immigrant, who, the poet tells us "then lived for months with the Māori / never sighting the Pākehā / you left behind." He wrote several books, plus a dictionary of Māori-Polynesian words and founded the Polynesian Society. "Only imaginative people really live," Tregear is quoted as saying, and he was surely one of them.

The real black sheep are a bunch of boy racers in a poem of the same name whom Pirie remembers with fondness from his student days. This is a racy account!

James K. Baxter died at just 46. The 46 *Pirie* poems of *Black Gold* honour one of our greatest literary figures.

Green Sea: Lost in the New Zealand Bush

Written by John Summers
Te Herenga Waka University Press
Reviewed by Kerry Lee



I still remember when an EC120 helicopter flown by New Zealand businessman Michael Erceg went down in the bush over Raglan in 2005 and was not found for over two weeks. The trees masked the copter so well that searchers at the time said, "It was almost impossible to spot."

The terrible story elicited morbid fascination amongst the nation. Like everyone else, I wondered how an entire helicopter could simply disappear.

Green Sea: Lost in the New Zealand Bush, the latest book from award-winning author John Summers, takes us on a non-fictional ride into the psychological journey and shows us just how easy it is to get lost in the 'New Zealand outback'.

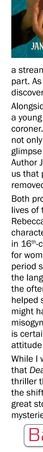
Included are interviews from survivors who have been lost, and anecdotes from years past about people who underestimated the bush and paid for it – sometimes with their lives. Through Summers' writing, we see just how small humans really are in the scheme of things, what being lost actually means, and the savagery of nature in our own backyard.

All at once, the book conveys the beauty of Aotearoa while vividly showcasing how dangerous it can be to the uninitiated. Summers' writing literally took me into the heart of the country, and I was glued until the very end.

The only real downside is that if, like me, you are a life-serving couch potato, *Green Sea* may not inspire you to set forth into the great unknown – indeed, you might be tempted to lock the doors instead and never venture out! However, don't let that stop you! If you want something to read that's insightful and well written, and you are an outdoorsy type who is interested in search and rescue and fascinated by how people get lost – and then found again – then *Green Sea* is something to look into. Especially as we move into Christmas and the New Year.

Death By Misadventure

Written by Jane Bitomsky
Lake Union Publishing
Reviewed by Kerry Lee



Death By Misadventure scratches my biggest itch – both as an avid murder-mystery reader and as a reviewer for *Regional News*.

Set in the late 16th century in the cosy village of Bramley, England, the story focuses on coroner John Derrick as he struggles to solve the case of a man found naked in a stream, who, ahem... is missing a certain body part. As Derrick searches for answers, he soon discovers that not everything is as it seems.

Alongside Derrick's story is Rebecca Laurence's, a young maid who shares the limelight with the coroner. I appreciated the dual perspective, which not only fleshes out the story, but gives readers a glimpse into what life was like in Surrey in 1585. Author Jane Bitomsky does a great job of showing us that people growing up then were not that far removed from the way we are now.

Both protagonists are well rounded, with believable lives of their own. I especially enjoyed my time with Rebecca and the insight Bitomsky offered into a character who would have gone largely unnoticed in 16th-century England. While undoubtedly bleak for women back then, Bitomsky captures the period she is writing in incredibly well. Her use of the language of the time, and the incorporation of the often-condescending attitude towards women, helped secure me in the world. While some writers might have shied away from reflecting such misogyny, I think including it was the right move – it is certainly and sadly an accurate reflection of the attitude at the time.

While I won't spoil the story for you here, I will say that *Death by Misadventure* is a fast-paced action thriller that had me on the edge of my seat, as did the shifting perspectives. If you are looking for a great story to close out 2026, and love murder-mysteries, then look no further.

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Heading south for summer

Kaikōura



World famous fish & chips

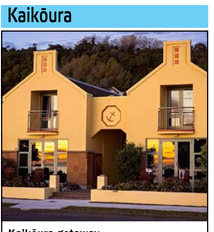
The perfect fish and chips lie in the balance of tradition and modern excellence.

Coopers Catch in Kaikōura is all about the fundamentals: premium ingredients, time-honoured recipes, and food that is cooked to order – ensuring every piece of fish is crisp and every chip is golden.

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Kaikōura



Kaikōura getaway

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Motueka – Nelson



Motueka connections

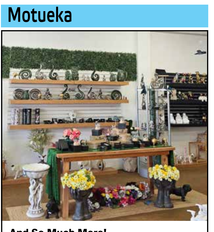
Over the summer, Kiwis and travellers in search of endless sunshine flock to the Tasman Region, a place where nature abounds and adventures await.

Motueka Taxis Ltd operates a private taxi service based in Motueka, connecting Nelson Airport and anywhere in the Tasman and Buller regions from Monday to Saturday, between 8am and midnight. Travel outside these hours is also available by bookings.

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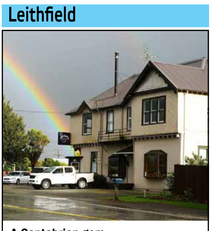
Hi Motueka, located on the main street of the beautiful Tasman town, is your one-stop shop for unique gifts, New Zealand souvenirs, household décor, jewellery, sweet treats, toys, health and beauty products, and so much more.

Discover our wonderful selection of New Zealand-made gifts, locally inspired treasures, quality candles, ceramics, leather bags, handcrafted pieces and special keepsakes to remember your travels.

Whether you're searching for the perfect gift for a loved one, a special souvenir to take home, or simply something to treat yourself, there's always something new to discover. Be sure to stop by next time you're passing through Motueka!

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/Himotueka
207 High Street, Motueka

Leithfield



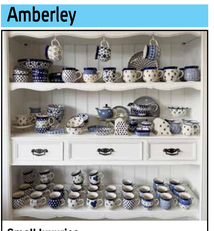
A Cantabrian gem

The Old Leithfield Hotel is named after the Scottish-born founder of its namesake town, John Leith. He built the first hotel on the bank of the Kowai River in 1855 before a village baker installed a new hotel on the same site 15 years later. Then known as The Royal, it was built as a coach stop and to service barges on the river – in fact, the original upping stones used to board coaches are still there.

The Royal operated until 1911 until a fire burnt it to the ground. A new building was constructed, the Old Leithfield Hotel, which remains to this day a fabulous place to stay and eat.

THE OLD LEITHFIELD HOTEL
03 314 7230
11 Old Main North Road, North Canterbury, Leithfield

Amberley



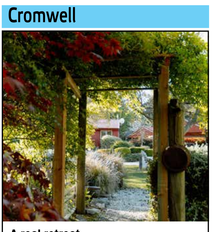
Small luxuries

Found in the small town of Amberley, Out Of The Bleu is the stunning result of a couple's dedication to beautiful craftsmanship and tasteful homemaking. A treasure trove of carefully curated homeware, fashion, beauty, gifts, and small luxuries, Out Of The Bleu is a family business with community at the heart.

Their range includes dining and kitchenware, tasty morsels for the pantry, books, candles, perfumes, garden decor, and the largest selection of caneware in North Canterbury. It's the small details that add a personal accent to your home, so stop in at Out Of The Bleu and bring charm and character to everyday life.

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Cromwell



A real retreat

Within easy reach of some of the best wineries and cycle ways in New Zealand lies a little slice of paradise, Burn Cottage Retreat. It boasts three private cottages set amongst lovely gardens, offering a tranquil break away whilst still being within easy reach of everything Central Otago has to offer, as well as only 40 minutes from Queenstown and Wānaka.

Each cottage offers a private deck, carport, BBQ, king-size bed, and a Nespresso machine, amongst many other features. Burn Cottage Retreat has everything you need to make your stay in this beautiful environment one to remember.

burncottageretreat.co.nz
info@burncottageretreat.co.nz
027 313 3838
168 Burn Cottage Road, Cromwell

Tasman



A touch of luxury

Tucked away into the blissful landscape near Abel Tasman National Park, Almyra Waterfront Lodge is a luxury getaway that gives guests access to their dream vacation. Whether you're an active traveller keen to kayak and hike, or you prefer to lounge by the 11-metre heated pool and sip something sweet, Almyra has it all and then some.

The hospitality stars behind the five-star service are husband and wife team Melitta and Richard, who take pride in ensuring that everything is perfect throughout your stay. Enjoy the thoughtfully designed rooms featuring a private deck overlooking the panoramic views of the inlet. Once you arrive, you'll never want to leave.

027 332 2168
stayalmyra@gmail.com
193 Kina Peninsula Road, Tasman

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Tireless swagger



Photo by Ray Gordon.

As one of the most devoted countries in the world to indie rock legends The Dandy Warhols, fans in the capital will be gearing up for their imminent return for a one-off show at Meow Nui on the 28th of November.

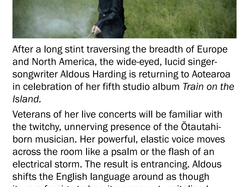
With an ever-evolving sound that whips up neo-psychedelia, shoegaze, and garage-infused powerpop, The Dandy Warhols continue to carve out a lane entirely their own, defined by their unmistakable, unpredictable sound and visual aesthetic.

The Pin Ups Australia and New Zealand Tour sees the band continue to push into new territory. The tour celebrates the release of their latest covers album *Pin Ups*, a carefully curated collection of music that helped shape the Portland band, with songs from The Beatles, The Byrds, The Cure, Bob Dylan, Marilyn Manson, The Damned, and more. "Nearly every band we cover… are friends of ours or artists we have had a meaningful experience with," lead singer and guitarist Courtney Taylor-Taylor explains.

Taylor-Taylor will be joined on stage by original band members Peter Holmström, Zia McCabe, and Brent DeBoer, who will flick through the band's extensive catalogue that features timeless anthems like *Bohemian Like You* and *We Used To Be Friends*.

The Dandy Warhols are a household name inseparable from the alternative rock explosion that occurred at the turn of the millennium. Renowned for their intoxicating live shows, they enter their fourth decade with just as much tireless swagger as when they first started out in 1994.

Strange energies



After a long stint traversing the breadth of Europe and North America, the wide-eyed, lucid singer-songwriter Aldous Harding is returning to Aotearoa in celebration of her fifth studio album *Train on the Island*.

Veterans of her live concerts will be familiar with the twitchy, unnerving presence of the Ōtautahi-born musician. Her powerful, elastic voice moves across the room like a psalm or the flash of an electrical storm. The result is entrancing. Aldous shifts the English language around as though it were foreign to her; it comes out revitalised, padded by quiet, articulate instrumentation that only amplifies her distinctive vocals.

Train on the Island features hit singles like *Venus In The Zinnia* and the 2026 APRA Silver Scroll award finalist *One Stop*. Co-produced by long-time collaborator John Parish, the album has been lauded as a "passionate enigma" by *The New York Times*, while *Paste* describes it as a "dramatic labyrinth that ignites a fuse to the heart's strangest energies".

Aldous Harding will be joined by the atmospheric dream pop, shoegaze trio Womb, composed of siblings Cello Forrester, Haz Forrester, and Georgette Brown. Originally from Pōneke, their prodigious shows are charged with a shimmering minimalism that shoots straight for the heart.

The performance at Michael Fowler Centre on the 29th of November marks the end of a tour that has been steaming along since June. Head along to hear music from *Train on the Island* at its most soaring heights.

Red Ribbon Revue



Comedy, drag, burlesque, pole, cabaret… what could be better? When all that good stuff comes together for a great cause, that's what!

On the 27th of November at The Fringe Bar, *Red Ribbon Revue: A Cabaret for World AIDS Day* will balance joy with purpose in a dazzling show that will make audiences laugh, remember loved ones lost, and know where to get a free HIV test after they leave.

"As a gay man in my fifties, I saw the worst of the AIDS epidemic, and the protest and resilience that turned it into a manageable condition," award-winning comedian, NZ Comedy School founder, and *Red Ribbon Revue* host Neil Thornton [pictured] says. "The best thing I can do as a performer is gather brilliant, diverse artists to carry those lessons forward, and fill a room with people laughing about something we used to be too afraid to say out loud."

The lineup of showstoppers on the night features Faux Femm, reigning 2024 Mx Capital and 2025 Aotearoa Drag Monster, co-director of the WINDY Awards, and former Burnett Foundation annual resident artist; Lector Intolerant, a takatāpui drag thing and freak on the street; Wellington-based comedian, writer, improviser, and producer Ralph Hilaga, winner of this year's Wellington Raw Comedy Quest; Ness Quick, who serves high glamour, dark femme energy, and unapologetic sensuality; Billie Jean, who can do burlesque, pole, aerials, *and* drag; award-winning boylesque champion Blue Virtue; and more to come.

After the costs of the night – which includes fair pay for the artists – any profit will be shared between four organisations working with people living with HIV in Aotearoa: Body Positive, Burnett Foundation Aotearoa, Positive Women, and Toitū te Ao.

Tactile creatures



Unicorns by Mara Elwood.

Featuring lifelike animals, quirky anthropomorphic forms, and whimsical mythical creatures, *Animalia* is a joint show from five Pōneke-based wāhine ceramicists, on display at Ninjaflower from the 20th of November to the 18th of December.

The five artists met through the Wellington Potter's Association, a place where people of differing experience levels share knowledge and encourage one another to explore their craft. The exhibition presents intimate insights into each artist's relationship with the natural world and how working with clay helps them navigate chronic pain and the darker side of life.

Tyla Bow's work depicts our interconnected marine ecosystem, producing sculptural sharks, octopuses, and other marine organisms.

For seven years, Christine Winbush experienced her artistic world through only her fingertips, which is reflected in her tactile, expressive sculptures that she encourages people to touch.

Mara Elwood has created 13 characterful unicorns for the exhibition, each one a representation of the days she experiences when her chronic migraines don't hinder her from enjoying her life.

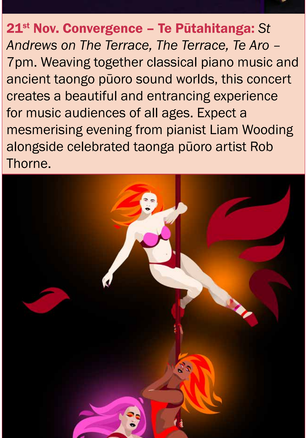
Rachel Kerr explores ceramic art as a way to heal. In shaping both native and exotic species, she finds the tactile and therapeutic nature of clay recentres her and offers up glimmers of joy.

Following a severe concussion, the forest became integral to Ruth Corkill's recovery. She hand-builds life-sized representations of native frogs, geckos, and tuatara, inspired by her encounters with them in the wild. For *Animalia*, she has also included the introduced species that disrupt Aotearoa's fragile ecosystem.

What's on



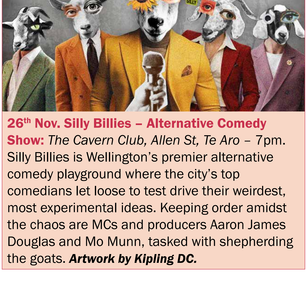
22nd Nov. Vivo Flutes: *St Peter's On Willis, Willis Street, Te Aro* – 3pm. Wellington's flute orchestra – 12 flautists on bass, alto, c-flutes, and piccolo – presents a captivating programme featuring Handel's *The Arrival of the Queen of Sheba*, Doppler's *Rigoletto Fantasy*, and Khachaturian's *Sabre Dance*, as well as music by Dvořák, de Falla, and Granados.



21st Nov. Convergence – Te Pūtahitanga: *St Andrews on The Terrace, The Terrace, Te Aro* – 7pm. Weaving together classical piano music and ancient taongo pūoro sound worlds, this concert creates a beautiful and entrancing experience for music audiences of all ages. Expect a mesmerising evening from pianist Liam Wooding alongside celebrated taonga pūoro artist Rob Thorne.



21st Nov. Wildfire Amateur Pole Competition: *The Hannah, Cambridge Terrace, Te Aro* – 12pm, 6pm. Over 60 pole competitors from around Aotearoa showcase their talent and skills. Two shows in one day means that the inverts and the open categories begin at 12pm while over 35, doubles, and group categories kick off at 6pm. Get psyched for all kinds of aerial fun at Wildfire Pole Competition.



17th-22nd Nov. Hutia Te Rito o Te Harakeke: *Thistle Hall, Cuba Street, Te Aro.* Ange Oliver (Te Aupōuri) presents *Hutia Te Rito o Te Harakeke*, her Master of Māori Visual Art exhibition featuring an engaging offering of her distinctive material transformation. The showcased works dwell between the dichotomy of connection and separation, between darkness and the world of light. ***Detail of untitled ukutea cotton artwork by Ange Oliver.***

27th Nov. Friday Laughs at Cavern Club with Tony Lyall: *The Cavern Club, Allen St, Te Aro* – 8pm. Headliner Tony Lyall [pictured], as seen on *7 Days*, writing and reporting for *The Project*, and performing at *The Best Foods Comedy Gala*, takes to the stage alongside local comedians! His mix of high energy storytelling, off-the-cuff crowd work, and general good-time vibes ensure a fun-filled evening of laughter.

26th Nov. Silly Billies – Alternative Comedy Show: *The Cavern Club, Allen St, Te Aro* – 7pm. Silly Billies is Wellington's premier alternative comedy playground where the city's top comedians let loose to test drive their weirdest, most experimental ideas. Keeping order amidst the chaos are MCs and producers Aaron James Douglas and Mo Munn, tasked with shepherding the goats. ***Artwork by Kipling DC.***

What's on Wairarapa

Until 22nd Nov. Weber Bros Present: THE CIRCUS: *Solway Showgrounds, Judds Road, Masterton* – various times. Ladies and gentlemen, the circus has rolled into town! Step right up to see the spectacular.

18th–22nd Nov. Limelight Theatre Presents: Little Grimley – To Be or Not to Be: *Wairarapa Events Centre, Holloway Street, Carterton* – various times. In this fun play about a play, an amateur theatre group take on one of Shakespeare's greatest works. What could go wrong?

18th–22nd Nov. Eastown Little Theatre Presents: Wheeler's Luck: *Studio 73, Main Street, Greytown* – various times. A rural NZ comedy set in the Wairarapa, this show gallops along at full speed, giving audiences the ride of their lives.

22nd Nov. The Phil Collins and Genesis Tribute Show: *Club Carterton, Broadway, Carterton* – 3pm. In his highly acclaimed international show, Andrew James pays tribute to one of the biggest bands in the world.

Kāpiti

21st Nov. Kapiti Strawberry Festival: *Kapiti Primary School, Rimu Road, Paraparaumu* – 9:30am. To raise money for Mary Potter Hospice, Kapiti Primary School presents a festival featuring all things strawberry, plus a sausage sizzle, face painting, food trucks, bouncy castles, stalls, and entertainment.

28th Nov. Kapiti Concert Orchestra Presents: Meet You in Paris: *Ōtaki Memorial Hall, Main Street, Ōtaki* - 2:30pm. Join KCO, conductor Donald Armstrong, and saxophonist Reuben Chin for a concert that dances through Milhaud's *Le Boeuf sur le toit*, pairs with Villa-Lobos' *Fantasia*, and sighs with Piazzolla's *Oblivion*.

28th Nov. Mozart Requiem: *Te Raukura ki Kāpiti, Coastlands Theatre, Raumati Road, Paraparaumu* – 3pm. Kāpiti Chorale and Capital Choir join forces with orchestra and soloists for a powerful performance of Mozart's final masterpiece.

4th Dec. New Zealand Symphony Orchestra Presents: Baroque Delights: *Te Raukura ki Kāpiti, Coastlands Theatre, Raumati Road, Paraparaumu* – 7:30pm. Don't miss Baroque French and Italian delights with NZSO concertmaster Vesa-Matti Leppänen and Kiwi soprano Anna Leese.

5th Dec. Kāpiti Food Fair: *Mazengarb Reserve, Scaife Drive, Paraparaumu* – 10am. Kāpiti Food Fair is where great food, great people, and great summer memories come together.

Events

21st Nov. Churton Park Community Open Mic Night: *Churton Park Community Centre, Westchester Drive, Churton Park* – 4pm. Give it your all or enjoy the show at this open mic night for all ages in Churton Park.

21st Nov. Cinema Saloon: *Ivy Bar and Cabaret, Cuba Street, Te Aro* – 8pm. Coven is a party for sapphic, trans, nonbinary, and gender-diverse people. Don't forget your boots and chaps!

27th Nov. Te Kirihimete o Petone: *Petone Rugby Football Club, North Park, Lower Hutt* – 3:30pm. Get the Christmas season started at this huge holiday celebration featuring market stalls, kai, entertainment, and so much festive fun.

27th Nov. Wellington Game Review: *Respawn Esports Centre, Manners Street, Te Aro* – 6pm. Try out games for free and support your local developers with feedback.

Music

20th, 22nd Nov. Goodnight Nurse: *San Fran, Cuba Street, Te Aro* – 9pm. To celebrate the 20th anniversary of their debut album *Always & Never*, the pop-punk outfit are coming out of retirement one last time.

21st Nov. Nui Hui 8: *Nui Hui, Waiu Street, Lower Hutt* – 4pm. Diverse genres come together under one roof at *Nui Hui*, featuring Hadees Drudge, Rain and the Urban Bohemians, Stretch to Mould, *Notea*, Mahuaranga, and Bob Marley Explosion.

21st Nov. simple ∞ animal: *Meow, Edward Street, Te Aro* – 7:30pm. Wellington favourites simple ∞ animal deliver their signature mix of raw emotion, funky rhythms, and irresistible energy.

26th Nov. Birdfest: *San Fran, Cuba Street, Te Aro* – 6pm. Predator Free Wellington are teaming up with RadioActive.FM for one epic fundraising concert featuring Bush20, Wellington Tree, Manu, Tūī Band, and Weka.

27th Nov. Ari Leason: *Hilltop House, Upland Road, Kelburn* – 7:30pm. Ari Leason is known for her soulful blend of indie folk and intimate storytelling, which shines through on her album *Hello Darling*.

27th Nov. Cat Power: *The Opera House, Manners Street, Te Aro* – 7:30pm. Cat Power returns to New Zealand performing her seminal 2006 album *The Greatest* in full, alongside songs spanning one of the most singular catalogues in contemporary music.

27th Nov. YĪN YĪN: *San Fran, Cuba Street, Te Aro* – 8pm. Dutch groove explorers YĪN YĪN are bringing disco, funk, psychedelia, and dance to Wellington.

27th Nov. Dermot Kennedy: *TSB Arena, Queens Wharf, Wellington Waterfront* – 8pm. Known for his passionate and powerful live performances, Kennedy tours his new album *The Weight of the Woods*.

28th Nov. The Dandy Warhols: *Meow Nui, Vivian Street, Te Aro* – 8pm. The cult alt-rock icons remain one of the most distinctive and adventurous live bands around, blending psych rock, shoegaze, synth pop, and their trademark swagger.

29th Nov. Hutt Valley Orchestra Presents: Dancing into Christmas: *St James Church, Woburn Road, Lower Hutt* – 3pm. Mendelssohn's *Wedding March*, Offenbach's *Orpheus in the Underworld Overture*, and Gounod's *Phrynè's Dance* set the scene for a lively concert alongside Seraphim Choir from Chilton Saint James School.

29th Nov. Deceits: *Valhalla, Vivian Street, Te Aro* – 8pm. The Los Angeles post-punk band rejects the genre's colder edges in favour of something more alive, pulling in the colour, rhythm, and emotional intensity of the Spanish-language music they grew up with.

29th Nov. Aldous Harding: *Michael Fowler Centre, Wakefield Street, Te Aro* – 8pm. Celebrating her fifth studio album *Train on the Island*, the Aotearoa artist tours home soil.

4th Dec. Come Together Presents: Big End of Year Bash Extravaganza – Festival Anthems: *St James Theatre, Courtenay Place, Te Aro* – 8pm. From the mud-soaked magic of Woodstock to the legendary stages of Glastonbury and Coachella, *Festival Anthems* celebrates the greatest performances in music history.

4th Dec. Park Rd: *San Fran, Cuba Street, Te Aro* – 8pm. Park Rd's new album *Boyhood* features 11 songs capturing the coming-of-age years Tom, Leo, TK, and Carlos are living right now.

5th Dec. Kristin Hersh: *Meow, Edward Street, Te Aro* – 8pm. Hersh's new album *Sugar on Blackstone* is a darker yet delicately rendered collection exploring life and death, memory, survival, and human connection.

19th Dec. New Zealand Symphony Orchestra Presents: Messiah: *Michael Fowler Centre, Wakefield Street, Te Aro* – 7:30pm. Australian conductor Erin Helyard will steer the NZSO, four exceptional singers, and The Tudor Consort through Handel's beloved and substantial work.

Performance

17th Nov–13th Dec. Austen Found: The Undiscovered Musicals of Jane Austen: *Circa Theatre, Taranaki Street, Wellington Waterfront* – various times. Addicted to Darcy? Easily Persuaded? Bonkers for Big Balls? Join Ashton, Dungey, and Burgess as they swoon, romp, and pianoforte their way through Jane Austen's world.

18th–28th Nov. Jesus Christ Superstar: *St James Theatre, Courtenay Place, Te Aro* – various times. A global phenomenon that has wowed audiences for decades, this Tim Rice and Andrew Lloyd Webber musical explores the biblical portrayal of the extraordinary events that led to the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ through the eyes of his betrayer, Judas Iscariot.

18th–28th Nov. New Zealand School of Dance Performance Season 2026: *Te Whaea: National Dance and Drama Centre, Hutchison Road, Newtown* – various times. Across 10 performances, NZSD's emerging dancers will bring classical and contemporary dance programmes to life.

21st Nov–6th Jan. Beauty and the Beast – The Pantomime: *Circa Theatre, Taranaki Street, Wellington Waterfront* – various times. For the first time ever, the pantomime goes to France with another fairy tale on a family favourite featuring spectacular songs, goofy gags, and a spellbinding story for all ages.

27th Nov. Red Ribbon Revue: A Cabaret for World AIDS Day: *The Fringe Bar, Allen Street, Te Aro* – 8pm. Hosted by award-winning comedian Neil Thornton and sponsored by the Burnett Foundation and Body Positive, enjoy comedy, drag, burlesque, pop, and more for a good cause.

28th Nov. MATRESCENCE – A Development Showing: *The Hannah, Cambridge Terrace, Te Aro* – 7:30pm. This new solo documentary theatre work created and performed by Romina Meneses and directed by Mel Dodge is about what happens when you become a mother far away from home, without your family or familiar support networks around you.

28th Nov. An Audience with Sir Tony Robinson: *The Opera House, Manners Street, Te Aro* – 7:30pm. Sir Tony Robinson is one of Britain's best-loved faces on screen, a master storyteller and an award-winning writer, known for playing the iconic Baldrick in *Blackadder* and presenting 20 seasons of Channel 4's *Time Team*.

28th Nov. Rising Star: A Drag Competition Finale: *Ivy Bar & Cabaret, Cuba Street, Te Aro* – 9:30pm. After three heats filled with fierce competition, dazzling performances, and unforgettable looks, the finalists are ready to battle it out for the crown and title of Rising Star.

5th Dec. Caburlesque Presents: Have A Very Merry Caburlesque 14: *The Fringe Bar, Allen Street, Te Aro* – 8pm. Catch incredible local acts at this silly season show featuring all kinds of performance styles and genres.

Galleries

6th–27th Nov. Womenageria: *Hunters & Collectors, Cuba Street, Te Aro.* Lily Hodgson Bell's exhibition features creatures from the mind and loins of the artist, whose confidence delves into the body as flesh, eroticism, humour, and sensuality.

Until 29th Nov. Millwood Miscellany: *Pop-up Millwood Gallery, Victoria Street, Te Aro.* Enjoy works by Philippa Christmas, Judith Maxim, and Mary Sascaja.

Until 3rd Dec. Kōrimurimu: *Nine Fathom Deep, Cambridge Terrace, Te Aro.* Neil Pardington's black and white photos of rimurapa (bull kelp) explore tensions between mātauranga Māori and Western taxonomy.

Until 19th Dec. Unseen. Unheard. Unarchived.: *Enjoy Contemporary Art Space, Left Bank, Te Aro.* A two-part film screening programme featuring work by Other Cinemas (Turab Shah and Arwa Aburawa), students from the Other Cinemas filmmaking programme, and artists connected to Aotearoa.

For your inclusion in the what's on listings email: whatson@regionalnews.kiwi. Close off for the next issue's listings is noon Tuesday 24 November

To the best of our knowledge, the information provided to us regarding the above events was correct at the time of press. Our company accepts no liability for events postponed, cancelled, sold out, or otherwise adapted.

Regional News
Connecting Wellington

Answers to the puzzles on page 33

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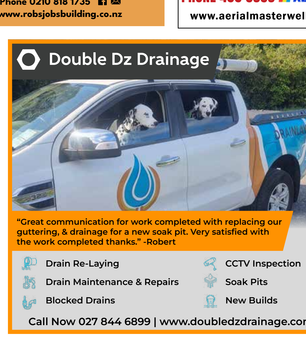


















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